

HOME PAGES

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE POCANTICO HILLS SCHOOL

FALL 2009



‘Each student is a complex and unique person.’ Pocantico Hills School came to life in September as our students rushed through the doors and flooded the corridors and classrooms with their back-to-school enthusiasm. Throughout the building, students delighted in new discoveries and friendships as teachers and staff offered warm smiles and encouraging words. Always guided by the District’s mission to help our children “realize their complete personal potential... and discover the rewards of working hard,” our staff encourages students to contribute, to stretch themselves, and be an active part of the Pocantico Hills School this year.

WHAT’S INSIDE:

- Letters Home...pages 2-3
- From PTA...page 4
- Back to School...page 6
- Harvest Garden...page 7
- Upcoming Dates...page 8

LETTERS HOME

HEARING FROM OUR COMMUNITY LEADERS

FROM OUR SCHOOL BOARD

Dear Parents, Neighbors and Friends,

As I watch falling leaves and avoid dangerous acorns, I am always astounded at how beautiful Pocantico Hills looks this time of year. The grounds of our magnificent school rate second to none. However, with the capital project moving forward, there will be temporary eyesores and inconveniences, but hopefully they will be minor. Please observe all posted signs and stay clear of work areas, and please report any unsafe conditions to the administration. Remember that the work that is being done today will result in the creation of a physical plant and environment up to 21st century standards.

The 2009-2010 school year began with a big bang and has released torrents of creative energy and brought about unbridled enthusiasm in our students and teachers. With loving guidance, creative instruction and professionalism, our teachers have jump-started and begun a new academic year with our children. We wish our teachers and students the best of

everything good and hope that they have a stellar and memorable year.

With a new year come new responsibilities. We as parents must realize that the education of our children starts at home. “Little sponges” is the phrase that a famous educator once likened to a young child’s mind. A mind is a precious gift, so let us all work together, like a village, and nurture and teach our children to become educated and productive members of society. Parents, please consider spending some time with your child at school in the various activities sponsored by the PTA. Better yet, become a member of the PTA and become more active in the education of your child.

On behalf of the Board of Education – Mr. David Wilens, Vice President; Mr. Robert Balog, Trustee and former Board of Education President; Mr. Maurice Curran, Trustee; and Mr. John Conrad, Trustee – we extend our warmest regards and best wishes to the entire Pocantico Hills family.

Sincerely,

Katherine Yu
President



Our Board of Education (l. to r.):
David Wilens, Katherine Yu, Robert
Balog, Maurice Curran, John Conrad

FROM OUR FOUNDATION

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

We hope that the start of the school year has been full of excitement and learning! This year, we are looking forward to offering Pocantico students engaging, educational and fun activities by providing selected after-school classes in the cultural arts and sciences. We hope those who participate will have a blast while potentially starting on a path that they'll follow for a lifetime. Stay tuned for more information on class offerings.

For those of you who aren't familiar with the Foundation, we are a 501(c)(3) (non-profit) organization founded in 1995 to raise funds and encourage support for educational projects and programs that are beyond the scope of the school budget. In practice, we accomplish our mission by awarding grants to our dedicated teaching staff, administration and Board of Education for projects and programs they propose. Additionally, we award scholarships to deserving college-bound Pocantico Hills graduates each year. We raise our funds through an annual dinner-dance-silent/live auction and the Swan Lake walk-a-thon.

We invite you to join us in our mission by:

- Attending our fabulous March 6, 2010, fundraiser at the DoubleTree Hotel right around the corner in Tarrytown (more details and invitations to follow later in the school year);
- Making a tax-deductible financial contribution; donating goods or services to our auction, or taking out an advertisement in our auction journal;
- Volunteering to help with our fundraisers, activities and work.

We accomplish our goals each year through the efforts of loyal volunteers, patrons, teachers, staff and administrators who consistently offer their time, talents and resources to do the work of the Foundation. We thank you for your enthusiastic support.

Best wishes,

Shelly Marchese

Chairperson



Everyone enjoyed the fundraiser walk around Swan Lake.

CONSTRUCTION PROJECT UPDATE



Pocantico Hills has established Nov. 3, 2009, as the date that bids for the construction work are to be received and publicly opened. To promote competition to achieve the lowest possible cost for Pocantico residents, the notice to bidders announcing the construction project was advertised in the Journal News and in a variety of construction trade journals. Additionally, 114 bid notices were sent directly to contractors by the District's construction manager, SAVIN Engineers P.C.

On Oct. 15, 2009, the District's construction manager conducted a walk-through of the building for prospective bidders. This walk-through was attended by approximately 50 prospective bidders. As of Friday Oct. 16, 2009, 80 sets of bid documents were distributed to prospective bidders.

The contractors have been asked to prepare their bids to provide the Board of Education with options regarding the start date for construction of the swimming pool. Depending on the contractor's proposed costs, the Board of Education will decide whether to begin the pool construction project immediately, or in September 2010. The balance of the project work is expected to begin following the Board of Education's award of the contracts to the lowest responsible bidder on Nov. 9, 2009, at the Board of Education meeting scheduled to begin at 8 p.m. in the school library.

The District will continue to provide the community with construction updates until the project is completed. Construction updates will be posted on the District's website, and published and mailed to residents directly. Additionally, the Pocantico Hills School District has created a special e-mail address to respond to questions about the project - constructioninfo@pocanticohills.org.

– *Interim Superintendent* **Jay Scotto-Friedman**

FROM OUR PTA

We're moving full speed ahead. September was PTA Membership Month, and we would like to thank all those community members who have joined the PTA.

While the National PTA designates September as PTA Membership Month, you can join at any time. Our 2009/2010 goal is to increase membership by 10%, so please fill out a form and return your \$20 to Gina Downes in the Main Office.

Another goal this year is to become more "green." We're sending out much less paper and instead, sending more e-mails. If you would like to be added to our e-mail list, please forward your e-mail address to Gina Downes at gdownes@pocanticohills.org or give her a call at 914-631-2440, ext. 103.

The first weeks of school were very busy for the PTA. We had our first meeting, the Wrapping Paper Sale, Truck Day, a Welcome Back Barbecue for our new families and Picture Day. Thank you to all those PTA chairpersons who organized these successful events.

We are looking forward to a great year filled with educational assemblies, the sale of our Hawks sweatpants and our annual Spring Carnival. Please remember to



Keep on Truckin' On Sept. 30, students in Pre-K through third grade participated in the annual Truck Day visit in which many community members bring their trucks to the school and give the children a firsthand look at the big rigs. Thanks to all who shared their trucks and expertise, and the PTA for providing breakfast and coffee on a cool but beautiful autumnal morning. As always, the event was a special one for the children who were engaged and excited by the experience.

check the calendar for our next meeting and plan to attend. Your input is extremely important to us. Also, check out our website page on eChalk for recent updates and upcoming events. Everything you need to know about the PTA can be found on our eChalk page. Check it out!

Hope you have a great year!

Sincerely,

Brenda Misuraca PTA President



SUPPORT THE POCANTICO HILLS PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION
MEMBERSHIP DUES \$20.00 / STAFF \$15.00

Please complete this form and return it to the PTA Mailbox or Main Office – Attention Gina Downes, Membership Chairperson (Checks made payable to Pocantico Hills PTA)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Phone _____

E-Mail Address _____

Name/Grade of Children _____

The PTA is always looking for volunteers. Please contact any member of the PTA if you are interested. All meetings are open to the public – check out the school calendar for upcoming PTA meetings and special events.

PTA Mission: The overall purpose of PTA

A powerful voice for all children,

A relevant resource for families and communities, and

A strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child

Happy Halloween 2009!

Friday, Oct. 30, was a perfect day for the annual Pocantico Hills School Halloween Parade as more than 200 Pre-K through fifth-grade students showcased their costumes and marched in the circle along with teachers, administrators, parents and even some grandparents, including a scarecrow! The sun was shining, the music was pulsing, the cameras were snapping, and all the faces were smiling!



Simon Sez Back to School!

The first day of school at Pocantico held all the usual delights and laughter as children rushed through the corridors and made new discoveries. New classrooms, new teachers and new friends merged with the old to kick-start a fresh new academic year. For grades K-5, there was the additional excitement that Steve Max brought to the day.

Steve Max, a professional Simon Sez caller, came to Pocantico School to impress the students with the qualities of all great Simon Sez players – listening and respect. His program, which was held in the gym, entertained and instructed grades K-2 in the morning and grades 3-5 in the afternoon.

Principal Stanley T. Steele said that Steve Max, who brings his show to hundreds of schools each year, was the perfect kick-off to a year that is themed on respect. “The social skills that Steve Max espouses in his shows – to listen, focus, pay

attention and look people in the eyes – are all qualities that serve people well in life,” said Mr. Steele. “These are all ways to show respect, so it was the perfect assembly for opening day,” he said.

“I impress upon the students important life skills that can be taught in the context of the classic game of Simon Sez,” Mr. Max concurred. “This is a very gratifying show. I get to entertain and affect children in a positive way. It’s the real reward.”

With audience participation at 100%, students are engaged from the first “Simon Sez” command straight through to the end of the show. They laughed, clapped, raised and lowered their arms, and all in all had tremendous fun as they learned the meaning of respect, and also saw how we can learn from our mistakes.

While they were delivered through a game, the lessons were age appropriate. In the end, the students took away some awesome tips that can be used in the classroom: “When someone is talking and you are listening, it shows respect. . . When you let people finish speaking, it shows respect. . . . How else do you show respect? With good manners, by saying hello, by being on time, by making good decisions that don’t hurt anyone’s feelings.”

So are you ready? Simon Sez treat people with respect and have a great year!

(For more info on Steve Max, go to www.stevemax.com.)



Organic Garden Keeps on Growing – and Giving

The leaves may be turning amber and gold, but it is still green in Pocantico. The organic garden that our students are tending on the neighboring Rockefeller estate is in its second year, and the children are learning about environmental sustainability in a way that could not be more hands-on or interactive.

With teacher Adam Brown leading the way, the third and fourth graders grew everything from onions and beans to basil and squash – over 20 different varieties of vegetables and herbs in all. In late September, they harvested their crops and then turned them into Harvest Soup, which was a great success and is perfect for the cool days of autumn.



“This is more than just fun,” said Mr. Brown. “The students are participating in and coming to understand the full garden-to-table process. They are getting excited about health and wellness, making connections to what they are learning back at school and hopefully, being inspired to one day incorporate aspects of this experience into their personal lives.”

The program itself is a partnership with the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and coordinated by Susanne Pandich. “We can’t thank Susanne and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund enough for all their support,” said Mr. Brown. “From building the raised beds and the purchasing of many supplies to the maintenance of the greenhouse and the grounds – not to mention Susanne’s expertise in the field – the Fund has really made this experience possible.”

The harvesting in late September went smoothly, scheduled for days that turned out bright and cool. Students were given individual lists with assigned vegetables and herbs to pick, and then they washed and organized the veggies before returning to school with their basket of produce. They subsequently worked on the soup in the cafeteria, slicing, dicing and chopping, and finally, after the hard work, enjoyed the healthful harvest.

The basil and some of the garlic was also put to use by the Middle School Home and Careers students who produced a pesto that was delicious!

When one fourth grader was asked about the harvest and the soup experiences, his one word said it all – “Awesome!”

Harvest Soup 2009

Our soup is refreshingly simple. Essentially, we harvested all the great vegetables and herbs from our garden, chopped them all up, cooked them in broth, had fun doing it, and savored every last drop at lunch. (To make your own, simply adjust the amounts to suit your needs.)

- 4+ onions, peeled and chopped
- 10+ carrots, peeled and chopped
- 10+ celery stalks, chopped
- 1 small head of garlic, chopped
- 6+ leeks
- 8+ peppers
- ½ cup olive oil
- 10 kale leaves, chopped (could also be Swiss chard)
- 10+ potatoes, peeled and chopped
- Corn (if available – it wasn’t for us)
- Squash (if available)
- 1 large sweet potato
- Tomatoes (if available – they weren’t for us) or
- 1 28 oz can plum tomatoes, chopped
- Piles of various beans, chopped
- Beans, seeded
- Parsley leaves, chopped
- Thyme leaves
- 8+ cans of vegetable broth
- 3 boxes of vegetable stock
- ½+ pound pasta, small shape, cooked
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

Heat oil in large stock pot.

Add onions, carrots, garlic and celery. Sauté 10 minutes until soft.

Add everything else, including the broth and stock. Bring to a boil.

Cover and simmer 2 hours. Add more broth as needed.

Add cooked pasta. Cook 10 more minutes to warm.

upcoming dates



NOVEMBER

- 1 Daylight Savings Time Ends
(Set clocks back one hour)
- 3 Election Day
- 4 PTA General Meeting (7 p.m. – Cafeteria)
- 5 Foundation Meeting (8 p.m. – Teachers' Lounge)
- 6 1st Marking Period Ends
- 9 School Board Business Meeting (8 p.m. – Library)
- 11 Superintendent's Conference Day (No School for Students – Teachers Report)
- 11 Veteran's Day – No School
- 12 8th Grade Visit to Sleepy Hollow High School (9 a.m.)
8th Grade Parent Visit to Sleepy Hollow High School (7 p.m.)
- 13 11:30 a.m. Dismissal (Pre-K through 8th Grade
Parent / Teacher Conferences (Noon – 3 p.m.)
Report Cards Go Home
- 16 Parent / Teacher Conferences (6 – 8 p.m.)
NYS Social Studies Exam (Grade 5)
- 17 8th Grade Visit to Briarcliff High School (9 a.m.)
- 19 8th Grade Parent Visit to Briarcliff High School (7 p.m.)
- 23 School Board Discussion Meeting (8 p.m. – Library)
- 25 11:30 a.m. Dismissal (Thanksgiving Recess)
- 26 Thanksgiving Recess (No School)
- 27 Thanksgiving Recess (No School)
- 28 PTA Breakfast & Movie

DECEMBER

- 2 Winter Concert
7 p.m. – Grades 1-2
7:45 p.m. – Grades 3-5
- 3 Foundation Meeting (8 p.m. – Teachers' Lounge)
- 7 School Board Business Meeting (8 p.m. – Library)
- 8 Senior Citizens' Event
- 9 Middle School Winter Concert (7:30 p.m.)
- 11 Hanukkah begins at sundown
- 16 8th Grade Visit to Pleasantville High School (9 a.m.)
8th Grade Parent Visit to Pleasantville High School (7 p.m.)
- 19 Hanukkah ends
- 21 School Board Discussion Meeting (8 p.m. – Library)
- 22-31 Holiday Recess (No School)
- 25 Christmas Day
- 26 Kwanzaa Begins
- 31 New Year's Eve

Note: Dates and times are subject to change.

POCANTICO HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL
599 Bedford Road
Pocantico Hills
Sleepy Hollow, N.Y. 10591

Board of Education

Mrs. Katherine Yu, *President*

Mr. David Wilens, *Vice President*

Mr. Robert Balog, *Trustee*

Mr. John Conrad, *Trustee*

Mr. Maurice Curran, *Trustee*

Mr. Jay Scotto-Friedman, *Interim Superintendent*



For more information, please visit our website:
www.pocanticohills.org



The Foundation's Swan Lake fundraiser took place on Oct. 9, a beautiful day for a walk.