

Neighborhood School PTA

Notes From the PTA

Parents have been busy with many projects this fall, including the Halloween Parade, a bake sale and a magic show.

But the largest event of the year is the school's annual holiday fair. Scheduled for Sunday, December 6th, the fair is a crucial fundraising project.

Huge city and state budget cuts are looming for this year and next year, which means a loss of tens of thousands of dollars for the kids and the programs at the school. Raising money this year is more important than ever.

The fair is also a great way to get involved in the

school community and a lot fun for the kids (and everyone in the area who attends).

Planning meetings will be held in the lobby cafeteria every Tuesday until the event.

There are any numbers of ways to help out, from gathering silent auction donations from friends and local businesses, to helping sort rummage contributions, to setting up and/or manning booths (arts and crafts, food, games) on the day of the fair.

We need everyone's help to make this event happen, so please chip in any way you can.

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Premiere Issue

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How to Volunteer for the Fair:

There are sign-up sheets in the school lobby.

You can also get in touch with organizers:
Fatima
(sessy05@aol.com),
Valerie
(frankenval@verizon.net)
Melissa
(lexinisse172@aol.com).

Get Involved: Holiday Fair

If you'd like to get involved in the silent auction but can't make the Tuesday meetings, you can email Donna Binder:

(dbinder@igc.org).

You can pick up silent auction forms in the lobby or online:

(<http://members.theneighborhoodschool.org/auction>), where you can click "Donate

Online now," fill out the form for the donations you gather, and see what has come in already. (The link to the online form can be sent directly to the businesses who might be interested in donating. They can fill out the form on their own if they wish.)

You can also leave any donor forms and gift

certificates in the Silent Auction envelope kept in the school office, if you prefer not to do it online.

Please keep in mind that almost any skill/product can be donated to the auction, from teaching someone how to cook your favorite food or helping with a computer problem to offering a summer home for a weekend.

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You'd also be surprised at how willing local stores and merchants are to make donations, whether it's a product or a gift certificate to a store / restaurant / hair salon / chiropractor / kids class, and so on. Please just take a minute to bring some forms to some local favorites and ask. If every family either donated or got one item to be donated, our auction would be a great success!

A Chat with Milo

We spoke to our principal Milo Novello about changes and happenings this fall at The Neighborhood School. Milo says he was excited to welcome five new teachers to the school this year (see a little introduction to them elsewhere in this newsletter), and that they are getting good reviews.

The Neighborhood School also added 2 new classes this year. An additional 4/5 grade class has been added to prevent class sizes from getting out of hand.

Additionally, a self-contained 12:1:1 class has been added. He says, "One of the shifts in our work here is we're able to serve a wider range of kids with this 12:1:1 class. We've always been inclusive and honored ethnic and socioeconomic differences, but also learning diversity.

The kids we're serving [in that 12:1:1 class] are not children who would have come here otherwise, and adding a

new set of needs is challenging us to give a new set of learners the full Neighborhood School experience."

He was eager to point out the work put into the beautiful school garden, and mentioned that the science curriculum this fall is making connections to the garden and to the city at large. There is also a green roof committee, which Milo says is expanding its eco-friendly mission to the whole building, including exploring compostable lunch trays.

The school also won a grant to continue and expand an afternoon band project with a teacher from the 3rd Street Music School; stay tuned for further information on this and other exciting projects in the winter and spring.

Milo plans to continue his ongoing series of coffee hours, in which parents can talk to him and to other parents.

Meet the New Teachers

This fall the Neighborhood School was pleased to welcome four new staff members. Here's a little detail about them:

Stephanie Schwartz comes to The Neighborhood School from River East Elementary School in East Harlem. She teaches fourth and fifth grade. Stephanie enjoys singing and playing the guitar and leads a singing group during extended day.

Her favorite part of teaching at the Neighborhood School so far is project time and all of the activities kids come up with. She especially enjoyed teaching students how to carve soap like Naomi Leon, from the book *Becoming Naomi Leon*.

Alexis Neider previously taught the Spanish component of the second-grade dual language program at P.S. 155 William Paca School in East

Harlem, New York. Last year she developed and executed an ESL through Technology after-school class with nine of her students there. Alexis participated this year in Programa Binacional de Educación Migrante (Bilingual Program on the Education of Immigrant Students), a teacher exchange program through the Mexican consulate.

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Meet the New Teachers (cont.)

She has experience working in project-based museum education, outdoor education, physical and art education.

Alexis studied abroad in Ecuador for one semester where she developed her Spanish skills. She has traveled to ten Latin American countries as well as Benin, West Africa and is fully bilingual and biliterate (English/Spanish).

Erica London comes to The Neighborhood School from Achievement First, a charter school in Brooklyn. She is teaching 1st and 2nd grade. Erica loves the hands-on and collaborative learning approach at The Neighborhood School. She

especially loves the creative projects that the students produce at work time. In her free time, Erica likes to read, cook, and spend time with family and friends. She is getting married this June.

Mallory Grundstein is the school's new occupational therapist. Prior to working at the Neighborhood School, Mallory was a travel therapist, which gave her the chance to travel around the country and experience living briefly in different cities.

It was also a great opportunity to practice hiking, one of her favorite activities. She chose The Neighborhood School because she loved the atmosphere and the

philosophy of the school. She says, "I'm loving it. The whole staff has really been helpful and the kids have been so much fun." (bios by Maria Muentes)

Rachael Canaday is from Tennessee. She has taught for three years and is a very nice teacher who makes learning fun. In a lesson about the brain, she had the class make sculptures of the brain. She likes to keep her class organized and neat. She doesn't get frustrated if kids in the class misbehave. She is very kind and friendly. (by Jamie Cooke, 4th grader in Rachael's class)

BUY AN AD!

In the next issue of this newsletter, we plan to start selling ad space to Neighborhood School families and local businesses.

It's an inexpensive and fun way to shout out to the school community and support the PTA.

If you would like to place an ad or would like to help solicit ads for us, please contact heatherpotts@gmail.com

IMPORTANT DATES:

:
Nov 26/27: Thanksgiving vacation

Dec 6: Holiday Fair

Dec 24 - 1/1: Christmas break

Newsletter team: Joy Press, Maureen Cooke, Heather Potts and Maria Muentes. If you'd like to help on future newsletters, please email Joy at joypress@gmail.com

News from the Library

By Cheryl Wolf, Librarian

The library's fifth birthday is coming up (before that, Neighborhood school had no library at all), and we will have a celebration in May. Please email me at mckinleylibrary@gmail.com if you would like to help with planning, organizing, or helping out with the celebration!

The total budget for books is \$6.25 per year per child (from NY State; NYC gives nothing). So our continued existence and support from the school community are testaments to committed administration and community.

New: Digital Books Available

We now have available through our website a collection of digital books.

These interactive books allow children to practice reading along while listening to a recorded version of stories. BookFlix™ from Scholastic pairs traditional video storybooks with related nonfiction ebooks.

Tumblebooks is a collection of animated, talking picture books. You can access these online resources and others through our Library's website.

Here's how:

- 1) Go to the McKinley Library website: <http://www.mckinleylibrary.org>
- 2) On the left-hand column, click on the ebooks page. I have provided the usernames and passwords for our subscription databases in the screenshot below:
- 3) Explore and enjoy these sites with your child(ren). And please let me know what you think!