



Okte Elementary School

1581 Crescent Road, Clifton Park, NY 12065

PTA Newsletter March 2009

100 days of school already...time sure does go by fast here at Okte! We hope that you and your family enjoyed the mid-winter recess and are ready for what the PTA has planned for March! Please stop by our PTA bulletin board in the lobby to see the special 100 day display and reasons why Okte is such a great school to be a part of created by Kristin Gregor, our Bulletin Board Chairperson. It looks great Kristin...Thank You!

First, let's re-cap February's wonderful events. Our After School Enrichment program was a wonderful success. So many children enjoyed the great programs that were offered this year. *Look inside this newsletter for more complete information and thank yous.

Our PARP program was in one word...AWESOME! We were treated to books, prizes, a reading night with a live performance and a book club for 4th and 5th graders, offering something for everyone. Our PARP chairperson, Kathy Crouth, did a fantastic job pulling all of this together. She really showed the children that reading can not only be fun but also very rewarding! Thank you so much for your dedication to this program Kathy, all of your hard work certainly paid off!

On Wednesday, February 4th, our 5th graders graduated from the DARE program. Thank you Wendy O'Malley, our new DARE Reception Chairperson, for hosting such a nice reception for our graduates. A big thank you goes out to her daughters, Caitlin and Shannon for all of their help setting up and cleaning up...what a great job they did! A special thanks to Deputy Gwiazdowski for showing our children that making safe, intelligent choices regarding drugs is the only way to go!

Well Okte certainly has some very creative inventors! On Saturday, February 7th at the Clifton Park Center they were able to showcase all of their hard work. A big thank you goes out to Brenda Birken, Shen Inventors Chairperson, for handling this event. She made sure all the information went out in a timely manner and was on hand to help with any questions. She even helped judge at the event! Thanks so much Brenda!

To end February with a blast there was the Almost March Madness basketball game!!! It was so much fun to watch our teacher's and staff playing ball and cheerleading! The energy in that gymnasium was awesome. A big thank you goes to Pam Kelly who was the representative for Okte on the A.M.M. committee. You can definably tell her expertise in event planning was tapped into to make the event the wonderful success that it was! Thanks so much teachers, staff and Pam for a fun and memorable night!

Now onto March...Math Madness has begun!!! Lynn Parker, our Math Madness Chairperson, is making sure the children are brushing up on their math skills and having a good time while they do so. She always provides some great incentives to keep the momentum going for the entire month. Thanks Lynn!

Kevin Kelly, our event chairperson, is hard at work getting ready for the annual Dad's Dinner being held on Thursday, March 12th. It not too late to join us for what is always a great family event. What's better than having a bunch of dad's serving you dinner? For reservation details, see the insert in this newsletter. Hope to see you there!

During the week of March 16th, our Spring Fundraiser packets will be distributed. Since it was such a big hit last year, we are bringing back Joe Corbis' Frozen Foods! Be on the lookout for more information. Remember...if you are not interested in purchasing any of the offered items, you can still make a donation to the PTA! (100% of your check to the PTA stays in the PTA) Thanks so much for your support!

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 as a PTA. Log on to www.shenet.org and click the link to Okte Elementary and then 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

March 2009

Dear Parents,

At this time each year, I begin to receive parent requests concerning the class assignment of their child for the next school year. The intent of this letter is to explain the procedures and practices used by staff at Okte in establishing class lists.

Many factors are considered as we build the preliminary class lists, such as:

- reading and math levels
- the specific needs of particular students
- the number of boys and girls in each class
- interpersonal relationships

The ultimate goal of the process is to provide each child with an appropriate placement for the following school year. As in any setting, there are a number of constraints placed on this process including:

- the need to build relatively equal class sizes at each grade level
- the need to produce workable combinations of reading/math groups
- a reasonable number of mainstreamed children in the student population

As parents, you may wish to share useful information about the specific needs of your child. This input should be conveyed to me before May 29th. Your information should describe the needs of your child and should not be a request for a specific teacher or assignment. Any letter that contains a specific teacher request will not be considered. As this process begins in May, any letter received after May 30th will not be a part of the planning.

Please realize that your letter will be shared with those professional staff members involved in the class building process. Your views are important to us and we shall work hard to address student needs and create balanced classes.

Sincerely,

Deborah K. Price
Principal

DKP/mac

Kindergarten Parent Orientation

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WELCOME

**Parents and Guardians of Incoming
Kindergartners**

***Please join us for a presentation about
our kindergarten program***

Thursday, April 23, 2009

7:00 pm

Okte Elementary School

Cafeteria

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 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**.

DAD'S DINNER

There is still time to sign up for the Dad's Dinner. On Thursday, March 12 all Okte families are invited to join in an evening "out" to dinner in the Okte gym. All dinners are \$6.00 with a choice of pizza, wings & ziti. If you do not have your sign up form you may obtain one in the school office or on the Shen website, follow the links to the Okte PTA. Any questions please contact Kevin Kelly at 383-8802, kkelly8289@nycap.rr.com

SPRING FUNDRAISER

Frozen foods are coming back!! The SPRING FUNDRAISER catalog/order forms will be distributed the week of **March 16**. In the catalog, you will see a wide variety of choices for different frozen food products that are designed to help make our busy lives easier!!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: Frozen food delivery date is **TUESDAY April 21**. Remember- the items are frozen- so it is *so important* for you to pick up the products on *that date*- we don't have storage for leftovers!!!

Please direct any questions about this fundraiser to Lori VanderVeer ([ljvdv2@yahoo.com](mailto:ljdvd2@yahoo.com))

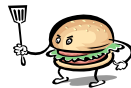
CONNECTING BOYS WITH BOOKS

The Friends of the Clifton Park-Halfmoon Library are co-sponsoring author Michael Sullivan's program, "Connecting Boys with Books," on Monday, **March 23rd** at 7:00 pm. This nationally known speaker is a true advocate of reading, especially for boys. Parents will learn tips to engage and sustain their sons' interest in books. This event is generously co-sponsored by the Friends of the Clifton Park-Halfmoon Public Library and Capital Region BOCES School Library System and The Early Childhood Direction Center of the Capital Region. This program is part of the Library's yearlong celebration of 40 years of service to the community. Required registration beginning Monday, March 2 in-person or phone the Library at 371-8622.

SPRING PICTURES



Spring pictures will be taken at Okte on Tuesday, **March 24th**. There will be reminders sent home as the day draws closer. The children do not need to bring in money on picture day. Packages will be purchased on approval.



MCDONALDS NIGHT

It's McDonalds Night on **April 7th** from 4:30 - 7:00 pm. Come have dinner with your friends and see your teachers flipping hamburgers or whipping up McFlurries. Support your school and have fun doing it. Hey, you have to eat dinner anyway.

CHILDREN'S AUTHOR TO VISIT OKTE

We are excited to announce that children's author Gail Gibbons will visit Okte on Monday, **April 20th**. Families will have the opportunity to purchase Ms. Gibbons' books for signing by the author. Please watch for book order forms to be sent home with students in early March.

Please visit the NYS PTA website (www.NYSPTA.org) which is updated regularly and has many helpful links for parents in terms of federal & state policies and plans.

SQUARE 1 ART

The artwork is done and the order forms will arrive shortly!! Your children did a great job working on their art project that was sent to SQUARE 1 ART. SQUARE 1 will take that piece of art and send it back to you on a complimentary magnet, with a product list/order form. There are a wide variety of products to choose from. Check out a small sample of the products, in the display case, next to the school office. REMEMBER-THIS IS NOT A FUNDRAISER!!!!!!! This is a fun program that the PTA offers to parents of Okte. (No mark up in prices have been made.)

A big **Thank You** to Mrs. Braglia, our *wonderful* art teacher, for helping to make this program a success!!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: PRODUCT

DELIVERY DATE is **TUESDAY, April 21.**

Please direct any questions about this program to Lori VanderVeer ljv2@yahoo.com.

THANK YOU

PARP 2009, The Magic of Reading/Reading is Electrifying, was a great success. We had 3 weeks of great books, a wonderful Family Reading Night and a tremendous book club with 4th and 5th grade participants. I would like to thank all the volunteers who helped me create such a wonderful program this year. They are Kim Ferraioli, Jen Franze, Colleen Franklin, Roberta Fishbein, Wendy Reynolds, and Pam Kelly. A big shout out goes to Donna Gatazka - our fearless leader of the 4th and 5th grade book club - what an amazing job she did along with Amy Valtin and Donna Cuva. Without the support of all the volunteers we would not have this great program that enhances the reading of our students. Also, thanks to all the faculty and staff of Okte for their support and help. To all those who came out in the snow to read at Family Reading Night and the custodial staff that helped with tables and chairs and cleanup. To Linda, Margo and Bonnie who answered questions, passed out information and made copies. I am definitely grateful for all you have done. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Kathy Crouth

PARP 2009 CHALLENGE WINNERS

Walton AM-Justin Mayo

Walton PM-Ann Gutelius

Barrett AM-William Stewart

Barrett PM-Jimmy Mulligan

Hanson - Kerry Allen

Lieberman-Katie Roche

Williams-Jessica Gordon

Troy-Lyndon Hunter

Knudsen-Molly Batchelder

Arthur-Michaela Schaffer

Ostwald-Olivia Stewart

Borgman-Hannah Franklin

Colapinto-Mark Bub

Carter-Kayleigh Nadal

D' Ambro-Meghan Crouth

Kuftiak-Brittany Maklos

Robbins-Grace Mayo

Sofko-Andrew Michel

Wilkinson-Nicole McCarvill

Butera-Ian Killane

Lee-Jayonna Treacy

Sansone-Stephen Cuva

Weller-Nicholas Ranucci

Popek-Dominick Barry

Fahey-Katherina Theoktisto

Moran-Brian Valtin



GET YOUR GREENS THUMB READY!

Okte Green Thumbs will be returning soon! Keep an eye out for more information in the upcoming months!



ATTENTION ALL
OKTE SCIENCE
ENTHUSIASTS

SAVE THE DATE



THE ANNUAL OKTE SCIENCE FAIR
THURSDAY, May 21

To be held in conjunction with the Annual Ice Cream Social and Book Fair!

All students are invited to participate. The project is done at home on your own (parents are welcome to help). You can work alone or in small groups. We look forward to seeing all the creative and enthusiastic science projects.

Information packets will go home once you and your child return the entry form to school by Friday, April 3. If you have any questions please contact Meredith Lounsbury at 371-3282 or send an email at jlounsbury@nycap.rr.com.



HONORARY LIFE WINNERS
ANNOUNCED

This year the PTA has chosen *Bonnie Lee, Joli McKay and Kevin Kelly* as its Honorary Life Membership winners. This award is given to those individuals whose dedication to children is exemplary. These winners along with those chosen from all of the Shen schools will be honored at a dinner at Michael's Banquet House on April 6th. If you would like to attend the dinner you may obtain a form with dinner choices in the office. The cost is \$28.00 per person.

Congratulations *Bonnie, Joli and Kevin* and thank you for all that you do for the children of Okte.

YOUR PTA DOLLARS AT WORK WITH
ARTS IN EDUCATION!

Okte's Arts in Education committee is comprised of a teacher representative from each grade, specials teachers, and a PTA representative. Throughout the school year, this group works to bring artists, authors, storytellers, bookmakers, musicians, and dance groups directly to our students. These events are paid for, in part, by the PTA. Some of the highlights of the Arts in Education 2008-2009 school year include:

- Singer/Performer **Johnny the K** entertained the entire Okte student body with a humorous program highlighting the themes of respect, responsibility and cooperation.
- Author **Jacqueline Sweeney** presented workshops to our 3rd graders regarding the writer's craft. Children learned to develop ideas and add details and description to his/her writing style.
- The 5th grade visited the **Slate Valley Museum** to discover how slate is quarried, how it is turned into tile, rooftops, and other products, and how it impacts the economy of the area.
- **Jeff Bennett** presented a program to our 4th graders regarding the history of the Dutch in early New York State and how their influences are still present in New York today.
- Artist **Paula Krieg** will teach the 1st grade about creative bookmaking using principles of art.
- The 3rd graders enjoyed the **Albany Symphony's** performance of "Raiders of the Lost Symphony" at the Palace Theater in Albany.
- Children's author **Gail Gibbons** will speak with all grades regarding thinking, researching, and writing like an author.
- Author/illustrator **Daniel Mahoney** will teach our 2nd graders about the writing process and the career of an author.

OKTE PTA 2009 AFTER SCHOOL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

This years After School Enrichment Program was a wonderful success. We had great classes to offer such as Sweet Beginnings in Candy, Basic Cake Decorating, Scrapbooking, Melvin's Magnificent Magic, KidzArt, Spanish for Kids, K'Nex Fun, Beading with Dragonfly Design, Mad Science, Tae Kwon Do, The American Girls, Stamping and of course Bowling!

A special thank you goes out to all of the parents/instructors who devoted their time to this program and who had the willingness to share their expertise with our children: Pam Kelly, Sue Gougler, Tina Cook, Joe Goode, Susan McCarthy, Lorena Ortega, Lisa Avila, Pattie Rakvica, Jen Miller, Michael Yuhasz, Sarah Nafis and Jannette Lacomba respectively.

Kudos to such a talented and generous group!

A big thank you also goes out to Sue DiNola for arranging the classroom assignments, assisting every week with attendance, ensuring student whereabouts and for her unending support of this program. Also, to Linda Schiavi who fielded the many inquires about this program from parents and staff...thank you both!

Also I would like to thank all of the teachers who volunteered the use of their classrooms: Mrs. Walton, Mrs. McKay, Mrs. Hanson, Mrs. Waters, Mrs. Bailey, Ms. Ostwald, Mrs. Colapinto, we really appreciated it! With any program, there are many people behind the scenes that, without them, things would not run as smoothly. Thank you so much to the volunteers that committed to help as an assistant every week throughout the

program. Linda DePoy, Stacey Schaffer, Deb Richard, Amy Valtin, Kim Ferrailoi, and John Piekarski. Your help was very much appreciated.

A big thank you to the parents and family members of the bowling participants that chaperoned the lanes every week. As you can imagine with 45 children participating, a lot of eyes are needed to ensure the safety of each child. All of your help was truly appreciated!

A special thank you to Jennifer Franze who was a part of the running of this program from the beginning, to help where and whenever needed. From registration, to attendance, to playing a vital role in the success of our bowling program. Jennifer committed herself to being there at the start of the program each Thursday to get the lanes and parent volunteers organized. It was a great comfort to me knowing that was being handled while I was en route on the bus with the children. Thank you, thank you Jennifer, all of your help was very much appreciated!

Wendy Reynolds/ASEP Chairperson

THANK YOU FOR THE GREAT JOB IN ORGANIZING ASEP

We would like to thank Wendy Reynolds for all of her hard work in organizing the After School Enrichment Program. Wendy puts together all of the wonderful, fun, and educational programs provided, as well as coordinates all of the volunteers necessary to make this program work and she sees to the overall operation each day the program is in effect. It is a huge undertaking and Wendy does it with such precision that she *almost* makes it look easy! But it is one of the most difficult programs to organize and we appreciate all that she has done to see to its continued success.

DR. ROBINSON MET WITH PTA PRESIDENTS AND OFFICERS

On Wednesday February 25th Dr. Robinson met with the PTA presidents and officers. The purpose of this roundtable discussion was to get a sense of what information is out there circulating around, correct some misinformation and to discuss the stimulus package and its effect on Shenendehowa. As you can imagine the majority of the meeting was spent on the budget and stimulus. One of the questions that came up numerous times was "What can we do, if anything, to help". Writing letters to our governor, senators and assemblymen is the most effective way to help. With that being said, many thought that contact information and "what do I write?" would be a stumbling block for those interested in sending a letter. Dr. Robinson and his staff agreed to send the contact information and a "template" of a letter to the PTA Presidents. If anyone would like to write a letter we would be happy to send you the information provided to us. Your letters really do make a difference.

Pam Kelly & Wendy Reynolds

Dates to remember...

March 9	Kindergarten Registration (5:00 - 7:30 pm District Office)
March 12	Dad's Dinner
March 16	Spring Fundraiser Begins
March 27	Superintendent's Conference Day - No School (Spring Fundraiser ends)
March 31	Math Madness Ends
April 8	PTA Meeting
April 12-17	No School, Spring Recess

Congratulations to all the students who submitted inventions for the Shen Inventors program. All students are invited to display their inventions at the Dad's Night Dinner at Okte on March 12. Tables will be set up. Stay tuned for date and time for the ice cream party.

CHILDHOOD SLEEP: WAIST OR WASTE?

Sleep has something to do with my child's weight? You're kidding right? No we're not kidding! In fact, recent research shows inadequate sleep greatly increases the likelihood your child will fight the battle of obesity as they grow. Here's what the research reveals: in children ages nine to twelve years old, as little as one extra hour of sleep per night more than the average required could decrease their risk of obesity by as much as 40%.

Losing Sleep As many as 15 million children in the U.S. (one in four) have difficulty sleeping-because of this, they're being put at risk for want of something that comes naturally and costs nothing. As with adults, problems with falling asleep can vary. It may be a matter of taking too long to fall asleep, a result of pain and/or medication taken for acute or chronic illness, internal clocks being out of sync with normal hours of daylight and darkness, or life schedules that just don't allow enough time for sleep.

Weight is Not the Only Enemy When it comes to children not getting enough sleep, weight is not the only problem. Observable symptoms of sleep deficit look much like ADHD, and it's now believed these two conditions may amplify the effects of one another. Mood disorders in both older and younger children have been tied to insufficient sleep. Too little sleep also subjects children to learning difficulties, poor concentration, depression, and a predisposition to chronic disease.