



The Rising Star

Swarthmore-Rutledge School

Home of the Panther Cubs!

Volume 13, Issue 7

March/April 2007

March/April 2007 FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

Dear SRS Families:

On Thursday, March 1, 2007, in cities and towns, large and small ... the young, the old, the short, the tall ... once again paid homage to the playfulness of Dr. Seuss and the splendor of the written word. Of course, SRS joined in and celebrated **Dr. Seuss' 103rd birthday and Read Across America**. Since this was the 50th birthday of *The Cat in the Hat*, our celebration revolved around this theme. The day started with our students reciting the "Reader's Oath". At different times throughout the day, students and staff members engaged in Drop Everything and Read. Students completed Co-op bags expressing birthday wishes for the "Cat". In addition, we had a special all school meeting at which time our whole school read *The Cat in the Hat*, played *The Cat in the Hat* trivia game, and watched a special video of Chinese students reading *The Places You'll Go*. Be assured: a good time was had by all!

Bullying at School

The SRS Bully Coordinating Committee has completed training in the Olweus bully prevention model. We will be training the rest of the SRS faculty and staff in March and April.

According to Dan Olweus, "A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students." Recent studies have shown that one out of seven students report being bullied "now or then" or more frequently. Younger and weaker students report being most exposed to bullying. In recent years, bullying has taken on more serious forms and is more prevalent now than 10-15 years ago. Boys are more often the victims and also the perpetrators of direct bullying. According to both bullied and bullying students, school staff generally does relatively little to put a stop to bullying. Parents of both bullied and bullying students are relatively unaware of the problem and talk with their children about it to a limited extent.

Some conditions tend to create/enhance bully/victim problems, whereas other factors have controlling or mitigating effects. The attitudes, routines, and behaviors of school personnel, particularly those of the teachers, are decisive factors in preventing and controlling bullying activities. The attitudes and behaviors of students themselves, as well

as their parents, play a significant role in reducing the extent of bullying problems. In addition, the reactions of the students who do not participate in bullying can have a major influence on both the short-term and long-term outcome of the situation.

What We Can Do About Bullying at SRS

- Goal #1: To reduce as much as possible existing bully/victim problems in and out of the school setting and to prevent the development of new problems
- Goal #2: To achieve better peer relations at school, and to create conditions that make it possible for both victims and bullies to get along and function better in and out of the school setting
- Goal #3: For victims, a greater sense of security at school, greater self-confidence, and a feeling of being liked and accepted by at least one or two fellow students
- Goal #4: For bullies, fewer aggressive reactions to the environment and asserting themselves in more socially acceptable ways

There are two necessary conditions for realizing the above goals: (1.) The adults at school and home need to have a general awareness of the extent of the bully/victim problems at SRS. (2.) The adults at school and home need to make a commitment to engage themselves in changing the situation.

An anonymous survey was recently administered to students in grades 3-5 at SRS. This survey will provide us with a starting point by providing us with the following information:

- The extent of bully/victim problems at SRS
- The frequency with which staff intervene and talk to the students involved
- The extent that parents are aware of their children's behaviors and experiences
- The absolute number of students in grades 3-5 who are involved in the problem

During the months ahead, this information will be shared with the SRS community at special bully prevention awareness meetings. We will focus on developing a long-term action plan and creating collective commitment and responsibility.

Reminder Regarding Traffic and Safety Procedures

The following are illegal and dangerous practices and must be avoided:

- Pulling into the main SRS faculty parking lot to drop students off
- Passing or crossing in front of a loading or unloading school bus with its flashers on
- Making U-turns in the streets where our children are crossing
- Double parking to drop off passengers
- Crossing in front of oncoming traffic to get to a drop off place
- Using driveways on College or Princeton Avenues to make turn arounds

Student Placement Requests

The traditional policy regarding student placement will again be followed this year: The faculty will decide student placement for the coming school year. Parents may discuss placement with their child's teacher. We ask that discussions focus on "suitable environments" as opposed to personalities, gender, or requests for specific teachers. The final decision will be made by the faculty and the principal.

Gary Davis

Math Resources for Parents

This website is a super resource to find out how to do problems, answer questions, and help with homework:

http://www.swsd.k12.pa.us/~rina_iati7parent_resources.htm

This website also helps with problems and gives you an overview of the program we are using:

<http://everydaymath.uchicago.edu/>

This website has games for the children to use to help reinforce skills at home

<http://www.everydaymath.org/>

Walk for Diabetes

SRS will participate in a School Walk for Diabetes. It will be held on Friday, April 27, 2007 from 1:45 to 2:45 p.m. on the school grounds. This walk is sponsored by the American Diabetes Association and includes a week long classroom program that educates the students about diabetes, nutrition and exercise. Information will be sent home with the students in April for those parents and students who are interested in participating. Let's show our support for those in our school community whose lives are affected by diabetes.

Dear SRS H&S community,

A lot has happened since the cancellation of our February H&S meeting, due to snow...and they say this was a mild winter. Foremost was the very successful "BINGO NIGHT", organized and run by Jodi Dawes and her colleagues. The kids had an energetic evening, socializing and winning some fabulous prizes donated by many SRS families. The parents got to enjoy a nice night out with the kids without having to cook dinner. A great time was had by all, and we extend a big thank you to all those who made the event possible.

The SRS students have been having PSSA testing throughout the month of March. I am sure they all look forward to March 26-29 when they will have half days of school for parent/teacher conferences. Remember students will be dismissed at 12:30 and no lunch will be served during this week. Please remember the SRS Scholastic Book Fair will also occur during the week of March 26-29. The children will have an opportunity to visit the book fair during the school day, and the book fair will also be opened until 4PM M-TH and during Math Night, March 26 from 7-9PM. Directly following this week we will all enjoy a week of spring break from April 2-6.

The month of April will be a welcome sight; we can usually count on winter fading away, and the start of some real spring weather. The SRS Student Council, coordinated by Mrs. McDonnell, will be hosting "Movie Night" on April 19 with two showings of the movie "CARS" and several different dinner options (pizza, hot dogs, hoagies) available for purchase. Order forms have been sent home in back packs. We will also look forward to the annual "Wilmington Blue Rocks Baseball Game" which will be held on April 29 at 1:35 PM. The 5th Grade Chorus will sing at the start of the game and the kids are invited to run the bases following the game. This is always a fun spring event.

We announced at the recent March H&S meeting that the Young Audience's of New Jersey will visit SRS and perform "The Golden

Lyre" for the primary grades and "Chariots of Fire" for grades 3, 4 and 5. These performances came highly recommended by several SRS families. Also in the spring we will be offering spirit wear t-shirts. The shirt will be white and short sleeved, with a catchy black SRS logo. More information about the shirts will be made available in the near future. The note card project started last year, where each student's individually created art was transformed into beautiful note cards, will also be happening during the spring, please keep an eye out for information about this project in your child's back pack.

For all those who attended the May Dinner Dance last year and thought it was spectacular....watch out...it may be out done, by the 2007 H&S Dinner Dance scheduled for May 4 at 6 PM in the courtyard behind the school.

We wish you all a safe and relaxing spring break and look forward to seeing you at the next H&S meeting on April 11 at 7:30 in the SRS LIB.

Thank You

SRS H&S Co-chairs

Kate Dickey, Dickeysw@aol.com

Beth Resweber, sresweber@pol.net



SRS Staff Spotlight
Featuring Erika Benson

Interview by Bryan Boyer

1. **How many years have you been working at SRS?** This is my fourth year at SRS as a teacher. I was a teaching assistant here for two years before that.
2. **What are your main interests besides teaching?** I like to go on adventures! I also like to walk in the woods. I enjoy playing the guitar, reading good books, and building things. I like to draw and write. I love spending time with my two boys and my friends.
3. **Why do you like teaching second grade?** Second graders are curious and have a lot of energy. They are open-minded and love learning new things! They know how to enjoy life and I learn a lot from them.
4. **What is your favorite pastime?** Relaxing with my family and friends and listening to music.
5. **What college did you go to?** I went to the University of Colorado for my bachelor's degree in English, and I went to Widener University for my master's degree in education.
6. **What did you do in your spare time as a child?** I rode my horse, read, wrote stories and poems, and played outside.
7. **Did you have an inspiration to become a teacher?** Oh, yes. Many adults have inspired me, including my parents, my former teachers, and other friends who are teachers. But my biggest inspiration came from my own children. I have been constantly inspired by their fresh approach to learning, their thirst for knowledge, their enthusiasm for new ideas, and their patient and gentle attitudes. They are the ones who really taught me how to be a teacher. My students also inspire me every day. I'm also inspired by noticing how things change. And I love sharing ideas with people!
8. **If you could name one goal stating what impression you want to leave with a child, what would that be?** Keep an open mind. Appreciate and accept that everyone is valuable and different and that there is beauty all around us all the time. So pay attention!

D.A.R.E

The fifth graders at Swarthmore-Rutledge School held their D.A.R.E. graduation ceremony on Friday, February 9th. They have been working diligently with Ofc. Bardo and Sgt. Thomas, of the Swarthmore Police Department, to complete the Drug Abuse Resistance Education Program. The children learned about drug abuse, what harm drugs can do to your body, peer pressure and many other things that will help them negotiate life safely and in good health. At the end of the program, the children were each challenged to write an essay about what they learned in the program, and the two top essayists from each class were honored at the graduation ceremony. The essays were read aloud by the authors, and it was clear that the program has had a real impact on their awareness of the harm that drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and negative peer pressure can cause.

The winners of the essay contest were:

Mrs. Jones's class:

1st place Ruth Cohen
2nd place Aidan Molloy

Mrs. Saunders' class

1st place Meghan Riviello
2nd place Philip Tierno

Mrs. Strometz's class

1st place Emma Martin
2nd place Zander Bashaw

Mrs. Strehle's class

1st place MeWei Hu
2nd place Nathaniel Urban

In the photo, from the left, are:

Ruth Cohen, Aidan Molloy, Zander Bashaw, Emma Martin, Meghan Riviello, Philip Tierno, MeWei Hu, Nathaniel Urban. In the back are Ofc. Bardo and Sgt Thomas.



If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Juli Kroon

610-328-1955

SRS BOOK FAIR



Volunteers are need for the SRS Book Fair to help with sales as well as set-up and clean-up. Please contact [Marcia Hiehle](#) if you are interested. The fair will be held **Monday, March 26 through Friday, March 30th**. There will be many children and adult selections along with a few from Swarthmore College. The hours for the fair are

- Monday 8:30-4:00 and to coincide with Math Night, 7:00-9:00 p.m.
- Tues, Wed, Thurs 8:30-4:00
- Friday 8:30-12:30

Get involved with the Relay For Life of Wallingford-Swarthmore!

The Wallingford-Swarthmore School District is hosting its annual American Cancer Society Relay For Life on May 18 & 19, 2007. The event raises money and awareness for the American Cancer Society and its mission in the fight against cancer. If you are interested in participating in the Relay For Life by **organizing or joining a team, being celebrated as a survivor, remembering a loved one, donating money or services, or becoming a business sponsor**, contact the co-chairs of the Wallingford-Swarthmore Relay at wsrelay@hotmail.com, or visit the website, www.acevents.org/relay/pa/haven. Last year, the Relay For Life of Wallingford-Swarthmore was the largest and most successful youth-sponsored Relay in the United States. Get involved now and help make the 2007 Relay the biggest success yet!

The SRS School Advisory Committee (SAC) Needs You!

What is the SAC anyway??

The **SRS School Advisory Committee (SAC)** is a group of concerned parents and teachers who meet once a month **to assist with the establishment and monitoring of school goals and priorities throughout the year.**

The SAC has five parent representatives and five teachers plus the principal, Dr. Gary Davis. The group provides a unique setting where both teacher and parent perspectives can be shared and discussed on a variety of issues affecting SRS.

Among the areas addressed during the 2006-2007 have been the following:

- Completing and submitting the National Character Education Award application. This submittal was the result of three years' work by Dr. Davis, the teachers who put the application together and the parents who contributed to it, and the SAC. The award submittal has the SRS cornerstones of social awareness as its foundation.
- Monitoring of the new anti-bullying program at SRS beginning this school year. To date, a team of teachers has been trained in the program; the rest of the teachers will be trained by the end of this school year. Parent sessions are planned for next school year. The last week of January was celebrated as Anti-Bully Week with a performance of "The Boy Who Cried Bully" for all grades.
- Exploring wellness offerings throughout the school. With an increased focus nationally on childhood health and weight issues, the SAC continues to build upon SRS' previous efforts in developing exercise programs and reviewing food and nutrition issues. The school district's nutrition policy and wellness policy are serving as the foundation for various activities by SAC and other SRS groups.
- Developing guidelines for after-school programs such as Hands-On Science and the art and language classes.

Two of the parent positions on SAC will become vacant at the end of the current school year. If you would like to serve on SAC or learn more about it, contact Virginia Thompson at 610-328-3629 or grepa430@msn.com .

SAC 2006-2007:

Virginia Thompson (Chair), Mary O'Gorman, Susan Brake, Beth Resweber, Linda Martin, Billie Jo Fries, Ellen Gidaro, Noreen Gaynor, Ed Gaynor, Jothi Strohmets, and Dr. Gary Davis.



The Rising Star

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Submit materials to:

Robin Boyer

Rdgenter@aol.com

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Swarthmore, PA 19081
610-544-5700

Attendance Line:
610-544-5702

Check out our Website!

<http://wssd.org/>
(click on SRS)

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*A proud member of Wallingford-
Swarthmore
School District*



Dates to Remember

**** PLEASE REMEMBER THAT ALL ENTRIES FOR THE RISING STAR ARE DUE IN BY THE 20TH OF EACH MONTH.**

***3/26-3/30:** Parent/Teacher Conferences

***3/26:** Book Fair - 8:30a - 4p and 7p-9p

***3/27-3/29:** Book Fair - 8:30a - 4p

***3/30:** Book Fair - 8:30a-12:30p

***4/2-4/6:** Spring Break

Still In Need of Reporters:

Interviews of a staff member of SRS are needed for the Rising Star for April and May. Students can do the interviews alone or with a friend. Please send me an email (rdgenter@aol.com), call me (484-477-3905), or send me home a note via backpack express. Notes can be sent by Bryan Boyer (Ms. Benson's class).

