



# The Rising Star

Swarthmore-Rutledge School

*Home of the Panther Cubs!*

Volume 13, Issue 1

September 2006

## *From the Principal's Desk*

Dear Parents:

Welcome to the beginning of another great year at SRS! If your family is new to this school, you are about to experience the kindness, warmth and educational excellence for which SRS is known ---something with which our returning students and their families are very familiar. We are fortunate to have very active parent involvement at SRS; parent volunteers who spend countless hours helping to make SRS a better place for students and teachers.

Some familiar faces will not be with us as we start the school year due to celebratory life events and personal journeys. Celeste Gerhab has moved to SHMS to teach Reading and Dorri Brooke will be on sabbatical for the first half of the year.

In our staff search, we were fortunate to have recruited talented new teachers who will make positive contributions to our school community.

Stephanie Guttilla, Layered Learning Support Teacher, Rm. 104

Education: Immaculata University, Chester County, PA – Special Ed. Certification, 2005; Millersville University, Millersville, PA – BS in Education, 2002.

Experience: Instructional Support Teacher, Octorara Area High School, Atglen, PA; Recreation Director for Summer Panthers Program, Wallingford-Swarthmore School District, 2002-2006.

Kelly Rubillo, IST/Resource Room Teacher

Education: Neumann College, Aston, PA – M. Ed. In Instructional Leadership, 2006; Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, PA – B.A. in Social Work.

Experience: Student Teacher, Nether Providence Elementary School, Wallingford-Swarthmore School District, 2006; Social Work Intern, Harrisburg School District, Harrisburg, PA, 1999-2000.

Eric McElroy, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher, Rm. 312

Education: University of Scranton, Scranton, PA – B. S. in Elementary Education, 1996.

Experience: Gifted Teacher, Wallingford-Swarthmore School District, 2/06-6/06; Computer Technology Assistant/ Sixth Grade Teacher, Philadelphia School District, 12/05-2/06; Permanent Per Diem Substitute Teacher/First Grade Teacher/Elementary Gifted Teacher, North Penn School District, 8/00-7/05.

In addition, Kate Friel and Kelly Kane have returned from maternity leaves, and Randie Gallagher has returned from a sabbatical leave. Bridget Pendleton is now Bridget Welsh and she will be serving as Reading Specialist at SRS this year. (*continued next page*)

### This Year at SRS

For the second year, SRS will have the benefit of learning from the **NEW-S project**. Neuman College, Elwyn Institute, and the Wallingford-Swarthmore School District work collaboratively to provide training and support to improve the quality of education for all SRS students, especially those students with Autism Spectrum Disorders. With the increasing incidence of autism in our student population, our teachers benefit from research based techniques and strategies that help them to individualize their instructional programs to meet the needs of their students.

A ten member committee of teachers, support staff and parents will receive training from a certified **Olweus Bully Prevention** consultant. This committee will do “turn around” training with the rest of the SRS staff. This program is one of the Blueprint Violence Prevention Programs and is acknowledged as an evidence and research approach to the prevention of bullying with young people. The program will provide all members of the SRS community with a unified and systematic approach to bullying behavior in all its forms that supports the victim, gives the bully/bullies a clear message that they must stop and empowers bystanders to follow the steps that they have been trained to follow when observing bullying.

This year SRS will hold its **first annual anti-bullying week**. Our students will learn specific strategies to use in response to being bullied. They will learn what bystanders should do when they observe someone being bullied. They’ll learn perspective-taking, a form of higher-order thinking that will allow them to be more understanding and empathetic toward others. As part of this week, the Walnut Street Theater Touring group will perform “The Boy Who Cried Bully” and the Spice Ensemble will take us on “A Journey into Middle Eastern Music” with an exciting exploration of North African, Middle Eastern, and Balkan music, languages, and dance. The Spice Route Ensemble brings together musicians of Arab, Israeli, and Greek traditions. This is a timely program that symbolizes our hope for peace in the Middle East.

The Walnut Street Theater Touring group will do a six week residency with our primary classes starting in late January. They will introduce students to the performing arts, allow them to experience drama-in-education techniques and give them an opportunity to be involved in a culminating presentation. The **Walnut Street Theater Residency** is coming to SRS through a matching grant opportunity with the Pennsylvania Council of the Arts.

SRS is in the final stages of preparing its application for a **National School of Character Award**. Over the course of the last six years, SRS has established a social awareness/character education program based upon four cornerstones: Manners, Kindness, Courage and Self-Control. We have a comprehensive approach to character education. We understand that parents play the primary role in character education development of their children and that the school plays a supportive role. We work together with our parents and the community to teach and promote positive character development by giving increased attention to our core values and other important traits and pro-social skills. It is our goal to promote good character in every aspect of life in our school and provide a positive school climate in which our students can learn to the best of their abilities.

Elementary schools throughout our district will be implementing **Everyday Mathematics** this year. It is an exciting, research-based mathematics curriculum developed by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project. This program uses a problem-based approach based on everyday situations so that mathematics becomes “real” for students. (*continued next page*)

Students learn basic facts in a variety of engaging ways; they do not learn basic facts through a tedious drill format. *Everyday Mathematics* is a spiraling curriculum: To enhance the development of basic skills and concepts, students regularly revisit previously learned concepts and repeatedly practice skills encountered earlier. *Everyday Mathematics* explores mathematical content beyond basic arithmetic; it develops concepts and skills in the following topics---numeration; operations and computation; data and chance; geometry; measurement and reference frames; and patterns, functions, and algebra.

There will be a series of *Everyday Mathematics* parent meetings throughout the district during the school year.

When: Wednesday, September 27, 2006 from 7:00-9:00 p.m.  
Where: SRS  
Focus: Overview of *Everyday Mathematics* and grade specific information about what is going on in *Everyday Mathematics* in September in your child's classroom.

When: Wednesday, October 25, 2006 from 7:00-9:00 p.m.  
Where: NPE  
Focus: Grade specific information about what is going on in *Everyday Mathematics* in October in your child's classroom.

When: Wednesday, December 6, 2006 from 7:00-9:00 p.m.  
Where: WES  
Focus: Grade specific information about what is going on in *Everyday Mathematics* in December in your child's classroom.

When: Tuesday, March 20, 2007 from 7:00-9:00 p.m.  
Where: SRS  
Focus: Grade specific information about what is going on in *Everyday Mathematics* in March in your child's classroom.

### **Revision of Board Policy Regarding Vacations During School Days**

The WSSD Board has recently revised this policy to limit the number of excused absences for vacations during the school year to two days per school year; any additional days will be counted as unexcused absences. As in the past, these vacations must be pre-approved by the school principal. A journal must be kept by the student detailing what was learned on the trip. The teacher and the principal will review the journal when the student returns.

Our **Parent-Student Handbook** will again be included in the Swarthmore-Rutledge School Directory. Please review the information in this handbook. If we are on the same page, we'll have a wonderful year at SRS!

**Dr. Gary Davis**  
**Principal**

## Dear SRS Community,

As we kick off the 2006-2007 school year, we are very excited about some new and existing programs sponsored by the SRS Home and School Association. The mission of the H&S Association is to enrich and enhance the school experience for our children at SRS. In accordance with this mission Dr. Davis has sought out some new programs offered by the Walnut Street Theater, and the Spice Ensemble to address and educate the staff and children on the topics of diversity and bullying. We are instituting our first annual Anti-Bullying Awareness Week in January 2007, as part of the activities being offered during this week, the SRS H&S association will support a performance of *A Boy Who Cried Bully* offered by the Walnut Street Theater and training for the SRS faculty by a nationally recognized Bully prevention training group. We will continue to sponsor our Dimension programs in Art, Social Studies, Science and Math, which offer the children exciting educational opportunities in each of these areas. The posters displayed in the first floor hallway of the school were generated by the visiting "Parent Scientist" of our Dimensions in Science program. They have generated much excitement and interest in both the staff and students. We will continue to produce and display the posters for our science sessions and hope to produce them for activities in our other Dimension Programs as well. They are an excellent way to see what our Dimension programs are offering. Our Poet in-residence Joann Sutton-Smith, will offer the much loved primary poetry program over a 4-6 week period, during the school year.

You may or may not have heard about the new "H&S website...SRSkids.org", the site is being developed with the help of several technology proficient dads of SRS students. We hope to offer an additional way to communicate the events and happenings at SRS which are H&S related. We are all at different points in our ability and interest in navigating the internet, but as the technology era continues, we will begin this year by introducing the website, and work diligently at keeping it up to date and informative, please visit it often as we continue to develop new aspects of the site.

The *Safety and Grounds committee* of the SRS H&S Association has worked hard on greening-up and beautifying the grounds surrounding the school. The Children's Garden, in the rear of the school next to the tennis courts, was completed last year by the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class under the guidance of Hillary Belanger and Jules Bruck. We can also all enjoy a beautiful new garden planted at the entrance to the school by Stacy Clements and Sharon Mester, under the direction of Geoff Anderson. A look at the plantings will tell you that we will enjoy many different colors throughout the seasons. We are awaiting the installation of two new teak benches at the front entrance to the school donated by the 5<sup>th</sup> grade class of 2006 and the SHS class of '81.

The H&S community at SRS is very active with many seasoned volunteers, who are always in search of new members with fresh ideas. We will begin the school year with our three major fundraisers, the *Sally Foster gift wrap sale*, the *Coupon Book* which was offered at the *Back to School Night*, and the *School Directory sale*. Together these generate over \$15,000 dollars, which goes directly to supporting the Dimension programs and other offerings of the H&S Association. Our social events also start right away with our Back to School Picnic on Sept 21, on the playground behind the school. More information will be sent home in the backpacks, or can be obtained on the SRSkids.org website

There are many opportunities to become involved with SRS H&S Association. We would like to extend a warm welcome to all our new families, and a warm welcome back to our returning families. We urge everyone to become as involved as time permits in the wonderful events and offerings of the SRS H&S community.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy 2006-2007 school year!

Co-Chairs, SRS Home and School Association

Kate Dickey [dickeysw@aol.com](mailto:dickeysw@aol.com)

Beth Resweber [Sresweber@pol.net](mailto:Sresweber@pol.net)



## SRS Monthly Staff Spotlight Featuring Ms. Hacik

*Interview by Frances Resweber*

### ***When did you decide to become a teacher, and where did you go to college?***

I always loved school; I enjoyed it throughout my entire life, and always thought I would become a teacher. I decided for sure to become a teacher while attending college; I went to Smith College, in Northampton, MA.

### ***How long have you been a teacher at SRS, have you always taught 3<sup>rd</sup> grade?***

I have been teaching in the WSSD for 31 years. I have taught grades 1,2,3,4,and 6. I have also taught in the gifted program. I have taught 3<sup>rd</sup> grade the most and for the longest time, 25 years right here in Swarthmore.

### ***Tell us something about your family.***

I have a wonderful husband named Bob, we adopted our daughter "Joelle" from China last year. You may remember that I was out on leave last year while we traveled to China to get Joelle. I stayed home for awhile with her, to settle in to our new life as a family. She brings Bob and I so much joy. You will all get to meet her this year. I also have a sister who is three years younger than I am.

### ***What is your favorite extra curricular activity?***

I love to read, write poetry, and swim in my free time.

### ***Who is your favorite author?***

I enjoy Barbara Kingsolver, Langston Hughes, EE Cummings and Billy Collins.

### ***What is your favorite part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade year?***

I love the beginning of the school year, meeting all the new students and getting to know everyone is such a special time. I also love the end of the year, when we study African Dance, make costumes and give a performance for the school and our families. Throughout the year I especially love reading books to the students and having them read to me and the class.

### ***What is your favorite food?***

My favorite food is "LOBSTER"...(I bet Ms. Hacik enjoyed her favorite food while attending college in Massachusetts. Lobsters are especially good when you are in New England.)

### ***What was your most favorite vacation?***

The best trip I ever went on was when I went to China to get Joelle. My favorite vacation spot is Beach Haven. I love to spend time with my family on Long Beach Island, swimming in the ocean, playing in the sand and enjoying the outdoors.

## [www.srskids.org](http://www.srskids.org)

Check out Home and School's own website. It includes a calendar of upcoming events and information about events, and we plan for it to include copies of forms that come home in backpacks (for those times when they don't make it home). With this new site, which is independent of the school district's web pages, we will be relieving the SRS staff of the need to maintain Home and School information, while making it much more available to families. Special kudos go to Tony Liu who, over the summer, made the site a reality.

**“The Carruthers are coming back... OH NO! AHHHH!” Look for more details in next month’s Rising Star and the Swarthmorean!**

### *New Editor for Rising Star*

Many thanks to Robin Boyer for volunteering to be the Editor for the Rising Star as Linda Martin moves on to another H&S position.

Please send all submissions to:

Rdgenter@aol.com



### *SRS Corporate Fundraising*

If someone walked up to you and said you could earn \$2,000 just by shopping, you'd jump at the chance, right? Last school year SRS families helped our school earn over \$2,000 just by grocery shopping!! We earned \$830 alone, by clipping box tops of products we use every day such as Cheerios, Fruit Roll-ups, Yoplait Yogurt, Pillsbury Waffles, Nature Valley Granola Bars and Gold Medal Flour.

Many families don't shop at Genuardi's and say they don't use these products, but don't worry – if you register at [www.boxtops4education.com](http://www.boxtops4education.com) and shop online at popular retailers such as JCPenney.com, Lands End.com, Eddie Bauer.com, 1-800-flowers.com, Nordstrom.com, or Gap.com (find many more listed on the website), you can earn up to 8% of your purchase total for SRS.

Please note, it's very important all families re-register for the upcoming school year by calling 1-800-801-4973, or if you are not already registered you can do so by visiting [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com). **SRS Home and School I.D. # is 152103668.** Let's see if we can get at least 100 families registered and we could double our money. Keep in mind, your family, friends and neighbors can also register their cards to benefit SRS, so pass this information along to aunts and uncles, grandmoms and grandpops, as well.

One other way we can earn money for SRS, of which you may not be aware, is by obtaining and using a Target credit card. Target donates up to 1% of every Target card purchase to the school of your choice and to date has donated more than \$100 million to schools. If you already have a Target Card you can call 1-800-316-6142 to designate a school or visit [www.target.com/visa](http://www.target.com/visa). If you would like to apply for a Target card, please see your local store for details.

Box Tops and Acme receipts may be sent into school with your child any time and deposited in special boxes in each classroom.



### Counselor's Corner

Kathy Gemberling  
SRS Counselor

It is wonderful to be here. The energy, enthusiasm, and optimism among the students is contagious. I look forward to a productive, happy, and rewarding school year working with all of our SRS students. I will be visiting each classroom during the month of September to say "Hello" and remind students that I am a helper and friend in their school. The new SRS students have had an opportunity to meet with me and each other while sharing lunch in my office. We will continue to meet periodically so that we may get to know each other a little bit better.

I will keep you posted as to what material we will be covering in our monthly class lessons. Our Second Step and Steps to Respect Curriculums are best implemented when staff and families create a classroom culture where feelings matter and children learn how to solve problems.

Please let me know if I can ever be of assistance to you or your family.

Sincerely,  
Kathy



**The Rising Star**

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*Submit materials to:*

*Robin Boyer*

*Rdgenter@aol.com*

**Swarthmore-Rutledge  
School**

100 College Avenue  
Swarthmore, PA 19081  
610-544-5700

Attendance Line:  
610-544-5702

**Check out our Website!**

<http://wssd.org/>

(click on SRS)

*A*

*A proud member of Wallingford-  
Swarthmore  
School District*



**Dates to Remember**

**\*9/21:** School Pictures grades 3,4,5

**\*9/21:** Back to School Picnic 5:15 -7pm

**\*09/22:** School Pictures grades 1 & 2

**\*09/22 - 10/16:** Sally Foster Gift  
Wrap Sale

**\*09/27 - 10/10:** Coupon Book Sale

**\*10/2:** No School - Yom Kippur

**\*10/11:** Home & School Meeting - 7:30pm

