

KeyNotes

A PTO Publication

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A Message From our Headmaster

Dear Keystone Community,

It's green day today in Kindergarten. Yesterday was blue day, and I found it easy to dress the part: blue shirt, blue tie, blue blazer ("It's navy," one of the five-year-olds pointed out to me, "but that's OK."). Today's color is a little trickier given my wardrobe. I have a green jacket and a green tie, but they won't work together. The jacket is corduroy - thick corduroy. It was one of two I often wore in Idaho, in January. I decide that the tie simply won't satisfy the kindergartners, so, I don the corduroy jacket and head for school. I have lunch in town, with jacket required. I run back in the house and grab a lightweight blazer for that event. To be honest, I'm more concerned about dressing the part for the kindergarten than for the luncheon.

The preoccupation with clothing colors is part of my very enjoyable learning process here at Keystone. In an effort to become better acquainted with the people and programs, I have endeavored to get in to different classes throughout these first two weeks of school. I seem to bump into the kindergarten students everywhere, and they told me about their color days this week and next. They are reading "Brown Bear," and each day they follow the color scheme of the book. I am trying to follow along. In addition to my fear of overheating today, I worry a little bit about what I'll be able to find to wear for the upcoming purple day, but we'll cross that bridge next week.

These first two weeks of school have been upbeat and busy. The excitement and energy of a new school year permeate the campus, from classrooms and hallways to the cafeteria and the blacktop. The joy of learning was best captured by one of my new second grade acquaintances, who, when asked how his first week went, replied with a jack-o-lantern grin, "I loved it." The 8th graders returned from Yellowstone safely, albeit without any good bear stories. Our upper school students are studying diligently, and despite the challenge, several seemed pleased to have three tests during the first two days of the second week. For my part, I have begun to learn the names of the 431 students on campus. I hope to have them all down by the end of the first semester. Due to my daily visits to check out their color displays, so far I have made the most progress with the kindergartners.

On behalf of the entire staff at Keystone, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2010-2011 school year. We look forward to an educational and enriching experience for all.

All my best,
Brian



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General PTO Meeting

September 30th

Pre-Meeting Social

5 p.m.,

Theatre Garden

Meeting

5:30 p.m.

Theater

Child care provided

Headlines

Dear Keystone Parents:

Welcome Back! The beginning of our new school year in the Lower School has been so beautifully orchestrated! Our teachers are eager, focused, and relaxed. We begin our year with establishing routines, schedules, and expectations that will provide foundation and guidance as we move through the academic landscape of our year.

We have embraced and are pleased with the initial implementation our new system, RenWeb. We are excited that this system will give us a more unified and more “user friendly” method of communicating internally and externally.



Coffee with Christine event.

This year Lower School will have its first Open House, which will be on September 15th from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. In the past, we have shared this event with the Middle and High School, but we are branching out to provide our parents with an experience that is more tailored to the interests and needs of younger children. We look forward to seeing you all that night. You can expect correspondence describing the specifics of the event soon.

Mr. Gonzales has added new percussion instruments to his collection and we look forward to experiencing their use in our classes. There has been a slight change in art; Mr. Parker will now be the art instructor for the entire Lower School. In the past, he has shared this responsibility with Ms. Webster. Although we will miss her, we look forward to the many new projects and ideas he is bringing to the art program this year. Thanks to Ms. Vilagi’s efforts, the number of volumes in the Lower School library has significantly increased. Stop by to check out a book or just enjoy visiting the heart of our Balanced Literacy program.

Once again, congratulations and thank you for all of your efforts in the successful launch of a new year!
Best Wishes,

Christine M. D’Alessandro
Head of Lower School

The Middle School is off and running!

I can’t remember having a more smooth start to school. The children have all found their ways to their classes and most everyone has mastered the art of opening a locker! I ask that all parents subscribe to our Yahoo Groups and create a ParentsWeb account. This will help you stay connected to what we are doing every day. Most students have created their own accounts, so they

might be a good resource for help. I’m also here to help with troubleshooting. I hope all of you enjoyed our first Middle School Newsletter regarding the Yellowstone trip. More are to come as I focus on all of the wonderful teachers and activities throughout the year. I’m looking forward to an amazing school year!
Michelle Rothwell

How Middle School Parents Can Get Involved

As parents of Middle School students there are many ways that you can stay involved with the school and your children's activities. Please consider volunteering – chaperones are needed for a number of events. If you are interested in helping out at school activities, day field trips, overnight trips, or dances, please contact Gayathri Adikesavan, Keystone PTO Middle School Representative, at gayathri365@gmail.com or 343-0178.

Upper School News

Many Upper School students and teachers have had an adventurous summer. A very few samples include Bill Spedding, history teacher for freshmen and sophomores, who is offering Global Issues: Focus on China to Upperclassmen. In preparation for this course, Bill spent a wonderful 3 weeks in July traveling in Asia. Funded by the National Consortium for the Teaching of Asia, Bill was part of a group of 40 teachers from throughout the United States who visited historical sites and schools in China and Japan. The trip's highlights included Beijing's Forbidden City, lots of great food in Shanghai and seeing ancient temples throughout Japan. Bill has come back fully armed with lots of material for his elective and looks forward to sharing his stories with anyone who wants to listen.

We have a new elective - Advanced Creative Writing - led by teacher Karen Krajcer who attended the Tin House Writers Conference for a third time and worked with non-fiction writer David Shields. Three of her seniors attended the highly competitive Juniper Writing Conference and pronounced the intense writing experience "amazing."

Last year's new Freshman course - Self & Community - initiated a new community service project open to all Keystone students, parents, and staff. KServe, the joint service-learning program formed last year between Keystone School and KIPP University Prep continues this year with the introduction of a monthly service opportunity called "Kids Corner." Last year, students from Ms. Raymer and Ms. Powers' ninth grade Self and

Middle School Parent Get-Together

Middle School Parents started the new school year with an opportunity to meet and get to know our new and returning students with a morning "Drop by for Coffee" on Friday, Sept. 2nd at the Olmos Perk Coffee Bar. This was a wonderful opportunity for middle school parents to chat and share questions, concerns, and information. The goal of such get-togethers is to facilitate interaction among families and build a stronger school community. We hope to have gatherings about once a month, by individual grade levels. If you have a preference of day or time that you would like us to consider when planning future monthly gatherings, pass them along! Ideally, we would meet on different days of the week, at different times, and offer different types of social events (coffees, lunches, etc.) to accommodate the busy schedules of many parents/families. If you are interested in attending, please email gayathri365@gmail.com.

Community Class designed and executed service projects in conjunction with local non-profit organizations. In the spring, students Nathan Engel, Miranda Freeman, Daisy Romero, and Fahad Zaman planned an evening at San Antonio Metropolitan Ministries, known as SAMM, where they read stories and had an ice-cream social with children who live in the SAMM Transitional Living Shelter. They also collected children's books to donate to the Shelter Library. It was a successful night, and this year, we've expanded the program as an on-going service opportunity open to all KIPP and Keystone families. The first Kids Corner will be held Thursday, September 2 from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the SAMM Transitional Living Center Library, located at 5922 Blanco Road 78216. We're inviting any interested students or families to come and volunteer. Initially, we expect that the evening will consist of students reading to the children, but eventually we hope to offer tutoring as well. If you are interested in joining us or have questions, please contact Theresa Powers tpower@keystone.org.

A Message from our President

Welcome to another school year! Whether you are new to Keystone or an old hand, I know this will be an exciting and eventful year. We invite you to join us in the PTO as we work to support the teachers and our children in as many ways as we can.

Our first general PTO meeting will be in the theater on **Thursday September 30 at 5:30 PM, with a pre-meeting social at 5:00 PM.** Child care will be provided, including dinner for the kids. Please note the change in time! Many of you requested that meetings be held earlier, so we're giving this a try. Similar to last year, meetings will open with a short performance by Mr. Gonzales' music students. The theme for this meeting is "What's New at Keystone?" The program will include an update from Mr. Yager and the division heads, and an overview of changes in technology at Keystone. Mark your calendars now, this promises to be a fun and informative evening.

To those of you who have already added your names to the list of PTO volunteers, we thank you very much and look forward to working with you this year. If you haven't signed up yet, you can do so at any time; we'd love to have you. Not sure what you can do? There will be a coffee on **September 10**, in the theater garden from 7:00 to 9:00 a.m. Stop by after drop off and say hi to your friends. There will be information about all our committees and ways you can get involved at Keystone.

If you ever have any questions or comments, please feel free to email me, or drop a note in the PTO box in the front office. I hope this year is a great one for all of us at Keystone!

Best wishes,
Erika Honoré

Parent/Community Communication

This year our PTO Communications Committee is working in collaboration with each of the PTO School Representatives, in addition to all of our PTO Council Committees to keep you informed. The Representatives are: Lower School - Cathi Koneru; Middle School - Gayathri Adikesavan; and Upper School - Francis Lam. Our goal is to share information about parent and family events, as well as student clubs, activities, and opportunities both for your scheduling purposes and to help you become more involved in our kids' school and the Keystone community. We are working to keep our PTO webpage updated frequently so please refer to it often for this kind of information. The webpage can be accessed directly at <http://www.keystoneschool.org/Parents/PTO/Default.asp> or by going to the school's home page, then to the Parents & Family link, and finally to PTO Information. For any suggestions about how we can further improve parent communication to ensure we are meeting your needs of staying connected to all the pertinent updates, please feel free to contact Patty Swartz, PTO Vice President of Communications at pattyswartz@earthlink.net.

Back-to-School Picnic

The Back-to-School picnic was a great success due in large part to the number of families that attended as well as the delicious barbeque. The consensus was that families were glad the event was held on campus. We welcomed Mr. Yager and he made a lovely speech about how glad he is to be at Keystone and his hopes for a great year. He was presented with a welcome banner that was signed by many of the students and their families.

The new students participated in scavenger hunts to help them learn about the campus and the administrators while the middle school students hung out in the theatre garden listening to music and spraying each other's hair with colored hair spray. All students received a black and red wristband that said "Go Cobras".

PTO Treasurer's Update, Shelley Galbraith, PTO Treasurer

The 2009-2010 school year provided a generous income for the PTO, bringing in \$7,230, or 36 percent more than anticipated. This is thanks to generous parents who joined the PTO, paid dues, and purchased directories, as well as the work of Keystone families, PTO board members, and volunteers in donating, diligently packing up, and reselling donated textbooks at the end of the school year. Thank you all! Our expenses were below expectation too, at just over \$6,000, or only 83 percent of budgeted outlays. We begin this school year with more than \$8,300 -- ready to support the Keystone community in 2010 - 2011.

Keystone School PTO, Year-End Financial Report, 2009 - 2010

Income

	Budget	Actual as of 7/31/10	Actual as % of Budget
PTO Membership/Dir. Sales	\$3,500.00	\$4,353.00	124%
Textbook Sales	\$1,500.00	\$2,684.86	179%
Box Tops	\$300.00	\$192.96	64%
Total Receipts	\$5,300.00	\$7,230.82	136%

Expenses

Culligan Water	\$540.00	\$539.88	100%
Family Committee	\$400.00	\$109.02	27%
Membership	\$250.00	\$47.73	19%
Speakers	\$100.00	\$-	0%
Directory Expense	\$-	\$834.00	
Teacher Appreciation	\$2,500.00	\$1,815.00	73%
Wish List	\$2,500.00	\$2,536.46	101%
Miscellaneous	\$505.00	\$204.90	41%
Total Expenses	\$7,290.00	\$6,086.99	83%

Beginning Bal. 8/1/09	\$7,173.83
Add: Income 09/10	\$7,230.82
Less: Expenses 09/10	(\$6,086.99)
Closing Balance 7/31/10	\$8,317.66

Welcome to our new families!

In addition to 22 new Kindergarteners, Keystone is welcoming 37 new students this year in 1st through 11th grades. To help ease the transition to a new school, the PTO arranged for host families to meet with the new students over the summer and help the students and their families answer any questions and feel more comfortable before the new school year began. Playdates, dinners, movies, and other activities helped the new ones meet some of their future classmates.

New Family Receptions were held on Sunday, August 8th. The Lower School reception, kindly hosted by the McCormick family, was held from 2 to 4 p.m. It was a nice gathering. Kids played in the backyard under the shade of an enormous tree. We met several new students who were siblings of current Keystone students. Some host families were in attendance, along with a number of board members. Helping to entertain the young students by making Cobra-colored key chains, playing games on the lawn, and eating popsicles to cool off on such a scorching day were Keystone Juniors Gail Tan, Joy Tan, Emily Cavazos, Danielle Stewart, Hannah Zesch, and Mia Kozlovsky from Girl Scout Troop 24,

which is led by Lisa Uribe-Kozlovsky. (Most of the girls have been in the troop since 2nd grade!) The girls worked with two Junior boys -- Ethan Agrawal and Wolf Honore -- whose moms also helped with the event. PTO information was available for the families to take home to learn more about PTO and how they can get involved.

The Middle/Upper School New Family reception was held on the same day from 2 to 4 p.m. (requiring some party hopping for those new families with children entering both Lower and Middle or Upper School. Some host families and current Keystone students were on hand and introductions were made between the new families and members of the PTO Council and Board of Trustees who were in attendance. To entertain the students, volleyball, badminton, and basketball were available in the yard of our gracious hosting Valkavich/Badger family as well as water balloons, soaked sponges to cool off, and music for singing and dancing. The reception was an enjoyable event for all.

We hope that the new students and their families will soon feel an integral part of the Keystone community.

10th Grade Parent Get-Togethers


Just as many of the Lower and Middle School parents have initiated individual grade get-togethers on a regular basis, the 10th grade parents have decided to get on the bandwagon as well. This opportunity to socialize will allow us to meet and enjoy getting to know each other, and also provide an opportunity to share ideas, information, and any concerns. We are pleased to report that our first August Coffee was a great success and we are looking forward already to a September family Pot Luck event (10th grade parents will receive an email with the complete details, which will also be posted on the PTO webpage). Knowing that with our busy schedules it is difficult for all parents to attend every get-together, and with input from our parents, we will be planning each monthly gathering on different days/times to accommodate as many parents as possible. If for some reason as a 10th grade parent, you did not receive our August email about the recent Coffee, or have any questions, please contact Francis Lam - LAMF@uthscsa.edu or Patty Swartz – pattyswartz@earthlink.net.

Odyssey of the Mind Information/Meeting

This year Keystone students will have the opportunity to participate in Odyssey of the Mind. This is an amazing, team-based competition that will definitely showcase the talents and skills that our students possess. For more information about this competition, please visit the organization's website, www.odysseyofthemind.com. The Keystone PTO will be hosting a meeting about Odyssey of the Mind for interested students and parents, on the evening of September 9th. Look for more information about this coming home soon!




**Annual Fund opens on September 15.
Watch your mailbox for more information!**

The Student Directories are In!

Packed with class lists, school calendars, addresses and phone numbers, the student directory is priceless. You may have your very own copy with a \$10 donation to the PTO or by purchasing one for \$10 from Janet Molak in Keystone’s front office. If you’ve already made your PTO donation, but not received your directory, you may pick it up from Janet.



Car Pool Information for Parents



Interested in carpooling? To find families in your area try eRideshare.com. Several Keystone parents have been using this site and have found it very helpful.

Communicating With the PTO Council

Questions? Suggestions? Information?
Please contact the PTO Council at PTO@keystoneschol.org.

Keystone School
119 East Craig Place
San Antonio, TX 78212
(210) 735-4022

Keystone PTO Parent Council 2011-2012

President	Erika Honore
President Elect	Rachel Pedraza
VP Communications	Patty Swartz
VP Community	Stephanie Stevens
VP Fundraising	Paige Bosshardt
VP Student Enrichment	Courtney McKendrick-Green
Secretary	Danna Halff
Treasurer	Shelley Galbraith
Parliamentarian	Helen Valkavidch
Lower School Rep.	Cathi Koneru
Middle School Rep.	Gayathri Adikesavan
Upper School Rep.	Francis Lam

Box Tops for Education

The “Box Tops for Education” program is a great way to earn money for our school. There is a collection box in the school cafeteria.

