



# The Owl's Hoot

Sol Feinstone  
Elementary School  
PTO Newsletter

January 2009

## **PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE**

Happy New Year! I am sure everyone had a busy, but fun-filled break. I always love January, a cold, calm month to sit back and relax while recovering from the hustle and bustle of the holidays. However, the PTO won't let you rest because the next few months are filled with exciting activities for all.

Please mark your calendars and plan on attending our January 8th PTO meeting. Our Superintendent, Mark Klein, will be there to discuss possible solutions for increasing the security of our school. He will also be there to address other concerns you may have regarding our school or district.

January 12-15 will be Council Rock Education week. While you are coming in to visit your children's classrooms, our hospitality committee will be busy behind the scenes providing refreshments. If you would like to help out, please contact Danielle Portnoy.

Our "cool" new Mother/Son Sports Challenge Night will be held on January 23rd at the Newtown Athletic Club (NAC). This fun night of friendly competition will allow Mother/Son teams to participate in many events including tug-of-war, an obstacle course, and scooter races. Please make sure to register early since space is limited at this event.

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## **Reminders**

1/8	PTO Meeting
1/12-15	CR Education Week
1/16	School closed
1/19	School closed
1/23	Mother/Son Challenge
1/31	Wizards Game

**January's Words to Learn by:**  
**Improve, Be Understanding, and Encourage**

## **FROM OUR PRINCIPAL: JOHN HARLAN**

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The first half of the school year is now complete and as we begin the New Year, Council Rock Education Week is right around the corner. CR Education Week runs from Monday, January 12<sup>th</sup> to Thursday, January 15<sup>th</sup>. From Monday, January 12<sup>th</sup> through Wednesday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, visitation is from 9:30

am to 2:30 pm. During this time, parents have the opportunity to visit their child's classroom. It is a wonderful chance to observe children in a natural school setting. Plus, parents see the great work our teachers do to contribute to the children's academic and social educational experience each and every day.

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## **FROM OUR PRESIDENTS (continued)**

January 2009

Registrations will be accepted on a first-come/first-served basis.

Our Harlem Wizards' game is scheduled for January 31<sup>th</sup>. This should be a fun night for our students and parents as they cheer on our favorite SFE teachers and staff members playing basketball against the Harlem Wizards. Special thanks to all of the SFE staff who will be playing and cheering!!

Enjoy January!

Sincerely,  
Kim Gibbons and Deb Emery  
SFE PTO Co-Presidents

## **FROM OUR PRINCIPAL (continued)**

Thursday, January 15<sup>th</sup>, is not a visitation day. It is a day to attend our workshop series presented by staff members. Topics include *The Responsive Classroom*, *Understanding Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder*, *Helping Your Child to Select Appropriate Reading Materials*, and *The Myths and Realities of Inclusion*. More specific information about this day and the entire week will be available during the first week of January 2009.

On a personal note, I want to thank all of you for your support throughout the first part of the school year. Sol Feinstone is a special place because we are all working together as a team and as our school motto states, "We Never Rest Until We Do Our Best!" Have a happy, healthy, safe, and wonderful holiday season and we'll see you in 2009.

Enjoy,  
Mr. Harlan



***Developing Empathy in Children***

Teaching empathy is an important step in helping children grow into responsible adults. Children that have developed the skill of empathy are able to show concern for another person's situation or feelings. They have learned to appreciate what they have and often look to how they can help others. Children that have not developed empathy are not able to relate to what others are feeling. These children will sometimes tease or bully because they lack the ability to understand how they are making another child feel. The good news is that empathy is a skill that can be taught to our children as they grow. The person with the greatest ability to help your child develop empathy is you! As a parent, you have the most influence on your child's development.

Empathy is a two step process. It involves recognizing another person's feelings and then successfully imagining what that person is feeling. Here are a few important points to remember when teaching your child empathy:

**A child is most influenced to learn empathy from his/her parents/caregivers.**

As a parent, our most important job is to be a good role model. A child will be able to learn empathy when they see his/her parents displaying empathy. This means:

- Show your child what it means to be empathetic.
- Teach empathy by explaining how others may be feeling during everyday situations.
- Show your child the importance of treating others with respect and kindness.

Here are some other tips on specific empathy skills that can help your child.

**Teach basic feeling words.**

The first step in teaching empathy is teaching your child basic feeling words. To be able to recognize another person's feelings, a child must be able to label and understand feelings. If your child is upset, use it as an opportunity to talk about feelings. Something as basic as discussing feelings teaches your child the language that will be used to identify feelings in the future.

**Teach your child to put himself/herself in someone else's shoes.**

This is the most important aspect in developing empathy. A child needs to learn what someone else is feeling in order to be successful at empathizing. For example, when you see someone treating another person badly it can be used as an opportunity to discuss how actions can affect those around us. You could ask your child to imagine how the person is feeling. Then ask your child to imagine how they would feel.

**Pay attention to your child's social life.**

When parents are involved with their child's social life, they are able to show their children the importance of treating others with kindness.

**Involve your family in charitable activities.**

Volunteering as a family can show your child the importance of helping others. It is a great way to allow your child to see how others need assistance and that everyone has the ability to help!

**Reinforce your child for any empathetic behavior you see them display!**

Anytime your child displays the empathetic behavior you are trying to teach, let him/her know. Parental approval is a great tool for helping positive behavior.

The points outlined above are the building blocks that will help your child become an empathetic child. Helping our children learn empathy will enable them to become conscientious adults that strive to help others. This could be one of the greatest gifts we can give to our growing children.

**Reminder for Physical and Dental Exam Forms**

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Earlier this year, reminders were sent home regarding the state-required physical and dental forms. Kindly note that school physical and dental forms are due now for this school year. The Pennsylvania state requirements for these exams are as follows;

- ◆ Physical Exam forms are required for ALL of the following:
  - ◆ K or 1<sup>st</sup> grade (the year of school entry)
  - ◆ 6<sup>th</sup> grade
  - ◆ out of state transfers this year
- ◆ Dental Exam forms are required for ALL of the following:
  - ◆ K or 1<sup>st</sup> grade (the year of school entry)
  - ◆ 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
  - ◆ out of state transfers this year

Please note, as in previous years, those students without the required forms on hand in the Health Office may face withholding of field trip privileges, and possibly final report cards. Your *prompt* response to this additional reminder would be greatly appreciated.

The forms may be accessed and printed from the 'Nurse' webpage on the Sol Feinstone website, and are also available in the shelves immediately outside the Health Office.

Thank you,

Mrs. Daniels

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**Thank you to all who attended this month's  
PTO meeting with special guest,  
Superintendent Mark Klein!**

**PTO BULLETINS**

January 2009

**Birthday Books**

Cassandra Lockett 215-369-0191

Karen Mealey 215-493-8658

The following students have recently celebrated their birthdays by donating books to the library:

Christopher Farese

Kaleigh O'Donnell

Monica O'Donnell

Julia Nenner

Zachary Newman

Shayna Pellen

Noah Pellen

Henry Polli

Hannah Thomson

Taylor Viola

We thank these children and their families for their lasting gift to Sol Feinstone's library.

**Family Activities Committee Update**

Jennifer Ceslak  
(215-504-5688)

The Mother Son Challenge will be held on January 23<sup>rd</sup> from 7:00 – 9:00 pm at the NAC. Mother and son teams will compete against other mother/son teams in fun games such as tug of war, pillow polo hockey, scooter relay races, and an obstacle course. There will also be dancing and hip hop lessons for those who want to feel the beat!

The cost is \$25 per mother/son team and \$5 for each additional son. Admission includes the fun, snacks, and a keepsake keychain photo. Be sure to wear your favorite team gear too.

Please note that we are limited to 300 participants due to NAC regulations. We have received a large number of responses already so please don't delay. We apologize in advance if we reach capacity before you register.