



Ben-Hem Happenings

The Bennett-Hemenway PTO

April 2014 Newsletter



Books for Ben-Hem

Written by Kristin Stotzel, Reading Specialist/Intervention Coordinator

Throughout the course of this school year, Ben Hem students have been fortunate to receive many new books. By my calculations, this year we have received over 4500 books at Ben Hem, all of which have been inventoried, labeled and delivered to classrooms. Of this number, approximately 2000 have been purchased with Ben Hem funds to supplement classroom libraries. This supports our initiative to increase the "time on text" in the reading blocks and demonstrates a commitment on the part of the Ben Hem administration to ensure our students have appropriate and adequate reading material. The article The Six Ts of Effective Elementary Literacy Instruction by Richard Allington, former president of the International Reading Association, highlights the importance of having both time to read as well as the need for a vast supply of books.

In addition to books purchased by Ben Hem, the district has supplied us with an additional 2,224 books. These books are all directly related to our new writing units of study, either as professional texts, immersion texts, or mentor texts. When beginning a unit of study on writing How To or All About books, our Kindergarteners and first graders can be immersed in many published examples to search for text features or learn more about a new topic. Third graders researching the American Revolution and second graders conducting country research all have a wealth of knowledge at their fingertips, all at levels accessible to particular age groups. Again, this shows a commitment on the part of Natick administration to provide us with the resources we need to teach the new units effectively.

The parent community was invaluable in helping to get the books out to classrooms. With the help of the Teacher Time Savers group, PTO members Krissy Fernandes, Debbie Forte, Trudi Lord, Rachael Tearle, along with some of our fourth grade students, helped to label each and every book to ensure it remains a part of the Ben Hem collection for many years to come.

After-School Care for Next Year

While this school year is not yet over, it is a good time to start planning for after-school care for next year. There are many options ranging from in-home care, educational, enrichment programs, and more. A few of the most popular options are typically those that pick-up students from Ben-Hem and bus them to their locations. Below are a few of the larger programs that pick-up at Ben-Hem throughout the school year.

A.S.A.P.

22 East Evergreen Road, Natick, MA 01760
www.natickps.org/Districtinfo/afterschoolactivities/main.cfm

Later @ Longfellow

203 Oak Street, Natick, MA 01760
www.longfellowclubs.com/home/the-longfellow-sports-club/childrens-programs

Tobin Afterschool

73 Cottage Street, Natick, MA 01760
www.tobinafterschool.org

Gardengate Academy

249 B North Main Street, Natick, MA 01760
www.gardengateacademy.com/classes_afternoon-morning-programs.html

* There is an informational open house on Wednesday May 7th from 7:00 - 7:45pm. Please call to RSVP for the event.



Camp Longfellow – Natick at the Longfellow Sports Club Starts June 23, 2014

- *Swim Lessons *Yoga
- *Arts & Crafts *Sports
- *Field Trips *Tennis *Fitness
- *Fun Fridays *Themed Weeks
- *Special Guests *Free Swim
- *Dance - plus lots more!

Get ONE week at 25% off

Valid May 1 - 31, 2014

New camper only. One Coupon per child only.

longfellowkids@gmail.com

Call 508 653 4633

SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

Thank you Ben-Hem Parents and PTO

Written by Kim Knowlton, Cultural Arts Chairperson

How often during the course of our hectic lives do we forget to recognize how truly fortunate we are? As a community, Ben-Hem is incredibly lucky to have supportive parents, dedicated volunteers and the most hard-working and involved teaching staff anyone could ask for. The amount of time Teachers, Administrators and Volunteers spend with the goal of enriching and enhancing our children's lives frequently goes unnoticed and unrecognized. Although we acknowledge many of their efforts on special days with special lunches, awards and gifts, it is also important to remind the community just how much their efforts make a difference throughout each and every year.

Over the last five years, I have had the honor of volunteering with the Cultural Arts program here at Ben-Hem. And during that time, I have witnessed incredibly dedicated parents volunteer for this committee. Although we are funded through the PTO, many of the events, performers and activities that have taken place truly would not have without the volume of parent support we have received. THANK YOU to all parents for your monetary support as well as your continued efforts in terms of suggestions, feedback and ideas. Through your generosity, we are able to continue to bring in programs that benefit students through the arts and performing arts as well as music and dance. In a nutshell, opportunities they would not have otherwise during the school day. All students' lives can benefit by increased exposure to the arts, and I am so thankful to be able to bring those programs to Ben-Hem.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the members of the Cultural Arts committee. Without their continued hard work and dedication, many of the events would not take place. As this is an all-volunteer committee, these parents in most cases overextend themselves to assist in planning, organization and scheduling activities. I can only begin to thank them for their hard work and commitment. Specifically, Mary Crotty-Peace, Kara Bettigole, Maureen McMahan, Kathy Wick, Michelle Lieberman, Denise Palmer and Debbie Forte. Please know just how much you are contributing and that your hard work does not go unnoticed.

In closing, Thank you also to Mr. Kelly and Mr. Gatto for their willingness to bring in cultural arts events. We have had many exciting and culturally rich events take place due to their appreciation of the arts in school. We are so incredibly lucky to give our children such a positive head start in life. Thank you Ben-Hem and may we continue to bring the arts to light on a regular basis!

COMING SOON

May 6: PTO Meeting (Starting at 7:00p)

Join us in the Ben-Hem Library as we review planning for upcoming events. Upcoming Seed to Harvest activities will be discussed so anyone who would like to provide input or be involved is encouraged to attend. Free childcare will be provided in the Cafetorium.

May 8: Teacher Appreciation Luncheon

It is National Teacher Appreciation Week and it is time to say thank you to all of the wonderful teachers at Ben-Hem who help our students to learn so much throughout the year. We will be holding a luncheon in their honor filled with food and goodies donated by Ben-Hem parents to show our gratitude.

May 10: Ben-Hem Yard Sale (9:00a – 1:00p)

Come shop the wares at the Ben-Hem Yard Sale and help support the Ben-Hem PTO. Donation drop-off will be Friday, May 9 from 3:00p – 9:00p.

May 21: Science & Math Night (7:00p – 8:00p)

New this year! Hosted by teachers Mrs. Huse and Mrs. McShane, this event gives students the opportunity to show-off their interest and knowledge in math and science.

May 30: School-wide Ben-Hem Spirit Day

Students and staff are invited to dress in the Ben-Hem colors and/or spirit wear. Benny the Bobcat will be visiting each class to take pictures and more.

June 13: Squirrel Stole My Underpants (7:00p – 8:00p)

Gardengate Academy is sponsoring this poignantly silly adventure tale for families at the Wilson Middle School. Tickets are \$8 and can be purchased online or at the studio.



All profits will benefit the Natick Public Schools PTOs.

puppetshow.benhempto.org



WELLESLEY • NATICK • NEWTON

Great Haircuts for the whole family!

Never a hassle, our "no appointment ever, just walk-in" policy is sheer convenience at an easy-to-afford price.

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

843 Worcester St Natick - 508.651.9122

WWW.HAIRCUTSLTD.COM

GARDEN UPDATE

The Seed to Harvest Garden has been full of activity. Last month 15 classes planted seedlings and 13 classes participated in garden crafts to add color and fun to our school garden.

This month will be all about planting in the garden. There are also a number of garden improvement projects that require hardworking volunteers. We need to dig holes for colorful tire seats and wood stump benches. We also need to complete the edging and clean-up between the beds to make them easier to maintain in the summer. There is plenty to do, so if you are interested in getting involved, join us on Tuesday, May 6 at the PTO Meeting (7:00p) or email us at seedtoharvest@benhempto.org.

Adopt the Garden for a Week!

The Seed to Harvest Garden will be in full bloom this summer and we need your help to keep it running. Volunteers are asked to sign up for garden maintenance in 1 week intervals to help with weeding, dead-heading flowers and harvesting ripened vegetables. To sign-up, go to:

adoptthegarden.benhempto.org.

GARDENGATE ACADEMY SUMMER FUN 2014 Monday through Friday* 9 am - 1 pm ENROLL NOW!



For children 2.5 - 5.9 years
Art, Dance, Cooking, Music & Movement, Science,
Theatre, Tumbling, Yoga and More!
\$195/week

*Additional Hours Available

www.gardengateacademy.com

(508) 720 - 0033

Enjoy 10% OFF First Week for
Natick Public School Families

Offer Expires June 1, 2014

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Meet Alfredo Vargas! Alfredo is a Ben-Hem dad who recently helped at the Seed to Harvest spring clean-up day.

Q: How many students do you have at Ben-Hem this year? What grades are they in?

A: We have one student at Ben-Hem this year. She is in Kindergarten.

Q: How long have you lived in Natick?

A: It will be just one year in June!

Q: When did you first volunteer with the Ben-Hem PTO?

A: I am new as a volunteer. So far, it is with the Seed to Harvest Program.

Q: What prompted you to get involved?

A: This particular project is one that interested me as it is easily accessible to both kids and adults and is a good learning experience!

Q: What was your most recent volunteer experience? What did you like best about it?

A: I recently volunteered with my daughter to restore a playground in a nearby town. Again, I enjoyed being able to share this opportunity with my daughter.

Q: What volunteer opportunities interest you the most?

A: I am interested most in opportunities that involve helping the environment and getting involved in the community.

Q: What do your kids think about your volunteering at their school?

A: Since we are fairly new to the community, I think they appreciate getting to know more people through these experiences.

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

Where Teachers Answer to the STUDENTS!

Each month, several student volunteers will interview teachers at Ben-Hem with questions of their choice. A subset of the questions will be published in this newsletter. You can view the full interviews and pictures online at: www.benhempto.org/happenings. If you are interested in interviewing a teacher, have your parent email us at happenings@benhempto.org.

Mr. Roper (Teacher, Music)

Interviewed by Nate Lord (3rd Grade)

Q: What was your first instrument?

A: Piano. My mother was a piano teacher. She taught me when I was 5.

Q: What college did you go to?

A: I lived in Nebraska and I went to the University of Nebraska.

Q: When did you start teaching at Ben-Hem?

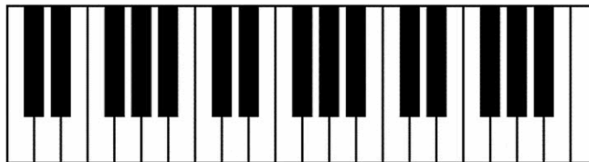
A: 2007

Q: Did you always want to be a music teacher?

A: No! I wanted to be a performer in a band! The years before I was a teacher, I was in a band and orchestra.

Q: Did Ben-Hem have recorder concerts before you came?

A: No, I don't think so. I'm pretty sure that I was the first music teacher that did recorder concerts.



KID'S CORNER

NATURE SCAVENGER HUNT: Now that it is getting warmer, it is time to get outside and enjoy nature. On a nice day, go outside in your backyard, on a walk through your neighborhood, or on a hike through the woods. Look for the items below. See how many you can find. **BONUS:** Take pictures and make a nature collage. Send us a picture at happenings@benhempto.org and we'll post it on the Ben-Hem PTO website.

Can You Find Me?

- Rock
- Leaf
- Pine Cone
- Wild Flower
- Bark
- Piece of Litter
- Stick
- 3 Leaf Clover
- Green Grass
- Feather
- Berry



TOUCH

- something SOFT
- something SMOOTH
- something ROUGH



SHAPES



- something CIRCLE
- something SQUARE
- something TRIANGLE

COLORS

- something GREEN
- something BROWN
- something RED