

Cougar Connection

A Publication of Helen Keller Middle School and the Easton PTA
February 2009

*“One can never consent to creep when one feels an impulse to soar..”
— Helen A. Keller*



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The Cougar Connection is a monthly publication of Helen Keller Middle School and the Easton PTA.

Previous issues of the Cougar Connection can be found on the Helen Keller Middle School website at:
<http://www.helenkellerps.org>

and the Easton PTA website at:
<http://www.eastonpta.com>

Helen Keller Students Support The 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade

This year Helen Keller Middle School was recognized by the 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade with an official Certificate of Appreciation signed by Larry Farmer, Command Sergeant Major and Col. Paul Bricker, Commander. The certificate acknowledges unwavering support of the troopers of Task Force Pegasus during Operation Enduring Freedom from April 2009-April 2010. It further states that the selfless service and support are invaluable and thanks the school for its support as the soldiers continue to serve proudly. This Certificate sits proudly in the display cabinet in the school lobby. We thank Mrs. Weinschel for involving our students in this initiative. She would like to recognize in particular one 6th grader, Andrew Jurgielewicz, who took the initiative to write to companies soliciting items for the soldiers.

Susan Kaplan
skaplan@eastonps.org
HKMS Assistant Principal

CALENDAR @ A GLANCE

- Feb. 1-23 QSP Magazine Sale
- Feb. 2 Report Cards Issued
- Feb. 3 Band Concert,
HKMS Cafeteria 7:00-8:00
- Feb. 5 Ski Club Tip
Ski Sundown
- Feb. 9 Board of Education Meeting,
HKMS Media Center
- Feb. 13-21 Winter Recess
- Feb. 26 Student Council Dance

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News from the PTA Presidents



Dear Parents,

Here is what you'll be hearing these days... "It's Budget Season." Many people understand what this means when it comes to our children and, admittedly, many people do not.

If at all possible, we strongly encourage you to join Joan Parker and Sue Kaplan at their Principal's Coffee on Monday, Feb. 8th at 9:15. For those that were able to attend on Jan. 28th (on that surprisingly snowy snowy Thursday morning!) it was a wonderfully concise hour of explaining what "Budget Season" means and how we, as parents, can help to ensure that our children's middle school education is at the very least on par with other schools in our region.

It is no secret that the significant cuts in our school budget left us without critical line items for our children, just one of which was Extracurricular Programs. To reinstate Extracurriculars at Helen Keller we had to turn to private donations from the community which was an unprecedented success that hopefully no school will be faced with having to do a second time. "Budget Season" is the time to address issues such as this.

To boil it down to what we can do as parents to ensure a proper middle school experience for our students, we ask your willingness to learn and be involved. As we all are pulled in many directions, it is understood that to attend all Board of Ed and Board of Finance meetings is an unrealistic request, however, if you could mark down just a few dates and do the best you can to make yourself available, this participation will help you to make a difference.

1. **Monday, February 8:** Principal's Coffee to explain the budget process (what is in the budget, what is being asked to be cut from the budget and what needs to be maintained and/or reinstated in the budget.)
2. **Tuesday, February 9:** Board of Education Meeting, HKMS, 7:30 p.m.
3. **Wednesday, March 10:** Board of Ed/Board of Finance Meeting. The more parents that are present at the meeting to represent what we want for our children, the more awareness there is of how important we feel our child's education is. You do not need a soap box, nor do you need to speak. But you do need to hear the discussions amongst the decision makers in order to advocate for your son or daughter. Just sheer numbers of parents who care and are present will help to support us!) Meeting starts at 7:00 p.m.

4. **Monday, March 22:** Attend Public Hearing on the Town Budget, SSES Cafetorium
5. **Monday, April 26:** Annual Town Meeting
6. **Tuesday, May 4:** Referendum (tentative date) Go to the polls at SSES and **VOTE, VOTE, VOTE!***

**There are many of us whose schedules prohibit us from voting. Sometimes we know this ahead of time, and sometimes voting day seems to get away from us, the work day keeps us longer or the commuter trains prohibit us or a spouse from making it to the polls. If this is a possibility, you can prepare ahead of time by getting an absentee ballot from town hall.*

Heidi Adair (hadair@optonline.net)
and Laura T. Jones (stoneybell@sbcglobal.net)
 Easton PTA HKMS Co-Presidents

BE INVOLVED during budget season

February 12 at 9:30 am:
 ATTEND our PTA Meeting with guest speaker,
 our new Superintendent, Dr. Cicchetti.
 Location: Easton Public Library

Thursday, February 25 at 9:15 am:
 LEARN about the budget process
 at the Principal's Coffee at HKMS Cafeteria.

Wednesday, March 10 at 7:30 pm:
 BE PRESENT at the
 Board of Ed/Board of Finance Meeting
 Location: TBD, but usually is at the
 Easton Public Library.

Tuesday May 4 (tentative date)
 VOTE, VOTE, VOTE at SSES

ENJOY the HKMS Band Concert on February 3rd.

Eighth Grade Government Toy Drive



Throughout the month of December, the Eighth Grade Government organized a community-wide toy drive to support kindergarten through fourth grade students in Bridgeport. The drive raised over 1,200 toys that were donated to the children of Luis Munoz Marin School and Curiale School in Bridgeport. The eighth grade students organized the event, collected and wrapped the toys, and delivered them to the children of Curiale School on December 22nd. Fifty-five eighth graders spent the day in various Bridgeport classrooms as 'teacher helpers.' When the toys were delivered, and the young children opened them, the screams of joy could be heard across the school. Thanks go out to the generous Easton community for spreading joy to Bridgeport children and eighth grade students. It was a remarkable day for everyone! Lastly, thank-you to Target and Subway for their generous donations and support to the HKMS toy drive. We couldn't have done it without you!



Save the Date:
**37th Annual
Spaghetti Dinner**

6-9 pm in the HKMS Cafeteria
Friday, May 7, 2010

Tickets on sale in March.



Hope to see you there!!!

COMING SOON:

Girls' Night Out, Boys' Night Out, and Activity Night

Eighth grade students have been working hard to organize a "Girls' Night Out," "Boys' Night Out," and an "Activity Night" for sixth and seventh grade students.

Watch for more information about prices, dates, and information! We would love to see your children at these events to build school spirit in a fun and active way. Students can expect fun games, pizza, music, and organized activities to keep them busy with their friends! Hope to see everyone there!



Reminder To Parents of Grade 6 Students:

The grade 6 health assessment form, (physical form) is due by the last day of school which is now, June 18, 2010. If you have not handed in your child's grade 6 physical, please make your appointments early, as doctor's appointments fill up quickly as we move closer to Spring. You may print a copy of the physical form from the HKMS website, by scrolling down under the "School Nurse" title, clicking on "Health Information and Physical Form".

Some of you have already passed in your physical forms and were notified by regular mail that the proposed, new vaccinations may be required for grade 7 students this Fall. These vaccinations will not be a State requirement to attend grade 7 as the Department of Public Health State Immunization Program has informed the Connecticut Department of Education that the proposed new School Immunization Requirements for Fall 2010 will not be finalized in time to be effectively implemented this coming school year. The new requirements are now scheduled to go into effect for the Fall 2011-2012 school year. This includes the adolescent TDap, meningococcal, and second varicella vaccines. If you have any questions about your child's vaccinations pertaining to school, please do not hesitate phoning the HKMS Nurse at 268-8651, ext. 6.

Regards,

Mary Jane Bellenot, RN, BSN
Helen Keller Middle School Nurse

Media News

The Media Center is delighted to report that Birthday Book money has provided these books...and more:

FICTION

Diary of a Wimpy Kid series by Jeff Kinney
"Hunger Games" & "Catching Fire" by Suzanne Collins
"Crocodile Tears", book 8 in the Alex Rider series
Caroline B. Cooney's latest mystery "If the Witness Lied"
"Don't Judge a Girl by Her Cover", by the best-selling author of "Cross My Heart and Hope to Spy", Ally Carter

NON-FICTION

"Almost Astronauts, 13 Women Who Dared to Dream"
"Mission Control, This is Apollo"
"Claudette Colvin", the National Book Award Winner

Carol S. Weinshel (cweinshel@eastonps.org)
Director, Learning Resources and Technology



News:

The Easton Learning Foundation Awards STEM Grant at HKMS

Easton Learning Foundation (ELF) President, Bernadette Waterman (right) awards Nancy Culliton (left) with a check to fund a "DNA Extraction Lab Grant". This grant will enable all seventh grade students to extract DNA from inside their cheeks and perform a chemical process that allows them to see and study their own DNA.

To view a video of this grant go to www.eastonlearningfoundation.org

ELF funds innovative projects, technology and professional development that is not covered in the school budget. The Foundation is a non-profit 501(c) 3 charity and relies on public donations to provide grants to our public schools.

To learn about the new "Engineering Innovation Lab" Grant for HKMS which benefits all current students in grades 1-7 or to donate to the Foundation, please go to www.eastonlearningfoundation.org



The Easton Learning Foundation Awards STEM Grant at SSES

Samuel Staples Elementary School 5th Grade teachers (l to r) Courtney Maggi, Joe Clark and Helen Simmons received a check for \$3,517 from the Easton Learning Foundation (ELF) to fund a new "Lego Machines Lab".

To view a video of this grant go to www.eastonlearningfoundation.org

This innovative, hands-on science lab will allow all 5th grade students to design and build mechanisms and machines. The lego curriculum introduces pre-engineering concepts in a fun and cooperative environment. ELF is focused on funding STEM related grants in Easton public schools. To learn more about ELF and to donate to STEM grants go to www.eastonlearningfoundation.org ELF Donations are at work everyday!



Thank You Donors!



**You are invited to
The Easton Learning Foundation's
5th Anniversary Party**

We have so much to celebrate. For five years ELF has been supporting your schools, your teachers, your kids! Having outfitted the entire district with Smartboards, awarded scores of teacher grants, sent your children on fantastic field trips and sent our teachers and administrators to outstanding professional development conferences, ELF just keeps on ticking.

Come celebrate our success and learn all about the new engineering innovation lab planned for Helen Keller Middle School in Sept. 2010. Visit our website to learn all about "Gateway to technology", a highly regarded national pre-engineering program designed by [Project Lead the Way \(PLTW\)](#). This engineering innovation lab will be added to the 6th - 8th grade curriculum at HKMS in 2010 when ELF successfully raises over \$115,000 during 2009/2010 through parent, business, and community partnerships. "Gateway to Technology" is an activity-oriented, five-unit middle school program designed to help all students explore math, science, and technology through courses that require hands-on exploration and problem solving. Let's be sure to get the "Gateway to Technology" program launched for September 2010! The entire project is being funded by Easton Learning Foundation. We need your support!

SAVE THE DATE. MARCH 13, 2010 7-10 PM

ASPETUCK VALLEY COUNTRY CLUB

EASTON LEARNING FOUNDATION 5TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY

Calling All Easton-Redding Pre-K
through 12

Artists and Performers

The Easton Arts Council Celebrates
National Youth Art Month

with

The Annual Youth Art & Talent Show
at the

Easton Library
Community Room

Sunday, March 14, 2010

2:00 pm Talent Show

3:00 pm Artists Reception



Easton Arts Council

P.O. Box 142, Easton, CT 06612

2010 Easton-Redding Youth Art & Talent Show



2010 Easton Arts Council
Youth Art & Talent Show



2010 Easton-Redding Youth Art & Talent Show



Youth Art Workshop

Come, Paint and Frame your Artwork!

This year, we will be holding an ART WORKSHOP on March 6, from 10am to noon in the Easton Library Community Room.

All attending will be able to paint a picture and then learn how to frame it for the upcoming exhibit.

All materials will be provided.

Date of Workshop:
Saturday, March 6, 10am - noon
Easton Library Community Room

Reception: Sunday, March 14, 3pm
after the 2pm Talent Show

Pickup date: April 10th, noon - 2pm

Questions, Contact Kathy Davidson
203-261-7351

BRING YOUR TALENT AND ENTHUSIASM!

All materials provided.

Questions, Contact Kathy Davidson
203-261-7351

Youth Talent Show

The Youth Talent Show will be held March 14th at 2 pm in the Easton Library Community Room.

Any type of appropriate act is acceptable: instrumental, vocal (no lip-synching), dance, acting, etc.

Acts must be four minutes or less. Piano is available. Singers must bring their own accompanist, or CD and player.

First rehearsal is on Sunday, February 28 at 2pm in the Community Room.

Dress rehearsal is on Saturday, March 13 at 2pm in the Community Room.

Questions: Joanne Kant 203-261-9160

Please fill out form below and mail in by Wednesday, February 24 to:
EAC, P.O. Box 142 Easton ,CT 06612

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Age: _____ Grade: _____

Act: _____

of Persons in Act: _____

Youth Art Show

Show runs from March 6 - April 10.

Two-dimensional Artwork must be in frames, wired and ready to hang (no saw tooth hangers please.)
Sculptures also accepted.

Receiving date:
Saturday, March 6, 10am - 2pm
Easton Library Community Room

Reception: Sunday, March 14, 3pm

Pickup date: April 10th, noon - 2pm

Questions, Contact Kathy Davidson
203-261-7351

PLEASE ATTACH TO BACK OF YOUR ARTWORK

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Age: _____ Grade: _____

Title #1: _____

Medium: _____

Title #2: _____

Medium: _____

February 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Feb. 1 to Feb. 23 QSP Magazine Sale	1	2 Report Cards Issued	3 Band Concert HKMS Cafeteria 7 pm - 8 pm	4	5 Ski Club Trip Ski Sundown	6
7	8	9 Board of Education Meeting HKMS Media Center	10	11	12	13
14 Valentine's Day 	15 President's Day 	16	17	18	19	20
 <i>Winter Recess</i> 						
21	22	23	24	25	26 Student Council Dance	27
28						

