



Ben-Hem Happenings

The Bennett-Hemenway PTO

May 2014 Newsletter



Adopt the Garden This Summer

Written by Krissy Fernandes, PTO Co-President



The Seed to Harvest garden project has been busy this spring. Over the past few months, parent volunteers have been working with many of the classrooms to prepare the garden for this year's crop. The activities have included

Planting Seedlings

Students in 15 classrooms were given the opportunity to plant one of the many flowers and vegetables that are going into our garden this year. They were each given a peat pod, measuring stick, and of course, seeds. The seeds were placed in a classroom window so that students could watch them grow until they were ready to be planted outside. Many of the classes also enjoyed a garden story, read by a parent volunteer, and a seed matching game.

Garden Grafts

15 classes signed up to help make our garden bright and colorful all year round. Students created crafts such as painted rocks, cement mushrooms, fairy houses, wind chimes, plant markers, and cement pavers. The crafts have almost all been placed in the garden and they all look beautiful!

Working in the Garden

Students of 10 classes met out in the garden to help prepare the garden beds, weed, plant seeds and seedlings, and do other needed garden maintenance. One of the fourth grade classes even helped clean out the garden shed. It was a fun couple of days and students were able to enjoy the nice weather and participate in their school garden.

In addition to the hard work of our students during the day, several continued to help get the garden going after school. The Kindergarten A.S.A.P. program built and planted potato cages in the back of the garden. It was a really cold day, but the students stuck it out and their efforts have now yielded a ton of healthy potato plants. It will be very exciting to harvest them at the start of next year.

Many of the other plants have started growing as well. The herb bed is looking good. Most of the herbs (basil, cilantro, dill, etc.) were planted from seed, so they are just starting out. The garlic, lavender and sage came back strong from last year.

The flower bed has hollyhocks, Shasta daisies, and one other purple flower that can be cut for vases, and then morning glories and two other climbing flowers in the back. They were planted as seeds, so will take some time to come up.

The "Salad Bar" beds are doing well. We planted some tomato seedlings and sweet basil from seed. Mass Horticulture donated several mature tomato plants as well as some Eggplant. A few new pepper plants have also been planted since, unfortunately, the seedlings didn't yield much.

The lettuce is starting to come up in two beds, and the sugar snap peas have sprouted. The strawberries look AWESOME! Everyone can't wait for them to bear fruit. There should be plenty for taste-testing over the summer.

HOW YOU CAN HELP!

Now that the garden is growing, we need help maintaining it over the summer while school is not in session. We are lucky enough to have an irrigation system, and have taken steps to make the garden more easily maintainable by adding stone between each of the beds. This means that the on-going maintenance has been significantly reduced.

We need families to sign-up to "Adopt the Garden" for weekly time slots throughout the summer. You can come by and work in the garden with your kids anytime during the week. All you need to do is:

- Weed in the garden beds
- Remove any "dead-heads" from the flowers
- Help yourself to any ripe fruits, vegetables and herbs

If you can help, sign up at: adoptthegarden.benhempto.org.

SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

Science & Math Night

On Wednesday, May 21, many of our Ben-Hem students came together in the cafetorium to share their knowledge and interest in Science and Math. There were a lot of interesting projects including one where the student even was able to extract DNA from spit at home!



Students were given the opportunity to talk about their topics and experiments as well as walk around the room and learn from their peers. Everyone was really excited to see Mrs. McShane and Mrs. Huse outside of school as they came around to see everyone's displays and hand out certificates. Mr. Kelly and Ms. Barbato also came to support our budding scientists and mathematicians.

**GARDENGATE ACADEMY
AFTERNOON PROGRAM FALL 2014 - 2015
Monday - Friday 2:00pm TO 6:00pm
ENROLL NOW!**



GRADES K - 5TH

Gardengate Academy offers afternoon programming. Children's routine includes homework, math, reading, dance, art, piano, drama and more.

249 North Main St. Natick, MA 01760

www.gardengateacademy.com

Call (508)720-0033

COMING SOON

June 3: PTO Meeting (Starting at 7:00p)

Join us in the Ben-Hem Library for our last PTO meeting of the year! We will be proposing the 2014-2015 budget for approval as well as celebrating the volunteer efforts of our parents and teachers throughout the year. Free childcare will be provided in the Cafetorium.

June 6: Family Fun Night (6:00p – 8:00p)

This is a great opportunity to relax and socialize with other Ben-Hem families and say good bye to the school year! Join together for fun, food, bouncing 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

Seed to Harvest Summer Activities

The garden will be in full bloom this summer! Come enjoy the color, smells and tastes of our school garden by participating in one or more of these fun activities. All activities are free. No registration is needed (except for Rubber Duck Parade). More information and times will be available on seedtoharvest.benhempto.org soon.

July 1: Bubble Fun & Sidewalk Art

Come make giant bubbles, snake bubbles, and more!

July 7: Rubber Duck Parade

Decorate or dress-up your Rubber Duck before-hand and come show it off in our Rubber Duck Parade around the garden. Email seedtoharvest@benhempto.org to sign-up.

July 30: Story Hour with Mrs. Wright

Bring a blanket to sit on and come enjoy a few of Mrs. Wright's favorite summertime stories.

August 7: Bike Wash

Bring your bike to ride around the school and wash it, and yourself, off in our sprinklers.

August 13: Movie in the Garden

Movie TBD.

August 19: Garden Pictures

Come draw or paint pictures of our garden in full bloom.

If you will be participating and would like to help with any of these activities, please email seedtoharvest@benhempto.org.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Meet Corey Dehner! Corey is a Ben-Hem mom who recently helped start the new Ben-Hem Science & Math Night.

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

A: I have one son in second grade and one who will be in Kindergarten next year.

Q: How long have you lived in Natick?

A: Three years.

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

A: Hmm. I have volunteered at the winter Holiday Fair and in my son's classrooms in the past. This year I volunteered with the Seed to Harvest program and on the creation of the Science & Math Night.

Q: What prompted you to get involved?

A: I love Ben-Hem and love that I am able to do something, albeit small, to support my community and my son's school. I also am a big fan of helping kids understand the connection between our Earth and our bodies. The garden helps demonstrate that food doesn't come wrapped in Saran Wrap. I love the pride you can see in the students when they exclaim, "That is my class's garden bed!"

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

A: I helped turn the soil of the garden beds and lay the stone paths between the beds. I loved that my kids were able to volunteer with me and that now they like to show their friends what they "did" in the garden.

I also volunteered for the Science & Math Night. It was a fabulous night. The students were so curious and enthusiastic about learning and sharing knowledge.

Q: What volunteer opportunities interest you the most?

A: I love volunteering in the garden, it's a chance to work in the soil and do something for Ben-Hem alongside my kids. Time is in short supply, but if I could, I'd love to help bring more Cultural Arts programs to the school.

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

A: They love it and I think it helps bridge the gap between home life and school life.

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. Kruszevska (Teacher, Kindergarten)

Interviewed by Benjamin Landry (3rd Grade)

Q: Why did you become a teacher?

A: Because I like working with young children. I like working with all children but I like young children best.

Q: Did you like school when you were little?

A: When I was young I liked school. Middle school was not so great and high school was tough. Elementary school was definitely my favorite. That is another reason why I decided to become an elementary school teacher.

Q: Where did you grow up?

A: I grew up in a town called Pompton Plains which is in New Jersey. It is a little town and is about 30-40 minutes north of New York City.

Q: What is your favorite food? And why?

A: PIZZA! It is cheesy, greasy and it's quick. Although it's not the healthiest food, I love it!

Q: What's your favorite activity to do on your free time?

A: I like to read and I like to scrapbook.

Q: What's your favorite sports team?

A: Hmmm... the New York Rangers are my favorite- they are also on a good winning streak right now. I like watching ice hockey and since I'm from New Jersey I like the teams from down there. I also like the New York Mets. I watch the Jets too but am not as big a football fan or basketball fan. Of course, I also watch the Red Sox!

Q: What's your favorite TV show?

A: I have a few but Grey's Anatomy is my most favorite.

Q: Do you have any other comments or thoughts to share?

A: I want everyone to know that I love teaching here. My first kindergarten students that I taught at Ben-Hem are seniors in Natick High School and are graduating this year! I've asked them to come back and visit and hope that my current students will come back one day too for a visit. I also want to say that I've been here a while now and I really enjoy being part of the Ben-Hem community!

KID'S CORNER

COLORING PAGE: Color the squirrel (from the show Squirrel Stole My Underpants) below.

SQUIRREL STOLE MY UNDERPANTS



Coming to Natick at the Wilson Middle School!

June 13, 2014 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Buy Tickets @ puppetshow.benhempto.org