

HARLEM WIZARDS WOW HASTINGS

No, the Hastings Hotshots did not upset the Harlem Wizards at their October 24, 2009 basketball game, held at the Cochran Gymnasium at Hastings High School. But the Hastings team helped to raise over \$4,000 for the PTSA.

The Wizards, known for their Tricks, Hoops and Alley-Oops, did not disappoint the crowd of over 600 Hastings parents and kids. The players showed off their skills on the basketball court and in a series of humorous skits, led by the outgoing and affable Dwayne "Swoop" Simpson, a 6'7" forward. At halftime, the Wizards held a contest in which a group of children competed to catch the most consecutive passes. After the game, the Wizards met the kids and signed autographs.

The Hotshots were coached by Hillside art teacher Nate "The Great" Morgan, who has been dutifully studying films of the Wizards since Hastings lost to the Wizards in 2007. Mr. Morgan's players included Superintendent Bob "The Enforcer" Shaps, Hillside Principal Laura "Sweet Feet" Sullivan, Hillside Assistant Principal Brent "All Net" Harrington, Athletic Director "Jammin'" Jesse Merchant, Hillside aide Maureen "Mighty Mo" Bassman, guidance counselor Jocelyn "Trash Talk" Perez and teachers Stefanie "Don't Me with Me" Denison, Kristen "The Piston" Kumar, Dennis "The Menace" Kiely and Romeo "The Spinmeister" Spiniello. Representing the parents was Marek "Fast Break" Fuchs. The Hotshots performed gamely, scoring on a variety of jumpshots and lay-ups, although when the Wizards offered them ten (and later twenty) points for scoring a basket within one minute, the pressure was too much and they did not convert.

The PTSA would like to thank the Wizards, the

Hotshots and all of the fans who came to the game and bought Wizards memorabilia. The money raised enables the PTSA to support grants for teachers, scholarships for students and various programs throughout the school year.

PALS RETURNS TO HILLSIDE!

With great enthusiasm we are pleased to announce that PALS (Playground Assistant LinkS) will be back at Hillside at the end of January, sponsored by the Hastings PTSA! The PALS program was created by Donna Hart and Julie Kuhn several years ago and piloted at Hillside School with terrific success. The PALS program places college interns on the playground during recess with the purpose of addressing and reducing issues such as bullying and social isolation, while promoting conflict resolution, making and sustaining friendships, and engaging in games and social interactions.

There are four interns from SUNY Purchase who will be at Hillside this year: Brittney VanDyke, Jana Rosenthal, Natalia Soto, and Virginia Stromberg. They are a diverse group of students with excellent references who are eager to meet and play with all of the children at Hillside. They are mindful that recess can be a stressful time for children who may be struggling with social skill issues or for children who are shy and have difficulty engaging with others during this unstructured period of the day.

The PALS will participate in a weekly supervision session to address concerns and issues that come up. Supervision will be provided by our local Youth Advocate, Jennifer Conte, who will act as the liaison between the PALS program and the Hillside School. For more information about the program, please contact Jenny Conte at (914) 478-3400 Ext 647 or jconte@hastingsgov.org.

PTSA FUNDS SPEAKER FOR HS ASSEMBLY

Each year the PTSA is pleased to provide grants to fund projects which enrich the learning experience for our students and teachers. The project should supplement the curriculum in some way by providing materials or resources not covered in the school budget.

In October 2009, at the request of Dr. Michael Mahony, chairman of the English Department, the PTSA funded a grant to bring in a speaker from the Innocence Project as part of the high school's Academic Field Day. The Innocence Project works to use DNA evidence to exonerate wrongfully convicted men and women. Alan Newton was sent to jail in 1985, convicted of rape, robbery and assault charges. The Innocence Project was instrumental in finding the evidence that had been mislaid in the District Attorney's office, and post-conviction DNA testing then proved that Newton was not the perpetrator of this crime. After 21 years in jail, Newton was exonerated July 6, 2006.

Alan's talk to the students started with a summary of his ordeal and was followed by a question-answer session with students. The one problem was that there was not enough time for all students to ask questions -- there were just too many questions for the 45 minutes set aside. Students found Alan's life and his struggle with his conviction to be a moving testimony to the resilience of the human spirit. Alan answered questions about what life was like in prison (a struggle to stay focused with hope of exoneration); how he spent his time (locked up for most of the day in his cell, eventually learning about law through all the petitions he made for evidence to exonerate him); and what his plans were now (he is going to law school starting next year). The students gave Alan a standing ovation that lasted a few minutes.

Afterwards, several stayed after school to talk to him one-on-one. The PTSA is proud to have been part of

this moving experience for the high-school students. Teachers interested in applying for a grant can submit the forms found on the PTSA section of the school's website to Diana Jaeger (River234@aol.com).

GREEN SCHOOL SUPPLIES!

For the first time, the Hastings-on-Hudson PTSA ran a school supply fundraiser, but with a twist: we sold green products! We paired with Green My Locker, a small company founded by two Westchester mothers, and offered school supply packages to first through fourth graders. The products were made from recycled materials whenever possible, and they came from countries with fair labor practices. Helping to make the event even greener were our terrific Hillside teachers, who pared down the supply lists as much as possible, both minimizing waste and reducing the cost to our families. The students placed their orders in June 2009, and when they arrived at Hillside on the first day of school in September, they found their own package of fabulous green supplies.

We heard only praise from students, parents, teachers and administrators about the quality of the supplies and the ease of buying. As this was our pilot year for this fundraiser, we had no idea how popular it would be. To our wonderful surprise, roughly one half of the students participated! We were so successful that we were able to offer discounted supply packages to those who needed financial help, and the Hastings Youth Council donated supply packages to other Hastings families in need.

We will run this fundraiser again this spring for Hillside and we are exploring running it for our Middle School as well. Thank you all for your enormous support.

More Information available

The Innocence Project

www.innocenceproject.org

Green My Locker

www.greenmylocker.com

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING WITH THE PTSA? CONTACT BARRON LERNER AT BHL5@columbia.edu. PLEASE WATCH FOR OUR NEW WEBSITE, COMING SOON!