



# Okte Elementary School

1581 Crescent Road, Clifton Park, NY 12065

Happy New Year! We hope you enjoyed the Holidays with family and friends and made wonderful memories to last a lifetime.

**PTA Newsletter  
January 2009**

Well, the PTA was sure busy right to the end of 2008. In December, we hosted a Holiday Shop Celebration. Co-chairpersons Donna Cuva and Wendy Hacker did a wonderful job organizing this event. We had over 35 vendors to shop from, make and take crafts for the kids and a "delicious" cookie sale! Thanks so much ladies for making this Holiday Shop as successful and as fun as it was!

The Staff Holiday Luncheon was held on December 11<sup>th</sup> and Debbie Rivers, our Hospitality Chairperson, certainly proved to our teachers just how much we appreciate them all year long and sent wonderful Holiday wishes at the same time. The room was festively decorated and the food and desserts were terrific. Thanks Debbie for all of your hard work ~ no detail was left behind and a great time was had by all!

Well, the entries were submitted and the winners are in! We had a stellar year here at Okte according to our Reflections chairperson, Roberta Fishbein. We had a total of 252 entries in 4 categories with 3 entries from each category moving on to the regional judging! How fantastic! Thank you so much Roberta for coordinating this program to make sure that our school was well represented to the National PTA ~ all of your hard work is greatly appreciated!

Now on to the New Year...our After School Enrichment Program (ASEP) will begin next week and run through the 1<sup>st</sup> week of February. We are offering some really wonderful programs again this year and hopefully your children will be able to participate. This is just another great way to beat the cold weather blues and learn something new at the same time. A big thank you goes out to Jennifer Franze, Claudia Tate and Tim Reynolds for helping with registration - your help was greatly appreciated!

Towards the end of the month, our Parents As Reading Partners (PARP) program will begin and run through February 15<sup>th</sup>. Kathy Crouth, our PARP chairperson, is hard at work on the new theme for this year, "Magic of Reading". We are all so excited to see what's in store for us! Between the support of the teachers and the participation of the children and their parents, this program can make a difference in a child's life. As we know, the love of reading can open doors for children that would otherwise remain closed. Please do your part at home by promoting this program-sit down with your children and take an interest in what they are reading, i.e.: ask questions, read aloud together, maybe even do a skit! Also, plan on attending the Family Reading Night that will be offered...if you came to last year's, you know it was really fun and the children LOVED it! Thanks Kathy for your hard work and dedication to the success of this program.

Stay connected...you can find more information on our website. We list all important dates, upcoming events and offer a feedback form for your use to let us know how you think we are doing. Log on to [www.shenet.org](http://www.shenet.org) and click the link to Okte Elementary and the click Okte PTA.

Pam Kelly and Wendy Reynolds, Okte PTA Co-Presidents

Deborah Price, Principal  
<http://www.shenet.org/okte/okte.htm>

Pam Kelly, PTA Co-President  
Wendy Reynolds, PTA Co-President

*The Honorary Life Membership submission is due Friday, January 9th. Forms may be downloaded from the Okte PTA website or can be picked up in the office.*

## REMINDER

January 30, 2009 is a 1/2 day for elementary students. AM kindergarten only will attend.

### **OKTE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PTA SCHOLARSHIP**

The school year of 2008-2009, the Okte PTA will provide three scholarships of \$500.00 each to deserving Shenendehowa Seniors who formally attended Okte Elementary School for at least two years. Applications may be picked up at the **High School East Guidance Office** from Mrs. Butera. The application may also be emailed directly to the Senior. For the application to be emailed to the applicant, please send a request to [jfeit1@nycap.rr.com](mailto:jfeit1@nycap.rr.com) and in the "Subject" area write "Okte Scholarship". The completed **hard copy** application form should be returned to Mrs. Butera at **High School East Guidance Office**, no later than March 6, 2009.

### **MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF MANY CHILDREN**

Six of the world's top leaders and parenting experts have agreed to join forces with National PTA and **YOU** to raise \$500,000—\$7 at a time! Contribute **\$7** (or more) to PTA via the [ParentingGiveaway.com website](http://ParentingGiveaway.com) and get access to the **over \$800** worth of parenting-related products! Go to [ParentingGiveaway.com](http://ParentingGiveaway.com) and see how we all can make a difference and how you can gain access to these valuable parenting materials from experts like Jack Canfield, Terri Khonsari, Chris Attwood, Janet Attwood, Dr. Bob Myers, and Marie Diamond.

### **WINTER RECESS GUIDELINES**

As part of the Okte School Health and Fitness Program, all children are expected to participate in twenty minutes of fresh air activity every day during their outside recess. All students will go out every day unless there is a wind-chill of 20 degrees.

All children must be properly attired for winter weather with boots, hats, gloves and warm coats or jackets. Snow pants are required for those children who wish to play in deep snow. Children should bring extra socks, pants and sweaters in a plastic bag in the event of wet and cold weather emergencies.

### **PARENTS AND GUARDIANS SHOULD CLEARLY LABEL ALL BOOTS, COATS, JACKETS and LUNCH BOXES**

Only those children who have a written medical excuse presented to the school nurse, or who have prior approval from a teacher will be allowed to stay inside during outside lunch recess.

### **THANK YOU**

Shannon Kelly for donating her babysitting skills to our PTA meetings each month. She is wonderful with the children and they all love her! We really appreciate her doing this for us as it allows parents to join these very important meetings when otherwise they would not be able to make it! Thank you Shannon for being the generous, delightful young lady that you are! ...The PTA Executive Board

## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Dr. Oliver Robinson, Superintendent, Shenendehowa Schools, will be the guest speaker at our January 15th SAGE Meeting, 7pm, Koda Cafeteria, Shen Main Campus.

Dr Robinson will discuss plans for the school district along with information regarding current and planned accelerated classes designed to address the needs of high ability learners at all grade levels.

Please, do not miss this meeting if gifted education is important to you.

The Saturday Scholars program sponsored by SAGE will also be discussed at this meeting. For questions or for further information please contact Linda DeMasi at 877-5813 or email us at [sagenews@yahoo.com](mailto:sagenews@yahoo.com)"

## SAGE SATURDAY SCHOLARS

March into some fun with Saturday Scholars! Shenendehowa Advocates For Gifted Education (S.A.G.E.) is pleased to offer another year of academically advanced and enriched classes to students in the Capital District. Kids from K-6 grade are welcome to choose classes from many exciting topics with enthusiastic teachers. Come explore, draw and create a custom 3-D journal in the Mythical Creatures class, learn how to communicate with your hands in a class on American Sign Language, or find out how to be a Journalist. If you like flying, join the Aeroscience class, or how about trying Art & Poetry, Picasso style. These are just a few of the many inspiring classes that will be available!

REGISTRATION is Saturday, January 24 at Acadia Middle School, 9-10:30 am.

CLASSES: Saturday, March 7, 14, 21, 28 & April 4 at Koda Middle School, 10am-12pm (Snow Date April 5)

Visit the SAGE Web site for a brochure and registration form:

[www.worknotes/ny/cliftonpark/sage](http://www.worknotes/ny/cliftonpark/sage)"

## SHENENDEHOW PTA COUNCIL PRESCHOOL COMMITTEE

The Shenendehowa PTA Council Preschool Committee presents a Preschool and Daycare Open House from 6:30PM - 8PM on January 6th in the Tesago/Skano Cafeterias. Snow Date is January 8th. Contact Evelyn Hickok at 373-2320 or Kate Kirkpatrick at 280-1176 for more information.

The Shenendehowa PTA Council Preschool Committee presents a Kindergarten Readiness Panel at 7PM on February 10th in the Tesago/Skano Cafeterias. Snow Date is February 11th. Contact Evelyn Hickok at 373-2320 or Kate Kirkpatrick at 280-1176 for more information.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION PTA COUNCIL

The Special Education PTA Council is a group of Shenendehowa parents and educators (both special ed and regular ed) that get together to discuss issues related to special education. Some of topics that were discussed at our last meeting included: providing more after-school activities for children with special needs and creating a Parent-to-Parent program so that parents who are new to the special education process can be matched with more experienced parents. The committee is also in the planning stages of setting up a resource area at the CPH Library that would have books and materials addressing the needs of children with disabilities.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Amy Valtin (Okte Special Ed. Committee chairperson) at 383-8063 or [pvaltin@nycap.rr.com](mailto:pvaltin@nycap.rr.com).

*Save the Date: February 25, 2009 - Special Education Parent Forum - "Planning for a Successful IEP" to be held at the Shen High School East Little Theater at 7:00 p.m. More details to follow.*

## **ALMOST MARCH MADNESS!!**

Plans are underway for a multi school basketball game. On February 26th Skano, Arongen, Tesago, Okte and Shatekon will have teachers and staff suit up to play a basketball tournament. Join in on the fun, prizes and basketball. Festivities will start at 5:45 pm with warm-ups and end at 8:15 pm with awards for the winning team!!!

Ticket sales will start the beginning of February with a first come first serve. The cost is \$3 per person or \$10 per family. Due to the number of spectators expected, space will be limited to 300 people per school. There will be an opportunity to purchase "team" t-shirts along with your tickets. Okte's team color is yellow!! There will be "team" pom-poms available at the game! Refreshments will also be available. Come out and show your support for your Okte teachers and Staff and have a great time!!! Any questions please contact Pam Kelly at 383-8802 or [pkelly325@nycap.rr.com](mailto:pkelly325@nycap.rr.com). More information will follow in the next few weeks.

## **DATES TO REMEMBER...**

**January 10, Community Conversation at Tesago at 9:30 a.m. Focus will be on the plan to deal with an impending deficit reduction assessment by the state which could mean up to \$5 million less in state aid for 2009-10.**

**January 12, ASEP Begins**

**January 14, PTA Meeting, 7 pm**

**January 19, No School, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

**January 26, PARP Begins**

**January 28, Okte Band Concert, 7 pm (snowdate 1/29)**

**January 30, Elementary School Half Day (AM Kindergarten attends**

**Many, many thanks to some very important "behind the scenes" volunteers...**

*Sharon Miller ~ Cultural Art Chairperson*

Thank you Sharon for working with the teachers in bringing all of the wonderful programs that our children enjoy so much to Okte.

*Tammy Street ~ Price Chopper Tools for School & Hannaford Incentives Chairperson*

Thank you Tammy for handling all of the receipts in order for our school to earn money.

*Kristin Gregor ~ Badge Making/PTA Bulletin Board Chairperson*

Thank you Kristin for continually updating our bulletin board with the latest PTA information and for making all the badges necessary.

*Theresa Cheisa ~ Box Tops Chairperson*

Thank you Theresa for handling all of our Box Tops and making sure our school earns the most we can.

*Stacey Schaffer ~ Newsletter Chairperson*

Thank you Stacey for our wonderful newsletter! Every month you compile all our information into an easy to read, informative edition.

*Jackie Pfaff ~ School Sign Chairperson*

Thank you Jackie for braving the elements every month to update our school sign to keep everyone informed of our monthly events.

*Danielle Sullivan ~ Campbell's Soup Labels Chairperson*

Thank you Danielle for counting all of our soup labels and submitting them so our school can earn the most we can.

*Mary Beth Nafis ~ Website Coordinator*

Thank you MaryBeth for continually updating our website with all of the latest information.

## **TEACHING CHILDREN HOW TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

Children look at their parents' examples of generosity, compassion, and selflessness and carry these family values on to the next generation, says author Terri Khonsari. There are many ways to be philanthropic, and everyone can find a way to include philanthropy in their lives, she adds. Encourage your children to give their time, talents and material belongings by doing the same yourself.

### *SHARE YOUR TALENTS*

Make a list of different ways that your children can give just by using their talents. If they read well, or are a whiz at math or science, they could tutor a younger sibling or friend. If they have artistic talent, they could help with the artwork for a fundraising poster or flyer. If they sing or play a musical instrument, have them make a CD for a shut-in to brighten their day.

### *SHARE YOUR TIME*

Time is often the greatest gift of all. Talk to your children about ways to give their time. They can stay after school to help the teacher organize the classroom, take out the trash for an elderly neighbor, or baby-sit for someone who needs a little time to themselves. This teaches not just caring about others, but responsibility too.

### *GIVE TO OTHER CHILDREN*

Pack a bag with cookies, hot chocolate, and a couple of nice children's books and go with your family to a children's hospital or rehabilitation center. Have your kids read to the kids who spend their holidays there. You can create memories in your child's mind of

being a good friend and giving to those in need.

### *VOLUNTEER WITH THE ELDERLY*

Take your kids to the local hospital or retirement community on holidays or weekends to visit. Take some cookies and gifts for those who don't have visitors and listen to their stories. The older generation has so much to offer, and we can teach our children to respect them and their knowledge, and accept what they have to share. Just listening is a great gift to give.

### *STEP OUTSIDE NATIONAL BOUNDARIES*

Sponsor a child in a third world country. Send money on a monthly basis and communicate with them regularly. Tell your kids that this is a new sibling of theirs, and plan together to send him or her toys or clothing every few months. If you can afford it, go visit that child with your children and let them experience the difference of the culture and world in which they live.

Giving your children real world opportunities to practice acts of love and kindness will teach them life lessons of compassion and generosity. You can encourage them to be thoughtful and kind and boost their self-esteem and pride at the same time. Learning that they can make a difference makes them grow in self-confidence and joy!

*Terri Khonsari is the author of Raising A Superstar: Simple Strategies to Bring Out the Brilliance in Every Child. To learn more about Terri's work visit <http://www.raisingasuperstar.com/> and sign up for more free tips on raising happy, healthy, and successful children.*

## **WHY IS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IMPORTANT?**

Being physically active is a key element in living a longer, healthier, happier life. It can help relieve stress and provide an overall feeling of well-being. Physical activity can also help you achieve and maintain a healthy weight and lower your risk for chronic disease. Physical activity can also:

- ⇒ Improve self-esteem and feelings of well-being
- ⇒ Increase fitness level
- ⇒ Help build and maintain bones, muscles, and joints
- ⇒ Build endurance and muscle strength
- ⇒ Enhance flexibility and posture
- ⇒ Help manage weight
- ⇒ Lower risk of heart disease, colon cancer, and type 2 diabetes
- ⇒ Help control blood pressure
- ⇒ Reduce feelings of depression and anxiety

Physical activity and nutrition work together for better health. Being active increases the amount of calories burned. As people age, their metabolism slows, so maintaining energy balance requires moving more and eating less.

### **SOME TYPES OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ARE ESPECIALLY BENEFICIAL:**

**Aerobic activities** - speeds heart rate and breathing and improves heart and lung fitness. Examples are brisk walking, jogging, and swimming.

**Resistance, strength building, and weight-bearing activities** - helps build and maintain bones and muscles by working them against gravity. Examples are carrying a child, lifting weights, and walking.

**Balance and stretching activities** - enhances physical stability and flexibility, which reduces risk of injuries. Examples are gentle stretching, dancing, yoga, martial arts, and t'ai chi.

Citation:

[http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/physical\\_activity\\_why.html](http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/physical_activity_why.html)

## **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FACTS**

Adults 18 and older need 30 minutes of physical activity five or more days a week to be healthy; children and teens need 60 minutes of activity a day for their health.

Significant health benefits can be obtained by including a moderate amount of physical activity (e.g., 30 minutes of brisk walking or raking leaves, 15 minutes of running, 45 minutes of playing volleyball). Additional health benefits can be gained through greater amounts of physical activity.

Thirty to sixty minutes of activity broken into smaller segments of 10 or 15 minutes throughout the day has significant benefits.

Moderate daily physical activity can reduce substantially the risk of developing or dying from cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers, such as colon cancer. Daily physical activity helps lower blood pressure and cholesterol, helps prevent or retard osteoporosis, and helps reduce obesity, symptoms of anxiety and depression, and symptoms of arthritis.

Citation:

[http://www.fitness.gov/resources\\_factsheet.htm](http://www.fitness.gov/resources_factsheet.htm)

# Building Lifelong Character: Nurturing Responsible Behaviors and Growing Self Esteem

**Sponsored by**  
Karigon and Orenda PTAs

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## An Essential Parenting Seminar By Randy L. Cale, PhD., Child & Family Psychological Services

- ◆ Nurture moments of happiness and joy
  - ◆ Promote healthy habits in your children...
  - ◆ Deepen their positive relationships
  - ◆ Get your kids out of a behavioral rut...
  - ◆ Teach your children the "habits of success"...
  - ◆ Get rid of tantrums...sibling squabbles
  - ◆ Have more peace and harmony in your home...
- And plant the seeds for future security?
  - And expand their interest in school & sports?
  - While not being controlling and demanding?
  - And get them back on the path to success?
  - And reduce homework/chore battles?
  - While decreasing rudeness and disrespect?
  - With less TV, video, and unhealthy games?

***You can do this and more!***

**"I have attended one of your free parenting seminars recently and started to implement your techniques. The results in just little over a week are INCREDIBLE!!"**

...Melanie from Ballston Spa

You have *one chance to experience this valuable seminar*. Why would you not attend this important training? **It's free, it's powerful, and you can learn how to transform your life at home!**

- **Where: Karigon/Orenda Cafeteria**
- **When: January 28, 2009 6:30PM**
- **\*\*\*\*\*SNOW DATE CHANGE: February 5, 2009 6:30PM\*\*\*\*\***

Who is the presenter? Your presenter for this workshop will be Dr. Randy L. Cale. He is a licensed psychologist, author, speaker, and parenting coach. He has produced a variety of effective parenting products, all of which are available on his website at [www.TerrificParenting.com](http://www.TerrificParenting.com).

During this powerful presentation, parents will have the opportunity to learn about the most important distinctions that lead to your child's happiness and success. These distinctions are pulled from the research on parenting, and from the years of experience that Dr. Cale has had as a therapist and coach for parents. You will also have the opportunity to purchase any of Dr. Cale's several products which will be on hand.

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RSVP to Alison Heller at [helleralison@gmail.com](mailto:helleralison@gmail.com) or send this slip with your child to the Karigon PTA.

I plan to attend the January 28th presentation by Dr. Cale: \_\_\_\_\_