

WELLINGTON

PTO NEWS

April 2008

EXECUTIVE CORNER

From PTO Executive Members Madeline Cronin and Heidi Steinert, Co-VPs of Community Events

The Wellington PTO sponsors many events throughout the school year that are designated as "community events." The PTO gives thoughtful consideration, when reviewing the PTO budget, to ensure that certain events take place with the sole purpose of bringing together and strengthening the Wellington community. Some events this past school year have been: *The Ice Cream Social*, *Pumpkin Fest*, *Multi-cultural Event* (Comics from Around the World), *Ice Skating Night*, *the Read-a-thon*, *Food Drives* and *Walk to School Days*.

Volunteer committees of dedicated parents/guardians run these events. Some of these committees are organized by people taking on the event for the first time, while others are run by those who annually commit to organizing certain events. Without the hard work and commitment of the volunteer committees, fueled by the desire for the community to come together and have fun, these events would not happen. Wellington

is a greatly enriched community as a direct result of such events.

The PTO Executive Board reviews each event after it takes place to determine the level of participation by the Wellington community. New event ideas are always welcome by the PTO. For instance, currently there is a group interested in having a Talent Show, and still another, a Math or Science event. These events are currently being reviewed for the 2008-09 school year. In addition, a program is being considered to welcome new families to the Wellington School, as well as a revival of a program to support students that are part of METCO (the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunities program). METCO is a voluntary integration program founded in 1966 that provides students from Boston with a suburban public school education.

The PTO needs parents/guardians to support these events, from volunteering on a committee to simply attending the event.

us with any questions/comments.

Madeline 484-3916 or Heidi 489-3385

“Without the hard work and commitment of the volunteer committees . . . these events would not happen.”

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PTO's MULTICULTURAL COMMITTEE PRESENTS...

Music and Dance Around the World!

TOMORROW NIGHT!

Join us on Friday the 11th from 5:30–7:30 pm for a night of *Music and Dance around the world*. Have dinner with food from around the globe (*don't forget to bring your favorite dish!*) and admire Wellington students performing regional dances from Ireland, Armenia and India. Come to the cafeteria and discover instruments you have never seen before! The Music and Dance Event also presents a special performance of the *Africa Great Lakes Ensemble*, sharing African traditional culture and heritage through music, dance, drumming, and poetry.

If you would like to show an instrument, bring food or help organize the event, please contact: *Suzanne Johannet* (sjohannet@yahoo.com), *Saskia Kenselaar* (kenselaar@verizon.net), or *Celia Chun* (chun_celia@hotmail.com)



WINTER CARNIVAL

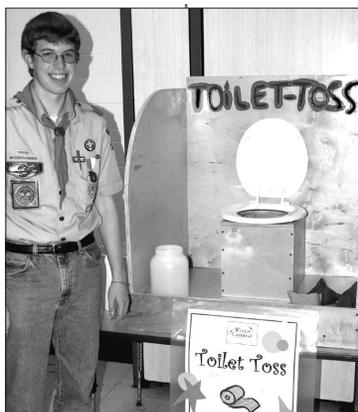
A HUGE Success!

Wellington PTO held its annual Winter Carnival on Saturday the 15th. There was a ton of warm fun to be had in the Wellington gymnasium and cafeteria over the weekend. The fair earned over \$9000 for the PTO.

Hundreds of people turned out and enjoyed moon bounces, great crafts, and the traditional book and bake sales. *The highlight this year was the donation of five new carnival*



games by *Will Boning*, a Wellington alum, current BHS student and eagle scout candidate. Will and Troop 304 Belmont, with scoutmaster Jeanne Starr, spent over 200 hours making these incredible games as Will's community service project. Chris Martino also deserves tremendous thanks for his woodworking expertise, his time and the use of his tools. Will approached the Wellington PTO in the fall of 2007 about making a lasting gift that would serve the school for many years to come. The parents were amazed at the quality of the workmanship of the games and the kids had a blast putting the games to the test!



The carnival is a Wellington School tradition and it takes a small army to execute. We would like to thank the following people and organizations for their hard work and donations: Thanks to all of the parents who volunteered to make this event a success, our appreciation goes out to the high school volunteers who kept the kids safe on the bouncy rides and provided some beautiful hairstyles. Thank you to the middle school face painters and pizza servers! Hats off to the St.

Joseph's youth ministry group who helped set up and break down our event in record time. Thank you, as always, to the Fitzgerald family for their generosity. A huge "thank you" to Jimmy and Tim, the Wellington custodial staff. Finally, thanks to the wonderful community businesses for their generous contributions.

Here is hoping for another rainy and cold day in March 2009!

Heidi Sawyer and Lynn Findlay
Co-chairs Wellington Winter Carnival

PTO SPONSORS ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

Read All About Them!

4th Grade

FOURTH GRADERS do extensive science units with Rocks and Minerals and Flowers/Plants. Last fall, the 4th graders visited the **Harvard Museum of Natural History** (part of Harvard University) for a classroom presentation on Rocks and Minerals as well as a tour of the rocks and minerals the Museum has on display. Students also observe the **Glass Flower exhibit**. The PTO generously pays for the busses as well as the admission to the museum and special class program.

As a supplement to our literature unit **Owls in the Family, Jim Parks** makes his annual pilgrimage from Western MA to Belmont, with his owls as well as other Birds of Prey. Students are truly fascinated to see these raptors in captivity (as they are too injured to be let back out into their natural habitat) while learning about the true behaviors of these majestic birds.

This spring, **Birgit deWeerd** brings some of her bees as well as a honeycomb and bee keeping equipment to each classroom. This is a wonderful opportunity for students to have the mysteries and misconceptions of **honeybees** dispelled as we actually use dead, sterile honeybees to pollinate the flowers we grow in our Flower/Plant unit. Brigit reinforces concepts learned in science and the importance of bees in nature.

FOURTH GRADE APPLAUDS and THANK the PTO!

– Laurie Carlson

3rd Grade

THIRD GRADE has had some very exciting programs this year thanks to the help and support of our PTO.

Last fall, **Patricia Bade, the Owl Woman**, came in to share Native American stories and songs. She also showed third graders Native American artifacts such as arrowheads and clothing. Owl Woman spoke lovingly of our world and taught third graders how to appreciate the environment around them. Another highlight of her program was observing her Snowy

Owl who winks. This performance ties into our Social Studies unit on the Wampanoag and helps set the stage for our PTO sponsored field trip to **Plimoth Plantation**.

Meg Tabasko from the **Massachusetts Water Resources Authority** (MWRA) came to our classrooms in the winter to discuss with third graders how water get from a reservoir to houses and schools in the local communities. The students played an active role in placing pipes throughout our mock community and connecting each desk or table to a water source. The students also learned about the benefits of tap water versus bottled water. Meg’s program wraps up our science unit study on water and provides the students with a deeper understanding of the importance of water and the MWRA.

Third graders are looking forward to a **hands-on electricity program**, as well as the Freedom Trail field trip in June.

– Jess Selden

2nd Grade

The PTO generously funded two enrichment programs to enhance our curriculum in SECOND GRADE.

The first one was February 7th. **Deborah Hartman, author of Jacob and the Magic Feather**, used a power point presentation to read the story to second graders and talked about the **writing process from idea to published book**. Deborah Putnoi, the illustrator, showed us the medium she used and showed the children how they could create similar pictures using the process. This connected so well with our writers’ workshop.

The second program was on March 11th. **John Kenney from the Patriot Siberian Husky Rescue** came in with his faithful dog, Blue, and a sled. He told us how a Siberian Husky is so well adapted to the cold temperatures. He showed us all the parts of the sled, how musher and dogs work together, and some pictures of sled racing. This coincided with our study of Alaska and in particular following the **Iditarod, The Last Great Race**. The children got to pet Blue if they wished. For his role he was presented with a bone tied with a blue ribbon. The PTO gave a generous donation to John for his organization.

Both programs were enjoyed by all and we look forward to having them again next year.

– Gwen Irish



1st Grade

Massachusetts Audubon Society/Habitat came to FIRST GRADE to present their FROG program. It was very educational for the first grade students. The presenters taught the students about the characteristics of **amphibians** in a very fun, lively, and informative program.

The students got to see a **salamander, an American toad, and a pickerel frog.** After having a close look at these animals, the first graders participated in three interactive activities that helped them to understand the characteristics of each animal. They measured how far they could jump, caught bugs with a long "tongue", and some were even lucky enough to see the salamander eat a worm! This program was a wonderful learning experience for our first graders.

THANK YOU to the Wellington PTO for sponsoring this in-school enrichment program!

– Kendra Nyanzi

Kindergarten

On Friday, March 28th, the PTO sponsored a program by the Tanglewood Marionettes for the KINDERGARTEN classes. The children were treated to their production of "**Cinderella.**" It was a very professional and highly entertaining show. The children (and teachers) were enthralled, especially when Cinderella's transportation appeared. The lavishly costumed marionettes and beautifully painted scenery brought the story to life. The program works well with the kindergarten **curriculum of fairy tale read-alouds and story telling/writer's workshop.** It is always one of the highlights of the year.

– Carolyn Murphy

All Grades

5-2-1-ALMOST NONE

Throughout March the school participated in the 5-2-1-Almost None program to emphasize and practice healthy habits. Each week added a new task: 5 servings of fruits/vegetables daily, 2 hours or less of recreational screen time, 1 hour of daily physical activity, and almost none of the sugary beverages (less than 2 per week.) Students heard about the program at a school-wide assembly and then received a new checklist each week. Students also received a "Portion distortion" poster for home highlighting how serving sizes have increased in this country, and what a proper serving size should

look like. The program is highlighted on a bulletin board outside of the cafeteria plus various posters throughout the school. Student response has been wonderful, with over 50% return of checklists, and, more importantly, **more awareness of healthier eating and physical activity.**

More information regarding 5-2-1 is available on www.growuphealthy.org and regarding healthy eating on www.mypyramid.gov

– Terry Grimm

AZILEE'S FRONT PORCH

A grant from the Foundation for Belmont Education sponsored the Martin Luther King Assembly. Azilee's Porch was wonderful. The actors were extremely enthusiastic! They presented **true stories from a difficult period in history in a way that the kids could understand and relate to.** They really seemed to understand not only the subject matter, but also their audience. They traveled around the room and captivated the children with their voices and stories. **Azilee's Porch** was oral story telling at its finest.

– Stephanie McLaughlin

MORE GREAT PROGRAMS COMING SOON!

In April, **FIRST GRADERS will be listening to master story teller, Diane Edgcomb as she reveals the mysteries of the Rainforest.** The students will follow up with their discoveries in May by learning about **Rainforest Reptiles.**

Also in April, **SECOND GRADERS will be hearing about "African Adventures"** from Gail LaRocca in April and the students will be learning about plants from **The Massachusetts Horticulture Society's Plantmobile** in May.

Still more in April, the **THIRD GRADERS will be enlightened by a performance by Steve Lechner on "Electricity".**

The **FOURTH GRADERS have an amazing spring ahead with Techsploration** a sound workshop in April and in June, **Giles Laroche, an artist,** will arrive with his **detailed paper relief technique** that he will share with students in several workshops.

The PTO has a programs co-chair position open for the 08'-09' school year. We also need grade parent volunteers to help organize when presenters arrive. **Please contact Jamison Jacobs if you're interested in any of these open positions,** jamisonjacobs@gmail.com

Jamison Jacobs, Programs Co-Chair

Juliet Jenkins, Programs Co-Chair

Special Mention and Thanks to our Sport's Monitors

Time is a precious commodity and there is never enough of it! That is why, I would like to take a moment to recognize and thank the mothers, fathers and families that gave of their free time to monitor the sports programs at Wellington. When you see these parents on the playground or around town, please join me in thanking them for all their help this year!

A special thank you to **Dr. David Alper**, who, working with the Youth Commission provided pizza during the final evening(s) of our basketball program. It was delicious and much appreciated - thanks David!

Before and After School Sports Monitors (Wellington)

Joanna Loveluck (grade 2), **Kirsten Isle** (grade 2 and 4), **Maura Curran** (grade 1), **Cheryl Chase** (grade 1), **Marianne Kelly** (grade 3), **Brenda MacLeod** (grade 3), **Susan Black** (all before school sports)

Evening Sports Monitors

The Haverty Family (Butler School/Monday and Friday night),
The Amer Family (Butler School/Monday night)
The Hannibel Family (Butler School/Monday night)
The MacLeod Family (Wellington School/Mon. and Fri. night)
The Duda Family (Wellington School/Monday night)
The Hogan Family (Butler School/Monday night)
Grainne Griffin (Burbank School/Thursday night)
Marianne Kelly (Wellington School/Friday night)
Ike Tingos (Wellington School/Monday night playoffs)
Mark Viale (Wellington School/Monday night playoffs)



A Winning Season for Sports for Wellington

The Wellington PTO working with gym teacher, **Mr. Richard Samaria** once again embraced the philosophy that students need, enjoy and learn by participating in physical activity throughout their day. Not always the easiest feat to accomplish given our harsh New England winters and the increased availability of computer games and kid's TV programs.

Thanks to Mr. Samaria's generosity of time and talent, this year, the Wellington PTO offered three before school sports sessions, the ever-popular after school sports program and evening basketball drawing friends from all Belmont elementary schools and the Chenery Middle School.

While some were still asleep, Wellington sports fans gathered at 7:30 a.m. each week at Before School sports.

Thirty six students participated in one or all of our three sessions (Fall, Winter and Spring) These children started their day off right - exercising. They played a variety of favorite Wellington gym games before class even started!

Children in grades one through four, 110 of them, met with classmates in the afternoon to participate in After School Sports.

These boys and girls released some stress while playing their favorite games such as soccer, basketball, pillow polo hockey and crazy kick-ball.

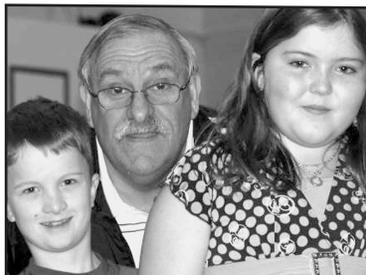
Listen carefully from November through March, and you can always hear bouncing basketballs from the Wellington gym on Monday, Thursday and Friday night. Why? On these evenings, 163 boys and girls visited our school to join a team, make new friends and play basketball. Participating in weekly games, skills drills and the madness of March tournaments, the kids (and parents) had a great deal of fun this season. If we ended our season here - it would certainly be a winner, providing a sports program at virtually every time of day to meet any child's interest, but there is more. Thanks to your participation in the sports programs, the Wellington PTO made a profit that has been put back into the programs to help Mr. S. and the kids continue to enjoy sports at Wellington. I am pleased to report that this year, new nets were purchased to replace the nets currently used for the hockey goals. A new set of pillow polo sticks and pool "noodles" have been purchased so that all the kids will continue to enjoy hockey play safely and securely. New junior size pins have been added to the current inventory. And, of course, medals and trophies were purchased for basketball and other sports programs.

As Spring and the end of our school year approaches, the sports programs at Wellington will come to a successful end. I am pleased to report on another "winning" season of sports fun at Wellington. **Thank you Mr. S. and thanks to all of you!**

Staff Spotlight!

April Spotlight on Mr. Richard Samaria . . . a.k.a. "Mr. S"

By Sophie Guzikowski, 4W



Q. When did you start your career in physical education?

A. I started in 1967.

Q. How long have you worked at Wellington?

A. Thirty-six years. Gwen Irish and I are the only remaining teachers who started at the Wellington when it became an elementary school.

Q. What is your favorite sport?

A. Basketball.

Q. Who is your favorite athlete?

A. Jackie Robinson

Q. What's new in the gym this year?

A. We have a new speaker system and a new turn table. We also have new noodles, pillow polo sticks and pinnies. The PTO has been very good to me with supplies.

Q. What's your favorite kind of music?

A. I like 50's music.

Q. What's on your wish-list for the gym?

A. A new floor. I'd love to have a new gym floor.

Q. Who do you like in the NCAA tournament?

A. For men, I like UNC. For women, I like Tennessee. Pat Summit is a great coach.

Q. Do you know every student's name?

A. Almost. It takes me a little longer to learn some of the names of students from other countries with names I'm not familiar with. I'm working on it though.



Q. What do you do in the summer?

A. I teach gym games to preschoolers at a summer camp.

Q. Do you have any children?

A. I have three girls. Christine is a doctor of Chemistry. Barbara is a medical doctor and Margie is a PISTOL! I have four grandchildren and one on the way.

Q. What is your favorite school event?

A. Field Day.

Q. Anything you'd like to say to the newsletter readers?

A. Yes. The greatest kids in Belmont go to Wellington!



PTO Student Care News

Who Said Staying After School on Early Release Days is No Fun?

The kids in the Aftercare program have been having a ball on early release Wednesdays during the month of March. They romped at the Kids Playground in Woburn; were dazzled by *Amazing Kids Magic*; shared their acting talents at *Kidstock*; and enjoyed the always popular *Tanglewood Marionettes* perform *The Dragon King*.

The other noteworthy news is the announcement from the School Committee to implement a full day kindergarten program starting September 2008. This program will be funded by a state grant in combination with tuition of \$1,500 paid by parents. What this means is that the PTO Student Care program will no longer be offering KED next academic year. This news is bittersweet for many parents whose children have enjoyed the KED program over the years. It is a special program for kindergarteners that will be missed by many.

– Gail Gorman

Belmont Special Education Advisory Council (BSEAC)

www.belmont.k12.ma.us/bseac

The BSEAC is a parent advisory council which advocates for quality education for all students, advises Belmont School administration and the School Committee on special education issues, and assists families in effectively participating in the special education process. Meetings are held once a month at Chenery Middle School at 7:30.

The next meeting is May 14th. "Autism Spectrum Disorders: Strategies for Behavioral and Social Skills Intervention". Practical approaches presented by Karen Levine and Naomi Chedd, from the Center for Child and Adolescent Development at the Cambridge Health Alliance.

To join the moderated listserve:
BSEAC-subscribe@yahoo.groups.com



Box Tops for Education



Thanks for your continued support of the Box Tops program! From September '07 through February '08, you have clipped **7,975 Box Tops, worth \$797.50!!** In addition, Wellington has received \$100 from your Online Marketplace purchases.

Reel 'Em In!!
 New Box Tops Collection Campaign
 Runs March 10th-May 2nd!!

Each class that reels in 500 Box Tops will win a prize!
 Ask your family, friends and neighbors to clip for Wellington too!

Visit: www.boxtops4education.com

- Daily 'click to win' Box Tops promotions and sweepstakes!!
- Wellington's earnings report
- Latest participating product list and coupons
- Marketplace for on-line shopping
- Easy recipes
- Useful Family Matters articles
- Fun projects for kids

Your 2007-08 Box Tops Coordinator is: jane.slavin@verizon.net



Help Wanted Section

Yikes it's already Spring!

We are already thinking about next year!

We are in the midst of planning some entertaining and enriching programs. Many of these programs and events will have both a fundraising and a community building focus. We can't do it alone. The PTO needs your help in the next year to be able to offer such programs and activities to the school and your children. We can only bring these exciting activities if we have people to run them.

Laurie and I are throwing our names in the hat again as co-presidents. Come join us! If you have some ideas or if there is something that you know you want to do, email us. Don't miss out on this opportunity to bring your energy and experience right into your child's school day.

Look for upcoming details. Committees and job listing and details can be found at: www.belmont.k12.ma.us/wellington/pto/jobs.html

Remember to take the PTO survey that was emailed on Monday, April 7. Here's the link: www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=38mEoSnhMjcy6anlKlNeDQ_3d_3d. We hope that this will improve our communication home to you and give us a better understanding of what your interests are.

Susan Black and Laurie Slap, Co-Presidents 2007-2008
Susan_black02478@yahoo.com / lqslap@gmail.com

Staff Appreciation Luncheon

We will be honoring the wonderful staff of Wellington at an upcoming event and could use your help!

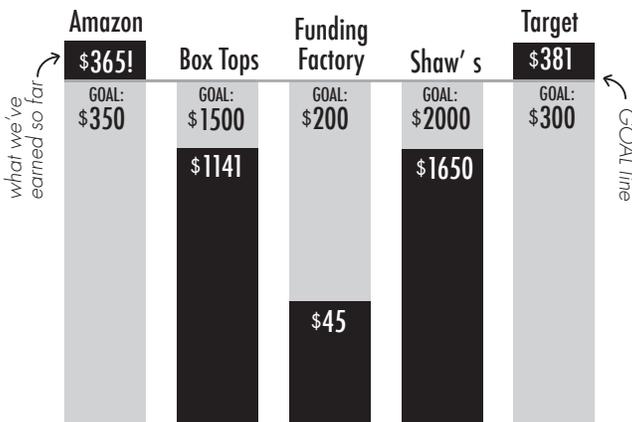
Whether you have a talent to offer (Do you play the piano? Do you like to decorate for a party? Do you enjoy baking? Do you have a specialty dish you like to prepare?), or you'd like to just lend a hand setting up, serving or cleaning up, we'd love to hear from you.

Please contact the PTO Hospitality folks: Melina Jacovides 617-489-3907 or Melina@jacowag.net and Celia Chun Zissner 617-209-2152 or chun_celia@hotmail.com. We're looking forward to another successful event!



PTO Fundraising Partners Update

Please support our ongoing fundraising efforts!



Wellington Wish List

Below are a few items that would help welcome spring. Please contact PTO co-presidents, Susan Black or Laurie Slap if you'd like to donate any of the following:

- classroom fans
- classroom antibacterial wipes
- classroom playground balls
- big American flag for the flagpole on the playground

THANK YOU!



Gift Book Program

We have 17 new additions to the Wellington library since January. Each book has been processed with a special bookplate commemorating a person or occasion. Ms. Raidl, our Professional Library Aide, does her best to present all gift books during the donor's class library time. Thanks for your continued support of the Gift Book Program! Please stop by the Library or contact Jane Slavin (617-489-1499) or Anne-Sophie Dankens (617-489-9101).

Thank you to the all the people who purchased books for Wellington's library!

PLEASE NOTE:

The deadline for article submissions for the next newsletter is **May 26th**. Email: pguzi@msn.com and jreed@greencastlecards.com with the text. Thank you!