

# Estabrook PTA Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 2

Friday, Dec. 21, 2007



## A Message from the Presidents

It seems as if it was only yesterday when we were helping our children get ready for the start of the school year. New children and teachers, along with returning students and faculty, made their way through our shiny halls in search of their classrooms. Now, in our fourth month of school, everyone knows where to go and what to do. The only thing that slows anyone down these days is the weather!

Since the middle of this past summer, the PTA has been working hard in collaboration with the school faculty and administration to enrich the lives of our children and create a vibrant and learning school community. Our focus has been and will continue to be on supporting the Estabrook community by: 1) bringing in outstanding performance artists through the ACT (Arts Created Together) program; 2) funding materials and supplies for the classrooms; 3) improving and expanding upon communications between the

school and home; and, 4) providing interesting and useful parent education opportunities.

In this time of limited resources and tight budgets we are always looking for creative ways to raise money for Estabrook while still having fun. In this newsletter you'll read about the many ways Estabrook families and staff have come together to enjoy each others company and support our community. We discuss the events that have already happened and preview what's still to come. Keep your eyes on the weekly Estabrook Update sent out via the List Serve for the latest information.

Additionally, on the final page of this newsletter you will find a calendar of upcoming events. If there is an event you've heard about that is not yet listed it's probably because a final date still has to be picked.

If you have not yet had the chance to become involved and would like to, please feel free to contact one of us and we will connect you with something that fits your interests and talents. There will be much more going on throughout the winter and into the spring!!

Together we have accomplished a lot this year. Thank you for all that you have contributed to making our community so healthy and vibrant. We hope you have a relaxing winter break from school and enjoy spending time with family and friends.

We look forward to seeing you in the new year!

Best,

Pam Hoffman and Margaret Counts-Klebe  
Estabrook PTA Co-Presidents

## What's Inside....

- Enriching the Lives of Our Children
- How our Money is Spent on Our Children
- Community Service at Estabrook
- How We Help Estabrook
- The ACT Program
- "Fun Raisers"
- Parent Education
- And much, much more!



## Estabrook PTA Executive Committee

Pam Hoffman, Co-President - pwhoffman@rcn.com  
Margaret Counts-Klebe, Co-President - margck@yahoo.com  
Karen Kristin, Vice-President - karen@matthewkristin.com  
Kamala Soparkar, Vice-President - kamala\_soparkar@yahoo.com  
Jen Minasian, Treasurer - jenminasian@yahoo.com  
Gretchen Reisig, Secretary - greisig@rcn.com

## How We've Spent Our Money on Our Children

Fundraising is a major theme throughout the year so we can sponsor and pay for programs, events and supplies. Roughly half of the funds raised go to teachers for items used in the classrooms. Another major chunk of money will go towards funding the ACT (Arts Created Together) program and most of those events happen in the spring.

So far this year we've spent money on:

- Jump Ropes and Kickballs  
For the start of school this year the PTA provided each classroom with a new set of playground balls, jump ropes and other grade-appropriate fun items for the children to use outside during recess.
- Prepared Classrooms  
Your PTA funds provided each classroom with tissues, hand sanitizer and other supplies to start off the year fully stocked.
- Organization  
The PTA provided each child with a yellow plastic "homework/notices" folder and for grades 2 - 5, a student planner.
- Basic Supplies  
Teachers received reimbursements for classroom supplies that they purchased with their own money.
- Arts Created Together (ACT)  
The 4th Graders were seen "Having Fun With Pyramids and Pharaohs". See below for more information about this fun filled educational program.
- Science Enrichment  
Wingmasters presented their "Native American Artifacts and Birds of Prey" program to the 2nd grade on November 16th. The students were shown live birds, as well as Native American artifacts from across North America. Wingmasters is an organization dedicated to increasing public understanding and appreciation of North American birds of prey.

### Fundraising Activities To Date

Barnes and Noble Fundraiser - \$617  
Wilson Farm Pies - \$519  
Box Tops Contest - \$192  
Gift Wrap Sale - \$6,322  
PTA membership - \$5,295  
Target (Rewards Program) - \$351  
School Photos—\$1657

## What is the ACT Program?

Over the course of the school year, the PTA working closely with the teachers brings interactive curriculum-based programs that explore arts, history, and culture to Estabrook to enhance the children's learning experience. On November 1<sup>st</sup>, as part of their unit on Ancient Egypt, Estabrook 4<sup>th</sup> graders participated in the first of several ACT programs, "Having Fun

With Pyramids and Pharaohs." The program was presented by Paulette Morin, who gives a dynamic, multimedia presentation using PowerPoint and storytelling to explore ancient Egyptian life. Paulette's fast-paced, lively program allowed the students to examine jewelry, clothing, wigs, and a museum collection of Egyptian artifacts reproductions. The boys and girls had fun trying on

jewelry and headpieces making the curriculum come alive. The program ended with some Egyptian legends and some untraditional dancing! "Having Fun With Pyramids and Pharaohs" is the first event of the year sponsored by the PTA-funded ACT Program. As one 4<sup>th</sup> grader described it "it was fantawesomool! Fantastic, awesome and cool."



## Parent Education

Over the course of this school year each of our PTA meetings will focus on a particular topic. In some cases we will have a guest speaker to present on the subject while other times we will “talk amongst ourselves”. The topic for our November PTA Meeting was “How to Keep Your Kids Safe on the Web.” Kate Benson, a technology specialist for

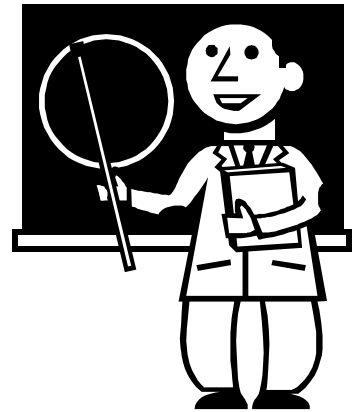
the Weston Public Schools and an Estabrook parent, led a wonderful presentation and discussion.

We have invited Liz Weiss to speak about creating healthy meals for children at a soon to be scheduled meeting for January or February 2008. Liz is a nutritionist, cookbook author and Bowman parent.

On April 8, 2008 the PTA

will host Dr. Robert Brooks, psychologist and author of several books including “Raising Resilient Children,” when he comes to Lexington to talk about “Raising Resilient Children and Adolescents.”

If you have suggestions for particular speakers or topics please e-mail Pam Hoffman at: [pwhoffman@rcn.com](mailto:pwhoffman@rcn.com).



## Community Building Events (a.k.a. “Fun Raisers”)

What are “community events”? These are events that are run by our PTA members simply for the pleasure of getting together. Of course anytime we get together -- whether it is at Barnes and Noble to raise funds for



our school, clean-up days for community service or for education at Family Math nights -- it is a community event. However, there are also those events that are just for “fun.” We started off September with a Family Fun Pizza Picnic. Our

annual International Heritage Potluck Dinner, co-sponsored by the PTA and the Anti-Bias Committee, followed in October. We also had a fall Spirit Wear Sale where families were able to purchase Estabrook spirit wear at cost.

### Stay tuned for these upcoming events:

- ✓ Family Fun Night
- ✓ Family Math Night
- ✓ Int’l Dance Night!

## How We Help the School

In addition to the enrichment opportunities listed on page 4 of this newsletter, parents are active in many other areas of the school. By helping to run the following programs or events at the school, you allow our Estabrook staff to focus on the important task of educating our children.

- School Picture Day
- Lost and Found Cleanout
- Estabrook Announcements List Serve



- The Library Volunteers
- Staff Bulletin Board - photos and creation
- Heights and Weights - volunteers
- Maintenance of the Library Fish Tank
- August Clean Up Day - front patio area weeded and mums planted
- September Clean Up Day - grounds cleaned up and weeded, mums and bulbs planted, wall ball and scully board painted

## Helping Each Other

We support our community by helping each other.

Here are a few examples.

Many have found the **Google Group** a great way to share everything from the names of electricians to opinions about nutrition. There are several options for receiving messages from the Google Group and you can adjust the frequency with which you receive these messages. You can choose to:

1. receive no email at all (and read messages on the web),
2. receive each message as it arrives (the default),
3. receive a summary of new activity each day, or
4. receive all new messages in a single daily email.

If you would like to change your setting, please log into the Estabrook Commu-

nity Web Page at <http://groups.google.com/group/estabrook-community> and follow the "Edit my membership" link at the right. If you have difficulty, please email Dana Kuszmaul - [dana.kuszmaul@gmail.com](mailto:dana.kuszmaul@gmail.com) and include your preferred new setting in the text of the email.

The **Estabrook Directory**, a huge undertaking each fall, is created by PTA volunteers. It provides an important way for us to communicate with each other.

The launch of our **Safe Routes to School Program (SR2S)** with all its inherent challenges provides a fun motivation, especially for

those who don't do it every day, to get out and walk to school or carpool - getting some exercise, helping our environment, meeting friends along the way and arriving as part of an excited community ready to start the day!

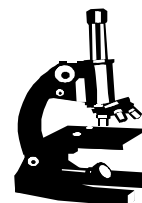
And last but not least, our current project of collecting and **compiling healthy recipes that children love**. Francis Gillespie is organizing this effort and she's already received a bunch of recipes from Liz Weiss (Lexington parent, dietitian and cookbook author). If you want to contribute or receive the compilation via email after it's complete please contact Francis @ [fpgill@rcn.com](mailto:fpgill@rcn.com).



## Enriching the Lives of Our Children

These programs represent enrichment opportunities that depend on everyone's help. Thank you for making this happen.

- Room Parents
- Big Backyard
- 4th grade Math Olympiads
- 5th grade Math Olympiads
- Chess Club
- Anti-Bias Committee
- The Greenhouse
- Science enrichment programs such as Wingmasters
- Estabrook Family Friends - this program pairs Lexington and Boston students for a playdate 8 times during the school year.



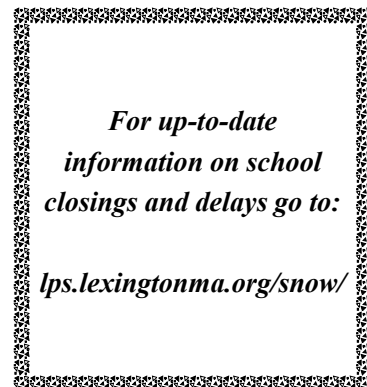
## REMINDERS

### Snow Days and School Closing Information

The winter weather has arrived with a vengeance even though the season doesn't officially begin until Friday, December 21<sup>st</sup>! School closings and schedule changes are posted on the Lexington Public Schools' (LPS) website <http://lps.lexingtonma.org/snow/> starting at 5:30 am each morning. The schedule is updated throughout the day if needed. This is

your best source of information concerning school and the weather. If school is in session despite questionable weather conditions or if school closes early, parents with children in Lextended Day should contact that program to find out if it's canceled for that afternoon. If Lextended Day is canceled, parents then need to notify Estabrook by emailing Terri Carfagno

([tcarfagno@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:tcarfagno@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us)) how their child should be dismissed that day. Options are the child will walk home, take a specific bus, be picked up by a parent or by another designated person. The child cannot be dismissed unless his or her parent has authorized a dismissal plan.



### Pick-Up and Drop-Off Procedures

Estabrook parents rock! The community has done a great job adapting to the new drop off and pick-up procedures instituted this year. The Estabrook staff wants you to know how much they appreciate your help in arriving at the proper time and following safe procedures to get your children to and from school. Here's a reminder of a few things to keep everything running smoothly. Perhaps you have a spouse, friend or grandparents who occasionally drive your children. Please remember to share these procedures with anyone who drops-off or picks-up your child.

#### General Procedures:

- Drive up the hill single file; do not pull out and pass anyone going up the hill. The hill only has two lanes - one going up hill and the other going down hill.
- Once you have reached the rotary you may move into the left lane to pass people to go park.
- Do not use your cell phone while driving in the rotary.

#### Morning Drop-off:

- Drop-off begins at 8:15. Please do not drop students off unless there is a staff member present on the front patio.
- Pull up as far as you can in the circle before dropping children off. If no one is ahead of you this means driving to the very end of the circle.
- Once you have reached the rotary you may move into the left lane to pass people to go park.
- You may always park your car in the lot and walk your child into the building.

#### Afternoon pick-up:

- If you arrive before 3:10 please park in the parking lot, shut off your car and walk to the front of the building to meet your children.
- Please do not park in the circle either in front of the school or around the far side of the rotary and wait until it's 3:10. This is dangerous.
- Do not sit in the parking lot with your car on. Massachusetts state law prohibits idling, plus it's bad for the air we all breathe.
- If the weather is bad, you may wait in the lobby until the children are dismissed. The children will still accompany their teachers outside for dismissal, so please go outside to get them at that time.

To subscribe to the list serve:

- Send an email to: [majordomo@silver.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:majordomo@silver.ci.lexington.ma.us)
- Send it from the email address that you want to subscribe.
- In the body of the message, put only the following two lines:  
  
subscribe estabrook-announcements  
end



## What's Happening in the New Year at Estabrook?

### January 2008

#### UPCOMING EVENTS AND MEETINGS

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 <small>Welcome Back</small>	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11 <small>PTA Coffee Movie Night</small>	12
13	14	15 <small>Coats for Kids</small>	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

- Principal Coffee - Friday Jan 11, 9 AM
- Movie Night - Friday, Jan 11- 6:30 PM
- Coats for Kids: Collection Ends - Jan 15
- Nutrition Presentation by Liz Weiss
- International Dance Night
- Family Math Night - Jan / Feb
- Wilson's Farm Shopping Day - March 6
- Family Fun Night
- "Raising Resilient Children and Adolescents" Dr. Robert Brooks - Apr 8
- "Run of the Mill" The Estabrook 5K - Sunday, May 18

### Community Service

Estabrook staff, students and families participated in some terrific Community Service projects this fall. These include collecting over 125 items for the Lexington Food Pantry; collecting \$900 for UNICEF through Trick or Treat for UNICEF; and collecting blankets and towels for pets. Thank you to Ms. Michalosky for bringing this program to Estabrook year after year. Currently, we are taking donations for the Coats for Kids program. There is a box in the lobby for donations of gently used (in good enough condition that you would give them to a friend) coats. All sizes are welcome from infant to adult. Please bring your donations in before January 15.

### Heartfelt Thanks

We heartily thank the many chairs of all of the committees for both the ongoing events, those that have passed and those that are in the works as you read this. Those of you who have chaired these events know that we cannot do it alone! It is with the

help of the many, many, many parents and staff who become involved that we are able to enjoy so many wonderful things here at Estabrook. Thank you to all who have helped this fall, whether it is financially by supporting the fundraisers or with your time

by running or helping with the various events or both!! We'd like to thank our fabulous principal, Ms. Martha Batten, her terrific assistant Mrs. Terri Carfagno and the entire Estabrook staff for their tireless efforts throughout the year.

ありがとうございます。

THANK YOU

**Gracias**  
*Gràzie*

Ευχαριστώ

*Merci*  
*Köszönettel*

شكراً

Teşekkürler

*Vielen*  
**Dank**

不好意思

**THANK YOU**