

# Cougar Connection

A Publication of Helen Keller Middle School and the Easton PTA  
January 2011

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



## Interim Principal's Pen

Dear Parent/Guardians,

It is the beginning of a new year so it is fitting to take some time to reflect on last year while also devoting some time to looking to the future here at HKMS. First, a committee has been formed to develop plans to commemorate Joan Parker; the group members are Dr. Mike Cicchetti, Sue Kaplan representing administration, Jen Rose representing teachers and students, Marion Carlson representing para professionals, Bernadette Waterman representing ELF, Heidi Adair representing PTA, and Regina Bobroske representing the Easton BOE. The committee members have received many thoughtful and very moving suggestions for ways to honor the memory and accomplishments of Mrs. Parker, and they will make their recommendations later this spring. One of Mrs. Parker's most lasting legacies will be the national Blue Ribbon Award Nomination that Helen Keller Middle School received

*continued on page 2...*

## CALENDAR @ A GLANCE

- 1/6 Parent Coffee 9:30 am
- 1/7 Professional Development-  
Early Dismissal 12:10 pm
- 1/7 Ski Trip
- 1/11 BOE 7:30 pm
- 1/13 BOE Budget Workshop 7:30 pm
- 1/13 Discovery Museum/  
Family Fun Night
- 1/14 Staff Day No School
- 1/17 Martin Luther King Day-No School
- 1/20 Music Concert 6:30 pm
- 1/21 PTA Meeting/Easton  
Library 9:15 am
- 1/21 Ski Trip
- 1/28 School Store Open
- 1/28 Ski Trip



**Helen Keller Middle School**  
360 Sport Hill Road  
Easton, CT 06612

<http://www.helenkellerps.org>

**Phone:**  
**203.268.8651**

**Fax:**  
**203.268.6105**

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>

Please submit information in MS Word format by the 25th of the preceding month to Caroline D'Agostino at:  
[cd@d-agostinodesign.com](mailto:cd@d-agostinodesign.com)

## Newsletter Topics.....Location

Interim Principal's Pen.....	page 1
Calendar @ A Glance .....	page 1
News from the PTA Presidents.....	page 3
News from the Media Center .....	page 4
PTA's Reflections Program.....	page 4
Discovery Museum/Family Fun Night.....	page 5
RELAX Redding Easton Lacrosse .....	page 6
Does Your Child Have Insurance/Husky Form .....	page 7
HKMS Birthday Book Club Form .....	page 8
January Calendar .....	page 9

*continued from page 1...*

this past November. HKMS was one of four schools in Connecticut to receive this nomination. As the Director of the Blue Ribbon Program wrote, "The Blue Ribbon Schools award sets a standard of excellence for all schools striving for the highest levels of achievement....(HKMS) is ranked among the state's highest performing schools as measured by your performance on state assessments". Joan Parker would have been very excited about this national recognition of HKMS, and she would want to tell all of the HKMS families that you should be proud of your children and the staff. To recognize the academic accomplishments of your children, Mrs. Parker and Mrs. Kaplan instituted an Honor Roll List which is now displayed in the front hallway of the school.

November and December brought a flurry of activities at HKMS. Congratulations go to Gavin Feltman, an 8th grader, who won the school wide Geography Bee held on December 23; he will take a test in order to participate at the state level Geography Bee later this year. Students have been active participants in a number of school wide events. As Mrs. Kaplan said, "We are a small school but our reach is much greater than our numbers, and 1,000 seems to be the magic number."

At the Pancake Breakfast on December 4 organized by 8th Grade Government, over 1,000 pancakes were cooked up by the students and consumed by Easton families and friends. One Board of Education member mentioned that this year's pancakes were some of the best he had tasted! Our students collected over 1,000 toys for the Curiale Elementary School in Bridgeport, and 50 of our 8th graders visited the school to assist in classrooms and distribute the toys to the children. Also, HKMS students collected an astonishing 1,000 cans of food during the food drive which were then donated to the PT Barnum Housing Complex in Bridgeport. We received a wonderful "thank you" letter from Gerry Claytor of the Feed the People Food Pantry who wrote, "It is with my upmost humility and sincere thanks that I acknowledge the kindness and support reaped upon us at the pick-up of the food drive from your school today. PT Barnum Housing Complex residents are faced with a multiplicity of difficulties."

Looking forward to winter in 2011, there are several events that should be marked on your calendars:

Friday, January 7	Minimum day (early dismissal)
Friday, January 14	Professional Development Day (no school. Snow date is Tuesday, January 18)
Monday, January 17	Martin Luther King Day (no school)
Thursday, January 20	HKMS Music Concert at 6:30 pm at HKMS

Finally, I must note that from October 2007 until the spring of 2008, I served as interim principal here at HKMS. From my first day in the building three years ago, I remember being impressed with the students who are so well behaved and motivated (they love to read!) as well as the dedicated staff and supportive parents. Those first impressions still hold true—this is a remarkable school, and it is wonderful for HKMS to be recognized as an exemplary school at the national level by the Blue Ribbon School Nomination. Congratulations to all of the HKMS community—students, staff and parents! I look forward to working with you for the rest of this year.

Best regards,

**Adeline Merrill,**  
[amerrill@eastonps.org](mailto:amerrill@eastonps.org)  
**Helen Keller Middle School Interim Principal**



## News from the PTA Presidents



Dear Families and Staff,

Welcome to a New Year! We are all equally eager to start a fresh 2011 with creative ideas and goals to help further the progress made to date in our HKMS community. As we move forward, we have taken time to review the past few months and celebrate successes as well as incorporate change and progress where needed. To this end, as always, we encourage your input and feedback as we continue to respond to the needs and fulfillment of our children's experience at HKMS. A few highlights to point out this month:

### SKI CLUB NEWS:

Friday is our first Ski Club Trip! We are so excited that it is finally here and thrilled at the turn-out. A group email will be going out with reminders and details regarding equipment drop-off, bus departure and pick-up. Keep your eye out for that important information. The following Ski Club dates are: Jan. 21, Jan. 28 and Feb. 4. Any questions please email [hkms.ski.club@gmail.com](mailto:hkms.ski.club@gmail.com)

### SCHOOL STORE NEWS:

We will be altering the school store hours to be consistent with the School Store openings at SSES. That means the school store will officially be open and manned by students and parent volunteers once per month. The next date will be **Friday, Jan. 28th**. As always, however, we are happy to accommodate orders/purchases of spirit wear, etc. as needed. Please contact Liz Dehler at [ebufano@optonline.net](mailto:ebufano@optonline.net) with any purchase requests or interest in volunteering your time during open hours.

### FAMILY FUN NIGHT:

In an effort to keep evolving the Family Fun Night venue, this year the PTA will hold Family Fun Night at The Discovery Science Museum on Thursday, January 13th. We encourage you and your children of all ages to join us for a night of science demonstrations, exhibits, planetarium shows and pizza dinner. Cost is \$20/family pre-purchased or \$25/family at the door. **Pre-ordered pizzas are \$10/pie.** See attached flyer on page 5 and/or email Jeanine Jones with any questions at [sseskids@yahoo.com](mailto:sseskids@yahoo.com)

### BE INVOLVED

ATTEND our next meeting on Jan. 21 @ 9:15 am  
(Easton Library)

JOIN us at The Discovery Museum on Jan. 13th  
(Flyer attached)



**discovery**  
MUSEUM AND PLANETARIUM

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

## Notes From the Media Center:

A heartfelt thanks to Brit Bast and her crew of volunteers who staffed the Book Fair and helped break it down upon completion. The Fair was a success in that it made books available to students. I couldn't have done this without you! I love to see the smiling faces of those buying books and hear the enthusiasm as they share their opinions of the books. Speaking of reviews, students in 21st Century have been writing reviews and posting them to the HKMS website. Check out the "Search for Books" link under Learning Resources and Technology. As you look for a particular book, you will be able to see which books are the favorites of the HKMS community. Feel free to encourage your children to write a review. It's easy...they just need an account...stop in the Media Center for directions...and happy reading!

Students will be voting for their favorite Nutmeg Book in January through their L.A. classes. It's always exciting to see if HKMS students vote for the winner. Watch the main page of our homepage for information.



**Carol Weinschel,**  
*Director of Learning Resources  
& Technology,*  
[cweinschel@eastonps.org](mailto:cweinschel@eastonps.org)



## TOGETHER WE CAN!

Put on your dancing shoes, grab a camera, or pick up a pen or paintbrush and create! It'll be fun! the **PTA's REFLECTIONS PROGRAM** has begun!

What a difference the arts make. For math skills, social skills, creative thinking, self esteem, etc.. Encourage your child's artistic exploration. Each year, the National PTA Reflections Program

challenges students to create art that relates to a specific theme. This year's theme is "Together We Can!" Participation can be in 6 arts areas; Visual Arts, Literature, Photography, Dance Choreography,

Musical Composition and Film Production. You may enter a piece of work in more than one category. Art entries are critiqued against children in the same grade division.

Recognition is from the local to the national level. Learn more by visiting [PTAreflections.org](http://PTAreflections.org).

The Easton PTA will be hosting the Reflections program for all students in Easton, from pre-school to eighth grade. To participate, entries will be received in the main office at HKMS until January 10, 2011 at 3 p.m..

For a copy of the entry form and to find out the program rules, please visit our website at [www.eastonpta.com](http://www.eastonpta.com). Please read the rules carefully. All rules must be followed exactly to be considered for the next level of competition.

Copies of the entry form and the program rules will also be available in the main office at HKMS. If you have any questions, please contact your Reflections Chair, Claire-Anne Meskers, at [meskers@optonline.net](mailto:meskers@optonline.net) or 203-374-5566.

# Family Fun Night!



- When:** Thursday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 – 8:00pm
- Where:** The Discovery Science Museum  
4450 Park Avenue, Bridgeport (across from Sacred Heart Univ.)
- What:** PTA Family Fun Night including live demonstrations,  
planetarium shows & exhibits & optional pizza dinner!
- Cost:** \$20/family (pre-purchased) or \$25/family (at door)
- Other:** Pre-ordered Pizza \$10/pie
- Questions:** Contact Jeanine Jones at [sseskids@yahoo.com](mailto:sseskids@yahoo.com)
- 

Family Name: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$20

Email Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Pre-Ordered Pizza Qty: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$10 =

Total (including Family Cost of \$20 + optional pizza(s): \_\_\_\_\_ \$

Please make checks payable to "Easton PTA".  
Kindly return to SSES/HKMS office by Tuesday, January 11th

PLAY LACROSSE THIS SPRING with RELAX!

Season Orientation & RELAX Gear for Sale!  
January 29<sup>th</sup> @ 12:00pm  
Joel Barlow High School

Boys and Girls in GRADES K-8

Register **NOW!**  
[WWW.RE-LAX.ORG](http://WWW.RE-LAX.ORG)

New K-2 Boys & K-2 Girls Program  
Easy Schedule! Fun Play!



Questions? Call the Redding Boys & Girls Club Hotline  
203-938-3166



## Does Your Child Have Health Insurance?

*Connecticut's HUSKY Plan offers low-cost or free health care*

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Is your child protected by health insurance? If not, your school and the State of Connecticut want to help. Please fill out this form and return it to your child's teacher, school nurse or school office. The school will then contact Connecticut's HUSKY Plan to help connect your student with health insurance coverage.

Healthy kids do well in school! HUSKY pays for doctor visits (including physical exams), prescriptions, emergency care, vision and dental care, mental health care, special health care needs and more. It's for children under age 19 in families of all incomes. Over 230,000 children now have their health care covered by the HUSKY Plan.

**If your child is uninsured and you would like to participate in Connecticut's HUSKY Plan, please fill out and return this form to your child's teacher, school nurse, or school office. Your signature means that the school can provide your contact information to the Connecticut Department of Social Services (administering agency of the HUSKY Plan) or its enrollment contractor so that a HUSKY customer service representative may call you, send you an information kit, and begin the application process to insure your child's health.**

Parent/guardian's name *(please print)*: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/guardian's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Street address: \_\_\_\_\_

City or town: \_\_\_\_\_, CT Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) and age(s) of uninsured child(ren): \_\_\_\_\_

Best phone number for the HUSKY representative to call you at? (area code first): ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

If you want an information & application kit sent to you, *please check here*:

**OR: If you want to find out more information on HUSKY right away, call the HUSKY information hotline--1-877-CT-HUSKY (1-877-284-8759).**

Hours are 8:30 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday; and 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday. You can apply by phone or request an information kit.

**OR: Visit HUSKY at [www.huskyhealth.com](http://www.huskyhealth.com). Check out our colorful website & download the application.**

*This partnership of Connecticut schools and the HUSKY Plan is from the HUSKY enrollment initiative proposed by Governor M. Jodi Rell and approved by the General Assembly in Section 119 of Public Act 07-02, June Special Session. Special thanks to the Connecticut Department of Education, Connecticut Department of Social Services, Regional Education Service Centers, and all caring school personnel throughout the state as we join with parents to bring health coverage to all Connecticut children.*



# HKMS BIRTHDAY BOOK CLUB

This is a **great** way to support the **HKMS Media Center!**

Your \$25 donation will buy quality books that are hand selected for a great variety of student's interests and with academics in mind!

Honor your student's birthday by donating to the **HKMS Birthday Book Club**. Each book will be marked by a special bookplate inscribed with a dedication to your child in celebration of his/her birthday.

Students will be recognized in their birthday month by receiving \$1 voucher to be used toward the snack of their choice in the HKMS cafeteria. (\* Summer birthdays will be recognized in the Fall.)

**Join at any time of the school year ....or now so you don't forget!!!!**

**Questions?** Please call or e-mail Kim Lenoci ([mrskiml@yahoo.com](mailto:mrskiml@yahoo.com)) or Mary O'Connor ([toconnor02@snet.net](mailto:toconnor02@snet.net) or 524-0108)

Please make checks payable to Easton PTA-HKMS Birthday Book Club and send your check in to HKMS, Attention: HKMS Birthday Book Club

\*\*\*\*\* tear off  
\*\*\*\*\*

## HKMS BIRTHDAY BOOK CLUB

**YES!** Please include my child/children in the HKMS Birthday Book Club! Each book contributed is \$25. Please include your child's birthday year in the date.

Childs Name \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_

Homeroom teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Childs Name \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_

Homeroom teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

# January 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1 style="font-size: 4em; color: blue; text-shadow: 2px 2px 4px black;">Happy</h1> <h1 style="font-size: 4em; color: green; text-shadow: 2px 2px 4px black;">New</h1> <h1 style="font-size: 4em; color: orange; text-shadow: 2px 2px 4px black;">Year</h1>						1
2	3	4	5	6 Parent Coffee 9:30 am	7 Professional Development- Early Dismissal 12:10 pm  Ski Trip	8
9	10	11 BOE 7:30 pm	12	13 BOE Budget Workshop 7:30 pm  Discovery Museum/ Family Fun Night	14 Staff Day No School	15
16	17 Martin Luther King Day-No School	18	19	20 Music Concert 6:30 pm	21 PTA Meeting/ Easton Library 9:15 am  Ski Trip	22
23	24	25	26	27	28 School Store Open  Ski Trip	29
30	31					