

P.S. 333 ❄ THE MANHATTAN SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN Newsletter

March 2005 Volume 13, No.6
SUSAN RAPPAPORT PRINCIPAL

154 WEST 93RD ST. NEW YORK, NY 10025 212.222.1450
CLAUDINE JELLISON, Assistant Principal

HTTP://WWW.MANHATTANSCHOOL.ORG
DARLENE DOOLEY, Coordinator



MEETINGS & EVENTS

TUESDAY, MARCH 1

Leadership Team Meeting
4 pm

Upper Grade
Parents Meeting
6-8 pm

THURSDAY, MARCH 3

Coffee with Susan
8:30 am

THURSDAY, MARCH 3

Grant Writing Committee
Meeting 6:30 pm,
Science room

FRIDAY, MARCH 4

Half Day
11:30 am dismissal

**SUNDAY, MARCH 7—
SATURDAY, MARCH 12**

Bank Street
Book Store Fair

MONDAY, MARCH 7

Caring Community
Meeting
6 pm

TUESDAY, MARCH 8

Committee for Children
with Special Needs

FRIDAY, MARCH 25

No School, Good Friday

First-Grade Parents Come to Recess!

By Amy Stuart Wells

The first graders had a recess problem this year. They have recess every day and no gym class. This may not seem like a big problem—especially from the students' perspective—but with all that collective steam blowing off, things were sometimes a little wild at first-grade recess. On Mondays and Fridays in particular, when recess is the last period of the day and often inside due to the weather—things were really wild!

With about 75 six-year-olds bouncing off the walls (sometimes literally), teachers, parents, and even some students thought it would be a good idea to have more adults on hand to help corral run-away balls and tempers, provide comfort for bruised knees, and make sure no one was getting tied up in jump ropes. We needed parent volunteers, and without too much nudging from the class parents in the four first-grade classes, our parent volunteers have turned out in large number to help at Monday and Friday recess.

Since we began to appeal to the first-grade parents shortly after the holidays, we have had a tremendous response. About 20 parents showed up for a training session with Martha Eddy, who leads the Caring Community campaign for the school and has been organizing parents across the school to volunteer at recess. Since the middle of January, we have had two to three first-grade parent volunteers at every Monday and Friday recess. And it seems like everyone is having a good time—the parents like it, the students really like it, and as Dinko says, “The more pairs of eyes, the better.”

Nancy Hobson, mother of Martha in Suzanne and Brooke's class, volunteers regularly for Friday recess. She said that it has been a lot of fun because she is getting to know so many of the students in the different first-grade classes. She noted that she has formed relationships with some of the students and they all look forward to their weekly basketball game.

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Recess Peace: Exciting Developments

By Sharon Heede

Concerns about recess never cease. The perception of “chaos” when three or four classes of children are supervised by only a small number of adults is present in many urban public schools. At MSC, Martha Eddy, EdD, educator and parent of Kaya in Lucas's third grade, has volunteered her expertise to evaluate recess problems, recommend interventions, and oversee solutions. All this is part of Martha's “Peaceful Play Programming™” which she offers professionally to other New York schools and gratis to MSC.

First, the observations. Martha began observing the various recess periods last spring and noted that some recess periods have up to 75 children and only two adults working with them. During other periods

there are eight adults for 60 children but five of those adults are assigned to individual children with special needs. Imagine what happens when one of these adults calls in sick at the last minute. Add to this adult: child ratio problem, balls flying around confined spaces, and children lacking in skills to negotiate their needs, desires and feelings with others with whom they must share equipment, time and space. This seeming chaos is exacerbated by the flow of janitorial activity and deliveries through doors and gates. In addition to her own observations, Martha met with the entire MSC faculty in early February to elicit their concerns about recess.

Based on input from staff and parents, Martha began consulting with

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Where the Wild Things Are

by Cathleen Gruen

"I think the play was very creative and the songs were very professional, like a real play. I'm also happy because even though I had a small part, it was a very funny stand-out part and it made me feel proud".

Leo Frampton (Plumber, 4th grade)

Leo sums up the feeling of accomplishment that's been swirling around Manhattan School for Children ever since early February. That's when MSC's 3rd and 4th graders presented an original musical adaptation of "Where the Wild Things Are" by Maurice Sendak. The production was spearheaded by Gina DeMetruis (Sebastian's mom), who adapted the book into a musical and also wrote the lyrics and score. DeMetruis said, "I think Maurice Sendak's book is a perfect picture book. It tells such a simple story and yet it can be read on many levels."

DeMetruis described the project, "The overall idea for the workshop was to develop a real theater company. Each kid realized how important his/her contribution was to putting on the show and worked together toward that end. I think we really did succeed in becoming a company and, for me, that's why the show worked." Comments from company members about their experience of being in the play echo that sentiment:

Clara Arndtsen (Max's Mom, 4th grade): "I was nervous when I was backstage but when I got out there I was able to do it. It was fun because Max was so annoying, and you don't get a chance to scream at someone like that in real life."

Lara Brennan (Psychologist, 3rd

grade): "I'm really excited that I got to do a play at MSC. I thought the play was funny and the actors were really good. I can't wait to do it again!"

The project was entirely initiated by MSC parent volunteers and was offered to students at no charge. Twenty-three 3rd and 4th graders signed up for the program, meeting each Monday afterschool from October to February. "It was truly a community effort" DeMetruis said, "five parents participated regularly, and others rotated in to support the ongoing

work. Erdene Armstrong, Patsy Wygle, Keith Moore and Michael Davis joined me to create a true parents' collaborative and allowed the work with the company to become deeper and more meaningful. The kids got to work in smaller groups on scene study, choreography and painting the sets. It's what theater is all about: Collaboration."

Nowhere was the spirit of collaboration more evident than in the appreciative behavior of children in the audience. They were very respectful of the performers, which enhanced everyone's enjoyment. Another important collaborator was MSC's PA Executive Board who supported the show with \$200 for costumes and props. Some funds will also be raised through the sale of a DVD of the show that can be purchased for \$10, done by none other than our in-house videographer, Tatiana Hoover. Please see Tatiana Hoover in room 517 to request your copy.

And finally, the company is VERY excited that the show will be performed again for the whole school in March. As they say - not to be missed!

Coffee
with Susan
(Family Meeting)
Thurs., March 3
8:30 am
(after drop-off)
in the
Cafeteria

Technology Committee Update

by John Donovan

Don Sunderland, Modi Haninovich, and John Donovan are spearheading MSC's Technology Committee to enable the school community to better use technology in the service of educating our children. Here's what the Technology Committee has put together to let us know what is available to MSC:

- A committed faculty and administration, able to marshal extraordinary resources
- A technically adept parent body, willing to donate expertise, time, and money
- A pretty amazing technological infrastructure
- A whole lot of computers, in varying states of repair

The guts are there, but there is a lack of both in-house expertise and district-wide support to use what we've got to better our kids' education. What's there is just not being used.

Here's what we've done:

Called in the troops, at the regional level and (when that proved less fruitful than hoped) directly with vendors. Apple has been particularly and directly helpful.

- Studied the existing infrastructure, especially the building's networks
- Deployed working clusters on each floor, where children and teachers can be assured that everything works
- Began the process of migrating MSC's file sharing and user management to new servers
- Initiated a survey of the desktops in the classrooms, to determine what works, what needs to be fixed, and what needs to be replaced
- Initiated a survey of the building's wireless infrastructure
- Kicked off work with Susan to create a technology plan for MSC. This plan will drive professional development in technology for the teachers, our purchasing in the coming years, and integration of technology with the curriculum.

The classroom by classroom assessment should be finished up soon.

Anyone interested should contact Modi Haninovich at mhaninovich@nyc.rr.com.

**REMEMBER: SAVE THOSE
BOXTOPS FOR EDUCATION!!**

CARING COMMUNITY Family Discussion Night

What's Up with the Upper Grades
Monday, March 7, 6-7:30 pm • 3rd floor art room
Pizza & childcare provided. Donations accepted.

For more information call Sharon Heede (212) 678-0755

LETTER FROM SUSAN

Dear Families,

There has been a trend toward elimination of recess in schools across the country. At first blush, this seems to be an effective way to address two major concerns: the concern that children need more academic time to keep up with the increasing amount of information they must acquire, and the concern that recess periods are breeding grounds for bullying and other types of hurtful behavior. In reality, reducing or eliminating recess does not help our children learn more, and it does not offer a “safer” social/emotional environment. In fact, numerous studies have shown that eliminating recess is counterproductive.

First, let’s look at the desire to have our children learn more during the school day. Study after study confirms that children’s learning is enhanced by periods of free, unstructured play. Play is the work of children. Play is how they learn about the world, about others, about themselves. Play is where they learn to solve problems and to use their imagination. Physical activity relaxes their minds and opens them to learning. Cramming more academics into the school day is not nearly as effective in stimulating children’s minds as a half hour of free play. Recess can enhance energy and concentration. Regular physical activity is essential to good health.

Of course, a stressful, upsetting recess period is not helpful to the child in this way. So, isn’t it better to keep the child in the classroom if the schoolyard is not a place of free play but a venue for stress? There are also many studies documenting the negative effects of being bullied on a child. Damaging a child’s self esteem clearly does not send them back to the classroom bright eyed and eager to learn.

In my view, eliminating recess to protect our children is the easy way out. We sacrifice the benefits of unstructured time to avoid addressing the real issues. And, by avoiding these issues we do our children a further disservice—we deprive them of the opportunity to develop the social/emotional skills they will need as much as academic skills as they go out in to the world.

Just like the playground provides small children with the opportunity to learn sharing and turn taking, the recess yard provides older children with the opportunity to learn more sophisticated social skills.

That’s why our goal as MSC has been not to eliminate recess but to make it a positive, beneficial period of the day.

Sharon Heede’s article on page 1 describes the many things we have been doing as well as our plans for the future to address the concerns around recess. You’ll read about one of our programs, Peaceful Play Programming, a program developed and taught by Martha Eddy (parent of Kaya in Lucas’s third grade). I think the name of this program says it all, Peaceful Play. Peaceful play provides our children with the intellectual, physical, emotional and social benefits of recess while protecting them from hurtful behavior. Amy Stuart Wells’ article describes the dramatic impact first-grade parent volunteers have made in improving recess for their children. These articles demonstrate the major strides we can make at MSC when parents and staff work together for the benefit of our children.

Recess at MSC is much better than it was, and further significant improvements are in the works.

I hope you will be encouraged by the developments described in these articles, and, as always, I hope you will share your concerns with me.



First-Grade Parents Come to Recess!

Continued from page 1

Parent recess volunteers also talk about what a thrill their own children get out of seeing their mom or dad at recess—playing kick ball, swinging from the monkey bars, and acting just like a kid again! And what a great excuse to take a break from work—

“Gotta go to recess,” Kathy Dunn (mother of Sean in Katie’s class) said as she left her desk, heading for the MSC playground.

The first-grade parents who have volunteered at recess thus far deserve a big round of applause and a collective thank you for their efforts to keep our kids safe and happy.

Those who have not yet had the chance to “go to recess”—I hope you find the time and inspiration to join us one day real soon. The sign up sheet for March is on the fourth fourth-floor desk by the elevator.

According to one first-grade student, Trevor (my son, in Katie’s class), having the parents there is a good thing and it makes recess safer and more fun, but, he said with a sly smile, “It is still a little wild.”

The MSC Uptown County Fair May 15

The Uptown County Fair is an MSC community event AND fundraiser.

The Fair will be open to the public—so please come with your friends and family to make this a successful and fun event for all.

Some of the events planned include:

Petting Zoo • General Store • Down-home Fare • Arts and Crafts • Farmers Market • Relay Races • Performances by Lucas, the chorus, basketball team and cheerleaders • Pot a Plant • Face Painting • Giant Jumping Rides • A Raffle and much much more!!

Volunteers are needed from ALL grades. Each grade will be responsible for a committee. Sign up sheets will be posted outside of classrooms and on the 1st floor.

The committees/chairs are:

- Kindergarten: GENERAL STORE,
Jeri Gellman - 212-769-3640, jeri28G@mac.com
- 1st Grade: ENTERTAINMENT,
Choony Lee - 212/865-3268, lee-kawanishi@juno.com
- 2nd and 7th Grades: ARTS AND CRAFTS,
COMMITTEE HEAD - CONTACT PERSON NEEDED!
- 3rd & 4th Grades: ARCADE GAMES,
Elizabeth Shell - 212-749-8645/646-326-6768 eshell20042001@yahoo.com
- 5th Grade: STUDENT ART SILENT AUCTION, RAFFLE, TICKET
BOOTHES - COMMITTEE HEAD - CONTACT PERSON NEEDED!
- 6th Grade: FOOD AND BEVERAGES,
Marsha Gomez - mgomez@brearley.org
- 8th Grade: GAMES FOR OLDER KIDS,
COMMITTEE HEAD - CONTACT PERSON NEEDED!

FAIR MEETING SCHEDULE:

Wednesday, March 2	Thursday, April 14
Thursday, March 17	Thursday, May 5th
Thursday, March 31	Thursday, May 12

Any questions please contact

Cathy McGlynn at 212-662-4076/cjmdesign@nyc.rr.com or
Marla Baldassare at 212-864-9667/Marla_Baldassare@liz.com.

Middle School Basketball at MSC

By Matthew Greenberg

This is my twelfth year coaching basketball (I coached Columbia Prep girls to a championship and the boys' high school team at Environmental Studies to a division championship), and it has been a pleasure coaching the first-ever middle school basketball team at MSC. The team is made up of sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade boys and one eighth-grade girl, Ayla. We practice Monday through Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 8:15 a.m. and Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Our record is six wins and three losses, and we have won our last three games. At last Thursday's game against C.A.S., we won at the buzzer by two points (scored by Christian McMillian). The teams we have played thus far include The Children's Storefront School, Center School, Crossroads, and Bank Street. We have three games remaining. This week is a home game against Columbus at 3:45 (Thursday, March 3rd), and we are also home for the last two games of the season. The all-star game takes place in April, and the playoffs (all teams make it) begin in early May. All home games are played in the second-floor gym and begin at 3:45 p.m.

Many of the children on the team had never played organized basketball before, and it has been a joy to watch them improve from practice to practice and game to game. For me, the beauty of basketball is not the game itself, but the process of teaching the game to those (like the students at MSC) who are so eager to learn. This experience has also given me the opportunity to get to know many of the middle school students (both students on the team and those who come to support us at home and on the road). I look forward to many more wonderful experiences this year and for years to come. My goal for next year is to add a girls' team to play in the league.

Pizza Night—Monday March 7th

Famiglia Pizzeria

Broadway at 111th / Amsterdam at 96th

Eat-in or Take-out

Tell them you're with MSC and **25%** of all you spend will be **donated to MSC**

T H A N K S

I want to thank EVERYONE who helped with the tours, the open house and the after school visits. This entire application process begins in October and continues into the first week of February. We had more applicants than ever and I am so grateful for all the volunteers who continued from last year and for the new parents who came forward this year. They are too numerous to mention but they know who they are.

- Annie Kolpin

Yes, Kindergartners Can Recycle!

By Rebecca Cohen

Back in November, I wrote about a paper recycling initiative for all 4 Kindergarten classes. This was a test market plan; meaning if Kindergartners could do it, so could the rest of the school. Just think about all those green trees we'll save, and landfill space and well, everything! I handed out a survey this month to the K teachers to see how it was going, and here is what they said: "They remember more than the adults do." "It's been very successful. The book "Recycle" (by Gail Gibbons) was crucial. It helped them understand how important it is to recycle. The kids really care about recycling." "The children encourage each other to do it." "We are thinking of making paper with them, (maybe in the spring) when the weather gets nice again we will be able to do more with our "adopted" tree and tie that in to the recycling study." "We could use more books about recycling, they got into them."

If you want to start this program in your child's grade, please do! Tatiana suggests doing one whole grade together. First, speak with Mark, our Head Custodian, tell him the room numbers that will need clear plastic bags for paper, make sure the can is well marked, "Paper Only," and place the can far away from the door (as people tend to drop garbage in as they enter and exit).

Next, buy some books on recycling for the teachers and kids. Last, monitor that it's working. The important thing to remember is, if regular garbage gets thrown in with the paper, it contaminates it, and won't be able to be recycled, so some diligence is required. If anyone out there has some books on recycling to donate, we would so appreciate it, bring them to Lisa Gershon's class room K-303 and I will distribute them. If anyone has any ideas or questions e-mail me at rebeccacohen33@yahoo.com.

PA PERSPECTIVE

As Susan and the staff continuously refine the curriculum to make the classrooms safe, happy centers of learning that support each child's individual style and personality, we, the Parents Association/Executive Board, have been implementing actions that would affect the community around the classrooms. It is you and I, the parents, who cement the culture of our school. Unless each of us can see the truth of this, we cannot truly experience the fulfillment of the "village" it takes to grow a child or ourselves.

Please place your trust in your children, yourselves, our administration and our school.

What would it look like if each of us cast away any doubt that we are in the best school ever? I know that my son, Connor, is doing the best he can and instead of continually trying to assess what he would be doing if he were somewhere else with other teachers with other kids, we've decided to commit and not to look elsewhere for his younger sister, Colette. We've simply decided to take Connor's lead. He is safe and happy at MSC. How could we think that Colette would be different? This has been our education. We are safe and happy at MSC.

So, what is our commitment used for? I don't know how else to say it; every single aspect of our fundraising/volunteering efforts is represented in empowering our educators to implement what they know is good education. Everything you see at MSC that makes it safe, healthy, nurturing, inspiring and empowering to your children is directly due to your commitment and your efforts.

So, please get involved in any way you can. Join us for these events: an afternoon of song with soprano mom Anna Kerkorian Koopman, mom of Joseph, on March 6, or help coordinate and purchase books from our teachers' wish lists at Bank Street Bookstore during the week of March 6-12, and volunteer for the County Fair on May 15.

Choony Lee

Did You Know...

MSC has grown so much that we no longer have an indoor space that will accommodate the entire student body and parents?

Our Science Lab is the best in the city?

The Science Lab was funded by the Friends for MSC? (funds raised by the Winter Ball, pie and bake sales, proceeds from Innisbrook, magazine, Mindware and Schoolpop fundraising

efforts, concerts, all those events for which we are asking volunteers to help)

When future 6th grade students were accepted, they screamed and yelled, just like game show contestants? They are that happy to be accepted at MSC!!

We now have a basketball team, coached by Matthew, and we even have cheerleaders! We are Proud!

Bank Street Book Store Fair

March 6-12

Come to *Bank Street Book Store* from March 6th through 12th and buy, buy, buy! 20% is donated to MSC or 25% book credit. Please bring your coupons. They must be presented at time of purchase.

Other discounts do not apply.

Recess Peace

Continued from page 1

Susan Rappaport, Claudine Jellison and Dinko Kacarevic (our physical educator), to design and implement programs to bring MSC recess toward more peaceable times.

Recess Leadership Team And Recess Supervisors

A recess leadership team was established. It is made up of staff members who attend multiple recess periods each week – this year it includes Dinko, educational assistant Paul O’Connor, educational support specialist Sarah Murphy and school aides Lorraine Phillips and Wilhemina Waldon. This group meets with Martha and/or Claudine periodically to discuss scheduling, equipment needs for each grade, best use practices of the gym and play-yard space, and to trouble shoot sundry issues. (Top issue today: determining how best to decide whether to have inside or outside recess each day especially as the weather shifts throughout the day and how to communicate these decisions quickly.) The Recess Leadership Team is joined by eight other staff members—educational support specialists, enrichment spe-

cialists and the third and fourth grade classroom teachers who each serve as Recess Supervisors at recess at least once a week.

Improving the Adult To Child Ratio and the Quality of Recess Time

You may have noticed an improvement in the adult to child ratio lately, and even more changes are coming. First, Martha enlisted the cooperation of Asphalt Green’s free Recess Enhancement Program. This has given us a professional leader, Andy, two days a week. And, Andy is training fifth and sixth grade students to lead peaceful, cooperative, fun recess games.

Parent volunteers are also helping to improve the child to adult ratio. We now have numerous regular volunteers who come in about once a week (Thank you Marcia Solomon, Lydie Raschka, Susan Donovan, Steve Anderson, Shirlene Blake-Neale, Mary Jo Pagano, Cathleen Gruen, Robin Sanchez). Other parent volunteers are always welcome. Amy Stuart Wells has helped to organize the first grade parent volunteers with a terrific schedule, in which each parent helps at recess alongside the regular recess staff at least twice a year. (See article on first-grade recess, page 1)

The effectiveness of both student and parent volunteers has been enhanced by Asphalt Green training in cooperative games/sports and by staff and parent training sessions provided by Martha.

New Recess Aide

The latest development in the staffing area has been the hiring of a new recess aide.

At Martha’s recommendation, the Friends of MSC funded this new position. Just prior to the February break, MSC hired Mike Swift, a graduate of Fordham University, to work at recess five days a week and help Dinko one period a day in upper grade physical education classes. Mike, already familiar with MSC from his work at Sports and Stuff, impressed the hiring team with his enjoyment of getting kids engaged in a variety of games.

Increased Safety

Several safety initiatives have also been instituted:

1. Staff regularly shuts yard gates and gym

Asphalt Green's Recess Enhancement Program

The Asphalt Green Recess Enhancement Program is led by Justine Cummings and Jennifer Gastrich. As part of this wonderful, free program, Andy, the Asphalt Green trainer, is teaching 16 fifth and sixth graders how to lead the cooperative games of Alaskan Kickball, Four Square, and Pass the Penny. The students are devoting part of their lunch hours two days a week to learn these games. Dinko has been active in this program too. Martha notes that while a lot of the games are not those which kids see in the media, in video games, etc., they are enjoyable and stimulating for kids and even adults. One of our biggest challenges is getting the kids to value these cooperative games. Beginning the week of February 28th, fifth and sixth grade leaders will share their cooperative games leadership skills gained with Asphalt Green’s program with the third and fourth graders.

doors at all times.

2. Special wheelchair safety guidelines were developed to enable children in wheelchairs to participate safely in games with other kids.

3. There is now an “incidents report book” so that facts are available about injuries and socially problematic behaviors for follow-through by the team with families and children.

Make Recess More Fun

To make recess more fun for more children, Martha has:

1. Recommended the purchase of art supplies, the use of the parachute, cooperative 3 mat twister (an adaptation developed by Peaceful Play) and guidelines for being able to use hoolahoops and jump ropes.

2. Selected recess activities that are consistent with our school’s philosophy of cooper-

continued on page 11

Goals for our Children

Peaceful Play Programming identified on-going goals for MSC children at recess

The entire community can help our children:

- resolve conflicts creatively
- channel their energy productively (during and after recess) (Gerri’s class enjoys practicing the Peaceful Play–“Relax to Focus Movement Series” after recess)
- respect the rules and accept the consequences
- include all others in all games
- keep up with care for equipment (and with adults to have them available when needed) give us feedback about the different layouts for games in the gym and yard
- value the choice to partake in cooperative games

Peaceful Play Programming™ at MSC

Peaceful Play Programming™ begins with Martha's observations of recess, a review of schedules and job responsibilities, and interviews with recess staff. She then recommends what aspect of the current situation needs support, and works together with as many of the regular personnel as possible to establish a productive tone at recess. Peaceful Play Programming uses movement and physical activity to teach conflict resolution, violence prevention, and community building. Peaceful Play™ problem-solves with the school to:

- 1) Find methods for adjusting the child: adult ratio.
- 2) Provide staff training in conflict resolution and ways to support socio-emotional skill building through games.
- 3) Reach out to parents to volunteer at recess and help provide Parent Training.
- 4) Establish a supervisor for each recess period who makes on the spot decisions about activities to be offered that day, does timekeeping, and is the point person for all of the adults (staff and volunteers).
- 5) Share behavioral guidelines for dealing with conflict as it arises at recess and provide direct staff development in conflict resolution.
- 6) Listen to parent volunteer ideas about enhancing recess and support implementation (e.g., wearing sports pinnies so children don't run in and out of games when their interest wanes; keeping the number of balls engaging but not too over-stimulating; have gardening projects).

Caring Teachers Caring Classrooms

This month's column will focus on MSC teacher Bernard Winter.

Creating a Caring Community Culture

Interview with Bernard Winter, Art Teacher and Arts Coordinator

by Cathleen Gruen

Bernard Winter is in his third year of being the Art Teacher and Arts Coordinator at MSC. During my interview with Bernard I confirmed, as I suspected, he's always been an activist in creating a caring classroom culture. It was a typical afternoon and there were several 5th and 6th graders "hanging out" in the art room afterschool. They were working on a project for another teacher, unrelated to their work in art class, but Bernard said: "This is a situation I enjoy. A lot of times the older grade students need a place to be afterschool to work on projects and borrow materials. I'm glad they ask to be here."

However the open door that Bernard maintains at MSC is new for him. At his last appointment at a large city school, there was less of a community atmosphere. Supplies were constantly disappearing and finally Bernard had to keep his room locked. The budget was so tight he often paid for materials without being reimbursed. Bernard said, "Fortunately the Friends of MSC have been great about providing a budget for supplies and activities and the MSC students are much more respectful of the art room. Having an open classroom and open shelves has been a wonderful new experience for me."

Bernard completed his undergraduate work as a painting major at Cooper Union and then earned a Masters Degree in painting at Queens College. He's been an art teacher with very challenged children at the New York School for the Deaf, PS 27, and MS 222. He was also an art specialist for seven years with Learning to Read Through the Arts, the well-known education program at the Guggenheim Museum. Bernard brought all of these experiences to MSC where he has been an active participant in the MSC school community since his arrival.

Recently he developed and implemented some beautiful art projects made by the K-4th graders for auction at the Winter Ball. Bernard worked with the students to choose caring community themes that included portraits of "Our Class," toy boxes of "Ways We Can Play Together" and murals that described

"Our Class Playing Together in the Recess Yard." About the murals Bernard observed, "It was very interesting to see how students knew exactly where they would show themselves standing and who they would show themselves playing with. There are invisible territories that children stake out on the playground that are quite definite." Bernard also noted that students chose to add dialogue boxes to their figures saying supportive things like "good kick" at a game or "it's nice to play with you."

In working with MSC's middle school students Bernard said, "Older students are very interested in their rights. If you appeal to students that responsible behavior safeguards their rights, they'll buy into their responsibilities. If the rules are only coming from me, they're going to question that." In his classroom Bernard has posted "Rights and Responsibilities" he has found works well in promoting a caring classroom environment:

1. Everyone has the right to learn.
2. Everyone has the right to be heard.
3. Everyone has the right to be respected.
4. Everyone has the right to be in an orderly environment and to be safe.
5. Everyone has the right to express opinions respectfully.
6. Everyone has the responsibility to follow all of the school's rules.

It's clear that Bernard is happy at MSC, and that has shown in the amount of energy he devotes to school projects outside of his regular responsibilities, and, to the kids who work in his room after school. Bernard said, "I really get a kick out of knowing everyone in the school. I've taught all of the kids, and I think everyone has experienced success here." MSC has certainly benefited, and the work students are creating proves that Bernard fosters a caring culture in his room every day.

Many of the MSC teachers are incorporating activities such as these and the Caring Community Committee will be interviewing and sharing news about them in upcoming newsletters.

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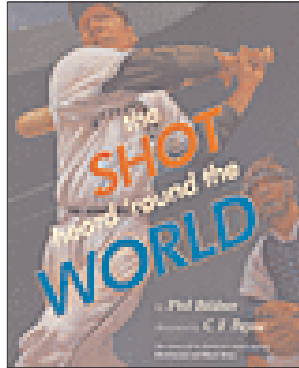
The Shot Heard 'Round the World, Phil's New Book

Our very own Phil Bildner, teacher of eighth grade ELA/Humanities, has a new book, *The Shot Heard 'Round the World*, illustrated by C.F. Payne, which just received a starred review in *Publisher's Weekly*.

There will be a publication party at Books of Wonder in Chelsea (18 West 18th Street, between 5th and 6th Avenues, up the street from Old Navy) on Thursday evening, March 31 from 5:00-7:00. All are invited.

C.F. Payne illustrated Phil's first picture book, *Shoeless Joe & Black Betsy* (Simon & Schuster 2002). Last year, the book won the Texas Bluebonnet Award as the best children's book of the year. Over 200,000 elementary school children participated in the voting.

His second book was *Twenty One Elephants* (Simon & Schuster, 2004), which came out last fall. It was illustrated by LeUyen Pham. This picture book won an Oppenheim Toy Portfolio Platinum Award for 2005, and it was featured on the NBC *Today Show* and in *Child Magazine*. For *Twenty One Elephants*, former students helped with the research. In fact, Eliza Kate Wicks-Arshack, now a sophomore at Beacon High School, is acknowledged in the book.



Throughout the school year, Phil visits many of the classes at MSC. Not only does he read the books to the students, but he also shares with them the entire writing and book-making process. He shows them drafts, pencil sketches of the art, early versions of the book, galleys, and images not used in the text. He also provides them with sneak previews of upcoming projects. For instance, the fifth grade classes, as well as Barbara's fourth grade class got to see/read *The Shot Heard 'Round the World* before it even came out. Most recently, Phil worked with Robin's class and Geri's class.

In addition, several years ago, Darlene Dooley, the school coordinator, proposed the idea of a picture book project. In conjunction with the 8th grade exit projects, some students turn their written reports into accessible picture books! Over the years, the students have produced amazing ones on The Cuban Missile Crisis, the Vietnam War, and the Roaring Twenties.

Phil reports, "I love sharing my writing with my students. This spring, I'm going to share with all the 8th grade students my first young adult novel which will be coming out next year."

All of the books are available in stores and on-line.

Fundraising Concert by Anna Kerkorian Sunday, March 6th 3 pm

Anna Kerkorian, a brilliant soprano, will perform at Christ and St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, located at 120 West 69th St. (between Broadway and Columbus) on Sunday, March 6th at 3 PM. The concert will also feature pianist Dan Smith. The concert will include works by Schubert, Debussy, Granados and Obradors.

Anna's son, Joseph, is in Shana's 2nd grade class, and her son Jude is in preschool at West Side Montessori.

She graduated from USC's School of Music, and has performed primarily in Los Angeles as a soloist in concerts and recitals. Anna has organized this concert as a fundraiser for MSC, as she did last year, with \$10 as the "suggested" donation at the door.

Celeste Thomas, mother of Chase in Gerri's class, was amazed by Anna's voice when she went to last year's concert, "she has a lovely voice and is able to create a mood and allows everyone to come with her..." Celeste encourages all of us to go to the concert where the surroundings and the acoustics are better than the MSC auditorium where Anna performed for our Fall Arts Festival.

Lucas Rotman's C.D. for Tsunami Relief

By Rebecca Cohen

MSC's very own 3rd grade teacher has donated his music for Save the Children, Tsunami Relief Fund. Lucas is a folksy musician with songs harkening back to the days of 60's protest music. His straightforward political lyrics are thoroughly enjoyable. There are eight songs, two of my favorites were Little Blue Pill and 21st Century Blues. Buy this CD for the harmonica riffs and acoustic guitar, and his politically conscious lyrics, and Lucas' lovely voice, and buy it for the tsunami relief effort for children. I relaxed and smiled, while listening to Lucas' sardonic adult humor and folk songs.



Write a check for \$25.00 to Save the Children and bring it to Lucas' classroom (room 318) or the parent liaison office (room 517). Thank you Lucas for your generous spirit and caring.

NEWSLETTER TEAM

Cynthia Wang, **Editor**
Candace Gulko, **Editor**
Deb Rabinowitz, **Design**

And with contributions this month by:
Rebecca Cohen, John Donovan,
Matthew Greenberg, Cathleen Gruen,
Choony Lee, Lisa Leventer, and Amy Stuart Wells

SPECIAL EVENTS FROM THE WINTER BALL

Focus on Photography with Peter Guttman

postponed from March 5, Date TBA
loripgreene@hotmail.com

Storytelling: A Parent/Teacher Workshop led by Lucas Rotman
Thursday, March 10, 6:00-8:00
csgulko@aol.com

Cooking Class by Stephanie Pietromonaco "Mediterranean Flavors"
Sunday, March 6, 12:30
Maryjo1000@earthlink.net

Cooking Class by Stephanie Pietromonaco - "Sunday Sauce with Rigatoni and Roasted Winter Vegetables"
Sunday, April 3, 12:30
Maryjo1000@earthlink.net

An Artful Friday Evening
Friday, April 15, 6:45 Christina
Hunter christinahunter@verizon.net

Family Concert of Fairy Tales
Sunday, May 1, 2:00 Bruce Adolphe
Pollyrhythm@attglobal.net

Umpteenth Annual Literary Tea
A date in May Polly Runyon
runwit@verizon.net

Taking the Fight out of Food. Learn to help children "eat for life"
Thursday, June 2, 7:00
donnaqual@aol.com

Sing-a-Long for Kids with Gerri Kilduff Date: TBA Lori Greene
loripgreene@hotmail.com

Exercise Workshop: Date: TBA
Erdene Armstrong
visual_impact@hotmail.com

Environmental Workshop
Date:TBA Allen Frankel
extrabigal@yahoo.com

Quasimodo's Tower Tour
Date: TBA Michael J. Smith
ms@gf.org

Secrets of New York
Date: TBA James T. Kahn
james.t.kahn@smithbarney.com

Soccer Clinic Date: TBA
jonathan.rhoads@gmail.com

Fitness class by Dinko
Date: TBA Deb Rabinowitz
debrabonline@earthlink.net

Architectural Tour of Times Square Date: TBA Nina Hall
rappaporthall@sprintmail.com

MSC WINTER BALL SPECIAL EVENTS COOKING CLASSES ARE A HIT

On Sunday January 23rd, Mary Jo Pagano (1st grade parent) hosted the 1st of 4 cooking classes that were part of the special events series from the Winter Ball.

Stephanie Pietromonaco (1st grade parent), a former chef, taught the group how to make "Sunday Sauce" — a hearty tomato sauce with sausage, pork ribs and meatballs - tossed with rigatoni and a wide array of winter roasted vegetables. Alene Hokenstad (Kindergarten & 4th grade parent), Pam Butler (1st grade parent), Lilar Chin (Kindergarten parent), Yoon Kim (1st grade parent) and Marty Toub (1st grade parent) all shared a delicious meal together, learned lots of great cooking tips and spoke about experiences both in and out of the school.

Then again on February 6th, a group gathered again at Mary Jo's to watch Yoon Kim create a variety of sushi from teriyaki eel to sushi rolls of salmon, crab and avocado. The plate of sushi was as beautiful to look at as it was to eat! Miso soup and salad began the meal and everyone sat down to enjoy the dinner they helped create. The wonderful lively dialogues and delicious food reinforced what MSC is about — community!!

There is still room in the upcoming two classes (Mediterranean Menu and another round of Sunday Sauce). Please contact Mary Jo Pagano (maryjo1000@earthlink.net) or at 212-222-1545 to sign up.

HELP HELP HELP HELP HELP HELP HELP HELP HELP HELP HELP HELP HELP HELP
Tsunami Victims

Get Lucas' great CD with A \$25.00 donation to Save the Children
(room 318 during drop off; room 517 other times)

Recess Peace

Continued from page 6
ation and inclusiveness.

3. Supported paraprofessionals working with a single child to set up games with their children that include as many other kids as possible (e.g., freeze tag, limbo, creative play, twister).

School-Wide Focus On Recess

In summary, MSC has begun several creative programs to improve the quality of recess for our children. This will be highlighted during Promoting Peace at Recess Week, which begins March 7. The teachers now engage in read-alouds and discussions on the subjects of caring interpersonal behavior, feelings of loneliness and exclu-

sion, dealing with bullying and teasing, and what constitutes peaceable playground behavior. Susan has authorized the purchase of all of the recommended books.

MSC staff and volunteers are working hard to make recess a special period of the day when children can learn a sport or choose free, unstructured play, both in surroundings that are physically and emotionally safe. Recess is not just the old-fashioned "time-off." It is the time to help the whole child, physically, emotionally, and socially.

We hope that all members of our community will support these beginning efforts to help our school be an even warmer, safer, fun-filled place.



TAKE NOTE:

Citywide testing dates
are as follows:

Tuesday, April 12th
ELA Grades 3,5,6 and 7

Tuesday, April 19th
Mathematics Test
Grades 3,5,6 and 7

MSC MARCH 2005 CALENDAR

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 The MSC Uptown County (Spring) Fair Meeting	3 Coffee with Susan/ Family Meeting — 8:30 am in the cafeteria	4 Half Day- Staff Development — 11:30 Dismissal	5
6 Anna Kerkorian Concert (see ad pg 9) •Mediterranean Flavors event •Bank Street Book Store Fair	7 Caring Community Meeting — <i>Whats Up with the Upper Grades?</i> 6:00 pm •Bank Street Book Store Fair	8 Committee for Children with Special Needs •Oceanophony— symphony concert for primary grades at MSC Auditorium •Bank Street Book Store Fair	9 New Victory Theater <i>"Introdans"</i> Fifth Grade Classes •Bank Street Book Store Fair	10 Bank Street Book Store Fair	11 Bank Street Book Store Fair	12 •Bank Street Book Store Fair
13	14	15	16	17 The MSC Uptown County (Spring) Fair Meeting	18 <i>Songs, Sangria and Tapas</i> Event	19
20	21 Newsletter Deadline	22	23	24	25 No School, Good Friday	26
27	28	29 <i>Alvin Ailey</i> performance, MSC Auditorium	30	31 The MSC Uptown County (Spring) Fair Meeting		

Indian Café

Sunny Budhiraja has offered a
5% donation to MSC EVERY DAY for
 eat-in and take-out orders placed when MSC is mentioned
 for his restaurant, Indian Cafe located at
 201 West 95th @Amsterdam **212 222-1600**

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achieve a high score on the city and state tests. Moreover, I will also work with him/her to learn beyond the tests. I work with students in grades three, four and five. My daughter is in the 8th grade here!

TONY MEEKER
(MSC parent)

Private Tutor
212-865-5442

mss.mkr@verizon.net
697 West End Avenue, NYC 10025