



Evidence of our MLK Day Celebration

PS 261

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2009

CALENDAR

Wed, Feb 4

Parent Workshop - Allergies
8:30am-10am, Library (Room 214)

Executive PTA Meeting 6:15pm-
7:20pm, Library (Room 214)

Fri, Feb 6

1st Annual Motown Sock Hop
6:30pm-9pm, Gym

Tue, Feb 10

Black History Month Celebration
9:15am and 10:30am, Auditorium

Wed, Feb 11

Black History Month Celebration
9:15am, Auditorium

Thu, Feb 12

5th Grade Valentine's Day
Bake Sale 8am-10am

PS 261 Open House AM
9am-11am, Auditorium

Fri, Feb 13

Pajama Day

Feb 16-20

No School

Mon, Feb 23

SLT Meeting

Wed, Feb 25

General PTA Meeting

Fri, Feb 27

Families as Learning Partners

Black History Month Celebration
6:15- 8:15, Auditorium

Brrrrrrrr. It's time for indoor fun and PS261 has a lot of it this month. From Sock Hops to a very special assembly in the Auditorium, we'll have a lot going on you should know about.

From Jerry Piper, Parent Coordinator

Don't forget to sign up for the PS261 ListSers! With a student population of more than 800, we really need to see more than the current 284 parent members. You can join the group by clicking on the "Subscribe to PS261's ListSers" link at the bottom of the *PS261.org* home page, and then following the instructions.

By joining the PS261 Announcements ListServ, you'll receive important news, information & updates about events at PS261. You can get emails each and every time someone posts to the ListServ, or you can receive a once-daily digest of all the day's posts, or you can even choose to receive no email (but you'll need to check the ListServ online for info). The choice is yours.

Stay connected with the PS261 Community and join the PS261 Announcements ListServ today! <http://www.ps261.org>

Inauguration Day at PS261

On January 20, P.S. 261 streamed the Inauguration ceremony of Barack Obama into the auditorium, where all grades were in attendance. The teachers aired the inaugural address in the classrooms of those who were unable to attend. According to many school employees, the children were "enthralled and attentive," despite some technical difficulties. If there was any doubt about the students' sentiments, one only needed to speak to them.

Miss Yasmine's first grade class wrote and illustrated their thoughts and feelings about what they witnessed. One of the students wrote that while watching the address he "felt proud of [Obama] because he worked very hard for thousands of people". One student said that "it took a long time for this to happen," while another said that he is "excited to have the first African American President." Finally, one of the class members expressed happiness because Obama is going to "change one of the wars that George Bush and Dick Cheney made."

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT ON

Jen Wells Best & David Faitelson K-115

Q: *How long have you both been teaching?*

J: 11 years D: 3 years

Q: *What is a CTT (Cooperative Team Teaching) class?*

J: A CTT class is a class with one general education teacher and one special education teacher with a 60/40 ratio of general education students to students with individualized education plans.

Q: *What's the greatest thing about Co-Teaching?*

J: More flexibility for small grouping for the students. This means more students can get instruction that meets their needs.

D: All of the children benefit from having an extra teacher in the classroom at all times and the students are able to learn from each other as well as from their teachers.

Q: *What are you looking forward to in the upcoming year?*

J: The inquiry study project based on Reggio Emilio has been interesting and I'm excited that this is an approach to get the kids really engaged in their learning. I'm also looking forward to watching the kids in K-115 grow.

D: We are looking forward to the Spring, more field trips, and seeing our kids grow as writers and readers!



Q: *What do you love about PS 261?*

J: What's not to love? The parents and students are wonderful and very diverse and the staff really works well together.

D: A lot of teachers, myself included, went to the Obama Inaugural Gala that the PTA organized and we were so impressed and amazed by vitality and dedication of the parents here at 261. The time and effort given to our school and students can't be understated!

Q: *What do you want parents to know?*

J: A child is never too old to be read to. That effects upper grade teachers more than K teachers, but reading to kids gives them SO MUCH learning which they need for literacy.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT ON

Teresa Melendez



Q: *When did you first volunteer with PS 261 and why?*

I first started to to volunteer at a bake sale for the 5th grade in 2007. My friend Ramona asked me if I could help out and I said sure.

Q: *What do you currently volunteer for at PS261?*

I am the candy sale coordinator and help with the bookfair and anything else anyone needs.

Q: *What's the best thing about volunteering at PS261?*

The best feeling to me is that I am helping the kids. I also love to see my kids' faces light up when their friends say to them "Hey look at your mom! She is always helping."

Q: *What would you suggest to a parent who's looking to get involved?*

Just come. It doesn't matter if you can't give all your time, just a little will make a difference. And you don't have to work like a dog like people think. Sometimes we just need an extra pair of eyes. When we are doing an event we have so much fun!

THANK YOU to Teresa and ALL the parents that have helped so much already this year!

Yes You Can!

There are so many ways you can get involved at our school...big and small, we'll find a place for ALL!!

WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO...

Black History Month

The Power of Words In light of President Barak Obama's historic victory the committee thought it would be fitting to focus on African-American orators and the power of words to empower and effectuate change. In conjunction with the assembly, we are publishing a student journal comprised of their literary and artistic works. The journal will be sold at our evening assembly as a fund raiser for the committee and the PTA. That performance will take place on Friday, February 27 at 6:15.

Contact Sadia Graham at sngraham1@aol.com for more information.

The Sock Hop

6:30pm-9pm, Gym

Introducing the First Annual PS261 Motown Sock Hop

When: Friday, February 6, 2009,
6:30pm - 9:00pm.

Where: PS261 Auditorium

Cost: \$3 to enter, \$5 for a plate of food

Alumni get in FREE!

We will have a blast!

Contact Maria Cutrona at maria@jamarts.com for more information.

Start small

Start collecting pennies now for next year's penny harvest

Start clipping boxtops for upcoming BOXTOP collection drive

Ask Carmelo and Jessica if any of their furry friends need a home over school vacation

Spend an hour at the Book Fair in APRIL helping kids select books

Bartend at the Spring Auction

Bake for a bake sale

Getting bigger

Write an article for the newsletter

Help organize the Science Fair (APRIL)

Help a few hours during the Book Fair (APRIL)

Help out at the Dance-a-thon (January 31)

Biggest...

Talent Show – We need parents to help out during school hours (lunch time) to help kids rehearse and get their acts together. The talent show is in MAY (tentative 16th)– best if you have 3 consecutive Mondays, or Tuesdays etc, to commit to help out during the school day. *This event is in serious need of a group of very committed parents to make it happen.*

Spring Auction – We are setting a date for late May or early June, we have a place, now we need someone to Chair this event and get things rolling!! And lots of volunteers are needed to help!!

These are some of the ways you can help. Please contact Elisa Wallman Jacques at ewallman@institute2000.org or Yvette Schwartz at yummy098@aol.com.

NOTE TO PARENTS We know that winter is here and will be with us for a while. Students, and understandably so, are wearing boots and heavy shoes to keep warm on their way to school. But on the days that students have gym with Donald or dance with Karyn, please have them carry sneakers in a plastic bag and change when they get to their special (gym or dance). It is very hard for Donald and Karyn to teach a class when 5 to 7 kids sit out because they are not wearing sneakers. Also, not wearing sneakers to these classes on a steady basis will be reflected in their grade. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated!

WE'RE LOOKING BACK ON...

The Community Sing - January 10

The 2nd Annual Community Sing on January 10th did not disappoint. Parents, teachers & children and Ms. Mills raised their voices in song with live musical accompaniment of piano, ukelele, banjo and tambourine. It was utterly impossible to stay in your seat for the traditional finale: a euphoric rendition of *Dancing in The Streets*. Big thanks go out to Rick Knutsen for spearheading this much beloved, now yearly event. Look for announcements of the third annual Community Sing early next year.



The Brooklyn Inaugural Ball - January 20

The only sadness about the Brooklyn Inaugural Ball benefit for PS 261 at the Bell House on January 20th came with the realization that the very nature of its specialness prevents it from being an annual event (or does it?) January 20th was a day all of us will remember. The day of "Yes, We Can!" and "Change We Can Believe In!" finally arrived. To extend the joy and welcome our new president, almost two hundred or so parents, teachers (and Ms. Mills) and community members danced, ate and toasted from 7 to 11 pm—and raised \$10,000 for our school! There was a spoken word performance, a fabulous band, dj and food and wine worthy of braving the chilly night in stockings and ties.

The organizers did a wonderful job and thanks go to the parents and local businesses who donated food, wine, services and help. Can we suggest to the organizers (who must be still in bed recovering) that they invent another inaugural-like occasion so we can all get down on the dance floor next year, same day, some place, and same band, please! It's a unique and wonderful experience to dance alongside your kid's teacher. More of us should have it!



The PTA Newsletter is put together by Melanie Hoopes with help from Jerry Piper, Duane Stapp and Stacey Meshnick... so far. We'd love your help. To get involved, email mhoopes@verizon.net.