



Ben-Hem Happenings

The Bennett-Hemenway PTO

March 2014 Newsletter



Relax... It's MCAS Time

*Written by Samantha Gondelman & Caroline McDaniel,
Fourth Grade Students at Ben-Hem*

During our MCAS unit, Ms. Killoran, a Kindergarten teacher at Ben Hem offered to teach Yoga to the 3rd & 4th graders before school. The idea of doing yoga before the MCAS is to help us relax before our long, hard and stressful day of test. She had a relaxing tone in her voice that helped us to stay calm and relax. She taught us the child pose, the rock pose, the tree and warrior 101 was our favorite. Warrior 101 was "I am strong, I am brave, I am powerful and I am smart". It made us feel really good about ourselves.

We also learned that counting and breathing also helps to relax the mind and body. This class was a great idea to kick off MCAS week. When we went into our classrooms to start writing, we had a different view on how to take the MCAS test.

We can't wait to do it again!
Thank you Ms. Killoran!



The Yoga for MCAS program offered a 30 minute yoga class before school for 3rd and 4th graders on the day of their MCAS exams. Students learned breathing techniques and yoga poses to reduce stress and anxiety and promote creative thinking, problem solving and memory recall. 18 third graders and 22 fourth graders participated in the program.

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Spring Cleaning to Benefit Ben-Hem

Spring is finally here! As the weather starts to get warmer, it is the perfect time to throw open the windows, let some fresh air in, and make your home a clean, happy and efficient space.

If you partake in this spring cleaning ritual, please keep Ben-Hem in mind. As you find items around your house that you no longer need, set them aside to donate to the Ben-Hem Yard Sale. Items can be dropped off at the school on Friday, May 9 from 2 – 9 pm. Volunteers will then organize and price your donations to be sold at the annual Ben-Hem Yard Sale on Saturday, May 10 from 9 am – 3 pm. All money generated from the sale of donated items will go to the Ben-Hem PTO.

This is a great way to de-clutter your home and support our school!

If you have any questions or would like to volunteer to help with the yard sale, please email Cheryl Alkon at: yardsale@benhempto.org.



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SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

Biography Night Inspires All

On Friday, March 28 the Ben-Hem community came together to meet and learn about over 70 inspirational people. Biography Night is an annual event that gives students the opportunity to research and share information about a real person that has inspired them in some way. From sports heroes to doctors and movie stars to historical figures, there was a wide range of people represented at the event. There were a few members of the Ben-Hem community introduced as well including students who have inspired their peers and a few teachers. One memorable moment was when Mrs. Huse, a first grade teacher at Ben-Hem, got to meet herself!

Having over 70 students and their families milling around the cafeteria may sound like a recipe for chaos, but the entire night went off without a hitch due to the efforts of event chairperson Kathy Schnair and her volunteers. This was Kathy's second year planning the event and this year she introduced a few improvements. Tables were numbered to make it easier for students to set up their projects and for certificates to be handed out. This small adjustment had a big impact and will likely be modeled for future student events. Students were also excited about signing autographs with their "Biography Night 2014" pencils. They were a nice reward for the job well done by all of the students who participated.



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COMING SOON

April 1: PTO Meeting (Starting at 7:00p)

Join us in the Ben-Hem Library as we review planning for upcoming events and welcome guest speaker Lynnette Owens. She will be speaking to parents about internet safety and How to Keep your Kids Safe Online. Free childcare will be provided in the Cafetorium.

April 1: Cultural Arts – Roger Tincknell, Musician (2nd)

Second Graders will be thoroughly entertained by this talented musician. Roger is a strong singer, with show stopping yodeling skills and masterful instrumental skills. He interacts with students as he sings from his extensive repertoire which includes original, traditional and contemporary songs presented in a variety of musical styles. Ballads, swing, country blues, bluegrass, and cowboy yodeling are interspersed with traditional American and international folksongs. Roger accompanies himself on guitar, banjo, mandolin, Irish bouzouki and Bodhran, Appalachian dulcimer, harmonica, Puerto Rican and Venezuelan cuatros, South American Zamponia (Pan flute) and charango, Native American Flute, Latin percussion and African Achica drum. This is a great performance for introducing students to many different musical styles and instruments and is sure to be enjoyed by all!

April 17: Cultural Arts – Wheelock Family Theater (4th)

Fourth Graders will be traveling to the Wheelock Family Theater to watch a school performance of **Where the Mountain Meets the Moon**. Inspired by her father's stories, a young heroine sets off on an extraordinary journey to change her family's fortune. Along the way, she encounters magical creatures, including a dragon that accompanies her on her quest, and finds her questions answered in unexpected ways. This play is the East Coast premiere of Grace Lin's Newbery honored novel and is a great opportunity for students to experience the arts.

April 28: Cultural Arts – Andrew Green, Poet (3rd)

Third Graders will be inspired by a visit from Andrew Green. He is an award-winning writer, poet, and teacher currently living in Natick, MA. Andrew will conduct a poetry workshop for each class talking about his own poetry and techniques to help students write their own.

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

Join us in the Ben-Hem Library to discuss end of year activities. We will be joined by guest speaker, Anna Nolan. She is the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching, Learning & Innovation and will be speaking to parents about the Core curriculum in Natick. This is a great opportunity to get some understanding and ask questions. As always, free childcare will be provided in the Cafetorium.

GARDEN UPDATE



Spring is finally here! There are already some bulbs sprouting in the Seed to Harvest garden. It is still too early to start planting seeds outside, but it is the perfect time to get it ready.

The plan for the garden this year is to, first and foremost, ensure that it grows. After that, it is all about getting students and members of our community outside to enjoy it. More color and seating will be added to make the space more fun and comfortable. Opportunities for garden activities will also be offered to all classrooms and families. Everyone is encouraged to get involved!

Garden Bed Adoption

To help students get connected with the Seed to Harvest garden, the raised beds were put up for adoption. 10 classrooms responded! Adopted garden beds will be named by their classrooms and volunteers will be working with teachers to coordinate additional involvement in the planting, maintenance and harvest of them. Adoption "records" can be viewed on the Garden Planning Resources page of the Seed to Harvest website (seedtoharvest.benhempto.org)

Garden Clean-up Day – April 4

On Friday, April 4 from 12:30 - 3:30, parents and students (after school) are invited to help in our initial garden clean-up effort. There are leaves to rake, garbage to pick up, plants from last year to pull out, and soil to turn over.

Garden Supply Drive thru April 20

In addition to the preparation of the actual garden, we also need to ensure that we have all of the supplies needed to make Seed to Harvest successful this year. We will begin this effort by holding a Garden Drive from now until Sunday, April 20. A Sign-up Genius page has been created with a list of all of the items needed (gardendrive.benhempto.org). You don't need to sign-up to bring an item, just follow the drop-off instructions below:

- Seeds can be sent into school with your student or placed in the PTO mailbox in front of the school.

- Rinsed drink containers and decorations for pavers can be dropped-off in the garden behind the school (a bin will be left by the garden shed).
- Please do not send coffee grinds or egg shells into school with your student. Please drop-off in the garden behind the school (a bin will be left by the garden shed).
- Please email seedtoharvest@benhempto.org to coordinate drop-off or pick-up of Landscaping Materials, Lumber, Soil or Plants.

Some of the supplies needed are:

- Used coffee grinds and k-cups
- Egg shells
- Mature "clean" compost
- Seeds (vegetable, herb and flower)
- Plants (annual or perennial)
- Lumber
- Landscaping materials (rocks, gravel and more)
- Milk jugs and soda bottles
- Outdoor paint
- Peat moss
- Twine
- Planters
- Materials for decorating pavers and fairy houses (flat marbles, stones, shells, mosaic tile, old colorful ceramics, acorns, bark, sticks)

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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.

Mrs. Huse (Teacher, First Grade)

Interviewed by Ryan Fernandes & Colin Chin (2nd Grade)

Q: [C] What is your favorite subject to teach?

A: Science

Q: [R] What was your favorite show when you were young?

A: The Jetsons

Q: [C] What did you want to be when you grew up?

A: Astronaut

Q: [R] What are you best at doing?

A: Burning everything that I cook 😊

Q: [C] What is your favorite food?

A: Sushi

Q: [R] Do you have a pet?

A: Yes, Murphy the dog.

Mrs. Nemeskal (Teacher, First Grade)

Interviewed by Bella Tramboulakis (1st Grade)

Q: What is your favorite animal?

A: A Giraffe. She got to feed one when she was in Florida in February..

Q: Who is your favorite president?

A: Abraham Lincoln because he tried to make things fair for all people.

Q: What is your favorite thing about watching kids learn?

A: Seeing them get better at things and work hard.

Q: What's your favorite thing to teach?

A: Reading and writing because you need it for everything.

KID'S CORNER

SPRING MAZE: Help the caterpillar find his way to becoming a beautiful butterfly!

