December 2007 Volume 10, Issue 4

# the HARRINGTON HERALD

Harrington School • 328 Lowell Street • Lexington, MA 02420 • (781) 860-0012

Elaine Mead, Principal Suzanne Cherenson & Mary Ann Stewart, PTA Co-Presidents

#### A Message from the Principal

- Elaine Mead emead@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us

Building a strong relationship between home and school is an important goal for supporting and improving student achievement. Two-way communication is a priority. Your recent participation in Parent-Teacher Conferences provided a valuable contribution to our understanding of your child. Your perspective from home combined with the teacher's view of your child at school paint a more complete picture. The connection between faculty and families brings energy to our common goals for student growth and development. Our learning community is stronger when we work together.

In addition to the conferences, the last PTA meeting brought parents and teachers together to discuss parent involvement and ways to support student achievement at home. The conversation was lively and many ideas were exchanged. Those in attendance shared questions, suggestions, and ideas from their own experience. The caring and support that parents offered to each other that evening impressed me. Laughter and a spirit of "we are in this together" came through.

I am very grateful to have the opportunity to serve this wonderful community as your principal. I have come to understand that Harrington is a special place because of the many dedicated and caring people here. I look forward to continuing our journey together. Please stay connected to the school and participate whenever possible.

If I can be of assistance to you please call the school office at 781-860-0012 or email me at emead@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us.

#### A Message from PTA Co-President

- Suzanne Cherenson dsacher12i@rcn.com

"Good morning, Harrington School, Mrs. Donovan speaking". These are the first words that most of us hear when we call the school for any of a thousand different reasons, and Mrs. Donovan has been there for nearly 14 years to handle it all. From her command central in the office, she hears, sees and knows just about everything going on with our school. As Mrs. Donovan nears her retirement date, we had a chance to talk about her years at Harrington and in Lexington, as well as a few other things!

Mrs. Donovan was raised in Watertown, one of 6 kids and 1 of 5 sisters. She is the parent of 3 children and 4 grandchildren and was a stay at home mom for about 12 years. In 1980, Mrs. Donovan joined the Lexington Public School system as an aide at Harrington School, stayed for 3 years and then became a secretary at Bowman School. She came back to Harrington in 1993 when the new principal David Crump arrived. Her children attended the former Franklin School until it closed and then Bridge School. As both a parent of kids in the Lexington Schools and a staff member at Harrington, Mrs. Donovan has a wealth of experience that has enriched the lives of the students, parents, teachers and staff.

...Continued on page 2

### **December CALENDAR**

**12** - Gr. 4 & 5 - chorus, band, and string concert: 9:00am performance for school

**13** - Gr. 4 & 5 chorus, band, and string concert: 9:00am performance for parents

**19** – Mrs. Donovan's Retirement Party 6:00 - 7:45 PM, Harrington Cafeteria

24-31- Winter Vacation, No school

#### **PTA Message** continued from page 1...

Mrs. Donovan has the distinction of having the most seniority of all of the elementary school administrative assistants. For 26 years she has been active in the Lexington Education Secretaries' Association (LESA) and served as its President for 9 years. The 6 elementary school administrative assistants get together once a month and share ideas about many issues relating to the schools. Mrs. Donovan says that much of her job is really public relations, as she is the first contact many have with the school. Over the past 10 years many international families have joined the Harrington community and Mrs. Donovan has developed an ear for understanding nuances of English spoken by nonnative speakers and works hard to help families understand the complexities of the school system.

Mrs. Donovan loves to crochet afghans and has given them as gifts to many staff members at Harrington. She also has cooked home made manicotti for many lucky Harrington teachers and staff!

Mrs. Donovan will officially retire from Harrington right before the December winter break. She will overlap with the person who will be resuming her position for the week prior to the vacation. Mrs. Donovan plans to rest and relax for a bit during the winter, which according to her includes painting her house, and she and her husband are thinking about retiring to Cape Cod, most likely in Hyannis, from their present home in Waltham, sometime in the near future.

Mrs. Donovan has loved working at Harrington and especially noted the strong relationships and supportive environment for all in our school community. All of the current and past Harrington community will miss Mrs. Donovan and wish her all the best for the future. She has promised to return to Harrington for the talent show, 5th grade graduation and the evening concert performances. Please be sure to attend the celebration for Mrs. Donovan on Wednesday, December 19th at 6:00 pm in the Harrington School Cafetorium.

Get ready for HARRINGTON HOBBY NIGHT January 10th, Thurs. night from 7 - 8:15.

#### **School Nurse's Notes**

- Margaret Waugh, RNBSN mwaugh@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us

Vision and hearing referrals have been sent home by mail. Please return the referral form completed by your child's doctor to me, so that I can keep a current record of your child's health information. If you have received a referral notice, it is important that you make an appointment with your child's doctor as soon as possible. Clear vision and hearing is imperative for student learning.

Flu season is approaching. Massachusetts Department of Public Health recommends that all members of your family get immunized against the flu. The Town of Lexington supported this recommendation by conducting a Flu Clinic for all Town employees. Many of our teachers and staff took advantage of this opportunity early in November. Most HMO's and Primary Care Physicians are either offering Flu Clinics or have vaccine available on request. Please consider taking advantage of these opportunities. Your best defense against transmission of most communicable diseases is good hand washing. Remind your children to wash their hands after toileting and before eating.

#### **METCO Family Friends**

 Leslie Zales, METCO FF Coordinator LSZALES@rcn.com



As you know, there is not a Family Friends Visiting Day in December. We will resume in the new year on January 3. However, I'd like to take this opportunity to share a little information about Kwanzaa, an African American celebration that takes place Dec-Jan.

**Kwanzaa** is a unique African American celebration with focus on the traditional African values of family, community responsibility, commerce, and self-improvement. Kwanzaa is neither political nor religious and despite some misconceptions, is not a substitute for Christmas. It is simply a time of reaffirming African-American people, their ancestors and culture. Kwanzaa, which means "first fruits of the harvest" was founded in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, and

has come to be observed by more than 18 million people worldwide. When establishing Kwanzaa, Dr. Karenga included an additional "a" to the end of the spelling to reflect the difference between the African American celebration (kwanzaa) and the Motherland spelling (kwanza).

Kwanzaa is based on the Nguzo Saba (seven guiding principles), one for each day of the observance, and is celebrated from December 26th to January 1st.

- Umoja (oo-MO-jah) Unity stresses the importance of togetherness for the family and the community.
- 2. **Kujichagulia** (koo-gee-cha-goo-LEE-yah) Self-Determination requires that we define our common interests and make decisions that are in the best interest of our family and community.
- Ujima (oo-GEE-mah) Collective Work and Responsibility reminds us of our obligation to the past, present and future, and that we have a role to play in the community, society, and world.
- 4. **Ujamaa** (oo-JAH-mah) Cooperative economics emphasizes our collective economic strength and encourages us to meet common needs through mutual support.
- 5. **Nia** (NEE-yah) Purpose encourages us to look within ourselves and to set personal goals that are beneficial to the community.
- Kuumba (koo-OOM-bah) Creativity makes use of our creative energies to build and maintain a strong and vibrant community.
- Imani (ee-MAH-nee) Faith focuses on honoring the best of our traditions, draws upon the best in ourselves, and helps us strive for a higher level of life for humankind.

#### A Farewell Party for Mrs. Donovan



- Kirsty Collis,
kirstycollis@comcast.net
- Naomi Kielar,
nbkiel@verizon.net

As most of you know, Mrs. Donovan has decided to retire and will be leaving Harrington at the end of December. We would like to give all students (current and past), parents, friends and colleagues a chance to say goodbye and good luck to this wonderful woman who has touched all of us and will be sorely missed.

WHEN: Wednesday, December 19th

TIME: 6:00 -7:45 pm

WHERE: Harrington School Cafeteria

Sandwiches, salads and desserts will be served. **RSVP** to Kirsty Collis or to Naomi Kielar in order for the right amount of food to be ordered. If you are interested in helping organize this party, please contact Kirsty or Naomi.



#### **Holiday Gift Giving**

- Chris Gerzon

As we approach the holiday season, many of us will be buying gifts for children. The media has managed to

spread fear about the safety of all toys with recent stories of lead paint in toys manufactured in China. While these fears are based on legitimate concerns, there is another compelling reason to provide safe toys not only for children's physical well-being but for their emotional and spiritual development. Advertisements tell us we should buy toys for their educational value and almost every toy manufactured today is billed as "educational" as a way to sell it.

The truth is that we need to support our children's emotional and spiritual development first. Toys are the tools that children use to engage in meaningful and creative play. A good toy allows the child to be in charge of the play. The child feels powerful and can use the toy to express whatever s/he wants and in the process learns more about her/himself and the world.

Many of the toys on the market today are devoid of any play value because they take the power of play away from the child. The child becomes merely an operator of the toy pushing this button or that to get the toy to make a noise or light up. The child becomes a solitary, passive player waiting to be entertained. The opportunity for feeling the joy of self-expression and imagination is lost. Without these vital early experiences of quality play, children never have the chance to develop a sense of competence and creativity. They become "play deprived" (we all know what it is like to be sleep deprived).

Since play is the central vehicle children have for learning about the world, this deprivation has a devastating effect on their ability to learn and on their emotional and spiritual well-being. Children do not learn about their own interests and talents. Later they become more likely to seek outside stimulation and entertainment rather than to look

inside for satisfaction and peace.

Do you remember the toys you grew up with? Did they light up? Did they change colors or morph? Did you need to sit down for hours in front of a screen to play? Probably not. Traditional toys were not high tech and yet we were engaged with these classic toys like balls, bikes, blocks, board games, crayons, dress-up clothes, puzzles and stuffed animals for hours. Or we were outside playing with natural objects like sticks, rocks, sand, water, leaves and mud making up our own stories with our friends and acting them out.

Do you remember how exhilarated you were to pretend you were the leader of the pack or to finally ride your bike without training wheels? Or how disappointed you were to be chosen last for the game? We learned vital emotional and social skills with our play that help us even today as we work with our colleagues in our jobs.

I have been a member of a group of dedicated teachers whose goal is to provide parents with information and guidance as they choose toys for their children. We are determined to counteract the toy industry's attitude that our children are a "market" for media-linked, single purpose, expensive, plastic toys that channel children's play into imitating the stories they see on the media instead of supporting them to create their own stories. Teachers Resisting Unhealthy Children's Entertainment (TRUCE) has a comprehensive guide to choosing toys of value. This guide, as well as other useful information, can be found on our website, Truce Teachers

Toys of value can be used over and over again in many ways depending on the skill and age of the child. These toys are truly educational because they allow the child to guide the play in the way s/he wants. The best toy I ever bought for my own children was a set of wooden blocks which they used everyday for years making all kinds of structures and imaginary worlds.

This holiday season you can enrich a child's emotional and spiritual development while insuring that those long winter hours will be filled with rich, imaginative play with toys that will last for years. And you might even be tempted to join that child yourself for some truly memorable play together.

Chris is retired Harrington teacher and a life

coach for women specializing in career, parenting, and relationships.

#### Gifts to the School and Staff

Staff members at Harrington are very professional and care greatly about their students. Parents often ask how

to show their gratitude for all their work. Simple words of thanks and appreciation are always welcome. Notes of appreciation are cherished by staff at all times of the year. In addition, your support of PTA and LEF fundraising benefits teachers and students alike.

Staff members are public employees, and as such are subject to the State's Conflict of Interest Law (General Law Chapter 268A) and State Ethics Committee rules. These state that we may not accept any gift that is of "substantial value," that is, no more than \$50. This includes meals, tickets to events, services, or holiday gifts, among other things. This \$50 limit applies to groups of people with a common interest (for example, members of the same class). Therefore, families in the same class may not combine their resources to purchase an individual teacher gift valued at \$50 or more. This law is in place to ensure that everyone served is treated equally and that no one has or might be perceived to have special advantages or influence.

Please note that this applies even if the purpose of the gift is merely a "token of gratitude for a well-done job or is given out of desire to maintain the public employee's good will." Parents may donate items to the school or the classroom. There is a Teacher Wish List Binder in PTA Central in the Harrington School Lobby. If you have questions, please contact Room Parent Coordinators, Kerry Heyda and Lisa Smith or Elaine Mead, Principal.

TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor are needed to see this picture.

### Turn your everyday shopping into contributions for our school!

How would you like to start earning money for our school every day – just by shopping? Now you can! We have enrolled in the Schoolpop Shop & Earn<sup>TM</sup> program, a year-round shopping program that allows you to earn contributions for our school

through everyday purchases. It's absolutely FREE! It's so simple! All you have to do is register with Schoolpop and start shopping online at www.schoolpop.com with hundreds of merchants. A percentage of each purchase goes right back to our school!

### Here's how to get started--Just in time for the holidays...

- Go to www.schoolpop.com and click Join. Choose Harrington Elementary School to receive the contributions from your purchases. Our school ID # is 122645.
- Fill out your Profile Information and choose your Preferences. Remember to register your debit and credit cards on Schoolpop's secure server so that our school earns the contributions from your purchases you make in-store and online at hundreds of national and local merchants.
- When you're ready to shop, go to schoolpop.com and search your favorite merchants, including Oriental Trading Company, The Gap, Lands' End, Kohls, Pottery Barn, L.L.Bean, Staples, etc.

Remember, the more you shop through Schoolpop, the more you earn for our school! Enroll TODAY at www.schoolpop.com!

The Green Team Ellen Cameron, eusol@aol.com

The Green Team ideas for December: Re-use, Re-cycle, Re-think. What do I mean by that?

I **Re-use:** use gift bags, gift boxes, plastic bags: these can all be used over and over again. When you use a gift bag, leave the tag attached to it blank, so it can be used again and again. and even re-gift.

Re-cycle:: Don't throw away wrapping paper. it is much easy to put everything we unwrap this holiday season in a trash bag. Give the environment a gift and have a throw out and a re-cycle pile. Wrapping paper can be re-cycled. So can the boxes that toys and gifts come in.

Re-think: Put holiday lights on timers, shut lights off and the TV when you aren't in a room, Turn the computers off, or sleep mode when they aren't in use.

Thanks for thinking about the list suggestions. Please send any suggestion you may have.

#### The Wellness Corner Kathy Pike kpike1@alumni.tufts.edu

Ahhh, the holidays! December gift-giving time! The media show us that it should be the most wonderful time of the year, yet many of us (most of us?) feel like it's the most stressful and most expensive time of the year! We want our children to have what they want, but it's not always possible and it may not be the practice we want to teach. Can mindfulness be a part of gift-giving?

Over the years, some great ideas and alternatives have come my way to help. This list is not to say that I won't \*also\* buy from my kids' top picks on their wish lists, because I will! Their happiness is very important to me, but I also want to keep the ever increasing snowball of their wants & "keeping up with the Jones'" at a reasonable and thoughtful size ... No matter what your tradition or culture of giving, December can end up being the Grand Central Station of Gifts in both volume and noise! Here are a few ideas that make me feel good and hopefully that connect my kids to a larger picture ...

Whether you give gifts nightly or all in one night:

- Sibling Night/Gift or Cousin Night/Gift kids' turn to give to each other
- Movie Night/Gift whole family goes out to the movies
- Pajama night (includes giving pj's and wearing them together! Goes well with Game night, where you can all play games in your pj's!)
- Book Night/Gift
- Giving to others (setting aside, but making public to the whole family, a small amount of money or gift that will go to someone or an organization in need)
- "Nana" Night/Gift, that special gift from a special person in the kids' lives who has died.
   The gift that "Nana" (or whomever) would have wanted you to have.

This last one is my favorite, since my mother died long before the kids were born. It's one tangible way of keeping her in their lives year after year. I make sure I select a truly thoughtful gift they can remember for years (and they do!) ... soft, cuddly, fleece blankets, themed especially for each child, miniature wooden treasure chests with a secret message or blessing inside from her, etc.)

From another angle, the <a href="www.TruceTeachers.org">www.TruceTeachers.org</a> site has some great thoughts on our kids and their exposure to entertainment (toys and tv). TRUCE stands for Teachers Resisting Unhealthy Children's Entertainment. Their list of guides includes a whole section on gift-giving ideas and alternatives, including this "shoebox" idea.

### http://www.truceteachers.org/toyactionguide.html#shoebox

What? Give my kid a shoebox for a gift, you say? Check it out. It's a themed shoebox, decorated to match your younger child's interests. Inside will be themed smaller containers (bags, baggies, mini boxes that each contain parts to a larger theme: sensory fun, shoebox garden, nature explorer, playdoh, etc.) While the site is geared toward younger children, I'll bet some creative minds out there (you) could come up with an age-appropriate shoebox idea that could work for older kids, too. Even if it's a shoebox scavenger hunt to the gift?? There's much more on the site and well worth a peek. Happy and Safe Holidays to All.



#### **ACT Activities**

- Raana Khavandgar r67r@yahoo.com
- Amy Zaslow -

azaslow@alumnet.simmons.edu

#### A.C.T. (Arts Created Together) and Science Enrichment

We are happy to give you an update on the arts programs we have secured for this year.

Additional programming is in progress.

#### Kindergarten

- <u>David Polanski</u> 10/3/07 David Polanski is a performer, musician and composer. His show involves the audiences in may different ways: singing, dancing, movement, questions and answers, or on the spot lyric writing.
- <u>Ribbon Dancing</u> 3/5/08 Chiao Bin Huang performs a beautiful Chinese Ribbon Dance and works with students to create their own.

#### First Grade

Abraham Lincoln

Presenter will recreate Abraham Lincoln's life from when he was 8 and older with many costume changes

 <u>Author visit</u> – teachers are selecting an author from a list provided

#### **Second Grade**

- <u>Abraham Lincoln</u> 2/8/08 Presenter will recreate Abraham Lincoln's life from when he was 8 and older with many costume changes
- <u>Native American Catherine Hunter</u> 11/5/07 Presentation of a program that combines storytelling, authentic artifacts from across the continent and a hands-on craft. Catherine Hunter talked about the Southwest, Northwest Coast, Plains and Wampanoag native Americans.

#### **Third Grade**

 The story of Anansi: The Trickster Spider (this is part of the Scott Foresman reading book)
 2/25/08

Presented as musical adaptation of a traditional story from Ghana based on the famous folk tale of Anansi-the Trickster Spider. Through preperformance workshops, children become part of the show.

• <u>Baystate Educators</u> 3/31/08
This program looks at the child's life in the 1750's America through the clothing of both boys and girls, the education of the child, toys and games of the Colonial America, the hunter-trapper and his accouterments.

#### **Fourth Grade**

- Archaeology 10/5/07
- Field trip to National Heritage Museum. In the lab setting, through a combination of instruction, demonstration, and active participation, our museum teachers will acquaint the students with the methods and processes that an archeologist uses in the field and back at the lab.
- <u>Darden Smith Be and Artist</u> 4/14/08 The goal of this program is to show children that we are all artists, that every action of our day has the potential to be art, and that each of us possess the raw tools to make this a reality using our own natural creative abilities. Each class will create their own song on CD.

#### Fifth Grade

Art Quest 12/7/07

A survey of the ancient cultures of South America and Mexico with a focus on the Inca and Aztec. This program presents an opportunity for students to observe the unique characteristics of the objects created that represent the way of life, the natural resources and beliefs of the people that lived long ago.

• <u>BSO</u> 2/1/08 Field trip to Symphony Hall for a students concert

#### **All School**

• <u>Meet the Musicians</u> 4/28/08 Actor and pianist Dennis Kobray will take on the persona of Ludwig Beethoven. The audience discovers first-hand the music, feelings, life and history of one of the world's most famous composers.

#### Science

We are working with Mrs. Mead and the teachers to select science enrichment programs for this school year. If anyone would like to **volunteer** to help us coordinate that effort please email Amy Zaslow at azaslow@alumnet.simmons.edu or call 781-860-0987.

#### Save the Date

Tuesday, January 16<sup>th</sup> Harrington PTA Meeting 8:45am-10:00am

The PTA Board would like to extend a special invitation to all2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Parents
All Harrington Parents Invited

#### Topic:

Dr. Nina Englander, Chiropractor, will be talking on Wellness.

Can't wait? Check out Nina's site at www.englanderchiro.com

Babysitting - Yes of Course!
Contact Regina Wiryaman to RSVP for childcare
at school during the meeting:
regina.wiryaman@rcn.com

QuickTime™ and a TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor

Happy Holidays everyone. You are doing so well handing in those Box Tops from those Ziploc, Cheerios, Bisquick and other boxes! The buses, the pumpkins and the turkeys just rolled in every Tuesday morning. We love seeing everyone. Thanks to the Resnick Family for counting all the Box Tops! They counted, and counted, and counted. Thanks to everyone who contributed since the beginning of September, we have made \$275 for the Harrington PTA. That is over 2,700 box tops! Well done everyone! Keep saving, we have the whole year to collect and some very cool prizes. Don't forget to ask your aunts, uncles and grandparents to save them for you too. See you on Tuesday mornings. If you want to check out the Box Top website for some cool promotions and recipe ideas it is http://www.boxtops4education.com/. Have a great holiday season! The Box Top Ladies.

# Giftwrap Fundraiser Raises More Than \$5,800 for Our School!

Thank you all who ordered from Sally Foster this year! A special thanks to those family members and students who made an extra effort to ask colleagues, neighbors and family to order! Please check your orders immediately. Last chance to correct any mistakes is Friday, December 2nd. Also, if you would like to order any additional items, please let me know by that date. Delivery is still guaranteed before Christmas. You can also still place online orders at www.sallyfoster.com using Harrington's Group # 0066919. Online orders will be shipped directly to you. We will continue to receive 50% of online orders made before January 1, 2008. A special thanks to Lisa Smith and Linda Resnick for their invaluable help in distributing the delivery! Contact me with questions at: lauracecere@gmail.com.



...Duncan Stewart who spent many, many hours creating the new Harrington directories – they look great!!

...everyone who facilitated a great November PTA meeting - especially: Amy
 Chamberlain, Mary Yardley, Geri O'Neill, Denise Omobono, Beth Nasson, Kathy Martin, Mary Turo, and Elaine Mead...Kindergarten and First Grade parents who provided treats for the meeting: Katie Cutler, Michelle Mabardy, Jennifer Bergantino, Linda Resnick, and Jennifer Gerfen...and Regina Wiryaman for coordinating and

supervising childcare at the meeting, **especially to Stephanie Wiryaman**, **Colleen Hughes**, **and Katie Burke** - all Harrington alums - who did the sitting!

Congratulations to both the **Harrington Hawkettes** and the **Harrington Trivia Raptors** for an outstanding night of trivia fun on November 8<sup>th</sup> at Cary Hall. The Raptors survived Swarm 2 through the second "white board" round before losing out on one of the most difficult questions of the night! The Hawkettes emerged victorious from Swarm 1 to advance to the Final Swarm!! Both teams were cheered on by a supportive gang of Harrington adults and kids – many of whom made posters and were decked out in Harrington sweatshirts and tees. Pictured left to right: **Jeanne Clifford, Flavia Vidal, Ellen Cameron (Hawkettes), John Mace, Peggy Gibson, & Kurt Klinzing (Trivia Raptors)**.

<u>Special Thanks:</u> I would like to thank all of the parents who volunteered to help on School Picture Day - Lisa Smith, Karen Skoff, Ellen Cameron, Marjolein Karelse, Larissa Lezina, Jiyoung Kim, Cynthia Cummings, Giulia Paliotti, Laura Parry, Genevieve Ng, and Dede Duncan-Probe. Without all of you Picture Day would never have run so smoothly. Your help is truly appreciated. I hope you had as much fun with it as I did. Thanks again, Carol Riselli.

## the Harrington Herald

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The Harrington Herald is the monthly newsletter of the Harrington PTA, published ten times a year. In keeping with the PTA Newsletter Policy, the Herald will print items directly related to the schools and their PTA's. This includes curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities that are PTA - or system-supported, and school-sanctioned projects. All articles are subject to editorial discretion.

Newsletter material may be emailed to Cristina Burwell (see above). If you cannot email your submission, please call her to make other arrangements for delivery.

Visit the Harrington School Web Site at <a href="http://harrington.lexingtonma.org">http://harrington.lexingtonma.org</a>.

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Next Submissions Deadline: December 20, 2007