



The Rising Star

Swarthmore-Rutledge School

Home of the Panther Cubs!

Volume 14, Issue 4

December 2007

December 2007

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

Dear SRS Parents,

Pretty soon, most of the members of the SRS community will be celebrating special holidays. These are holidays that are usually associated with families getting together, lights and candles, special food and treats, the retelling of special stories that touch our spirits in special ways. On behalf of the SRS faculty and staff, I wish you and your family the very best of the holidays.

News From Around the School

Primary

Our primary classes will be kicking off a thematic unit on oceans during the next few weeks. In conjunction with this unit, our multi-age classes will visit the Independence Seaport Museum in early December.

Second grade presented their annual Thanksgiving pageant on November 21st. Their wonderful rendition of the first Thanksgiving provided us with its true meaning.

Joanne Sutton-Smith's primary poetry workshops will be taking place in March. The Walnut St. Theatre will be conducting a four-week residency program with our 1st and 2nd graders in April that will support our India social studies focus.

Third Grade

The third grade is busy learning about measurement and calculating areas and perimeters of shapes. Students have also been writing narratives about memorable experiences they have had with animals. They are also busy learning about rocks and minerals.

The whole third grade went to the Academy of Natural Sciences on November 13th and learned about how rocks are formed. They also learned about the minerals that are found in everyday objects, as well as what archeologists do, and had a chance to "dig" for dinosaur bones.

Fourth Grade

On Thursday, November 29th, our fourth graders went to the Landis Valley Agricultural Museum in Lancaster County. Students had an opportunity to participate in workshops and talk to real crafts people about life in rural America in the past. Students gained a much greater respects and insight into the rigors of life in an early American agricultural community.

They will also be having a visit from Carla Messenger, a member of the Lenape tribe. She presents a talk and demonstration involving Native American crafts and lore for the 4th and 5th grades.

Fifth Grade

On Monday, Nov 5th, the fifth grade went on a trip to the Keswick Theater to see the show "Toying with Science". This show, commissioned and developed with the Museum of Science in Boston, explored the scientific principles of gravity, leverage, fulcrums and simple machines. Audience participation, music, and carnival skills, ensured that the students were actively involved!

On Friday, November 9th, the 4th and 5th grades went to SHHS to attend a Veterans' Day Assembly. All three elementary schools were represented. Veterans from the district were invited to attend, along with our guest speaker, a WWII veteran who was injured in Iwo Jima. Two 5th grade students (Gwen Newton and Miles Jefferson) were chosen to read some facts about Veterans' Day. The kids returned to school full of questions and surprised over all they had learned. This assembly made November 11th, Veterans' Day, more meaningful to the students!

On Monday, November 12th, SRS 5th graders came to school with their Native American Mahopa projects and essays. Each student was required to research a Native American tribe and/or region. They had to write an expository essay on their research and do a special project related to this unit of study. Their projects are on display at the end of the 5th grade hallway.

Music

Mr. Shaull reports that the band and orchestra are coming together nicely after six weeks of rehearsal. Parents of beginning band students should soon hear "Hot Cross Buns," "Go Tell Aunt Rhodie," and "Mary Had a Little Lamb". Beginning string students, he says, are a few weeks away from using the bow.

According to Ms. Suarez, the primary grades have been focused on developing good singing voices, establishing an understanding of basic beat versus rhythm, and listening to varying examples of musical recordings. Much of their work has focused on simple folk songs with the addition of pitched (xylophones) and non-pitched (drums, triangles, tambourines, etc) instruments.

Third grade has learned to read the lines and spaces of the staff. They recently began playing the recorder. "Hot Cross Buns" will soon be ringing throughout the school," she says.

The 4th grade is expanding their rhythmic vocabulary and starting to sing music with multiple parts. Their instrumental music has varied from an African xylophone piece to a seasonal piece on the recorder.

FROM THE PINCIPAL (cont).

Fifth grade students are finishing a unit on Native American music that was coordinated with their social studies lessons. They have been singing and performing Native American music. They also listened to authentic recordings and studied some dances using video from a powwow in Wisconsin.

Lastly, the Fifth Grade Chorus is six weeks into preparing for the Winter Concert. Ms. Suarez reports, "Rehearsals have been going well and the songs are coming together nicely."

Art

Teacher Brad's primary Art classes are working with the theme of "people". They are designing images for foam prints. Later, they will be able to mass produce their images using traditional printing techniques. His 3rd grade classes are currently working on gesture drawings. His students are using images from sports magazines for inspiration. They are trying to "capture the movement" of the figures in action. His 4th grade classes have finished their "Day of the Dead" skeleton sculptures and are now designing an image for a rubber stamp block print.

Teacher Helen's primary classes have completed a unit on the color wheel. Her 3rd grade classes have done coil pots and are currently working on African masks. Her 4th grade classes have just completed double pinch pots, and her 5th grade classes just completed dream-catchers and are doing traditional pueblo coiled pots using pinch pots with added coils smoothed with a "gourd" piece.

Teacher Helen also reports that the Fifth Grade Project Committee has been talking with Paul Downie about working with our 5th graders on this year's project. He has done quite a bit of work with the Mural Arts Project in Philadelphia, and has been working with the CAC to do murals in Chester, including one at Chester High and in the Chester Public Library. She goes on to say, "He seems to be exactly the kind of artist we have been wanting for this year: organized, familiar with doing big projects with kids, and he is a storyteller and musician too!"

She asked me to mention that she has quite a few classes that still need volunteers. She also could use help promoting our Postcard Project and installing art work around the school.

Guidance

Kathy Gemberling's primary guidance program has focused on increasing her students' ability to identify others' feelings, take others' perspectives, and respond empathically to others. Her intermediate program has focused on friendship development and the connection between respect and friendship.

Kathy also reports that senior citizens from the Gathering Place in Swarthmore who have expressed an interest in working with our students during the school day have been contacted and placed with teachers who would like assistance.

Connecting With the Wider Community

SRS will be doing an MS Read-a-thon later on this year. We will also be collecting supplies for Guatemala and the SPCA as well as the Community Action drive for homeless children in Delaware County.

FROM THE PINCIPAL (cont).

General Interest Resources for Kids

Internet Public Library for Kids

<http://www.ipl.org/div/kidspace/>

Scholastic Kids

Scholastic produces educational materials to assist and inspire students: <http://www.scholastic.com/kids/>

PBS Kids

Free preK-12 resources to support learning at home and at school.

<http://pbskids.org/>

Recess and Playground Policy: Winter and Wet Weather

Winter Temperatures: If the wind-chill is 20 degree (F) or below, recess is held inside. This is a district-wide requirement that SRS must follow. While many children are dressed for these cold temperatures, the school cannot risk exposing others who are not dressed as warmly to these conditions.

Snow: Children are not permitted on the field areas when there is snow on the ground. We realize that most children would like nothing more than to build a snowman or toss a few snowballs at their friends. However, the logistics of both preparing for and undressing from play in the snow would place an unrealistic burden on staff members, who already have limited time to accomplish the many demands of their work days. In addition, snow play does present safety risks. Assuming these risks as parents is one thing; taking on the responsibility of supervising approximately 150 students per lunch period is another.

Wet and Muddy Conditions: If it is raining, muddy or excessively wet, recess will also be held inside. If conditions permit, play will take place on the black top, but will not be allowed on the fields when muddy. Due to risk of injuries, playground equipment will be off limits to children in wet and icy weather.

Inside Recess: On the days when recess is held inside due to the above conditions, children remain in the cafeteria. When available, a limited number of classes will have access to the gym on a rotating schedule. In the cafeteria on indoor recess days, students bring down activities from their classrooms, or choose from a large assortment of games to occupy their recess time.

Please make sure your children are dressed appropriately for the weather. Encourage your children to wear boots, snow pants, gloves, hats, and scarves when needed.

Thank you in advance for your understanding and support.

Sincerely yours,

Gary Davis

December 2007

Anti-Bullying Corner
Parent Response to Bullying

If Your Child Is Being Bullied

First, listen to your child. Just talking about the problem and knowing that you care can be helpful and comforting. Make sure that your child knows that you do not blame or feel disappointed in him or her. Ask your child what he or she thinks should be done. What has your child tried? What worked and what didn't?

Encourage your child not to retaliate against the bully or to let the bully see how much he or she has upset your child. Getting a response just reinforces the bullying behavior. Tell your child that if at all possible, he or she should stay calm and respond evenly or firmly (e.g., "I don't like your teasing and I want you to stop right now" or "Stop doing that now. If you keep on, I'm going to report you to the principal."). Some children find it works to just say nothing and walk away. At other times, it can be more effective to make a joke, laugh at oneself, or to use humor to defuse the situation. Brainstorm with your child to develop some effective responses. Then role-play different approaches and responses with your child so that he or she will be prepared the next time.

Encourage your child to go immediately to a teacher, principal, or other nearby adult if he or she feels seriously threatened.

You may also want to help your child to develop strategies to avoid situations where bullying can happen and to avoid being alone with bullies. If bullying occurs on the way to or from school, your child may want to take a different route, leave at a different time, or find others to walk to and from school with. If bullying occurs at school, your child may want to avoid areas that are isolated or unsupervised by adults, and stick with friends as much as possible.

Encourage your child to form strong friendships. A child or teen who has loyal friends is less likely to be singled out by a bully, and they can be valuable allies if your child is targeted. If your child lacks friends, help him or her to develop more friendships. Encourage your child to participate in positive social groups that meet his or her interests, such as after-school groups, church groups, extra-curricular activities, or teams. In addition to helping your child make friends, these activities can help to develop your child's special skills and rebuild his or her self-confidence.

In many cases, bullying won't require your involvement. If the bullying is persistent and is harming your child's emotional health, you need to intervene by talking to your child's teacher, school counselor, or principal about the problem in order to make sure your child is safe, that effective consequences are applied toward the bully, and that monitoring at school is adequate. Advocate for the involvement of the bully's parents. Suggest that the school implement a comprehensive anti-bullying program.

If Your Child Is Bullying Others

If you learn that your child is bullying others, sit down and talk with your child immediately. It is important to take the problem seriously, because children and youth who bully others are at a greater risk for serious problems later in life. Give your child an opportunity to explain his/her behavior, but do not accept any excuses or justifications. Make it clear that bullying will not be tolerated and outline the consequences for further unacceptable behavior. If the problem is occurring at school, tell your child you support the school's right to punish him/her if the behavior persists.

Encourage your child to try to understand how the bullying feels to his/her victim. Bullies often have trouble empathizing with their victims so it is important to discuss with your child how bullying feels. How would your child feel if it happened to him/her? If you or someone close to you has been bullied in the past, you might want to share the story with your child, discussing the emotional impact.

Increase your supervision of your child's activities and whereabouts, and know who your child is spending time with. Make an effort to observe your child in one-on-one interactions. Stop any show of aggression immediately and help your child find other, nonviolent ways of reacting to certain situations. Praise your child for appropriate behaviors.

If the bullying continues, you need to seek help for your child. Without intervention, bullying can lead to serious academic, social, emotional and legal difficulties. Talk to your child's pediatrician, teacher, principal, school counselor, or your family physician. If the bullying continues, a comprehensive evaluation by a child and adolescent psychiatrist or other mental health professional should be arranged. The evaluation can help you and your child understand what is causing the bullying and help you develop a plan to stop the destructive behavior.

From the National Youth Violence Center



IMPORTANT SAFETY NOTICE

Emergency Closings and After School Club

PLEASE NOTE: *In the event of an emergency closing at SRS, the After School Club will be closed as well.* Quite a few phone trees have come back with After School Club as an option for emergency closings. Please double check your information and let your Homeroom Parents know what your child should do in the event of a closing, as After School Club is not an option.

Dear SRS Community,

What a whirlwind these past few months have been. The calendar has been full and we are well on our way to reaching our fundraising goals thanks to your support.

Directly after Thanksgiving we had a wonderful Ladies' Night Out including live entertainment provided by Dean Sophocles. We hope you were able to get a leg up on your holiday shopping while having fun with friends. In addition to supporting Home & School enrichment programs the event proceeds benefited the Delaware County Domestic Abuse Project and the Global Women's Fund. Thank you to Tracy Federico, Jennifer Fleming, Veronica Olszewski, Sonya Pappas, Lee Seaman and Jody Sophocles and for making the event such a success.

Speaking of our enrichment programs, the Visiting Scientist program keeps growing with several new participants this year. An artist has been selected for the 5th grade art project; Paul Downie is a multidisciplinary artist and educator who facilitates youth murals. The Social Studies team provided classroom materials during the election in November and is planning to hold a mock election in the spring. And the technology team is exploring what types of classroom hardware Home & School can contribute.

We are encouraged by the new faces we continue to see at our Home & School meetings. In November Rene Stroback, SRS Librarian, gave an informative overview of CyberSmart, a new internet safety curriculum. We voted to use the Teacher Initiative Fund to cover set up costs for the adoption of two guinea pigs in Ms. Corson's 5th grade class after an impressive presentation by student Jamie Funk. We got updates on our Dimensions programs and discussed finances and charitable contributions. Be sure to read our minutes summary in this newsletter and please join us at our first daytime Home & School meeting on **December 12, 2007 at 9:30am** in the auditorium. Dr. Davis will update us on the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program.

As always, feel free to contact us with your comments or concerns.

We wish you all a safe and happy holiday season.

Sincerely,

Beth DeBruyn (beth@bethandchris.com)

Linda Martin (lindadmartin@aol.com)

Co-Presidents, SRS Home & School Association

SALLY FOSTER IS STILL AVAILABLE!

Wish you had more gift wrap for the holidays? You can still order Sally Foster products online at www.sallyfoster.com. Be sure to use our Group Code 68048, Swarthmore Rutledge School when ordering. Home & School earns 50% of all sales.

Home and School November 2007 Monthly Meeting Minutes

This month's special guest speaker was SRS Librarian Renee Stroback, who discussed CyberSmart! Nether Providence Elementary has been using the site, which promotes internet safety tools, for quite awhile and Wallingford Elementary School began using CyberSmart last year. There are five units, all of which have age-appropriate learning lessons for the children in elementary school. To learn more, go to www.cybersmartcurriculum.org

Dr. Davis reported that the primary grades are beginning to study the ocean and that the multi-age class visited the Independence Seaport Museum to support this study. The third grade visited the Academy of Natural Sciences recently to learn about how rocks are formed. The fourth grade, which is undertaking a unit on Pennsylvania studies, took a trip to the Landis Valley, and the fifth grade went to the Keswick Theatre.

Per Dr. Davis, the band and orchestra are coming along nicely, and Ms. Suarez reports the same for the choral singing. Both art teachers are working on projects with their classes that support the current studies in the curriculum.

Dr. Davis reminded everyone that the recess policy for SRS is that children will stay inside if there is a 20 degree windchill factor. If there is snow on the ground, or if it is wet, there is no field play. For indoor recess, children will come to the cafeteria with things from their classroom and there are games to play that are available in the cafeteria.

The WSSD Wellness Committee is in the process of standardizing class party guidelines to be compliant with the PA Dept. of Education guidelines.

The SAC reported that it is developing SRS Guiding Principles, based on survey results that parents and teachers provided earlier in the year. In addition, SAC is working to form a partnership with the College

According to the treasurer, we are on track to hit our fundraising goal for Sally Foster sales. The Fall Fair was an excellent fundraiser this year! With the recent purchase of the rock wall for the playground, the playground fund has been closed out.

Dimensions in Art has selected an artist for the 5th grade project. Dimension in Social Studies recently sent home a form discussing our local elections and municipalities, and Dimensions in Science has four new scientists onboard.

Mark you calendars now! Mom's Night Out is on November 30 from 7-9 p.m. So far, we have 20 vendors and there will be no charge to enter. Every vendor will provide an item to raffle.

Ms. Corson's class asked for, and received, approval for a \$105 outlay from the Teacher Initiative Fund to support the adoption of two guinea pigs.

The next Home and School meeting will be at 9:30 a.m. on December 12.

P A G E

(Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education)

Presents:

**"HOW TO MAKE THE GIEP WORK
FOR YOUR CHILD"**

Wednesday, January 16, 2008

7:00 PM

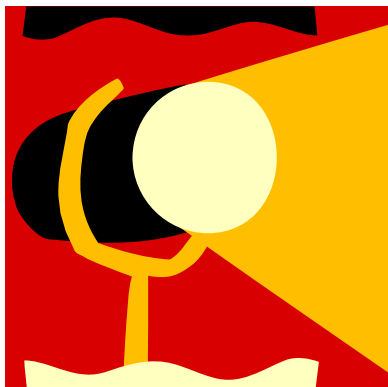
Helen Kate Furness Library

2nd Floor Conference Room
100 N. Providence Rd, Wallingford

This meeting will feature a special speaker, Mr. Todd McIntyre, who will do a presentation on GIEPs. If you have special areas of GIEP writing that you would like Mr. McIntyre to address, please email PAGE program director Marcia at: marcia.hiehle@gmail.com. Also, visit Mr. McIntyre's website at: <http://www.appliedgifted.com/appliedgifted.htm>.

General PAGE questions? Call Lauren McKinney at 610-541-0125 or email lauren@mcswartz.org.

Also checkout penngifted.org for more information about PAGE.



Spotlight on Ms. Jennifer Connolly, Multiage grade teacher

Interview by: Megan Carroll

What do you like to doing in your spare time?

I like reading books, doing yoga, and spending time with family and friends.

What college did you graduate from?

University of New Hampshire.

Where did you grow up?

New Jersey, Idaho, and Columbia in South America.

What has been your favorite trip that you have ever taken?

Australia and Turkey.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I have fun every day teaching and learning. Every day is different.

What is your favorite book?

My favorite authors are Shel Silverstein and Patricia Polacco.

If you had three wishes, what would they be?

**1) Peace around the world; 2) For every child to have a favorite book;
3) Good health around the world**

Do you have a family or any pets?

A brother, husband, mom, cousins, aunts and uncles.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring one thing with you, what would it be?

A good book.

What did you do for fun when you were a kid?

Ride my bike, ski, gymnastics, and play with friends.

Did you teach at any other schools before SRS? If yes, which ones?

Yes, in California , NPE , and Connecticut

What is your favorite:

Song? **Most songs by Bruce Springsteen**

Color? **Red**

Animal? **Koala**

Food? **Pizza**

Where would you most like to visit?

Spain.

Spotlight on Irene Buecheler, 4th grade teacher
Interview by: Jackie Yates and Kaylyn Crowley

What is your favorite color and why?

Hue Blue and Sky Blue. It reminds me of the ocean and makes Me feel calm.

Where would you want to live and why?

Italy. Because that is where my cousin lives.

What is your favorite pet or animal?

Yellow Labs.

What is your favorite time of year and why?

My favorite time of the year is summer because I can relax on the beach.

How many years have you been teaching at SRS?

9 years.

Would you wear sneakers, flip-flops or sandals for the rest of your life? Why?

Flip-flops, because there are so many styles and I like fancy ones.



SRS Student Council

By: Phoebe Richardson and Cole Smith

As you probably know, the Student Council is important at school, so we are writing to inform you about the SRS Student Council. There are three people from each intermediate class on the committee: one boy, one girl, and one person of either gender. Most of the classes picked randomly, however, a few classes required the students wishing to be on Student Council to write a paragraph explaining why they wanted the job. Then the teacher or class voted or chose three pieces of writing. The committee members are in charge of taking out their class' recycling at the end of the day and talking to their class about what was discussed at the meeting. The fifth grade reps also report to the primary classes. They lead a discussion and eventually a vote on theme day ideas (there is one theme day every month), movie night films (movie night will be in March), and other important school happenings. Mrs. McDonnell is in charge so the meetings are held in her classroom. One of the Student Council's biggest undertakings is ensuring that movie night runs smoothly (with help from adults!). There is also a breakfast meeting in March. Hopefully, you now see how SRS' Student Council helps the school.



The Rising Star

Published monthly

Deadlines: 20th of each month

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

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

- *12/11: School Advisory Committee Mtg. (7:30am)
- *12/12: Home & School Assoc. Mtg (9:30am)
- *12/24-31: NO SCHOOL – WINTER BREAK
- *1/1: NO SCHOOL – WINTER BREAK
- *1/8: School Advisory Committee Mtg. (7:30am)
- *1/10: Winter Concert (7pm)
- *1/21: NO SCHOOL – MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. HOLIDAY

Calling All Reporters:

Reporters are needed to Interview a staff member or community member of SRS for the next five editions of the Rising Star. Students can do the interviews alone or with a friend. Please send me an email (rdgenter@aol.com), call me (215-327-7866), or send me a note via backpack express. Notes can be sent by Bryan Boyer (Ms. Benson's class). Remember the deadline for entries is the 20th of the month.

