

Principally Speaking . . .

Pequannock Valley Middle School — Pompton Plains, New Jersey
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"NJ School of Character"

January 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As we approach the midway point of the school year, it makes sense to reflect on what we have started and what we have accomplished. With the great improvement in student achievement recorded at the end of 2007-08, we know we will have to work hard to replicate that effort. Our focus has been on using what we learned last year to promote student success without the same level of stress experienced by some last year. I am confident that our faculty is meeting the mark and that we will be equally proud of this year's gains in student achievement once testing is completed in April and May of 2009!

During the month of January, we also begin to prepare our eighth grade students for their move into high school. The first of our transition programs is scheduled for Thursday, January 15. This program is called the "Four Years and Beyond" and our eighth grade students and their parents are invited to attend an informational program at Pequannock Township High School starting at 7 PM in the High School Auditorium. This program will provide information about selecting a high school schedule which will adequately prepare our students for post-secondary education. A letter of invitation will be forthcoming from the High School early in the new year.

There are several other opportunities for parents to attend programs this month. On Thursday, January 22, we will hold our regular meeting of the PV School Home and School Association. A topical presentation will be followed by a brief business and planning meeting. On Wednesday, January 28, there will be a parent education program held at Pequannock High School for all interested parents. This program, entitled "Eating Disorders" will be presented in the PTHS Cafeteria from 7-9 PM.

On Thursday, January 29, we will sponsor another transition activity here at PV School. This program is called "A Night of HOPE" and will be held in our Gym and Cafe from 6:45-8:45 PM. Eighth graders will participate in a program planned by Mrs. Montalbetti and the High School HOPE group. The evening will end with small group activities and a pizza party where our eighth graders will get to know the high school peer leaders. We are putting together an additional program on that evening for eighth grade parents given by members of the high school guidance staff. More information and a program announcement will be forthcoming when we return from Winter Break.

Let me also remind you that there will be an early dismissal on Tuesday, January 27. PV students will be dismissed at 12:41 PM as teachers will be participating in half-day professional development programs that afternoon.

Wishing you and yours a Happy and Healthy New Year!

Sincerely,

Dr. William H. Trusheim
Principal

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PEQUANNOCK VALLEY NEWS

JANUARY 2009



PV HOLIDAY CONCERTS A HUGE SUCCESS!

On Tuesday, December 9, the PV School Music Department presented two holiday concerts to a packed house. The first concert featured the Sixth Grade Band, the String Orchestra, and the Choir and the second concert featured the Seventh Grade Band and the Eighth Grade Band. More than half of the student body participated in these programs under the leadership of Mr. Richard Summers, Mr. Jeff Foth, Mrs. Janelle Heise, Mr. Joseph DeVizio, and also Mr. Bill Vivino who served as accompanist to the choir. All of the groups gave outstanding performances which were indicative of the hard work put in by both students and faculty. Congratulations to all who made these concerts a special part of the holiday celebration in our community.

Quiz Show Assembly Challenges PV's Brain Power!

One of our students' favorite assemblies each school year is the "Brain Challenge" Quiz Show. Each grade level gets the chance to strut their stuff as they answer questions of appropriate difficulty for points and a chance to show what they know. As always, the Brain Challenge, who visited PV on December 11, sparked student enthusiasm in the spirit of friendly competition. Even some of the staff got a chance to compete! "Al," the host of the show, also challenged our students with physical challenges such as "Simon Says" and Tugs of War. Above all it was impressive to see the scope of knowledge possessed by our middle school students! Everyone was a winner!



"Kids, Incorporated" Sponsors IRON CHEF - PV!

In December, three of Mrs. O'Neal's Kids Inc. 8th grade classes participated in our very first Iron Chef Competition. Teams of students competed to win the golden spoon award, a gift certificate for a snack, and of course the title of Iron Chef! In order to explore the true meaning of inventing a product, teams of students were challenged to cooperatively work together to create a new food product. Each team was given the same ingredients and were charged with preparing a delicious, original recipe in a single class period.

There was a great deal of excitement in the air as students hurried to complete their recipes. One class invited teachers to work with them! Ms. Asaro, Mr. Kneebone, Ms. Torrisi, and Mr. Zichelli bravely volunteered to participate! A panel of PV teachers and staff judged the entries based upon originality, appearance, texture, and taste. The winners were: Julia Mullaney, Jenn Murphy, Maria Viggiani, and Mr. Kneebone- fruit smoothie; Marissa Capobianco, Katherine Guzzo, Nina Kitele, and Natalie Lin - cheesecake; and Ben Foster, Jesse Roszkowski, Matt Spratt, and Jason Wright - berry smoothie.



Area Band Accepts Ten From PV

Ten members from our Band Program will be performing with the North Jersey Area Band in the month of January. This is the largest contingent of students that have been accepted into this honors ensemble. Members include Brandon Denman-tuba, Olivia Schreiber-tuba, Kevin Phalon-trombone, Linnea Fenske-Williams-bassoon, Taylor Grimes-flute, Caroline Greydak-clarinet, Leah Oliemuller-clarinet, Laura Sayre-trumpet, Chris Lundy-percussion, and Julia Wehrer-percussion. Students will attend rehearsals in January and perform in the Area Band Concert on Sunday, January 18, 2009 at Mount Olive High School.



PEQUANNOCK VALLEY NEWS

JANUARY 2009

Eighth Grade News...

PV Eighth Graders Prepare to "Take Action"

All of our eighth graders are contemplating how they can make a difference in our school and community through our annual "Take Action" projects. These projects are part of the eighth grade social studies curriculum combining research with service learning. During the months of December and January, students will be selecting issues or causes, doing some research, and creating action plans to address these issues. Implementation of the action plans will occur throughout the second semester. Some project ideas include a faculty-student basketball game, a volleyball tournament, a "Guitar Hero" contest, among other ideas. Issues to be addressed include homelessness, literacy, helping the needy,

"How It Works" Teaches Students About Home Systems

In our popular eighth grade elective called "How It Works" students learn how to wire electrical circuits, solder copper pipes, and do simple sheet rock. The students love working with their hands and feel that some practical knowledge will come in handy some day when they become home owners. Three of our students (Catherine Vedovino, Michael Flood, and Kyle Denos - pictured at right) show their project wall with electrical and plumbing connections.



Seventh Grade News...

"Lions, Tigers and Bears – Oh my!" The animal kingdom is the focus as students begin their adventure by learning about single cell organisms. They will become researchers to discover the answers to different case studies involving diseases. Academic math classes are exploring shapes like triangles and polygons as they begin their first unit on Geometry. Algebra students are expanding their knowledge of variables through algebraic fractions. Zeus, Hera, and Hades take the forefront in social studies classes as the students begin a unit on the Greeks. In Academic English, short stories and basic story structure will be the focus, while the Honors students begin reading novels of their own choice and completing independent reading projects. In all English classes, standardized test practice takes on a very important role as narrative and persuasive writing is practiced. Near the end of the month, an interdisciplinary project, based on environmental issues, will begin. A surprise guest speaker will give a presentation to the students and assignments in all four core subjects will follow.

Sixth Grade News...



Our "Shoebox Santas"

'Tis the season of giving and counting our blessings. Our sixth graders wanted to show how grateful they are for their health and happiness by becoming "Shoebox Santas." They have collected little, meaningful gifts to share with a child who is sick or in need, and wrapped these gifts in a decorated shoebox. Understanding that "it's the little things that count," our sixth graders hope to have brightened the holidays for those less fortunate!

PV's sixth graders wrote about their most memorable events and activities of 2008. First we brainstormed lists of favorites, then we selected three to write about in detail. Next our rough drafts were written and proofread and final copies were completed. Finally we put our present together with wrapping paper and a bow. What a wonderful keepsake and a great memory of 2008!



"Wrapping Up 2008"

Students Show PV Panther Pride as Winter Sports Teams Begin Their Seasons.

The winter sports season is probably our busiest season with three inter-scholastic sports teams plus cheering and color guard. Visiting the gymnasium on most days after school in the months of December and January, you will likely see a girls or boys basketball game, cheerleaders, color guard and even a panther mascot. Add the wrestling team in our cafeteria and you have a school where lots is happening. And, in addition, through the early weeks of the sports seasons, all of our teams are more than competitive with enviable won-lost records. The Winter Season lasts through the end of January, so come out and watch our students compete!

