

FRANCIS W. PARKER CHARTER ESSENTIAL SCHOOL
& THEODORE R. SIZER TEACHERS CENTER
49 ANTIETAM ST DEVENS, MA 01434
TELEPHONE (978) 772-3293 FAX (978) 772-3295 www.parker.org

Friday Announcements

Date: November 17, 2006

Hello Parker Community

Often in life when things don't go quite as well as we had expected them to, we might become discouraged about continuing or give up trying altogether. I wasn't sure how the community had reacted to the Community Congress's efforts to make our Wednesday morning gathering more engaging, but I knew that it didn't go as we had planned. The dedicated committee had discussed it for some time, trying to come up with ideas to convince people that morning gathering was really a gift that the community was given rather than an obligation for the first fifteen minutes before choice block. How could we get the school to not want to leave the gym? What would it take?

The idea to have a competition to test each advisory's knowledge of pop culture seemed like the perfect idea. Each advisory would have to band together with their knowledge of boy bands and reality TV. Not only would advisories become closer with the sense of competition amongst the school, it would also bring our community closer while still remaining fun. People would wish morning meeting were longer. Right?

In reality, it didn't happen quite like that. Things don't ever seem to go as planned. Sometimes feedback is difficult to find, but that morning it was quite clear that the school didn't feel the same way that our committee had felt about making morning meeting fun. "It was too confusing." "I couldn't hear anything that they were saying." "Why was it only division three?" We learn at Parker that there are always ways that you can improve and cool feedback is the means through which we can achieve those improvements. There was no shortage of cool feedback that morning.

I had all of choice block to think about how we were going to talk about what had happened that morning and how we could improve it for the next gathering that we would have the "World Series of Pop Culture." When the Community Congress meeting began with the initial fifteen minutes to discuss what was most pressing concerning our school, that morning's gathering was, not surprisingly, the topic of choice. The discussion was not about how bad it was or how it was embarrassing (neither of which it was) but how much potential it could have had and what we should do the following time to really convince the school that our morning gathering committee's idea really could work.

I was humbled by the productivity of this conversation, having anticipated controlling a negative reaction that could have convinced the hard working group to give up on their great idea right then and there. It didn't end there, however. After dismissing the groups into their committee work time, I looked around to see the entire Community Congress- a cohesive group of students- working completely independently of the guidance of co-advisors. One committee was making a phone call to book a location for a dance while another was planning the celebration of America Recycles Day. The students of the Community Congress, I believe, were enacting the spirit on which it was originally founded: using community feedback to make positive change.

That day, my role as co-advisor suddenly changed from supervisor to facilitator. I was never more proud of my school and the dialogues that were being raised. Since then, serious issues have arisen that forces us to question how our school desires to define itself. Again, this dialogue and feedback is surfacing and we are working towards redefining who we are and want to be as a school. People are already taking the next steps and asking themselves what we can do to attain this identity that we are proud of and know we can be. Some may be questioning of the future vibe of our school, but I am confident in our future. I am confident because I was so proud that day when I witnessed Parker students using conversation and discussion to effect change in order to meet their high standards for what they believe our school should look and feel like.

Kyle Reeves, '07
Co Advisor

Help Your Student Keep Up at Parker

John Mohrbacher M.Ed., LICSW, “therapeutic tutor” who spoke to parents on October 26th is offering a private, group course for students that will focus on improving attention, personal organization and written work production. This is a five week program meeting on Saturdays at 11 AM at Parker on December 2nd, 9th, and 16th, and January 6th and 20th. Two evening meetings will be arranged, one to meet each potential participant before the first group session and one to meet with each family to help them develop a weekly schedule and family agreement for homework routines. The cost of each session will be \$65. If interested please contact John at (781) 729-5050 or jo.mohrbacher@comcast.net.

What: The course will directly teach strategies for training one’s attention, identifying and working consistently on one’s priorities, managing materials, and writing efficiently. The course will also use the “group therapy” modality to help students overcome some of the emotional obstacles to faithful homework production. Each student will leave the course with a document detailing the strategies covered in the course, a cassette tape featuring relaxation/concentration techniques, and a “homework agreement.”

Each group meeting will dedicate some time to identifying and practicing the strategies mentioned above, as well as dedicating some time to discussing the personal and emotional hurdles that block homework production.

John uses three different avenues to help his clients:

1. Directly “remediate” information processing difficulties (i.e. improve reading, memory, attention, comprehension, planning ability, etc.);
2. Diminish the emotional problems that tend to develop around learning difficulties (i.e. deal with anxiety, despair, anger, etc.);
3. Teach effective learning strategies to deal with current schoolwork (help clients study for tests, write papers, develop projects, etc.).

Who: Six boys, grades 8 thru 10. Students admitted on a first-come, first-serve basis. Each student will be interviewed before the first class to determine if the course is likely to help him.

When: Personal interviews with students in advance of the class will be arranged during November on Thursday and Friday evenings (at Life Management, 257 Ayer Rd., Harvard). The classes will meet on Saturdays at 11 AM for one hour and fifteen minutes on December 2nd, 9th and 16th, and January 6th, and 20th.

Cost: Each group meeting will cost \$65. Fees for the two individual sessions (also \$65 each) are payable at the end of those sessions. The fee for the five group sessions is payable in-full at the beginning of the first session.

SITE VISIT FROM THE CHARTER SCHOOL OFFICE

Parker is in the second year of its third charter and we are scheduled to have a site visit from the Charter School office. This site visit will take place on Tuesday, December 12th. We have been asked to put together a focus group of parents who would talk to the team about their child’s experience at Parker. If you would be interested in being part of this group and our available to come to school on Tuesday, December 12, please email Nicky at nicola@parker.org.

Subscribe to Parker community email lists!

We use the Parker Listserv to post announcements and reminders about life at Parker.

FWPaaa is the Parker community email list for general announcements.
FWPsports is Parker's email list for sports-related announcements.

Subscribe at <http://lists.parker.org/mailman/listinfo/>

COMING SOON

November, 2006

Wednesday, 22 – Early Release (noon dismissal)
Thursday, 23 – Friday, 24 - Thanksgiving Break
Wednesday, 29 – College Finance Information Night @ 7:00 p.m.

CALENDAR

PLEASE MARK THESE DATES! (*Subject to change*)

December, 2006

Friday, 1 – Parker International Gala & Auction, Spring Hill Suites, Devens
Saturday, 2 – PLAN testing at Parker
Tuesday, 5 – Trustees Meeting at 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, 6 – Snow date for College Finance Information Night
Friday, 8 – Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* play
Saturday, 9 – Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* play
Tuesday, 12 – Charter School Office visit
Friday, 22 – Early Release (noon dismissal)
Monday, 25 – Sunday, 31 - Holiday Recess

January, 2007

1 – New Year's Day
2 – Holiday
3 – Faculty planning (no classes)
4 – Classes resume
7 – Enrollment Information Session (1:00 – 4:00 p.m.)
Thursday, 11 – Parker/Wachusett Mountain Ski Program begins
15 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday (no school)
16 – Trustees Meeting at 7:00 p.m.
21 – Enrollment Information Session (1:00 – 4:00 p.m.)
28 – Snow date for Enrollment Information Session (1:00 – 4:00 p.m.)
29 – Faculty Planning (no classes)
30 – New semester begins
Wednesday, 31 – Blood Drive for the American Red Cross

Thank you

Many thanks to the family of Joe Vendetti for their donation of white envelopes to the school and to the family of David and Tim Poole for their donation of a box of assorted games for advisory use.

DIVISION III UPDATE

Teachers have finished writing progress reports, and they will be coming home in the next few days. Please read them carefully and contact your student's advisor or teachers if you have any questions or concerns. With a little more than two months remaining in the semester, many classes have major projects in process. This is a good opportunity to get portfolio pieces before the end of the semester crunch in January. Seniors are starting their second formal senior project conferences next week. They should be well into their research at this point, and the first research summary is due on December 15th. Those seniors who are hoping to do internships during the third quarter need to be working now to set those up, as proposals for these are due December 18th.

This week's course updates are from Jon Churchill's MST class, Advanced Algebra:

Students in Advanced Algebra have recently completed our unit on logarithms and exponential functions. Through a study of inverse functions, we discovered the roll of logarithms in "undoing" exponential functions. How are logarithms used, you might ask? Here is a scenario.

Challenge: If a student was given \$1000 by a grandparent and invested it in a CD that returns 20% annually, how long must they leave the money invested before they can afford one semester of college at a private college?

Solution using logarithms:

$$25,000 = 1000(1.20)^{(\text{years})}$$

$$25 = (1.20)^{(\text{years})}$$

$$\text{years} = \log_{1.20} 25$$

$$\text{years} = 17.65$$

Life Lesson (?): Unless students want to go to college at age 35, they are going to need to start saving more money for college. Or, they'll need to start saving early for the future.

Our next unit is polynomials. Beginning with a review of Quadratics, to which the students were introduced in Division II, we will research patterns and commonalities in higher order polynomials. In a matter of weeks, students will move from understanding basic polynomials such as $g(x) = x^2$ to being able to factor and sketch a more complicated polynomial function such as $f(x) = x^5 - x^4 - 13x^3 + 13x^2 + 36x - 36$. Students will develop their own understanding of polynomials, but embarking on a week-long exploration/investigation which will be assessed for Mathematical Communication.

ARTS AND HUMANITIES

Arts and Humanities – Division I

And we're off! This week students wrapped up the first unit of the year by sharing some of what they learned with each other. They also jumped head first into "Romeo and Juliet." They've been up and about exploring some of the themes and language they are about to encounter in our second unit of the year. Through pre-reading activities, students are preparing themselves for this challenging but exciting play. By early next week, all students should have a copy of "Romeo and Juliet" that they will use for the duration of the unit. We encourage you to read along with them and maybe even do some acting over Thanksgiving break! There's romance, there's action; what more could you ask for at a holiday gathering?

Arts and Humanities – Division II

This week in Division II we wrapped up our first unit. Some students revised OPs in class. We finished our first writing assessment, focusing on stating beliefs in a 500-word essay. We also began some preliminary work on our second unit about World War II and the Holocaust. Students will be looking at social science experiments, post-WWI German history, and asking some initial questions about the way in which the holocaust was allowed to begin as we head towards our reading of Elie Wiesel's "Night."

MATH, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Math, Science and Technology – Division I

This week in MST science has been focusing on various ways Americans dispose of their garbage such as landfills, incineration and recycling. Math continues to explore volume and surface area in prisms and other solids.

This is also a revision week. Students should be revising C.O.W.s #4 or #5. In addition they should be striving to "Meet" on one of the six C.O.W.s assigned in the Decomposition Unit.

On Thursday Division I MST classes took a walking field trip to the Shepley's Landfill and Pump Station on Devens.

Next week we will be hosting guest speakers on "household recycling" and "industrial waste."

We will also be starting a new unit on Monday, November 27th "Weather and Climate Change." This unit will continue until the February break. Stay tuned for more fascinating information!

A big thank you to Laurie Nehring for giving up her free time to join the Division I MST classes on their field trip to Shepley's Landfill. We all greatly benefited from her sharing her expertise about the landfill and its problems.

Math, Science and Technology – Division II

Over the past week students have been working on understanding linear functions in class. A Problem of the Week (POW#2) was handed out this week in some classes, with a due date of next Wednesday (11/22). Other classes will hand this assessment out with a due date after the Thanksgiving break. We have also been working on a short unit on Photosynthesis and Cellular Respiration. This topic grew out of our water quality unit where photosynthetic organisms played a large role in the amount of dissolved oxygen present in the water we studied. Photosynthesis and Cellular Respiration focus on how energy from the sun is converted into a form of energy (chemical energy) that organisms, including humans, can use to carry out life functions. Students will be carrying out a laboratory activity this Friday and Monday. An in-class written assessment will be given the following day, based on the laboratory activity. After Thanksgiving we will be starting a unit on solution chemistry.

Math, Science and Technology – Division II Transition

Students finished up the week reviewing exponential functions and taking a revision test. We begin rational and quadratic functions on Monday. In science, students finished photosynthesis and respiration with an in class lab write up on Monday. We began a new unit on disease this week. POW 2 revisions were due this past Wednesday and very few were turned in.

SPANISH

7th grado Spanish

Estamos presentando nuestras recitaciones creativas del alfabeto.

7th grade Spanish

We are presenting our creative recitation of the Spanish alphabet.

Division 1 Year 2 Spanish (Eighth Grade)

This week we've been learning about the two verbs for "to be," ser and estar. Utilizing this information and vocabulary of things in and around a house, students have started plans to create a movie in Spanish. This is a group project, with 3-4 students in each group. The theme is that they have lost a beloved pet. They'll be shooting their movies next week, and the final project is due Thursday, November 29.

WELLNESS

Alan's Wellness Class:

This week in Alan's classes, students were assigned their Violence Prevention projects which will be due on the 21st of Nov. Div. 1 will do work around kindness and Div. 2 will work on artistic expression and health advocacy relating to violence prevention. Students thought about and answered questions relating to apologies. For physical activities, we exercised to music, played two ball soccer, capture the flag, and dodgeball.

Deborah's Wellness Class:

This week in Deborah's Wellness classes, students finished the volleyball module, were introduced to "pinball", played board games and DDR and had a chance to work on the assessment that is due on Tuesday. You can find a copy of the Wellness assessment on the Parker web site under Division II, Deborah and Alan's Div II homework. In Health class, we finished the Reputations class and moved into boundaries. Students were able to design a friendship bill of rights, a tool to help establish boundaries in a friendship.

Laura's Wellness Class:

This week in Health each class was assigned a 'kindness' project. Each student will complete an act of kindness for another person that is at least 30 minutes in length. In addition, each student will answer some reflective questions regarding the project and they will interview the person they chose. This project is due next Tuesday, November 21. We also discussed reputations both good and bad and what effect they have on people. In Wellness we played thunder ball, basketball and floor hockey. Next week we will play dodge ball and kickball. If the weather continues to be warm and it is not raining we will go outside; so please remind your kids to come prepared with a jacket and appropriate footwear. Please no flip flops, thank you.

SPORTS UPDATE

Basketball season is starting! Official start dates:

Girls Middle School and Girls JV: Monday, November 20, 4:45-6:15 at Shirley Middle School

Girls Varsity: Monday, November 27, 4:00-6:00 at Lura White in Shirley

Boys Middle School: Monday, November 27, 3:30-4:45 at Parker

Boys JV: Tuesday, November 28, 6:00-7:30 at Parker

Boys Varsity: Monday, November 27, 4:45-6:15 at Shirley Middle School

2006-2007 Coaching staff:

Girls Varsity- Ben Benoit
Girls JV- Art Stoumbelis
Girls MS- Mandy Sheffield
Boys Varsity- Sam Collins
Boys JV- Mike David
Boys MS- Clay Hobart

Girls Middle School and Girls JV basketball teams are looking for more players. Please see Ben in the gym to sign up at lunch or after lunch.

All Soccer and X-Country uniforms are due back NOW! Please turn them in to the office ASAP. Thank you.

NEWS FROM FRANK'S CAFE

Monday: "Brunch" Cinnamon French Toast, or Waffles, sausage, potato patties, applesauce and milk

Tuesday: Pizza Bagels: Choice of plain or pepperoni, salad, fruit and milk

Wednesday: Noon dismissal – no lunch today

PARKER ESSENTIAL FUND

The Parker Essential Fund is now accepting grant applications for review at the next PEF Board meeting on Wednesday, November 29. If you have enrichment ideas or items for next year that require funding, please submit applications to the PEF Box by Monday, November 27 with Teri's signature. Bridgit has the forms and instructions in the office. Please call or email Maryellen Grady (978) 486-4064 or mwgrady@gmail.com if you have questions.

The PEF is a group of parents, teachers and students whose purpose is to raise money to support educationally enriching activities at Parker. Check the Parker website for a list of recently funded items by the PEF.

Parker International Gala and Auction

Reminder: Please get your Gala reservations in ASAP.

If your donation is available and you haven't already done so, please drop off your donation with Nicky (unless you have already made other arrangements).

If you have already dropped off your donation but did not get a receipt, please contact Carolyn Sullivan (978-692-6144, sullivan.cb@gmail.com).

Please note: If you have included a minimum bid on your donation form, and we do not get the minimum, you will need to collect your item after the auction. If you would like to change your minimum bid, please let Carolyn Sullivan know.

If you have any questions at all, contact Carolyn Sullivan or Pam Gross (978-772-9863, rbgross@charter.net).

* * * * *

For a more complete listing of items with descriptions, go to www.parker.org.

Click "[International Gala and Auction](#)" on the Parker home page to get to the Gala and Auction web page.

Click on "[Catalog](#)."

So, get your reservation forms in soon (download from the Gala and Auction web page). The deadline for reservations is the end of school on Monday, November 27th.



Hello sports fans! Here is your opportunity to have fun and have a chance to win tickets to see your favorite New England team.

- 4 club seats to a New England Patriots game
- 2 chances to win tickets to a Red Sox Game
- How about tickets to the Bruins?

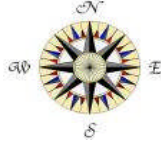
Watching sports isn't your thing? How about a chance to spend time away from home?

- Weekends in New Hampshire
- Weekends on Martha's Vineyard
- Vermont
- New York

And more...

Beautiful handcrafted items, dinners cooked just for you, electronic equipment...

These are just a sampling of the over 250 items to be auctioned off at the



You are cordially invited to the
Parker International Gala and Auction
 (Sponsored by the PEF)

Friday, December 1, 2006
 Devens Common Center, 31 Andrews Parkway, Devens

Enjoy Hors D'oeuvres and partake in your favorite beverage from the cash bar while bidding on delightful items at the Silent Auction. The Silent Auction starts at 6:00 p.m. Don't be late. We will be staggering the closing of the silent auction tables! Next, enjoy your Buffet Dinner in the Solarium Ballroom served from 7:30-8:30. The Live Auction starts at 8:30.

Dinner Buffet Menu

- Classic Caesar Salad
- Warm Rolls and Butter
- Sliced Sirloin Steak w/Au Jus
- Apple Almond Chicken
- Pasta Primavera
- Garlic Mashed Potatoes
- Baby Dill Carrots
- Double Chocolate Raspberry Cake w/Fresh Berries
- Coffee, Decaffeinated Coffee & Tea

Note: For your convenience, we will be accepting MC, Visa, and AMEX to pay for auction items!
 Any Questions? Contact Carolyn Sullivan (978-692-6144, sullivan.cb@gmail.com or Pam Gross (978-772-9863, rbgross@charter.net
 Auction co-chairs. Look for our web page at www.parker.org – appearing soon!

Reservations are \$30.00 per person. You can also reserve a table for 8.

___ I want to reserve a table for 8. Enclosed is \$240.00.

I want to reserve ___ tickets @ \$30.00 each. Enclosed is _____

Name(s): _____ Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Please make checks payable to the Parker Essential Fund. Return the lower part of this form with your check to the Parker School office or mail to:

PEF – Gala and Auction
 Parker School
 49 Antietam Street
 Devens, MA 01434

February, 2007

- 6 – Trustees Meeting at 7:00 p.m.
- 16 – Early Release (noon dismissal)
- 19 – President’s Day (no school)
- 20 – 23 - Winter Recess

March, 2007

- Spring Conference Day (no classes) TBA
- 6 – Trustees Meeting at 7:00 p.m.
- 11 – Daylight Savings Time begins
- 14 – Noon Dismissal - Faculty Planning

April, 2007

- 3 – Trustees Meeting at 7:00 p.m.
- 6 – Early Release (noon dismissal)
- 13 – Early Release (noon dismissal)
- 16 – Patriot’s Day (no school)
- 17 – 20 - Spring Recess

May, 2007

- 15 – Trustees Meeting at 7:00 p.m.
- 25 – Early Release (noon dismissal)
- 25 - Senior/Junior Prom
- 28 – Memorial Day (no school)

June, 2007

- 6 – Noon dismissal - Graduation (6:00 p.m.)**
- 19 – Trustees Meeting at 7:00 p.m.
- 22 – Last Day of Classes (or earlier if we have fewer than 5 snow days).

*We are required to schedule 185 days of school but we are only required to conduct 180 days of school.
Faculty planning days take place in August, January and June. 25, 26, 27 – Faculty Work Days (or earlier)*
(9/05/06)