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# THE CONNECTION

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Attendance Line 617-559-9509

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## PRINCIPAL'S PAD

Parent Appreciation Day was a huge success! It is amazing what a coat of paint can do to spruce up a room or change the appearance of old book cases. The nurse's room has been totally transformed and looks fantastic. The bathrooms in the two offices are almost ready for Better Homes and Gardens with their new tiled floors. Even the noise level in classrooms is diminished thanks to the many tennis balls that now cover chair and table legs. (There must be a shortage in some tennis club!) Over fifty parents, as well as a number of high school students earning community service points, arrived to share time and efforts to improve our school. A special thanks to Megan McA'Nulty and Paul Labovitch for the many hours they spent organizing, planning, publicizing, and recruiting. We appreciate the time, care, and planning that went into this event and thank everyone who had a hand in it.

By now parents in last year's 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades should have received via mail the results from last year's MCAS assessments in Reading, Writing, Mathematics, and Science/Technology (gr. 5). We are analyzing this data closely and will use the results of these assessments, as well as current classroom assessments, to refine our instructional practices at Franklin to better meet the needs of each child. Please remember that any standardized test is but one measure which tells only part of the story. If you have any questions about your child's individual results, please call. As you meet with your child's teacher for conferences you'll also hear about the various measures we use to assess your child's achievement and influence our instruction.

**Blue zone** Please share this information with your babysitters, neighbors, relatives, and anyone else who may pick up your children. Often times the parents follow the rules but forget to inform others. Double-parking in the Blue Zone is dangerous and unacceptable. Children run a risk of being hit by a car every time a parent double-parks and beckons a child to walk between parked cars. For safety reasons no staff will allow children to walk between cars to a parent who is double parked. Parents pick children up at school not only as a matter of convenience, but also to keep

them safe. And yet, we create untenable situations with parents driving in the wrong direction, double-parking and asking children to enter cars on the street side. Parents run the risk of receiving parking tickets from the Newton Police department for violating Blue Zone rules or for illegal traffic behaviors (e.g. u-turns, double parking, traveling in the wrong traffic lane). Only those who use the blue zone can make it safe for students. I implore you to consider the children, and to strive for safety. Please model positive behaviors for our children so they learn to follow the rules.

Parent / teacher conferences are being scheduled from now through Thanksgiving break. Conferences are important sharing opportunities. In order to prepare for your conference, I include the following ideas and questions for your consideration. (Some of these suggestions are adapted from the National Education Association, the National PTA publications, and a variety of other sources.)

Ask your child's perspective about what he/she is learning in class, what is going well, where the student has seen improvement, and what is difficult. Does your child have any questions or issues which he/she would like you to discuss with the teacher?

As you speak with the teacher, consider sharing:

- \* Your child's learning style and study habits at home
  - \* Your observations, questions, about the curriculum
  - \* Your questions, concerns, and goals for your child's progress
  - \* Ways in which you feel you and the teacher can collaborate to create a successful learning environment for the student
- Feel comfortable asking:
- \* Is my child working up to his/her ability? If not, what course of action might address this issue? What is the role of parent, teacher, and student in this effort?
  - \* Does the child participate effectively in discussions and activities? Cooperate?
  - \* What goals has the teacher set for the student? The student set for him/herself?

When in doubt or unsure, seek clarity. Ask for specific evidence to support statements with which you disagree or with which you are unclear. Ask for specific suggestions for ways to help you child at home. How much should you as a

Nov 8	PTO Meeting 7:30 Auditorium
Nov 10	No School
Nov 22	School closes at NOON
Nov 23-24	Thanksgiving Recess

parent help with homework? How much help is too much? What kinds of help are beneficial?

Your meeting should help forge a strong partnership with a common goal: mapping out a plan of action and setting learning targets to create the most positive learning experience possible for your child.

After the meeting, share what transpired so that your child feels included in the process.

Parents often ask what they can do at home to support our efforts in school. We ask that you pose to your children specific questions about school activities and expect full sentences in response. Rather than asking, "How was school today?", ask what book they are reading, or ask about the main character, or what they discovered when experimenting in science, etc. If you have a younger child, play word games. Board games and card games can reinforce number sense and computation. As always, read, read, read and talk about what you are reading.

Cynthia Marchand

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## NEWS FROM THE PTO

Why is a witch like a candle? They are both wick-ed! (Joke courtesy of Franklin fifth grader). And we had a *wicked* good time at the **Halloween Bash** on Saturday night! With the biggest turnout ever, this year's bash was a huge success, filled with pint-size ninjas and princesses, crafts, games, and candy. Big thank yous go to chairs Jocelyn Scheirer, Cindy Shechtman, and Terri Romanelli, and all the many volunteers who organized, decorated, advertised, recruited, and cleaned up. A shout of gratitude to Herb Ryan for bringing us the highlight of our party, the Haunted House.

Look forward to receiving the **school directory** in your child's backpack within the next week. It looks great! Thank you to Julie Barbieri and Jennifer Roy for doing such a painstakingly thorough job with this big project, and thanks to all of the sponsors who helped defray the printing costs.

Come to the next **PTO meeting**, Wednesday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 7:30pm, and learn about the **Newton Schools Foundation**. Franklin parent Alison McCarty and her colleagues will tell us how NSF works and the many innovations it has supported in our school and throughout the district. Did you know that the mentor reading program at Franklin, in which an older child is paired with one in a younger grade, was created by Franklin teachers and made possible through money from the NSF? Come learn more!

**Understanding Our Differences** kicks off on November 9<sup>th</sup> with a presentation on learning disabilities for the fourth graders. This is a wonderful unit that helps kids understand a wide range of learning issues that occur in the classroom, from dyslexia to processing problems.

Want to **volunteer**, but you're not sure how? Here are some ways you can help:

- We need a chair for the **Social Action Committee**. If you're interested in connecting Franklin kids with the greater community, this is the job for you. Last year, the social action group held a sing-a-long at the Scandinavian Living Center, organized a read-a-thon to help raise money for the victims of Hurricane Katrina, and ran a coats-for-kids collection. The kids learn so much about how to help others in very concrete ways.
- Franklin families represent more than fifteen different languages and countries. It's amazing! If you're interested in bringing together these diverse cultures, then please consider being a Co-Chair of the **Multicultural Day** committee. This is the only committee that organizes a day of international dancing, food, singing, and learning.
- Last but not least, we also need a **Health and Safety** representative to oversee any events that handle food and are open to the public. For Franklin, this will be no more than one event this year, but the city still requires that we have a trained rep. To qualify you need to attend one training session -- that's it! Please let us know if you can do it. It's an easy way to volunteer for an important job with a small time commitment.

We'll see you all at the next PTO meeting. Please contact us too if you are interested in volunteering for any of the above positions.

And one more chuckle from a kindergartner: What is a wizard's favorite subject in school? Spelling!

Elizabeth Roll and Kim Freedman

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## **Fifth Grade Graduation Committee Election Day Bake Sale**

The Fifth Grade Graduation Committee will be sponsoring a bake sale on Election Day, Tuesday, November 7<sup>th</sup>. We will be in the gym selling coffee and baked goods in the morning from 7-9, midday 12-2 and evening 5-7. Please stop by and support this fifth grade class fundraiser. Any fifth grade parents who would like to bake or work at the sale, please contact Mary Baker or Linda Farina.

## MIDWINTER COFFEEHOUSE SEEKS MUSICIANS!

The Seventh Annual Midwinter Coffeehouse will be held on Saturday, February 10th at the First Unitarian Society in Newton from 7 to 10 p.m. Each year, parents, teachers, and other community members share their musical talents with the Franklin School Community, creating a bit of warmth and fun in the middle of the winter. We have had barbershop quartets, a capella singing ensembles, classical guitarists, and singers of Broadway show tunes, as well as singer/songwriters in the folk and blues traditions.

If you are someone who loves to sing or play in your living room and think you'd like to perform for a slightly larger audience, here is your chance!! Please contact Cindy Mapes.



### Coats for Kids



Newton's Head Start program and area shelters need your kids' gently used and laundered coats for preschool and elementary school aged kids. All cold weather gear is needed: Coats, snow pants, hats, mittens, or boots. Drop off donations in the collection box in the school's main hallway November 6<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup>.

Contact Julie Youdovin or Kim Freedman if you have questions.

*Thank you from the Franklin PTO Social Action Committee.*

## DRUM LESSONS

The Newton Public Schools-Fine Arts Department offers beginning drum lessons for students in grades four and five. Semi-private lessons will be held on Tuesday afternoons immediately after school at Newton North High School (private lessons are also available). The fee is \$250 which includes 14 lessons. Yearly registration begins immediately. For more information call 781-721-0490

*The next Connection will be published on Nov 17th. To submit something, send by email or leave it in the Connection mailbox in the school office. The deadline is Monday, Nov 13th, NOON, but feel free to send it to me early. Ads are only printed as space allows, so meeting the deadline is not a guarantee of ad placement.*

**Franklin Office 617-559-9500**

## Understanding Our Differences – Seeking Volunteers for Upcoming Third, Fourth and Fifth Grade Programs

The **Understanding Our Differences** program will take place in the 3-5<sup>th</sup> Grades again at Franklin. This nationally recognized program is part of the Newton Public Schools' curriculum and takes place in all 15 elementary schools each year. The goal of the program is to increase information, understanding and acceptance of people with disabilities and individual differences in our community.

This program is organized and led by parents with support from the school, the grade level teachers and the specialists. This is a great opportunity to share time in the classroom and take action in support of our school's core values. Please consider volunteering... this program helps teach our children life long lessons for understanding differences in peers and the community around them.

The **fourth grade** program will kick off late fall through winter with three sessions: **Learning Disabilities & Challenges – Thur, Nov 9<sup>th</sup> 1pm-3pm**  
**Developmental Disabilities/Mental Retardation – Thursday, March 8<sup>th</sup> 1pm-3pm**  
**Special Medical Conditions –Thursday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> , 1pm-3pm**

The **third grade** program will kick off next year:  
**Deafness – Thursday, January 18<sup>th</sup> 1pm-3pm**  
**Blindness – Thursday, March 15<sup>th</sup> 1pm-3pm**

The **Fifth grade** we will have a program focused on **Physical Disabilities** in the winter:  
**Physical Disabilities – Thursday, March 1<sup>st</sup> – 1-3pm**

If you want to learn more or are interested in volunteering, please contact Mary Beth McIntyre (5<sup>th</sup> grade coordinator), Kim Freedman (4<sup>th</sup> grade coordinator) or Janna Zwerner (Deafness and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade coordinator). We are looking for both Unit leaders and in class volunteers. You do not have to have a 3-5<sup>th</sup> grader to participate. More information to follow.

# Call for Participation Technology Advisory Committee For Newton Public Schools 2006- 2007

The Newton Public Schools Department of Information Technology is inviting community members and school staff to serve on an advisory committee for technology in the Newton Schools. The Technology Advisory Committee offers the school system the exciting opportunity to join the interests and values of the community with the expertise of school department professionals.

**Background:** The Department of Technology includes both the instructional computing and library media program as well as administrative computing. The department provides the technological infrastructure, professional development opportunities, and staff support to enable teachers and administrators to use technology as a teaching, learning and administrative tool.

**Goal:** The goal of the advisory committee is to provide a vehicle for community input into the development of an updated four-year technology plan. (The current plan can be accessed at <http://www.newton.k12.ma.us/technology/>).

**Role and Focus:** Community members can play a crucial role in contributing to the vision and providing recommendations for the development of a comprehensive technology plan for the schools. Advisory committee membership will be a wonderful opportunity for citizens to share their expertise and varied experience. In addition, advisory committee members can help expand communication channels within the Newton community about the importance of the school's technology initiative.

The primary focus of the advisory committee will be to research and review a variety of successful strategies that support teaching and student learning, allowing Newton to develop and implement the best possible technology program within current fiscal restraints.

**Representation:** The advisory committee of 12-14 members will represent the diverse interests of the community and ideally be composed of the following constituents: Director of Information Technology, Chair; School Committee Member; METCO Representative; Special Education Representative; Principal or other school administrator, representative from elementary, middle and high; Teachers, representative from elementary, middle and high; High School student; Parents, representative from elementary, middle and high; Business; University Educational Research

**Scope of Commitment:** We are asking community members to serve at minimum one year with the possibility of two years. Each member will be expected to work on smaller subcommittees, depending on interest and expertise.

**Time Commitment:** The entire advisory committee will meet on the fourth Tuesday of each month (excluding December) from 4:30 to 6 pm. Subcommittees will also

meet during the month with the amount of time dependent on scope of work. The first meeting will be Tuesday, November 28, 2006 at the Ed Center, 100 Walnut St. (Subsequent dates are 1/23/07, 2/27/07, 3/27/07, 4/24/07, 5/22/07, 6/26/07.)

**Outcome:** The advisory committee will make recommendations that will be used in the development of an updated Four-Year Technology (2007-2011).

**Selection Process:** Interested community members are requested to submit an updated resume (if available) along with a letter of intent, not longer than two pages. A small committee comprised of Newton Public Schools Administrators will select community members based upon experience and skill set. The letter should include the following:

Name, Address, Phone Number, Email, Your experience, either using technology personally or in your working career Any previous related experience you have as a volunteer Why you would like to serve on the advisory committee

Letters of intent are due **November 1, 2006**. Please email letter and resume to: Shelley Chamberlain, [Shelley\\_chamberlain@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:Shelley_chamberlain@newton.k12.ma.us)

If email is not available, please send a hard copy to:

Shelley Chamberlain, Director of Information Technology  
100 Walnut Street, Newtonville, MA 02460

Please feel free to contact Shelley Chamberlain via email or telephone with any questions.

## **COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Newton Mothers' Forum:** Monthly Mothers' Night Out, Monday November 6th. Event is from 7pm to 9pm at the Longwood Cricket Club. The evening's speaker is Liz Weiss from Meal Makeover Moms. Liz is a registered dietician and co-author of *The Moms' Guide to Meal Makeovers: Improving the Way Your Family Eats, One Meal at a Time!* ([www.mealmakeovermoms.com](http://www.mealmakeovermoms.com)) The event is \$25 and includes wine and a light dinner. It is free for Newton Mothers' Forum members. All are welcome to join the Newton Mothers' Forum and more information can be found at [www.newtonmoms.com](http://www.newtonmoms.com).

**Holiday Craft Fair** at the Woman's club of Newton Highlands. Saturday Nov 18, 9 am-3 pm. Come to the Woman's Club Workshop at 72 Columbus St (near Lincoln) in Newton Highlands and to find a unique selection of holiday gifts and decorations created by local crafters. Admission is free. Club proceeds will provide college scholarships for Newton public high school students. April 2006, the club awarded four \$2000 scholarships and hopes to do the same in 2007. For more info please call Millie McMullin, 617-527-5400

**IN SEARCH OF MOZART**, Tuesday November 14, 2006 at the West Newton Cinema with the Newton Symphony Orchestra. Award Winning Feature length Documentary by

Phil Grabsky. Making headlines across Europe and Australia, is an exciting new documentary film for musical novices and classical music aficionados alike. Filmed and directed by the award-winning Phil Grabsky, *In Search of Mozart*, is the only documentary film made to mark the 250th anniversary of Mozart's birth. The film has been highly acclaimed following strong box-office performance and has been praised as THE Mozart film of 2006. *In Search of Mozart* documents the composer's life through his music and personal letters as well as through interviews with renowned scholars, and performances by the greatest musicians and ensembles of our day. Spanning 25,000 miles, 10 countries and more than 80 compositions, it is the most comprehensive documentary ever produced about the musical genius. "This is the most comprehensive film about Mozart that I have ever seen." – Sir Roger Norrington, Conductor, and Artistic Advisor to Boston's Handel and Haydn Society "A film that sets the record straight and provides a deeply affecting advocacy of experiencing Mozart's music. Bravo!" – Gramophone

**Nov. 15th Workshop for Parents of Teens:** "Alcohol, Drugs and Teens 101: What Every Newton Parent Needs to Know" Newton, MA – Oct. 27, 2006 – On Wednesday, November 15, 2006, Newton Community Service Center's Teen REACH program and Walker Partnerships will present a workshop for parents of Newton middle and high school students: "Alcohol, Drugs and Teens 101: What Every Newton Parent Needs to Know." The workshop will provide parents with current information about: (1) the amounts, types and effects of drugs and alcohol available to, and used within, the teen community (including a discussion of a recent rise in the abuse of over-the-counter medications); (2) methods of communication, prevention and intervention with teens to keep them safe and build strong parent-teen relationships; and, (3) strategies for detecting symptoms of drug/alcohol use and plans for dealing with crises. Patricia Davis, LICSW, and clinical supervisor with Walker Partnerships, and Christopher Fortunato, Director, Teen REACH and VP of Newton Community Service Center's Youth and Adult Programs, will present the workshop. The session runs from 7 – 8:30 pm at the Anthony J. Bibbo Youth Center on 429 Cherry Street, West Newton, MA. Space is limited; reservations are suggested. Parents can register by phone: 617-244-1404, email: [teenreach@ncscweb.org](mailto:teenreach@ncscweb.org), or at the door. The registration fee of \$5.00 includes an information packet. For more information, contact Chris Fortunato at 617-244-1404.

## Sports & Dance

**CREATIVE ICE SKATING LESSONS:** Join the Sheryl Franks Pellegrini Creative Skating Academy, Learn to Skate Lessons. Call (617) 699-4736 for details on classes held at the Fessenden School Rink 250 Waltham Street, Newton. We meet Sunday afternoons 1:00 – 3:00 PM! Earn patches

learning Basic Skills through the USFSA program. Have FUN playing on-ice games, special events, and watching exciting performances by guest guests! Sheryl was a 1980 Olympian!

**Newton Girls Basketball:** Let the games begin! There's still time to register for the upcoming Newton Girls Basketball (NGBA) season. Join the more than 600 players (from second graders through high school level) who play NGBA basketball. This is a recreational league for Newton girls with fun for beginners and experienced players alike! Games are played on Saturdays for all grades, starting December 3rd and continuing into March. There are no weekday practices for High School. To register or to find out more about the league, please visit our website at [www.NGBA.net](http://www.NGBA.net) (a late fee applies for registrations after 10/15 and the final deadline is 11/26). Scholarships are available based on need by contacting [cliffu@gmail.com](mailto:cliffu@gmail.com).

**Skiing/Snowboarding** The Newton Parks and Rec Dept is sponsoring skiing and snowboarding at Nashoba Valley. Six week program beginning in Jan 2007. Tuesday afternoons for grades 3-5 and Friday afternoons for grades 6-12. Lessons available. Registration now available at [www.ci.newton.ma.us/parks](http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/parks). For further info call Stephanie Pelkowsky at 617-796-1500

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