



# Happenings

a publication for students and parents of  
Horace Mann Elementary

May 2010



## Horace Mann Hot Topics By Principal Jeff Strasnick

- ✧ June 3<sup>rd</sup> Comedy Show Fundraiser at the Kowloon to raise funds to improve Horace Mann's technology. It should be a great time. Please come and/or volunteer to help out. A survey was sent out looking for volunteers. If you didn't receive the survey, e-mail or call Mr. Strasnick to have it sent to you.
- ✧ A reminder to please make appointments to speak with your child's teacher. Teachers either have other meetings in the morning or are getting ready for the day. This is typically the same in the afternoon, so please avoid the "drop in".
- ✧ On May 21<sup>st</sup> from 8:30am to 9:30 am I will be hosting "Breakfast with the Principal" to give parents the opportunity to ask me questions and hear what's happening at Horace Mann and plans for next year.

## Happenings Staff

The *Horace Mann Happenings* Editorial Staff would like to thank all of you for your continued support this past year. Your editorial contribution to our school newsletter is important in maintaining positive communication within the Horace Mann community. Please send content for the June 2010 newsletter to [samantha.sullivan1@verizon.net](mailto:samantha.sullivan1@verizon.net).

In addition, if you have any feedback or ideas to improve the newsletter, please send along to any one of our staff members:

- ❖ Samantha Sullivan—Writer/Editor [Samantha.sullivan1@verizon.net](mailto:Samantha.sullivan1@verizon.net)
- ❖ Nancy Murphy - Designer/Editor [jn95murphy@verizon.net](mailto:jn95murphy@verizon.net)
- ❖ Sharon Lavery - Editor/Production Coordinator [sklavery@comcast.net](mailto:sklavery@comcast.net)



## Important Dates

May 12 - PTO Meeting 7:00 p.m.

May 21 - Teacher Appreciation Luncheon

May 27 - Spring Concert, 6-8 p.m.

May 31 - No School, Memorial Day

## Keys to Success

Congratulations to the April  
Key to Success Recipients for  
**Persistence!**

Isaiah Valdevisio

Rebecca White

Dante Marena

Liam O'Hara

Isabella Fiore

Liam Gage

Madelaine Kozlowski

Joshua White

Kevin Wheelock

Elizabeth Casey

Owen Hertigan

Emily Sands

Jocelyn Skane

Ella McGillicuddy

Luke Desmond

Fiona O'Donnell

Amanda Brilliant

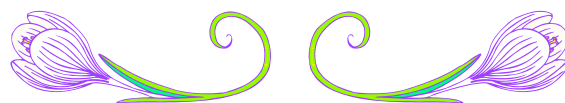
Emma Acworth

May's Key to Success is:

**Empathy**

## Ice Cream Social a Great Success!

The PTO would like to thank the Horace Mann community for supporting our annual Ice Cream Social! Like everyone, the PTO has been impacted by the economic conditions of the past year, and this event was in jeopardy of being cut from the budget. By collecting \$1 for each ice cream, we were able to cover a portion of the costs, allowing us to continue with this fun springtime tradition. We had a great turnout...over 350 students, parents and neighborhood friends enjoyed Richardson's ice cream sundaes and had a chance to visit the classrooms and teachers. We also had representatives on hand to kick off our Tupperware and Tastefully Simple fundraisers. Thanks to all who attended!



# PTO Meeting Minutes

Our apologies to anyone who arrived late to the PTO meeting to find no one there. We had to move the meeting to Yvonne Garcia's home because the PTO could not get into the school. Mr. Strasnick was not in attendance because he was at Ecamp so there was no one at the meeting with a key to the school. Sorry for any inconvenience.

## PTO NEWS

Jen Waden started off the meeting with discussion of a plan to give parents a questionnaire seeking their opinions of PTO issues such as fundraisers, scheduling of meetings and school events. The PTO plans to distribute the survey before the end of the school year.

There are many open PTO Board positions for next year. We encourage all who are interested to contact Jen Waden. Even if you have never attended a meeting in the past, you are welcome to take on a position. It is a great way to learn more about what is going on at Horace Mann and to express your opinion. Debbie Brooks has agreed to act as Co-President with Jen Waden next year. Jennifer Ward has also offered to take on a position. The open positions are:

- Vice President (2 if possible)
- Treasurer (2 if possible)
- Secretary (2 if possible)

If you want to find out more about what is available, please contact Jen Waden.

## FUNDRAISERS

The Tupperware and Tastefully Simple fundraisers which were kicked off at the Ice Cream social are still underway. Feel free to send in your order forms.

There is an upcoming Dockside Fundraiser scheduled for June 16th. Jen Waden has been working with Liberty Bell to try to get a fundraising night (which includes take out) on the calendar.

Checks from the Math-a-thon continue to trickle in. It is not too late to send in your checks!!! The PTO is considering doing some sort of summer read-a-thon.

Horace Mann families spent \$910 at Modell's earning \$45 for Horace Mann. A Modell's fundraiser will take place again in August/September, so plan to do your Fall Sport shopping at Modell's for Horace Mann.

# PTO Meeting Minutes continued

The PTO conducted a poll regarding whether Horace Mann should host a Road Race as a fundraiser. The response was very positive and most felt it would be more successful in the Spring due to our already having the Golf Tournament and Pumpkin Festival in the Fall. The PTO is still in the research stage of planning a road race as there are many challenges such as police details, liability, and sponsorships.

## FAMILY IN NEED FUND

Patti Jones attended the meeting to give an update of the Family in Need Fund. Her 5th grader is moving on to middle school but Karen Corr has agreed to work with Joanie Russell next year. The Red Sox opener was very successful. Due to the fact that the fund gave out \$900 in checks this year, Patti and Joanie feel strongly that the fund should start off the year with \$1000 in its account. A suggestion was made that all profits from the cookout (which is actually a community event and not a fundraiser) be allotted to the fund. All agreed that would make sense next year.

## MEMORIAL DAY PARADE

Mrs. Capaldo and Mrs. Babagallo have agreed to chair the Parade this year but the PTO discussed ways to try to get more families involved. The PTO will plan to do some sort of contest which will reward the class which has the most participating families march in the parade. The parade is the Sunday of Memorial Day Weekend, May 30th. If you are not out of town, please plan to march in the parade with your children. It is sure to be a great time.

## RETIREMENTS

Mrs. Savarino and Mrs. Dembro are retiring this Spring. The PTO will plan to honor them in some way.

## TEACHER APPRECIATION LUNCHEON

The Teacher Appreciation Luncheon is planned for Friday, May 21<sup>st</sup>. Volunteers will be needed to cover the classrooms as well as to cook for this special event. Forms will be coming home soon but feel free to contact Laurie Armstrong for more information. Because this luncheon does not fall during the actual Teacher Appreciation Week, the PTO will be sending in goodies to the Teachers lounge to recognize the teachers as well.

## MINI GRANTS

Second round of Mini grants will be determined at a Mini Grant meeting on May 7<sup>th</sup>.

# Comedy Night to Benefit Horace Mann



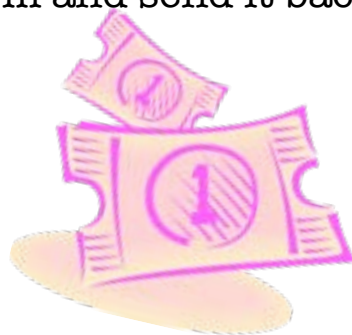
This year we will be having a Comedy Show fundraiser for Horace Mann to raise money to improve and increase the school's use of technology. It will take place at the Kowloon restaurant on Thursday Jun 3<sup>rd</sup>. Our school will receive 50% of all profits from ticket sales and advertising sales. The company that organizes the show will also print tickets, posters, programs, and 50/50 raffle tickets at no cost to us.

We need to sell **at least** 200 tickets at \$30 each for the show. The show includes 3 comedians and a buffet dinner supplied by the Kowloon. I am looking for 20 people (or more) that can sell at least 10 tickets each. Several people already volunteered, but we still need more.

I am also looking for people to sell advertising space for the event program. This program will be given out to everyone at the show. It will also contain bios of the comedians and information about Horace Mann.

We discussed at a PTO meeting not hitting up local businesses and going for some of the bigger ones on Route 1 (Trader Joes, Kelly's, Lakeshore Learning, Fuddruckers, etc.) We only need to fill two pages worth of advertising but the more we get the more we make.

This fundraiser will make Horace Mann a great deal of money and will definitely provide us with a fun adult night out. Once everything is printed and ready, I'll have an informational meeting for everyone who would like to help out. If you didn't receive the volunteer link you may fill out the attached form and send it back to me. Thanks as always for your support.



# Classroom Happenings

## **First Grade**

In reading, we are continuing to go over consonant blends (i.e. bl) and digraphs (i.e. wh). These concepts are very important in both their reading and spelling development. We are encouraging the children to be very careful when sounding out words in their writing, so that all the sounds in the words are represented on their papers. To strengthen our comprehension skills, we have been discussing the sequence of events, setting, characters, main idea and author's purpose.



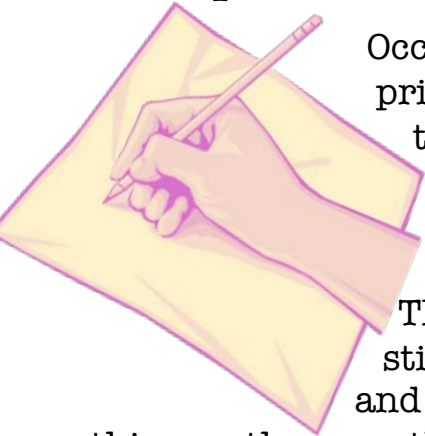
We are very proud of the progress your children are making in writing. When writing in journals, we are working on elaborating and using more details. We are also working on using writing conventions such as capitalization, punctuation, and spacing between words. The children are all very proud of their writing and they love to share their journal entries with their classmates.

We continue to learn many new concepts and review those already introduced. The children recently learned about fact families and related addition and subtraction facts. We are currently working on pattern units. Children should be able to identify a pattern unit, label it and be able to continue the given pattern. Some examples of these patterns are AAB, AAB or ABB. A couple ways to practice these patterns are by using our bodies (AAB; clap, clap, stomp) and manipulatives, (AAB; triangle, triangle, square).

First grade continues to study weather this month. Our focus is on the water cycle. Ask your child to sing the water cycle song we've learned! Stratus, cumulus and cirrus clouds will also be studied. The next unit will be "Growing and Changing". We will be observing the life cycle of two different insects! It will be exciting!

We are summing up a unit on "In and Around the Land" where we have been discussing goods, resources and the production of several goods in factories. The importance of recycling is being emphasized. Next, we are moving onto "My Country, My Heroes". Be on the look out for a state project that is sure to be enlightening!

## Occupational Therapy Update: Keep up the cursive....



Occupational therapists typically write goals related to printing and cursive writing. We are not handwriting teachers, but we do use writing as a modality to work on fine motor and visual motor limitations that students may have. O.T.'s also teach strategies to help students compensate for poor formations with writing letters/shapes.

There has been some debate over whether cursive writing should still be taught in the classroom. Some feel that it is old fashioned and out of date, especially with the rise in technology. Although if this was the case, then why would we bother teaching students how to print either? The fact is that about 90% of the work that students do in class is written manually, as opposed to on a computer keyboard. Studies show that cursive writing triggers the thought processes connected to storing and retrieving information in memory. It also helps link letters to sound and spelling. For students with dyslexic tendencies, cursive writing is much easier to learn/use than printing. I have seen many students go from very poor quality printing to very legible cursive writing. Cursive writing is faster to use and develops better eye/hand coordination. Encouraging students to use cursive writing more consistently can likely result in these positive outcomes.

## Student Government at Work

The HM Student Government will devote their efforts for the last two months of school to raising money for Heifer International. Heifer fights hunger by providing animals to needy families which share the offspring with other needy families. Families are trained to take care of these animals which provide food (eggs, milk, meat) as well as animal-power to help with growing crops. The Student Government will be holding a smencil (those sweet smelling pencils the kids love) sale during both lunches starting on May 13th. The cost will be \$1.75 for one, \$3 for two, and \$5 for three pencils.



Parents - be sure to look for an after school sale on Wednesday, May 19th. We are also planning a bake sale in June to help raise more money for this worthwhile cause.

Bike licenses will be coming out soon for fourth and fifth grade students. Once students have gotten permission to ride their bikes to school, student government representatives will help monitor everyone's use of helmets and bike locks as well as safe riding on school grounds. The students are looking forward to getting to school with their own "set of wheels!"

Thanks to everyone who helped support the Coins for Cures collection. The Horace Mann school collected over \$160!

# Help Wanted

**By Melinda Stockwell, HM Volunteer Coordinator**

“I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do.” - Edward Everett Hale

We are all busy. We all have a lot of commitments and often feel as if we are pulled in all directions. I know this.

Every month, I feel as if I am writing the same column:

asking for help and thanking those of you who have stepped up.

However, this month, I think I need to start using stronger words. **We really need your help.** Yes, that's you. We have a lot of key positions to fill and we need you to come forward and fill them.

Every Horace Mann family is a member of the PTO and we depend on all families in this tight community to contribute as they can with their time and talents.

Take some time to review the open positions below and if you have yet to serve a leadership role, please seriously consider it -Now is your time to step forward.

**URGENT!** Do you have background or interest in bookkeeping and/or accounting? The current PTO Treasurer has had to step down and we need someone to fill in for the remaining term for 2010 and hopefully continue on the board for the 2010-2011 school year. Please consider helping out by taking on this crucial role for our school community. This is ideally a position for a team of two, so grab a friend and sign up together!! Please contact me or any current board member if you are thinking about this position.

The **PTO board** needs to fill some other important roles as well. We can't all just assume someone else will do it. We have some new people this past year and they have been working hard on new ideas. Let's keep the momentum going and get the 2010-2011 board positions filled! Although this is a yearlong commitment, the work can easily be done outside of typical work hours and can be done when you have availability. The board ideally needs two people to fill the co-Vice President positions, as well as two more volunteers for the co-Secretary positions. Again, if you have a friend and have been thinking about getting more involved, sign up for these positions together. It is a great way to find out what is going on and get connected with the workings of the community. No prior experience needed.



## Help Wanted continued

In prior years, Horace Mann's participation in the **Memorial Day Parade** was just a group of students carrying balloons behind a Horace Mann sign. It looked great and was fun for the kids, but didn't require a long term commitment of planning by the coordinator. Most of the work is done in one morning. We still need someone to coordinate that for this year in addition to next year.

I hope you're still reading! Please see the list below for more open committee chairs. The descriptions for these committees are in your family directory. If one of these opportunities interests you or you would like more information, please contact me.

- ★ **Bank Day**
- ★ **Beautification**
- ★ **Curriculum**
- ★ **Enrichment**
- ★ **Painting**
- ★ **Publicity**
- ★ **Regarding Art**
- ★ **Raffles**
- ★ **Horace Mann Clothing Sale (organize sale of shirts, pants and jackets with HM logo)**



Questions?

Contact:

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[melinda.stockwell@gmail.com](mailto:melinda.stockwell@gmail.com)





## A Horace Mann Savings & Fundraiser Event

Twice a year, you can sign your organization up for Modell's Team Weeks Program. They will provide your organization with a 15% savings coupon. When \$500 or more is spent by your team, your team will begin receiving a 5% reward. Customers can continue to earn MVP rewards during this event.

Horace Mann's participation took place March 26<sup>th</sup> thru April 22<sup>nd</sup>. During our 4 week savings event, **\$910.51** was spent by our families and friends! Horace Mann earned **\$45.53** in the fundraiser portion.

**THANK YOU** to all who graciously participated in the Team Weeks at Modell's.

As mentioned, the Modell's Team Weeks Program is allowed twice a year. We will coordinate the Fall 2010 event to help our families save during the fall soccer and football or hockey seasons. We will most likely move next Spring's 2011 event in order to better serve families who could benefit from savings on lacrosse, which begins in early March, yet still serve the families that participate in soccer and baseball.