



Okte Elementary School

1581 Crescent Road, Clifton Park, NY 12065

**PTA Newsletter
May 2009**

Spring has finally sprung! We hope that everyone enjoyed spring break...it's hard to believe that we are in the home stretch of this school year.

Last month we had another successful McDonald's night...the children had so much fun being served by their teachers and the PTA made over \$500.00 from this event. Thanks so much to Jennifer Franze, our Family Fun Nights Chairperson, for organizing such a good time for all of us...we really appreciate her hard work.

Our Spring Fundraiser was quite a success! It seems as though we all like pizza and cookies!!! A big thank you to Lori VanderVeer, our event chair, who spent many hours organizing paperwork, placing orders and making sure everyone got their orders in an organized and timely manner on pick-up night. In addition to the frozen foods, Lori also handled the Square 1 orders. We appreciate this service, as now we will have memories to last of lifetime of our children's artwork. Thank you Lori for you dedication to both programs and your wonderful organizational skills!

This month we continue to be busy with some great events. May 4 -8 we will be celebrating Staff Appreciation week. While we are grateful for our wonderful teachers and staff throughout the year, this week is the perfect time to really show them just how much! Maybe you could send a quick note to make your child's teacher know just how terrific you think he/she is!

Get Out and Vote! The 2009-10 Budget vote will be held on May 19th in the Gymnasium at Gowana Middle School. Polls open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Please take the time to read the budget information in this newsletter, get informed and vote!

Save the date...Thursday, May 21st will be Okte PTA's Annual Science Fair and Spring Book Fair in conjunction with the Ice Cream Social. What a great family event - something for everyone. Come enjoy our students imaginative and inventive sides, buy a book get one $\frac{1}{2}$ off and have an ice cream sundae to top it all off!

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 ww.shenet.org and click the link to Okte Elementary and then click Okte PTA.

Happy Spring!

Pam Kelly and Wendy Reynolds
Okte PTA Co-Presidents

The PTA wants you!

Have you been thinking about heading a PTA committee, but just never made the move? Well, this is the perfect opportunity because the PTA has a few positions open for both committee chairs and board positions for the 2009-2010 school year! Holding a position with the PTA is very rewarding and does not take up too much time. **Now is the time to get involved!** For more information contact Joanne Barry 280-4057 jbarry6@nycap.rr.com
Donna Gatazka 348-1786 dgatazka@nycap.rr.com
Lori VanderVeer 383-6702 ljdvd2@yahoo.com

Shelebration for Second and Third Graders

Okte, Chango, Orenda and Karigon Elementary schools will be hosting a "Shelebration" for second and third graders to honor the works of writer Shel Silverstein. The party will take place on **Wednesday, May 20** at the Clifton Park-Halfmoon Library. It will start at 6:30 and run till 7:30 PM. **Parents must be inside the library building while the program is taking place.** There is limited space for the event for students. There are only 60 tickets for Okte students to participate in grades 2-3.

Students need to check with their parents first and get the permission slip signed. If you are interested, pick up a slip beginning May 13 in the Okte Library Media Center. Your parent's signature is required on the slip. Slips are due on Monday, May 18. The first 60 students to hand in their slips will get a ticket to the event. **(Not everyone will be able to participate.)**

The "Shel-ebration" will include games, prizes, and a read-aloud of his poetry.

Thank you. . .

A Big Thank You to Kim Lavery who took the time to come to Ms. Lieberman and Mrs. Williams's 1st grade play "Goin Buggy" to videotape the performance. Not only did she make a copy for each classroom, she also made copies for each and every one of the performers (students) and their families. This wonderful video is sure to be a treasured keepsake for years to come. Thanks so much Kim for your generosity...it is greatly appreciated.



Spring Book Fair

Don't miss the Okte Spring Buy One, Get One Free! Book Fair on May 20th and May 21st. It is a great opportunity to get your child excited about reading and to stock up on reading materials for summer vacation.

Once again, there will be a "Preview" sale night where shopping and browsing can be done in a quiet setting. Preview night is Wednesday, May 20th from 5:00-8:00 PM in the Okte Cafeteria. On Thursday, May 21st, the Okte tradition continues with the Book Fair, Ice Cream Social and the Science Fair from 6:00-9:00 PM. Our Book Fair will move to the Okte Library on the night of the Ice Cream Social. Hope to see you there!



A BIG congratulations goes our to all of the 3rd, 4th & 5th grade students who participated in the musical play, Once Upon A Lily Pad! What a wonderful performance these children put on! All of their hard work and dedication really paid off. One could not escape the overwhelming feeling of pride and accomplishment in that gymnasium from students, teachers and parents alike. Bravo!

A special thank you goes to our wonderful "Musical Directors", Mr. Chaikowski and Mr. Carter and to the grand list of parent volunteers. Your time and dedication to our children and the production allowed them to have this memorable experience. We could not be more grateful for all that you have done. Thank you!

CUB SCOUT PACK 62 INVITES YOU TO JOIN

In Cub Scouts your son will have lots of fun, learn new things and make new friends. But Cub Scouts is much more than that; it is fun—with a purpose. Everything he will do in Cub Scouts—ceremonies earn awards, sports, games and crafts, will be done with a specific purpose in mind. The reasons parents want their son to get into Cub Scouts probably aren't the same as why he will want to join. Take a look at the 12 Core Values Cub Scouting strives to teach:

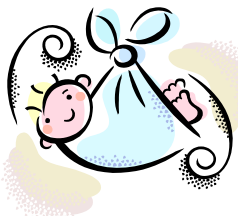
Citizenship	Honesty	Compassion
Perseverance	Cooperation	Positive Attitude
Courage	Faith	Respect
Health and Fitness		Responsibility
Resourcefulness		

Please come find out about all the fun! You and your son are invited to learn more about Cub Scouts at the Pack meeting on May 17th at the Vischer Ferry Fire House at 6:30pm. If you like what you learn, you can join that night. All boys in 1st through 5th grade are welcome.

Join now and enjoy the summer activities such as day camps, overnight camping, and the Fourth of July Parade!

NEW COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT

Recycle your old or damaged eyeglasses and sunglasses (adult and children). Through the Give the Gift of Sight Foundation your glasses will be fixed, cleaned and given to people who cannot afford glasses in countries around the world. A drop box will be located in the main office near the visitor passes. This program costs you nothing but a few moments of your time. Won't you please join me in helping give the "Gift of Sight"? For more information regarding this program please visit www.givethegiftofsight.org.



Congratulations to Mrs. Arthur and Mrs. Borgman on the birth on your sons. Moms and babies are doing great!

*Arthur, Callum Kopec, born 12:59 am on 3/15/09, 7lbs, 13oz, 18 3/4"
Borgman, Andrew Joseph, born 7:16am on 4/14/09, 7lbs, 7 oz, 20"*

HOST A CHILD THIS SUMMER

Fresh Air is a program that gives NYC children a chance to see another way of life. They get to leave the city and become a part of your family. They get to escape the dangers, noise and pollution. You would be giving a child (ages 6-12 for first time visit) a chance to enjoy the small things we take for granted each day. Many of these children don't get to sit and see the stars, play outside in the yard, swim, bike, or just have a picnic in the park. It is truly a rewarding experience both for the child that comes and for your own family. Children arrive in Clifton Park on July 3, July 20, and August 11. Please consider hosting a child. This program can change a child's life forever. Contact Deb L'Amoureux at 348-1018 or freshair@nycap.rr.com for more information.

DATES TO REMEMBER...

- May 4-8** Staff Appreciation Week
- May 5** Annual budget hearing: 7:00 pm at Gowana School Library
- May 13** PTA Meeting (Dr. Robinson will be our guest speaker regarding the budget)
- May 16** Community Conversation with the Superintendent: 9:30 am in High School West Cafeteria
- May 19** Annual Budget Vote and School Board Election: 7:00-9:00 pm in Gowana Middle School Gymnasium
- May 21** Science Fair/Spring Book Fair/Ice Cream Social
- May 25** Memorial Day - No School
- June 12** Half Day (AM Kindergarten attends)
- June 19** Half Day (AM Kindergarten attends)
- June 23** "Moving" Up Day/Last Day of Kindergarten
- June 24** Half Day - Last Day of School

The 2009-10 Shenendehowa budget vote will be held on May 19th in the Gymnasium at Gowana Middle School. Polls open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

After \$4.4 million in reductions, the proposed budget of \$147 million represents the lowest spending increase in 13 years. If approved, the average tax increase would be 1.78% in Clifton Park and Halfmoon.

The proposed 2009-10 budget finds a fine balance between preserving strong academic programs and minimizing the tax impact.

This year is unique in the fact that the proposed budget, with an increase in spending of less than one percent (0.9%), is already more than \$3.2 million below the contingency budget cap established by the state. This means that a failed budget would come with many restrictions and still result in a similar tax impact.

According to the N.Y.S. Education Department:

"When the proposed budget is below the contingency budget cap, the contingency budget is calculated by removing all non-contingency appropriations from the proposed budget. Items, which are statutorily considered non-contingency expenses, are, for example, student supplies, community use of buildings and grounds, certain equipment purchases and certain salary increases. Therefore, the contingency budget adopted by the Board of Education would always be less than the proposed budget."

Being on a contingency budget would undoubtedly prove to be difficult, particularly the limiting of facility use by non-school groups, which would be devastating to the more than 80 groups that provide programs and services to our students and community during after-school and weekend hours. These activities, in many ways, represent the fabric of this community.

Remember: your voice and vote counts. While the district cannot tell you how to vote, we can strongly urge you to come out and vote.

Key points:

- The proposed budget is \$147,447,257 for 2009-10. It represents an increase in spending of less than one percent (0.9%)...the lowest in 13 years, totaling only \$1,312,863.
- The budget includes \$4.4 million in reductions and restructuring to help pave the way to what is anticipated to be a multi-year fiscal crisis. The reductions are across the board, impacting every major unit of expense from athletics to operations and everything in between. The reductions include a total of 46 positions across all areas. The ideal situation is to eliminate positions when they become vacant due to retirement or turnover. However, there may be some displacement of staff.
- State operating aid to Shenendehowa will remain flat at the 2008-09 level. Annual increases in state aid are typically used to help offset the usual year-to-year inflationary cost increases. Expenditure-driven aid (BOCES, transportation, building aid) is actually decreasing. Revenue generated from interest is also decreasing.
- The two major sources of revenue for schools are state aid and property taxes. As a result of no increase in state aid, the total tax levy will need to increase 2.79% or \$2,654,925.
- It is estimated that the average tax rate will increase by 1.78% for the two largest municipalities (Clifton Park and Halfmoon)...one of the lowest tax rate increases in years. This assumes that equalization rates remain the same as the prior year and that the taxable assessed values increase by 1%. These two items are typically not finalized until the summer.

These decisions represent a strategic and deliberate plan to help preserve programs and people as much as possible. The Board of Education and the administration fully recognize and accept the reality that the economic downturn is real, and that cuts are essential to maintaining a low tax rate. Without the reductions, the tax levy would have been 4-5% higher.

Please help us promote the vote, knowing that the future of education at Shen comes down to the vote of the majority. THE BUDGET VOTE WILL BE HELD ON MAY 19 FROM 7 A.M.-9 P.M. IN THE GYM IN GOWANA M.S.

Absentee ballots are available at the District Office, 5 Chelsea Place, Clifton Park, NY 12065, or contact the Superintendent's office at (518) 881-0610 for information.

PTA Reflections "WOW"

What a stellar year it was at Okte for Reflections! With Mr. Chaikowski jumping on the bandwagon he was able to have all his 5th grade students take part in the Musical Composition category. There were also submissions in the Visual Arts and Photography categories from a number of students in grades 1-5. Additionally, all the fourth grade students from Mrs. Butera's, Mrs. Lee's, Mrs. Sansone's and Mr. Wilkinson's classes, along with Mrs. Robbins third grade class, submitted their pieces in the Literature category.

All in all, Okte Elementary School had a total of **252 entries** in the Reflections program this year! What an outstanding job by all those who participated!

Congratulations to our Okte winners.

In Visual Arts:

Jessie Ferraioli	2nd Grade
Adam McCarvill	2nd Grade
McKenzie Ryan	2nd Grade

In Literature:

Peter Christensen	2 nd Grade
Jarrood Deering	4 th Grade
Rachel Sohn	4 th Grade

In Photography:

Andrew Cuva	2 nd Grade
Timothy Cole	4 th Grade
Emily Schaffer	4 th Grade

In Musical Composition:

Eric Lovelock	5 th Grade
Amy Luo	5 th Grade
Lindse Maklos	5 th Grade

Honorable Mentions were awarded to:

Olivia Timmis, Sadie Dunne and Samantha Long for Visual Arts.

Zachary Fishbein for Photography.

Thank you to all those students who participated in the Reflections program this year!

I would also like to say a special "Thank You" to all the teachers who actively engaged their students to take part in the Reflections program. Without your encouragement this program would not have been the success that it was this year!

Upcoming in May, we will be holding the Reflections Ice Cream Party to celebrate the efforts of all those who participated in the program.



Great Strides Walk and Area Restaurants Host Cystic Fibrosis Fundraisers

Rachael Nadler, 6, an Okte 1st grader is this year's poster child for the Cystic Fibrosis GREAT STRIDES walk at Clifton Park Center on May 3rd. She will greet guests and share her personal story of living with CF. "We have been a part of the Great Strides walk for several years," said Allyson Nadler, Rachael's mom. "and we have seen how the money raised has improved treatments and medications available to those effected by CF. It has extended the life expectancy almost 10 years just since Rachael birth. We expect great things in just the next few years."

Radio Disney will provide music and entertainment at the walk. Raffles and door prizes will be offered. Food and refreshments have been donated by area merchants and will be available both before and after the walk. To help fight CF, and get involved in GREAT STRIDES call the CF Foundation's Northeastern NY chapter at 518.783.7361 or stop by the walk at 10 a.m., **Sunday May 3rd** at Clifton Park Center. Sign up to walk at [HTTP:// GREATSTRIDES.CFF.ORG](http://GREATSTRIDES.CFF.ORG).

The following events are being held in conjunction with the Cystic Fibrosis Great Strides Walk:

Shane's Rib Shack, 7 Southside Drive, is hosting a CF fundraiser on **Tuesday, April 28th** from 4-8pm. 15% of your sale will be donated. Tickets went home on flyer. Additional tickets available via email. Must present ticket at time of purchase.

TUSCAN'S GRILL, Route 9 (Parkwood Plaza) has generously offered to host a fundraising dinner on **Tuesday, May 5th**. Open seating from 4 to 8pm. Full menu available. Reservations suggested. Door prizes and raffles will be held at this event. 25% of your food bill will be donated to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

Moe's Southwest Grill, 5 Southside Drive, is hosting a CF fundraiser on **Tuesday, May 12th** from 4-8pm. 15% of your sale will be donated. Tickets went home on flyer. Additional tickets available via email. Must present ticket at time of purchase.

Outback Steakhouse, 610 Old Plank Road, is hosting a CF fundraiser on **Wednesday, June 10th** seatings at 11:30am and 1pm. Take out available at takeout window starting at noon. Banquet style luncheon. More than 50% of ticket price will be donated. Presale only. Door prizes and raffles will be held at this event. Adult tickets \$25, child's meal available for \$10.

***** For tickets or further details on any of these events please contact *****
***** Allyson Nadler, Event Chair @ 518-383-1170, allyson@nycap.rr.com. *****

WEBWISEKIDS

Wisdom begins with you

Do you feel like your children know more about the Internet than you? Are you worried about your children being safe on the Internet? Wired with Wisdom is for you.

Thanks to the generosity of the Entertainment Software Association Foundation and Web Wise Kids, Wired With Wisdom is being offered to the New York Parent Teacher Association at **NO COST**.

Download your copy of Wired With Wisdom at **NO COST**.

Log on to www.webwisekids.org/www-ny

The password is **safe**.

Reading for Meaning with Your Child

Reading with comprehension takes practice, time, and patience to develop. Families play an important role in helping a child learn to read for understanding.

When building comprehension skills, make sure your children are reading books appropriate for their reading level. If a book is too hard, all your child's energy will be put into decoding and reading word for word, with less energy available to figure out what the book means. Books that your child can read with near 100 percent accuracy are good choices for comprehension building. [Reading Rockets](#) offers a "before-during-after" approach to building comprehension skills.

Here are a few suggestions that will help build comprehension skills:

BEFORE

Your goal is to help your child build an understanding of and purpose for what they're about to read. Look at the book's cover. Ask, "What do you think this book might be about? Why? Can you make some predictions?" Guide your child through the pages, discuss the pictures, and brainstorm what might happen in the story. Talk about any personal experiences your child may have that relate to the story.

DURING

Your goal is to help your child be an active reader. Read together and talk about what's happening as they're reading. Stop and discuss any interesting or tricky vocabulary words. Talk about any surprising or sad passages, and help them visualize parts of the story. Ask your child, "Do you understand what's happening here? What do you think will happen next?" If your child seems unsure, stop, go back and reread if necessary. Discuss any confusing parts.

AFTER

Your goal is to help your child reflect on what they've read. Summarize and share your favorite part of the book. Have your child rate the book on a scale from 1 to 10 and say why. Have your child reread their favorite part or act it out.

Take the extra time before and during reading to read with your child this way. You'll soon find yourself reading with a child who is motivated to comprehend and learn from everything they read!

Get more information on reading comprehension from [Reading Rockets](#).

MEMBER BENEFITS PROVIDER MESSAGE

PTA and T-Mobile have partnered together to bring PTA members exclusive discounts on wireless mobile service and equipment. All PTA members will receive the following special promotions:

Special Savings for PTA Members!

14% discount on monthly service plans

FREE Activation (savings of \$35)

Custom pricing on the following devices for new activations:

- * FREE Blackberry Pearl
- * FREE Blackberry Pearl Flip Phone
- * FREE Nokia 6301 with a FREE Bluetooth
- * T-Mobile Sidekick for \$49.99
- Google G1 for \$139.99

* PRICES ABOVE ARE NET OF ALL INSTANT/MAIL-IN REBATES. THIS PROGRAM IS NOT AVAILABLE IN RETAIL STORES AND REQUIRES A NEW LINE OF ACTIVATION. To take advantage of these and other special offers, please call **866-464-8662** and mention promo code **9788TMOFAV**. If you are already a T-Mobile customer, please call 877-453-8824 to receive the PTA discount! Don't forget to mention your "Local PTA Unit Number" as a reference.



2009 Prices
Meager's Farm Stand
Rt.9 1 Mile North of Round Lake
899-4025

Herbs (Rosemary, chives, etc.) Qt. pots $3.50 + .25 = \$3.75$

Perennials Gal Pot $6.50 + .46 = \$7.06$

Bleeding Hearts & Peony Bushes $8.95 + .63 = \$9.58$

Flats of Flowers (annuals) per pack $2.00 + .14 = \$2.14$

6 $\frac{1}{2}$ " green pots of various plants $4.95 + .35 = \$5.30$

Pots of wave petunias, million bells, spikes, vinca vine, potato vine, dahlias, pan flowers, morning glories, 4"

daisies, Dacia, licorice plant, german ivy, bacopa, zinnia (4" pots) $2.95 + .21 = \$3.16$

Geraniums, tubular begonias, double impatiences, new guinea impatiences

$3.95 + .28 = \$4.23$

Hanging Baskets $19.50 + 1.37 = \$20.87$

Bags of flowers $15.95 + 1.12 = \$17.07$

Martha Washington Geraniums $6.50 + .46 = \$6.96$

Lilac Bushes $34.95 + 2.45 = \$37.40$

10" Pots of flowers $12.95 + .91 = \$13.86$

12" Pots of flowers $15.95 + 1.12 = \$17.07$

16" Pots of flowers $18.95 + 1.33 = \$20.28$

Can order special hanging baskets - larger, combinations, etc. prices will vary.

Will plant special hanging baskets, containers, window boxes, bags of flowers

Whatever you want - Prices will vary

This year, the Okte Green Thumb Club will be busy planting perennials donated from proceeds of the sale of flowers from Meager's Farm Stand. (Bonnie Meager) works in the office. Any questions please call 899-4025 after 2:00pm Mon. - Fri. or Sat. and Sun.

Please fill out the order form below and return it to school with cash or check made payable to Meager's anytime during the month of May. Orders will be filled and brought to the school for pick up. Just fill out the date you can come in.

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Child's Name _____ Teacher/Grade _____

Parent's Name _____ Telephone # _____

Date you would like to pick up your order (Monday through Friday) _____

Hanging Baskets: kind _____ color _____ how many _____

Flats of flowers: kind _____ color _____ how many _____

Perennials: kind _____ color _____ how many _____

Any other flower or vegetable plant your would like: kind _____ how many _____

Total Amount Due and Enclosed: _____