

Principally Speaking . . .

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

November 2008

Dear Parents/Guardians,

November is always a special month at PV School. We have planned a variety of events to celebrate American Education Week, which will be held Monday, November 17 through Friday, November 21. We will hold a Principal's Coffee Hour on Tuesday, November 18 at 9:30 am in the Library Media Center. You will have the opportunity to participate in a discussion of a variety of school issues, enjoy some light refreshments, and join in the regular November meeting of the Home and School Association. On Wednesday, November 19, we are sponsoring a day of classroom visitations and we invite you to come to school and sit in on some or all of your child's classes. We ask that you notify our Guidance Department at 973-616-6060 to sign up for classes and times when you would like to visit. Our Drama Club will be presenting our Fall Drama Showcase on Friday, November 21 at 7:00 PM to cap off the week. I hope you will join us for one or more of these events.

As most of you already know, we have upgraded our student scheduling and grading software to the "Genesis" system. Genesis is a web-based product that simplifies access for both teachers and parents. Many of you have filled out our request forms for your contact information so that you can have access to the "Parent Portal" in Genesis. If you have not yet gained access, please send me an e-mail at the school using the account that you would use to look up grades and assignments. I will take care of having your e-mail address added to our database of parent contacts in Genesis.

Pequannock Valley School continues to take the lead in Character Education. We are entering our second year as a "Coach School" in a project called "Fostering Change in School Culture Through Character Education." This project is run by Rutgers University and it pairs schools with experience in their coaching model and expertise in character education with schools who desire to implement better character education experiences for their students. This year, our partner school is the Sussex Avenue School in Newark. This is a Pre-K - 8 school and we have already met with members of their administration and teaching staff to plan appropriate activities for this school year. We are looking forward to a productive relationship that will benefit both schools.

I hope you will be able to visit PV School sometime during the month of November to take part in one or more of our special events. I thank you for your support of our programs and I wish you a happy Thanksgiving with family and friends.

Sincerely,

Dr. William H. Trusheim
Principal

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PEQUANNOCK VALLEY NEWS

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ELECTION 2008!

This year's presidential election has drawn an exceptional amount of interest. Our students have looked at the candidates and the issues and will vote at the end of October as part of a statewide student initiative to encourage interest in the election. Student voters will go to the polls on Wednesday, October 29, and the results will be tabulated by grade, by school, and for all participating schools in the state. Our students will have the chance to express their opinions on the election through a variety of classroom activities that help them understand the issues as well as the candidates' positions on these issues. The results of the statewide student election will be shared in our next newsletter.



"JESSE'S JOURNEY" HELPS US CELEBRATE RED RIBBON WEEK



Jessica Ingino, Brianna Guttuso, Alex Gonzalez, and Kaitlyn Benson join Jesse and Maureen Morella for "Jesse's Journey"

Red Ribbon Week is the oldest and largest anti-drug and alcohol campaign in the country. It began in response to the murder of an undercover policeman trying to stop drug trafficking from Mexico to California. Friends and colleagues of the slain officer began to wear red ribbons in his memory.

We celebrate Red Ribbon Week every October using it as a vehicle to encourage our students to live drug and alcohol free. This year, we capped our celebration with assembly programs given by Maureen and Jesse Morella, accompanied by four high school juniors who, as eighth graders at PV School, chose as their "Take Action" project to produce a slide show about Jesse to encourage their classmates to make good decisions about the use of drugs and alcohol. Along with the Morellas, they

delivered a powerful message which should help our students make good decisions about drugs and alcohol. They also provided some practical advice about self-concept and self-image and spoke out against bullying.

PV School Gains National Recognition from the Character Education Partnership



Descriptions of our practices on display during Poster Show

On October 17, 18, & 19, the Character Education Partnership held its National Forum in Washington, DC. Pequannock Valley School received awards for two National Promising Practices in Character Education - one for "Book Blogging is Beneficial" and one for "Teen Action Council". The Blogging program was developed by Jeri Asaro and the Teen Action Council was an outgrowth of "Take Action" Projects. Past and present advisors of the Teen Action Council include Kathy Azrak, Donna Dykstra, Jim Zichelli, and Charles Crosby. The awards are on display at PV.



Dr. Trusheim receiving the awards in Washington, DC.

PV Photo Gallery . . .



Summer Reading Projects



Tracing characters from "Bull Run"



"Remote Control" Assembly



"Walk-to-School" Day

PEQUANNOCK VALLEY NEWS

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PV Student Leaders Attend Morris County's Youth Summit

On Wednesday, October 22, 12 students representing our Peer Leaders and Student Council attended the Youth Summit in Morristown. The program was sponsored by The United Way of Morris County as part of the "Youth Empowerment Alliance" (YEA). Ten middle schools from Morris County took part in a series of activities and discussions. The focus of the discussions dealt with problems that the students identified as being present in their schools. Some of the areas covered were cyber-bullying, cliques, feeling safe at school, peer pressure, dating, and drugs and alcohol. Students were given the opportunity to offer suggestions to improve or eliminate the problems. Students found the summit to be enjoyable, informative, and effective. A follow-up session is being planned for the spring of 2009.



Sixth Grade News...



Sixth graders enjoyed their first "Fun Night"

On Friday, October 24, our sixth grade class attended their first "Fun Night" sponsored by the PV Home and School Association. They enjoyed a variety of games, activities, and refreshments as they spent a social evening together. Thanks to the HSA and to the teacher chaperones who assisted with the activities that evening.

During the month of October, our school counselors interviewed all of our sixth grade students. Each student wrote a "Letter to My Counselor," contributed something interesting about themselves on a quilt square, and filled out a worksheet assessing themselves emotionally, socially, and intellectually. These activities help our counselors get to know each and every student in our school.

Seventh Grade News...

Legends come to life in seventh-grade English. Students are reading *The Black Pearl* and creating their own legendary creatures. Character Education is the focus as students read *The Misfits* by James Howe. In English Honors, students are beginning their second book of the year, entitled *Hatchet*. Gary Paulsen's novel is a survival novel, so students will be working in teams and playing Survivor (like the television series) in class. Which team will be the final survivor?

Presidential elections travel back to Mesopotamian times as students research *Hammurabi for President* using technology and a Web-quest format. Thirty special vocabulary words connected with the election are the focus in Social Studies and English classes. Students are using these words in various ways to build familiarity and understanding of their importance to democracy.

The *Building Blocks of Life* will be the focus in all science classes. Students will learn the chemistry behind lipids, proteins, and carbohydrates. Students will apply that knowledge to learning the structure of cells and cellular respiration.

Algebra classes are moving on to the basics of algebraic equations. Real-life applications include perimeter, cell phone plans, and amusement park admissions. In seventh grade math, students are focusing on using integers with decimals and fractions and applying their knowledge through student-constructed surveys.

Eighth Grade News...

Fluid Power! Fluid power as a power system is comprised of either hydraulic or pneumatic power, depending on the application. Fluid Power is now a part of the eighth grade *Tech Revolution* program. We use hydraulics and pneumatics in our automobile systems, in our heating systems, in elevators, and in manufacturing. These systems are an integral part of our everyday life and without them, our civilization would be set back to the late 1800's.

Hydraulic systems use liquids, usually a petroleum product, to convert, store, or transmit power. Pneumatic systems use air to perform these same functions. In our tech classes, we concentrate on using hydraulic power. A robotic arm is constructed from wood, transparent tubing, colored fluids and hydraulic pumps (small plastic plungers). These plungers are used to actuate a raising, lowering, pinching or turning of the robotic arm. Our students truly enjoy building their robotic arms while learning about this form of power.



Michael Flood and Tom Beck demonstrate their robotic arm.