



The Scribe

Volume 50, No.2

Winter 2010

A publication of the Jane Stenson PTA

Have you visited the new
and improved Jane Stenson
PTA website lately?

Check it out at:

www.janestensonpta.org

Have you checked out the FREE
resources available through
the **Niles Township Schools
ELL Parent Center?**

Family literacy classes,
conversation classes, parenting
skills workshops, citizenship
classes, and much more.

Call 847.568.7611 for more
information!

School Calendar

February 23
4th Grade Music Program (7 pm)

February 26
no school

March 1
no school

Dear Parents,

As I sit here putting my thoughts to paper it is yet another gray, chilly, Chicago winter, kind of day. My own five year old is beginning to exhibit signs of severe cabin fever. What's a parent to do when it's too cold for sledding, you're too broke for shopping and the thought of another Disney Video is a threat to your sanity? After a little bit of thought, here were a few ideas I had that centered around one of my favorite things to do – reading:

- Call the neighborhood kids over and have a book swap.
- Make some hot chocolate and a big bowl of popcorn and have an evening of family reading.
- Read to your younger children while they are taking a bath.
- Read a story while your children act it out.
- Read poetry.
- Pitch a “reading tent” by throwing an old blanket over the kitchen table and sitting underneath it.
- Invest in some children’s magazines.
- Retell some stories from your favorite book.
- Record books to listen to in the car.
- Make a habit of bedtime stories.
- Read the newspaper together.
- Take turns reading from a good joke or riddle book.
- Amaze each other by finding fun facts in the Guinness World Book of Records.
- Snuggle up under one big blanket and read.

If you come up with any great inside reading activities, give me a call. It looks like we may have a few more wintry days ahead of us.

Sincerely,

Susan E. O’Neil, Principal

Treasurer's Report

Lisa Malina, Treasurer

Jane Stenson PTA Summary of Inflows and Outflows 8/1/09 - 12/31/09

Membership Dues, JSPTA portion \$1,121

Donations..... \$25

Ways & Means Projects

Gift Wrap & Candy Sale Income \$7,096

Gift Wrap & Candy Sale Expense \$(4,364)

Fall Book Fair Income \$633

Fall Book Fair Expense -

Spiritwear Income \$1,706

Spiritwear Expense -

Miscellaneous Income..... \$13

TOTAL Ways & Means Projects \$5,084

Student Activities

Cultural Arts Income (Grant) -

Cultural Arts Expense \$(718)

Short Range Gift to School \$(789)

Prepack Kit Income..... \$67

Prepack Kit Expense..... -

Room Parent Expense..... \$(52)

School Dance Expense..... \$(475)

School Store Income..... \$1,114

School Store Expense \$(646)

TOTAL Student Activities \$(1,499)

Parent & Teacher Activities

Parent Cal/Handbook/Dir Expense..... \$(629)

TOTAL Parent & Teacher Activities \$(629)

Administration Activities

Bank Fees \$(14)

Childcare Expense \$(160)

Interest Income \$65

Liability Insurance..... \$(370)

Office Supplies & Postage..... \$(9)

Miscellaneous Expenses..... \$(70)

TOTAL Administration Activities \$(558)

TOTAL Profit (Loss) for the Year..... \$3,544

Cash Available at Beginning of Year \$15,134

Total Profit (Loss) Year-to-Date \$3,544

Cash Available as of December 31, 2009 \$18,678

We are well into the new school year and our schedule of PTA activities. The summary at left shows our finances through the end of December.

The main sources of our income are membership dues and fundraising events. We currently have 166 member families and staff, and would like to thank all who have joined. Your PTA membership helps support your child and your school community, so if you haven't already become a member, it's not too late! The cost is only \$10. This year we offered a Pizza Party to the class with the highest PTA membership, and Mrs. Shamoos's class won. Their class had the greatest percentage participation, and enjoyed their pizza during their holiday party last December.

Since dues alone do not finance all the activities we support during the year, we also hold several fundraising events to supplement this income. Our fundraising efforts thus far have netted \$5,084 in revenue from the Fall Book Fair, and the Innisbrook and Spiritwear sales. **Our next major fundraiser is the Online Silent Auction, and it will be starting soon.** A lot of fabulous items have been donated, so please visit the PTA website to participate and support our school!

In the true spirit of the PTA, most funds are spent on student-related activities. The PTA helps bring artistic groups to the school to broaden our children's educational experiences, and hosts Bingo Night and a School Dance during the winter. While the School Store and Prepack Kit are not fundraising activities (the PTA makes little or no money on these sales) they are listed here under Student Activities because they are for the convenience of the students and parents.

Expenses related to Parent & Teacher Activities include producing a school directory so families can communicate with each other, and contributing to a district-wide calendar listing activities available to parents and their children.

In order to provide all of the activities and programs throughout the year, the PTA does incur some administrative costs. Childcare at all monthly PTA meetings, insurance for the organization and supplies and postage are all necessary expenses to maintain the PTA.

If you have any questions about any of the financial information contained in this report, please feel free to contact the Treasurer, Lisa Malina, at 847-674-3094 or at lisa.malina@hotmail.com.

On behalf of the PTA, I would like to thank all the parents and teachers who support the PTA by volunteering and participating in our membership and fundraising drives. I encourage everyone to get involved for the benefit of the school, and for all of our children.

From the Gavel: Notes from the PTA President

Allison Zidek

Wow – what happened? I blinked and 2010 is well underway. A new decade is upon us and the PTA is ready with many exciting opportunities for Stenson students and families. It's great to see new faces at the PTA meetings and so many people volunteering! It's evident that many of you care very much about our school and our PTA and want to have a positive impact on things happening in and around Jane Stenson. Remember, the PTA is made up of Stenson family members – YOU! We are all volunteers and we could always use more help. We have some BIG events coming up and if each family can volunteer to help at one event during the year, all the children at Stenson will benefit. An hour of your time will go a long way to encourage our children to be more involved in school activities and get the most out of your PTA.

Upcoming events and how YOU can join in the fun by volunteering or attending:

- **Wed – Mar 3 @ 6:30 pm – Family Fun Night**

Allow the stress of ISAT week to float away. Enjoy the "Funny Magician" Dennis DeBondt

- **Mar 8-19 – SILENT AUCTION – this is a BIG fundraiser for the school**

◊ How can you help donated or solicit donations (be CREATIVE – what special item or talent do you have that you can donate?)

◊ BID – make sure to look at the auction booklet and BID – many items start at \$10 or less! We already have some pretty exciting bigger items too, including 4 – 1 day – Park Hopper tickets to DISNEY WORLD!!!

◊ Contact Jason Malina (847-674-3094) or Sue Arcus (847-967-8237) for information.

- **Mar 18 and 24 – Book Fair**

Please stop by during Parent-Teacher conferences and see our NEW book fair partner – Usborne Books. An

expert will be on hand to help you and your children pick out that perfect book (and our library benefits from your purchases).

◊ We can use help setting up before and cleaning up after each day

◊ Contact Rebecca Schwer 708-284-4843 for info.

- **Thurs – April 8 @ 6 pm – INTERNATIONAL NIGHT – a celebration of our cultures**

◊ Every family is asked to bring food that is representative of their heritage to share

◊ We will have Entertainment and Demonstrations from around the globe

◊ This event requires a LOT of volunteers – mostly ½ hr shifts for greeting, direction help and food distribution. There are several other areas to volunteer as well – look for flyers coming home soon.

◊ Contact Anzhela Bozhinova @ 847-763-7713 for info.

I'm also very excited to let everyone know that our new website is up and running. It is a work-in-progress and I'd really appreciate your input about what you'd like to see on the website. Please visit www.janestensonpta.org when you have a few minutes and check it out. The website is the place to go to check on bidding and the most up to date items during the Silent Auction, March 8 – 19, 2010. Please email me at president@janestensonpta.org with your comments and suggestions for making our PTA website helpful to you. Sending an email will also allow us to capture your email and begin to save some trees and communicate electronically. Thanks to Kim Savini for all her help on the website!

I'm looking forward to all the wonderful programs and events the PTA is sponsoring within the next few months. Please join me and get involved in YOUR PTA!

Jane Stenson PTA Officers

PresidentAllison Zidek
Vice President.....Caryn Bean
VP Ways & Means ..Eva Rafas
VP MembershipKim Savini
VP LegislationAna Bryant
VP Room Parents Ina Borozin
VP Parent Educ.Karmedra Webber
SecretaryKarmen Krause
TreasurerLisa Malina
Honorary VP Sue O'Neil

Jane Stenson PTA Committee Chairs

BingoMarni Marek
Book Fair Rebecca Schwer
Box TopsNancy Batio
Bulletin Board.....Eva Rafas
Calendar Collating ..Susan Arcus
Child Care Susanna Roman
Cultural Arts Caryn Bean
Directory.....Karmen Krause
Fifth Grade PartyKala Kant
Gift Wrap Sale.....Caryn Bean
Holiday Dance.....Marni Marek
International Night ...Anzhela Bozhinova
Library Volunteers ..Karmen Krause
Market Day Karen Lostaunau
Parent-Staff TeaAna Bryant
PrePack Sales.....Marni Marek
.....Eva Rafus
School StoreEva Rafus
Scribe.....Scott Melnick
Silent AuctionSusan Arcus
Staff Appreciation...Susan Arcus

Notes from the Music Room

Louise Finton, Music Teacher

"To stop the flow of music would be like the stopping of time itself, incredible and inconceivable" - Aaron Copland

The Jane Stenson fifth graders had the opportunity to hear a concert by the Skokie Valley Symphony Orchestra on December 7, 2009. The students reviewed the families of the orchestra by listening to Benjamin Britten's "Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra". One of the favorite parts of the field trip was watching the performance of a student cello soloist playing Tchaikovsky's "Rococo Variations". He was amazing!

The fourth graders are busy at work preparing for their music program on February 23, 2010 at 7:00 PM in the Jane Stenson MPR. It is

titled, "A Small Part of the World". We will be taking an imaginary trip around the world through song and dance. The Jane Stenson Brownie Troop will also present a flag ceremony. It promises to be a great evening.

The third graders are receiving their recorders this week in music class. They are excited! They will be learning how to play B, A, and G in their first class and to put those notes together in the song Hot Cross Buns. District 68's recorder program allows students the opportunity to learn a wind instrument, to read and play music, and

to create original melodies. The school's recorder program continues through fifth grade.

Jane Stenson second graders will soon start work on their music program. It is scheduled for April 14, 2010. It will be a special evening of music, dance, and poetry. Please save the date on your calendar.

The kindergarten through second grade students continue to enjoy singing seasonal songs, working on rhythms, movement activities, and playing instruments. Ask your child to sing one of their favorites songs for you!

Stranger Danger - WARNING

(The following letter was sent to the Jane Stenson community)

February 8, 2010

Dear Families,

It was reported to me this weekend that a junior high student was confronted by a stranger while walking near her home early Friday evening. I am sharing this information with you because this incident occurred within our attendance area and I feel that we need to work together to keep our children safe.

According to the student, a maroon/dark red 4 door sedan pulled up as she was walking in her neighborhood, in the 5200 block of Suffield Terrace, and a strange man asked her to get in and have dinner with him. The male driver was described as approximately 50 years old with no facial hair. The man was wearing a tan jacket, a hat and glasses. The student noted that the man had a noticeable accent when he spoke. The student immediately ran away from the stranger and reported the interaction to her family. The family responded immediately by contacting the Skokie Police Department.

As a school, we spoke to the students today about the dangers that strangers pose. I would encourage you to reinforce this message as well as a family.

Sincerely,

Susan E. O'Neil
Principal



Parents in the Know

Focus on Reading

Informational Text

As your children become more fluent readers, they begin to read to learn more than focus on learning to read. Therefore, they are expected to be able to discover information on their own from textbooks and other informational texts. This can be overwhelming for many children. Some tips that can help your child experience success when reading to learn include:

Before Reading

1. Preview the text reviewing the chapter title, subheadings, illustrations, graphs, pictures, captions, bold face terms, and subheadings.
2. Determine what you think you already know about the topic from what you have previewed.

During Reading

1. Ask questions while reading to check your understanding.
2. Make note of significant ideas and important details.
3. Make connections with what you already know.

After Reading

1. Review what you learned.
2. Make note of any questions you have.



Vocabulary Games

Playing board games is a fun way to build your child's vocabulary. Scrabble, Password, Pictionary, Scattergories, Taboo, Boggle, Upwords, and Balderdash are all great for vocabulary development.

However, if you are looking for a new twist on an old game, try adding some extra challenge!

Scrabble: Make each player use a predetermined number of tiles for each turn.

Pictionary: Draw words related to the subject instead of the subject. This will help your child focus on definitions!

Based on: Melissa Mayntz, "Games Scrabble, Password, and Pictionary as Vocabulary Tools", LoveToKnow, http://boardgames.lovetoknow.com/Games_Scrabble,_Password,_and_Pictionary_as_Vocabulary_Tools

Reading With Expression

One of the elements that children work on when they begin to become fluent readers is prosody. Prosody is another term for reading with expression. Practice reading aloud the following sentences.

abc! defg. hij? klm. nop! qrs. tuv. wx? yz!

Punctuation marks identify what type of expression we use. So, next time that you think that your child's reading could use a bit more expression, tell her the following rules:

Comma: Pause when you reach a comma.

Period: Stop when you reach a period.

Question Mark: Let your voice go up at the end of a question.

Exclamation Point: Show excitement!

What Research Says



Children who have involved parents do better in school. They have higher reading achievement, language skills, and comprehension. These increases in ability positively influence students' success in other academic fields also.

The benefits of parent involvement go beyond a child's academic performance. Children whose parents are involved have better social and emotional development, deal with stress better, are happier, have better relationships, and more self control.

Based on: Christina Clark, "Why It is Important to Involve Parents in Their Children's Literacy Development", National Literacy Trust, <http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/research/Parental%20Involvement%20-%20a%20brief%20review.pdf>

Advice from the Gym

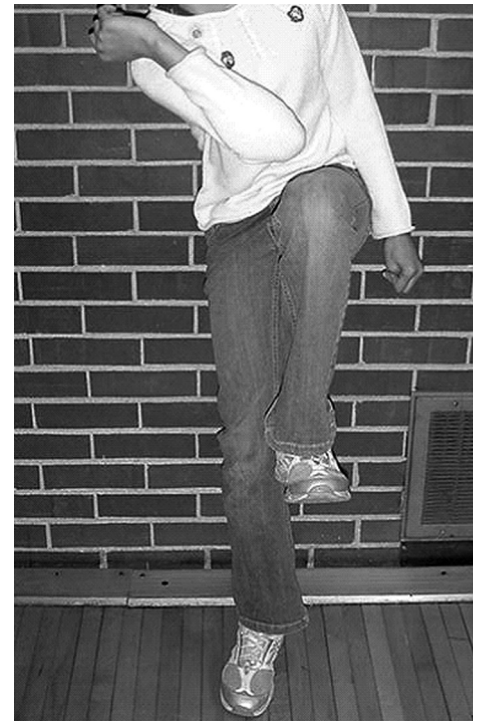
Marc Jenkins, Gym Teacher

ISAT Testing during the first week in March is fast approaching and Jane Stenson will once again be offering “ISAT Morning Work-outs” in the gym for 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students. Why are testing strategies being offered from the PE department, you ask? I am a strong supporter of the belief that movement enhances learning. By starting off the day with exercise and water, we can make ourselves significantly more alert thereby performing better on those early morning tests when we would otherwise just go through the motions. We will begin at 8:20am and students should simply tell the supervisor that they are interested in going inside for morning work-outs. Just take your things to your locker and then report to the gymnasium for supervised and structured activities hosted by myself and Mr. Hamilton.

Your first testing strategy actually begins the night before the tests. Students should get around 9-10 hours of sleep each night which can go a long way towards being attentive all day. For those of you who cannot make it to school early that week, I would like to offer some ideas which you may find useful in helping your child perform to his/her best capabilities on test days. Begin each testing day with these same four rituals BEFORE walking out the door for school:

- eat a healthy breakfast to get the metabolism fired up and running until lunch
- sip plenty of water throughout the morning to assist with alertness and to stave off fatigue during testing
- perform no less than 10-minutes of sustained, aerobic exercise which raises the heart rate. This will increase oxygen flow to the brain.
- complete any brain-based exercise which requires you to cross the body’s midline with arms, legs or both arms AND legs (jazz square, cross-crawl, hook-ups or any other ideas from the internet/books)
These exercises should also be used between tests.

These methods will “wake up” the brain and stimulate blood flow in that direction making your child more alert for testing which will yield better test results than if your child simply goes about a normal day. More information on Brain Gym can be found at www.braingym.org If you navigate your way to the ‘bookstore’ section of the site under the drop-down menu called ‘About Us’, Edu-Kineshetics, Inc. will provide you with even MORE Brain Gym information and many books to help children with unique learning needs become successful in the classroom. Good luck on those ISATs!!



Cross-crawl



Hook-up