

# Toll Gate PTO Newsletter

January, 2004

## Calendar of Events

- January 15, 2004 – CAT committee utensil rolling for TASK – 3:30-4:30 pm
- January 16, 2004 – Early Dismissal Grades 1-12
- January 19, 2004 – School Closed – Martin Luther King Day
- January 21, 2004 – Child Assault Prevention Meeting – 7:30pm – Stoney Brook Elementary School
- January 22, 2004 – Family Night – Reading Night – Read Over
- January 22, 2004 – CAT committee utensil rolling for TASK – 3:30-4:30 pm
- January 27, 2004 – CAT committee making Valentine's Day decorations for Millhill
- January 30, 2004 – End of Second Marking Period
- February 3, 2004 – PTO Meeting
- February 11, 2004 – Report Cards Issued
- February 13 and February 16, 2004 – School Closed

### PTO Executive Committee

#### Co-Presidents-

Ned Fletcher (737-8825) Randee Tengi (737-7198)

#### Vice President-

Catherine Ahmad (818-9239)

#### Secretary –

Sandee Steinberg (818-0470)

#### Treasurer –

Molly Mahn (818-1694)

**Home Room Coordinators**-Randi Plevy (730-1890) and Frank Jankowski (818-1830)

## PRINCIPAL'S LETTER

Dear Parents:

It's difficult to believe that we are already beginning another new year. The month of December (*as well as September, October, and November*) certainly passed quickly. We were busy and productive here at Toll Gate Grammar School. Not only were we entrenched in learning to read, to solve math problems, to identify nouns and verbs, and speak Spanish dialogue but we also wrote in a variety of genres, published our first student newspaper (*Thank you Mrs. Slattery.*), celebrated the first 100 years of flying with First Officer Tim Airey, taught parents to play the violin and cello, and continued our efforts toward building people of good character and strengthening our school community.

January promises to provide opportunities for continued learning and fun. We will celebrate reading at our *Read Over Family Night*, begin our *Meet the Masters Program*, determine a question for our students to vote upon when you cast your votes for the school budget and new Board of Education members, and we will write some more.

As you know our slogan, *We're Writing Right*, emphasizes our important school goal to enhance writing. Many of our classrooms consistently use Rubrics as a writing tool.

Teaching the use of a rubric is one important way to help improve student success at school and at home. Rubrics can be designed for almost any function. To develop a rubric think first about what the perfect end product would "look like." Then decide upon the

(Cont'd on page 2)

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

The topic for this month's letter is the search for next year's PTO Executive Board members. Now, considering the frigid temperatures, please don't think this is a reflection of our desires to be done with the year already; we've all grown quite fond of the plush PTO Executive Suite. Our intent is to proceed in an orderly manner toward the selection of a new board as laid out in the PTO By-Laws. The first order of business is to form a Nominating Committee - two members from the Executive Board and three members-at-large. This is where we first need help. Anyone interested in this role of identifying and recruiting candidates for the PTO Board, please contact Ned or Randee. Being on the Nominating Committee does not automatically preclude you from an Executive Board position, nor does it excuse you. (In case you thought being a nominator was a good way to escape being asked to serve as president!)

The Nominating Committee will identify interested parents by March so that we can prepare a slate of candidates for presentation to the membership at our meeting on March 30. Nominations can also be made from the floor at that time. The voting will take place in May, and new officers begin their term in June.

That's the nuts and bolts of the whole process, but perhaps you're wondering what qualities would make a good board member.

(Cont'd on page 2)

## Principal's Letter Cont'd

steps you value that would make progress toward the end product. The rubric would have the ideas that are most valued at the highest level and then would slowly decline at the lower levels. Rubrics are used in our classrooms for writing math, oral presentations, art, and other subjects. Rubrics are widely used in grading the state mandated and standardized tests. They are also an effective way to differentiate learning for students at different developmental stages. I have attached a rubric for you to use at home with your children to help them make progress in cleaning their rooms. This will help you discover just how easy it is to design and use a rubric. Look forward to positive results.

## To Reward or Not to Reward

As we talk about our goals for the new year, you may wish to think about a controversial topic with which many people struggle, "To Reward or Not to Reward". My message to you this month centers on that very topic. Parents often ask us, as educators, whether or not they should reward good behavior or should the behavior be done just because it is expected? Honestly, we, as educators, struggle with the question as well. Here are my thoughts on the subject.

Many people feel that to give rewards teaches children to obey for the wrong reasons. I believe that a reward is best used as a motivation to "jump-start" the consistent use of certain expected behaviors. The real question has to do more with the concept of external versus internal motivation.

External rewards come from outside. For example, positive motivators might include a candy treat given to your child when he or she cleans his or her room. When a report card comes home, one dollar may be given for each A earned. Negative motivators may include: losing TV time for not completing homework; doing jobs around a neighbor's house for tossing a ball through his or her window and breaking it.

Internal rewards occur when we "feel good" about what we accomplished. Often that internal feeling of good motivates people to try even harder or to achieve more. It is a great self-esteem booster and we wish our children had more of those internal motivators.

External rewards are helpful when beginning a new behavior. A child may earn a sticker on a chart for taking out the trash or completing his or her chores. An important component of this type of reward is that you talk to the child about character and a true desire and joyful feeling that he or she did the right thing. For example, you might say, "It feels good to contribute to our family by taking out the trash." "Your grades improved in all areas on your report card. That's great and the best part is that you feel better about your accomplishments."

Use the external rewards to start, when needed, and talk about building character as you see the efforts improving. As soon as possible, stop the external rewards and let your child do the job just because that is what is expected to be part of our family and the job is truly done from a willing heart.

Fondly,

Myra J. Bugbee  
Principal

Special Thought: The three grand essentials to happiness in life are something to do, something to love, and something to hope for.

Joseph Addison

## President's Letter Cont'd

Well, there's no right answer really. We've had excellent volunteers who are new to the school and others with just one fifth grader remaining after many years at Toll Gate; some are highly organized and adept at juggling many tasks, others (yours truly included) find this a daily challenge; some stay at home, while others work part or full time. A balanced team is what is needed.

There are some requirements, however, for those serving as President or Co-President,

including several meetings each month. Two of these are during the day: one with the District Parent Council (PTO Presidents of all the district's schools and school district superintendent, Mr. Lorenzetti, who meet monthly to discuss district-wide topics), and another with the Toll Gate Parent Council (comprised of representatives from each grade, the PTO President, and Ms. Bugbee). And, of course, attendance at 5 or 6 PTO meetings throughout the school year, as well as Executive Board meetings from time-to-time.

More important in a candidate is the understanding that parent involvement is a key factor in Toll Gate's success in educating our children. Guiding the PTO as a member of its board is an excellent way to build the strong sense of school community that unites parents, students and staff.

Is it work? Yes. Is it fun? Sometimes. Is it rewarding? Definitely.

Ned Fletcher  
PTO Co-President

## TOLL GATE PARENT COUNCIL

The parent council representatives for this year are as follows:

Stella Scafidi	PreK
Adrienne Fawcett	K
Kathy Frederick	1 <sup>st</sup> Gr.
Aida Valcarcel	2 <sup>nd</sup> Gr.
Bonnie Piper	3 <sup>rd</sup> Gr.
Susan Huber	4 <sup>th</sup> Gr.
Tara Russell	5 <sup>th</sup> Gr.
Ned Fletcher	PTO Rep.
Myra Bugbee	Principal
Ida Chiaradia	V. Principal

The parent council meet once a month to discuss various issues relating to the school. If you have anything you would like to see discussed please feel free to contact any of the above representatives.

Minutes from the last Toll Gate Parent Council meeting are attached along with minutes

from the District Parent Council Meeting.

## COMMUNITY ACTION TEAM (CAT)

CAT enables both parents and students to become involved in different philanthropic activities throughout the year. For example, every week TASK uses an additional 400 pieces of wrapped cutlery for their satellite Latino soup kitchen. Tollgate has offered extra hands to help with this need. In December, over two sessions, we rolled 480 pieces of cutlery in napkins and wrapped with a twist-tie. A new activity this month will be making decorations for Millhill's Classroom Bulletin Boards for Valentines Day and St. Patrick's Day. Any donations of pink, red or green paper is appreciated.

A flier will be sent home soon along with permission slips. If you have any questions, or have ideas for other activities, please call Elizabeth Haines (730-4887) or Maude Tatar (818-0711).

### Schedule:

Date: January 15, 2004  
Activity: Rolling Cutlery  
Place: Media Center  
Time: 3:30 – 4:30pm

Date: January 22, 2004  
Activity: Rolling Cutlery  
Place: Media Center  
Time: 3:30-4:30 pm

Date: January 27, 2004  
Activity: Cutting/Creating Decorations  
Place: Media Center  
Time: 3:30-4:30 pm

Date: February 5, 2004  
Activity: Rolling Cutlery  
Place: Media Center  
Time: 3:30-4:30pm

### Millhill Child Development Center:

After Christmas each year, fourth and fifth graders read books to the pre-schoolers at Millhill Child Development Center. Every other Tuesday thru May 4<sup>th</sup>, 10 students at a time and two-three adults will go to Millhill. This year, we kick off

the program on Tuesday January 13<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am. The children arrive at Millhill in Trenton by 10 am and go into the classrooms and read to the preschoolers. Many of these children are not read to at home and enjoy the special treat of having "big kids" in the class.

If fourth and fifth grade parents are interested in attending please give Catherine Ahmad (818-9239) or Elizabeth Haines (730-4887) a call.

## CORPORATE REWARDS UPDATE

Although the winter holidays are behind us, Valentine's Day is just around the corner! Why not surprise your sweethearts with gifts you order online at the Box Tops Marketplace at [www.boxtops4education.com](http://www.boxtops4education.com)? For every purchase you make at the Marketplace from vendors such as 1-800-Flowers, FTD, GiftBaskets.com, Harry and David, Limoges Jewelry, Nirvana Chocolates and The Sharper Image, General Mills donates CASH back to Toll Gate (up to 10% for some vendors). If you charge your purchases with a Box Tops Visa Card or a Target Visa Card, Toll Gate gets a double benefit (1% CASH back on all Box Tops Visa purchases and up to 1% CASH back on all Target Visa purchases)!! To apply for a Box Tops Visa, call 1-800-227-9605 or visit [www.boxtops4education.com](http://www.boxtops4education.com). To make Target Visa your card of choice (and 83 of you have), visit [www.target.com](http://www.target.com) (Financial Services section) or call 1-800-394-1829.

Don't forget Verizon Extra Credit for Schools! A full 5% of your long distance spending (including calling card and international calls) goes directly to Toll Gate as your designated favorite school. Call 1-888-223-2051 to sign up for Verizon long distance and to designate Toll Gate as your favorite school. Already have Verizon long distance?

Just call 1-877-X CREDIT to sign up for Extra Credit for Schools. For more information about this Verizon program, visit [www.verizon.com/extracredit](http://www.verizon.com/extracredit).

Got relatives? Friends? They can participate in ALL of Toll Gate's Corporate Rewards programs, too, you know! Just relay Corporate Rewards info to them, and help them help our Tollgators. Clipping those Box Tops labels and submitting them to Toll Gate is, oh, so easy (not to mention shopping with a Box Tops or Target Visa and making Verizon long distance calls).

Want to find out more about all of Toll Gate's Corporate Rewards programs? Just visit the Hopewell Valley Regional School District Web site at [www.hvrtd.k12.nj.us](http://www.hvrtd.k12.nj.us), then follow these steps: click on Toll Gate Grammar School; click on Tucker; click on the PTO News link; click on Fundraisers; browse the links for Box Tops, Target and Verizon in the Corporate Rewards area! It's that simple! You are only a few clicks away from learning more about how to earn CASH back for our Tollgators. Of course, you can always call Linda Hilliard (737-0172) for lively conversation about Corporate Rewards too!



## NEW PTO INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS!

Writing to your PTO Board has never been easier! Our new internet address is [tgpto@hvrtd.k12.nj.us](mailto:tgpto@hvrtd.k12.nj.us)

## PTO WEB SITE/ BULLETIN BOARD

The PTO's web site address is as follows:

<http://www.hvrsd.k12.nj.us/tollgate/home/pto/home.html>

The TGPTO web site has been expanded this year, and is your one-stop-shopping site for PTO information. If you've mistakenly tossed one handout too many, look here! The newsletters and flyers for some events can be found under "Forms and Flyers and Stuff." Forgotten the dates of the Bookfair? Look under "Fundraisers." Budget updates and PTO and TGPC meeting minutes will also be posted.

The PTO now has a bulletin board on the wall opposite the Main Office. Please remember: You are a member of the PTO! Come to the meetings to participate in the decision making (and learn lots about what's going on at Toll Gate and the district), volunteer to help at an event, support a fundraiser - they're all important ways you can contribute to and support our wonderful school.

## GATOR GRAMS

The PTO will soon begin to use Gator Grams to send timely email messages to parents. If you chose to provide a family e-mail address when you filled out your child's directory information online, then you will automatically be subscribed to this service, and your email address will be printed in the directory. If you did not provide a family email address and would like to receive Gator Grams, please send an email to [tgpto@hvrsd.k12.nj.us](mailto:tgpto@hvrsd.k12.nj.us)

## A MESSAGE FROM THE LIBRARY

Wow! The Toll Gate Media Center was flying high in November and December while we commemorated the Centennial of Flight.

There were paper airplanes flying for accuracy and distance, paper helicopter-making for

kindergarten, learning about other means of flight and expanding our knowledge of early aviators. For one week, the Media Center was transformed into Trans Toll Gate Airlines complete with tickets, boarding passes, assigned seating, safety procedure demonstrations, snack cart with pretzels, in-flight movie and flight attendants Morgan and Meyer. To culminate the unit, Mr. Airey, an American Airlines pilot, spoke to the school.

The best result of the experience was that over 200 children participated in the reading aspect of the unit. Three classes had 100% class participation – Mr. Nelson, Mrs. White and Mr. Corino.

We are settling in to the new year and looking forward to wonderful media center events such as READOVER 2004 on January 22, Read-Across-America which will be the Seussentennial, and interesting things to do in the media center classes. We hope that you can help us make these activities successful.

Happy and Healthy New Year!

Chris Morgan

P.S. We have some items that were loaned to us for the flight unit that may be brought home. Please stop by the media center as soon as possible. Thanks.

## NEWS FROM THE SPECTRUM OFFICE

I.C.E. (In class enrichment) lessons for Grades 3 through 5 current focus:

Grade 3 - Rocks & Minerals, Grade 4 - Memoir Writing, Grade 5 - National Geographic Geography Bee will end mid-January. Grade 5 will then begin lessons for the Invention Convention. All fifth graders will learn methods to create an original product - students will then display their products and/or prototypes at our annual Invention Convention to be held at Toll Gate sometime in March. Fifth grade parents please look for more information flyers from your children within the next few weeks!

A.L.L. (Advance level language) Grade 3 - reading enrichment will end on January 30, next activity will be Poetry writing. Teacher recommended students will meet once a week to delve into deeper poetry concepts and writing. Grade 4 - Mock Trial writing has begun. Teacher recommended students will work on the writing of an original "Mock Trial" case. Grade 5 - Students are working on making their Mock Trial case, "The Case of the Shucked Finger," into a script so that it may be performed later in the Spring.

Type IIIs (aka Spectrum Projects) Many original projects are in the works! Parents, please feel free to contact me via phone or email with any questions or concerns regarding your child's Spectrum and/or service project. As I know that this can be a difficult and confusing process, I am always available to assist in any way.

Mentors Needed!

Attention all history buffs! Two students are in need of a mentor to assist with information surrounding the assassination of JFK. Anyone interested in sharing their interest and knowledge with these students, please contact me at 737.4008 x8242 or email at [cchalela@hvrsd.k12.nj.us](mailto:cchalela@hvrsd.k12.nj.us). Happy Learning.  
Carol Chalela  
Spectrum Teacher

## FROM THE YEARBOOK COMMITTEE

It's time to start assembling the pages of the 2003-04 Yearbook. **We need your photos** of last spring's events (May Day, Field Day, Farm Day, etc...) and anything so far this year--Halloween, First Day of School, TASK, and any assemblies, family night activities, class activities and candid shots of those smiling faces. Please send in your contributions marked

"Yearbook" or drop them in the designated box in the main office. The first half of the yearbook is due in a couple weeks, so the deadline for your submissions is Monday, January 12 but we'd love them sooner! Thanks for helping us to capture the memories!

## **GRAPHIC ARTIST NEEDED FOR T- SHIRT SALE**

Spring is coming and the T-shirt Committee is looking for a volunteer to assist in creating a Toll Gate design for our t-shirt sale. If you are able to help, please contact Danielle Tartaglia @ 730-0584 or Jennifer Hastings @ 730-8331.

## **Publicity Committee**

Thanks to Jana Dickstein for donating a camera to the Toll Gate PTO Publicity Committee.



## **Meet the Masters**

Meet the Masters is beginning it's 2004 season on January 12 with Fourth Grade studies in Composition, Abstract Art and a Watercolor Workshop. The Program offers all Tollgate students three art adventures that introduce art concepts and artists ranging from Pointillism to Picasso. The Program will run through March with the Meet the Masters Family Fun Night scheduled for April 13. Thanks to all the wonderful energetic volunteers who make this Program happen - We have a team of 45 Art Specialists this Year! Also, special thanks to Donna Cariola for being a great sounding board, to Deb Cusma, Paul Smith at Framesmith and Jack Koeppel at Queenstown for ordering and framing project posters, to the families who have generously donated posters or other art for the 2003/2004 Program: Bancroft, Casper, Cusma, Filepas, Matejka,

and Rice, and to new Study authors, Anne Bancroft (Aboriginal Art), Liz Bell (Keith Haring) and Julie Slattery (Gustav Klimt.) If your family would like to donate art that supports Meet the Masters Projects (donation from \$25 to \$75) please contact Deb Cusma. Questions about Meet the Masters? Call Kit Greener 737-5188 or Kim Hansen 737-2749.

## **Toll Gate Auction**

Save the date!! Saturday, March 27th for the Toll Gate live and silent auction. The theme is "Learning outside the box at Toll Gate" and some of the proceeds will benefit the outdoor learning center and blacktop area. We are in the middle stages of getting this auction underway and already we have a wonderful variety of things to bid on (a round of golf at Jazna Polana, autographed children's books, gift certificates, etc.). So, get a sitter and plan for this night out!! If you are interested in donating to the auction please call Molly Rice @ 737-7816 or Cynthia Wiley @ 737-6722.

**This is a reminder that  
our school hours are  
8:35 - 3:30. Children  
arriving after 8:45 are  
marked "tardy."  
Students who are late  
are missing the  
important beginning of  
our school day.**

