



KeyNotes

A PTO Publication

Building community
through communication

Volume 3, Issue 5

A Message From our President

by Mark Steinhelper

Graduation brings closure to the 2008-2009 academic year. As itemized during the various class ceremonies, most notably at the class of 2009 graduation, our extended Cobra family will rightfully celebrate individual and shared successes, as highlighted in this publication. As our enthusiastic cheers subside and the ennui of summer sets in and prompts thoughts on the questions of life beyond school, poets provide insight. To wit; Whitman.

O Me! O Life! by Walt Whitman

O Me! O life!... of the questions of these recurring;
Of the endless trains of the faithless—of cities fill'd with the foolish;
Of myself forever reproaching myself, (for who more foolish than I, and who more faithless?)
Of eyes that vainly crave the light—of the objects mean—of the struggle ever renew'd;
Of the poor results of all—of the plodding and sordid crowds I see around me;
Of the empty and useless years of the rest—with the rest me intertwined;
The question, O me! so sad, recurring—What good amid these, O me, O life?

Answer.

That you are here—that life exists, and identity;
That the powerful play goes on, and you will contribute a verse.

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A personal thanks to all parents and teachers who contributed to the success of the PTO this past year. I am pleased to report that Erika Honore' will be sharing with us her considerable talents as PTO President next year. I am sure that Erika and the newly elected officers will earn and deserve our support. It has been a privilege to serve this past year, and I invite all of you to contribute your talents, energy, and resources to Keystone. Contributing your own verse in support of the Keystone mission will enable our faculty to instill the skills and refine the intellect necessary for our students to share their own eloquent and elegant stories with their school, community, and world at large.

Lower School Students Take Steps to “Work it Out”

by Theresa Powers

“Calm down” is probably not the most common expression you hear on an elementary school playground, but as lower school students at Keystone School hop and jump through a newly painted mural outside the kindergarten yard, calming down is an essential part of the game. Children step on brightly colored circles with directions that guide them through a conflict-resolution process for disputes, mostly minor conflicts about not getting a turn, or hearing words that hurt feelings.

“State the problem” and “brainstorm solutions” are steps that come directly from the school’s social and emotional learning curriculum, entitled Second Step, an award winning, research –based violence prevention program that integrates social and emotional learning with academics. Lower School students at Keystone are familiar with “Impulsive Puppy”, “Be Kind Bunny”, and “Slow Down Snail, puppets from the program used to teach problem solving and social skills. The Second Step program will expand to students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade this coming fall, with a focus on preventing bullying and substance abuse in middle school.

The playground mural was designed by Communications Coordinator Theresa Powers, in consultation with School Counselor Alison Raymer. Science teacher Jason Nydegger’s Upper School Advisory and Calculus students as well as students who are members of the Middle School PALS program assisted with painting. Second grade students reported using the mural to work out an issue about being friends, and first grade students explained how they had devised a game called “Bubble Tag” that could be played on the mural as well.



Kindergartners on the “Work-it-Out Walkway”



Headlines

Dear Keystone Community Member,

The students are gone; it is the afternoon of the last day of school. The quiet is working on those of us still lingering around. As our brains register the absence of the student cacophony of voices, shrieks, loud thuds, and laughter, the eerie quiet morphs into a *grito* declaring the school year over. Over, that is, except for the real shouting to occur at Senior Graduation this Sunday afternoon.

What a year it was! Our community was tested by a range of existence's perils, from death to the new flu to an array of issues 430 students and 50 or so employees can generate. The community's strength prevailed, as we buoyed each other and joined together in ways that were truly inspirational and mutually reinforcing. We rung the record enrollment bell again in 2008-2009, a very important guide to the school's well being. A quick look at enrollment committed for next year and an analysis of the circumstances, point toward another healthy enrollment year for 2009-2010, with a new record within our grasp. Not bad, in the face of the economic global downturn. The Territory Ahead looks very promising. Thanks for all you have done to make things go well.

The 2009-2010 school year will be my last year at Keystone School. Keystone School is a place I love and respect greatly. I have regrets around the fact that it is just not possible for me to stay here and continue to perform well for this worthy place, given all the circumstances.

As announced by the Board, a group of semi-finalists will be chosen in August and they will be interviewed by the Search Committee in mid-September. Typically, two or three finalists are chosen for a full day of on-campus interviews in October or early November. From that group of finalists, the Search Committee will recommend a person to the Board. I encourage you to participate in the process and to let your views be heard by the Board decision makers. This is an important decision. From the start, next year will feel quite differently than years without a leadership transition. This will all go very, very quickly.

Consistent with good practice, I will not be involved in the search process. I will be involved post-selection, however, in making the transition go well. I will work as closely as humanly possible with the new Head of School, after he or she is announced in November, to ensure that the students at Keystone School gain more than they might lose in the transition.

Now, let's move into the summer and do what is necessary to rejuvenate ourselves and come back in August with affirmed resolve to be an even stronger community next year, making next year all that it can be for Keystone's students.

Sincerely,
Hugh McIntosh

Upper School *by Suzanne Elizondo*

Today is the last day of the 2008-2009 school year. Students and teachers are ambivalent. Many of their achievements are posted on Keystone's website. Yes, there are cheers over successful college admissions and gap year plans, finding a summer job or internship, the end of AP exams and final exams, and the arrival of graduation at long last for seniors. But, many will not see their friends over the summer or, in the case of seniors, for much longer than 2 ½ months. Teachers are seeing the end of tests to prepare, papers to grade and lessons to plan, for this school year anyway. But they are also saying good-bye to young people they have come to know and enjoy. The ambivalence is noticeable in every school, but at Keystone it is tempered by something special. Many of these young people come back singly or in groups to catch us up on their lives after they graduate. We are privileged to follow their college and job-hunting adventures, to meet their friends and sometimes their spouses and children. We often continue to share their lives, long-distance perhaps, but shared nonetheless. When they come to town, we can sometimes sit to talk, listen, drink a latte, or eat lunch together. Such are the rewards of a small school like Keystone.

Head of School Search Update

The Head of School Search Committee of the Keystone School Board of Trustees is pleased to share the following news about the search for the new Head of Keystone School for Fall 2010.

At this point in time, we are still in the application stage, as applications from candidates have been arriving in the Wickenden office. Wickenden will continue to receive applications over the summer until the cut-off date of August 19. So, until then, we rely on Wickenden to keep surfacing excellent candidates.

The fall will start with a flurry of activities with the identification of a group of semi-finalists who will visit the school the weekend of September 12-13. In early October two or three finalists will visit Keystone and meet with faculty, administrators, parents, alumni, and students. This will give the community the opportunity to meet the finalists and the candidates the opportunity to see the Keystone community in action. Faculty and Parent Advisory groups will also be involved.

The Board would like to thank the community for submitting feedback forms to Wickenden; these forms helped shape the Opportunity Statement (available for viewing at Wickenden.com) We hope you have a great summer and return energized in the fall to help with the selection of the new Head of Keystone School.

Susan Kaufman,
*Chair, Head of School Search Committee
Keystone School Board of Trustees*

Matchless Mathletes *by Debbie Preston*

The seventh grade students were among the 103,045 students worldwide to participate this year in the Math Olympiad program. They took in a series of five monthly contests of 5 problems each, from November to March, working problems that were unusual and difficult and required creative thinking to arrive at solutions. The seventh grade received a plaque for Highest Team Achievement, awarded to all school teams whose scores fall in the top 10% of all participating teams in the middle school (grades 7-8) division.

Of the 103,045 mathletes, only 90 received a perfect score of 25 points. (That's 0.08%!!!) This year, **Eric Duan** became only the 2nd Keystone student in 21 years to perform at this level, and he received the Dr. George Lenchner Medallion for his perfect score. (Dr. George Lenchner was the founder of the MOEMS contests.)



Eric Duan received a perfect score on the Math Olympiad contest.

Congratulations to Eric and all the 7th graders!

The PTO congratulates the following members of the Junior class, who received book awards from the local alumni of several prestigious colleges and universities.

Jessica Lam—Harvard
Paco Darcey—Princeton
Raul Quintana—Yale
Chance Ruder—Cal Tech
Laura Wright—Smith College

Upholding the ISEF Tradition

Six Keystone students recently competed in the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in Reno, Nevada, accompanied by teachers, Mr. Howk and Mr. Nydegger. The team of Angad Jolly and Jordan Zesch won a 3rd Place Fair Award and a 1st Place Special Award from the American Acoustical Society. Jada Dalley and Sehar Salman's project won a 1st Place Special Award from the National Institute on Drug Abuse. And Kaitlin Joest was one of 20 students selected (from over 1500) to attend a luncheon with Nobel Laureates and then pose a question during the panel discussion later that afternoon. The PTO applauds these dedicated scientists!



Keystone students at ISEF in Reno, Nevada last May: (l-r) Jada Dalley, Sehar Salman, Kaitlin Joest, Angad Jolly, Nakhila Mistry, and Jordan Zesch



PTO Salutes the Class of 2009

**“Wherever you go,
go with all your heart.”**

Confucius

Gopal Athreya	Trinity University
Tomas Bartanusz	Trinity University
Yemile Bucay	Yale University
Gillen Burch	University of Southern California, School of Cinematic Arts
Josh Drum	Portland State University
Kevin Echavarría	Northwestern University
Dena Furman	St. Edward's University
Phoebe Jean-Pierre	University of Pennsylvania
Maria Gillette	Hendrix College
Angad Jolly	Rice University
Meagan Knuth	St. Mary's University
Andrew Koepf ⁺	Vanderbilt University
Jessica Koepf	Texas A & M University
Lauren Koepf	Kansas State University
Nick LaBrie	Texas A & M University
Amanda Lozano	Texas A & M University
Kimberly Mendez	Dartmouth College
Lauren Monier	Austin College
Christiana Renfro	Princeton University
Hallie Saylor	gap year, San Antonio College, Hands and Feet Ministries
Melissa Schram	University of Southern California
Nathan Seaworth	Baylor University
Neela Thangada*	Rice University
Matthew Tjahja	Washington University in St. Louis
Carl Tremblay	Emory University
Victoria Williamson	University of Dallas
Meagan Wilson	Texas Christian University

*** Valedictorian; + Salutatorian**

The class of 2009 has received over \$3.5 million in merit scholarship offers. **Congratulations Seniors!**

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



Keystone PTO Parent Council 2008-2009

Susan Agrawal
Fiona Arecchi
Paige Bosshardt
Mark Carolin

Jennifer Chan-Lam

Lisa Cooper

Roxanna Gonzalez-Soza

Danna Halff

Shelley Hensley

Erica Honore (President)

Alice King

Patty Swartz

Marilou Tan

Amy Zesch

Ex Officio

Mary Burch

Hugh McIntosh

Green in Many Ways...

Thank you to the students and families who donated 418 used books to the PTO's textbook recycling program. Not only has this program prevented waste and aided schools in low income areas, it has earned needed funds for Keystone PTO activities. We anticipate earning around \$1,000 for this effort!



PTO REMINDER!!!

Please continue to save box tops this summer. We will start collecting them when the school year begins. Thank you so much.

Members Matter!

The PTO wouldn't exist if wonderful families of Keystone students didn't join. We express sincere thanks to our 2008-09 members, whose names can be found on our PTO website. Please be on the lookout this summer for our 2009-10 membership form, and join us again for another exciting year.

Fiesta FunD Day Thanks!

by Mary Burch

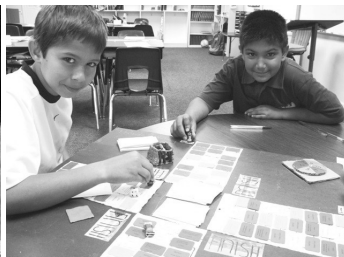
I can't believe this is the end of the year – another great year! Thanks to your generosity and devotion of time and talent we can call the year a success! Our income from Annual Fund and Fiesta FunD Day is equal to last year. A huge victory during these economic times. These fundraisers are an important part of each year's budget as they provide crucial operating income. Money you donate to the Annual Fund and for Fiesta Family FunD Day is used to help your child by supporting academics in the classroom, student activities and all co-curricular activities such as theater, art, music and digital arts. Thank you very much for your support. Thank you again to **Mary & Paul Chang**, this year's Annual Fund general chairs, and **Shelly Hensley**, 2009 Fiesta Family FunD Day chair. They were supported by their leadership teams of – Annual Fund Grade Level Chairs: **Sophia & Roy Pachecano, Anne & Greg Warrington, Diane & Will Hileman, Allisa & Warren Butler, Bonni & Larry Barocas, Merrill & Mark Carolin, Ingrid & Brian Skop, Deborah & Bob Gonzalez, Lisa & John Weissler, Dan & Lisa Cooper, Tammy & Jack Chisenhall, Marti & Richard Taylor, and Margaret & Bob Echavarria.** Fiesta Family FunD Day committee chairs – **Julie Seal, Lisa Ewell, Julie Baker, Roxanna Soza, Jill Dunn, Colleen Ferruzzi, and Kathy Pavlovsky.** We couldn't have done it without you! Thanks again and have a wonderful and safe summer. See you next year!

Fourth Grade Revolutionary War Board Games

Traci Holliday's fourth grade students wrapped up their study of the Revolutionary War this spring by producing some amazing board games; students worked in groups to create games testing information and facts about people, places, dates from the era, as well as Revolutionary War trivia. John Aidan Kozlovsky and Vivian Whitney's game featured small game pieces modeled as soldiers, and highlighted the roles of African-Americans and Hessians in the war. Mia Quintero and David Howk's game, modeled on the board game *Life*, featured jobs and occupations during the period. Fourth grader Javier Soza stated, "If you learn with trivia cards instead of a test, you have to answer a lot more questions," and his classmate Maaz Khan added "Compared to a test, you can have a lot more fun learning with the same amount of information." Ms. Holliday was thrilled to see the children playing their games again and again, as it "reinforces their learning in a really fun way."



Mia Quintero and David Howk's board game.



Javier Soza and Maaz Khan play a classmate's game.



The Keystone French Club wrapped up the school year by spending the afternoon of the last day of exams at Fiesta Texas. This year the Spanish Club joined the fun, and 80 students enjoyed pizza and ice cream before heading off to the amusement park. Chaperones included Senorita Deaton, Senora Greenfield, Dr. Caraway, Dr. Haness and Madame Mira.