

Elysian Charter School Weekly Newsletter

December 19, 2011

Vol. 7 Issue 15

Please note that the school newsletter is sent out on Mondays. When Monday is a holiday, the newsletter will be sent the following day. If you have news to send,

please send it to lynneshapiro@rocketmail.com by 3:00 PM on Mondays.

Harry's Corner

What Is Bullying?

Today we are planning for the first meeting of our School Safety Team. In preparing for the meeting I have been reading the book *Schools Where Everyone Belongs* by Stan Davis. In the book he provides the following definition of bullying, written by Dorothea Ross in 1996:

Bullying is a form of social interaction—not necessarily long-standing—in which a more dominant individual (the bully) exhibits aggressive behavior that is intended to, and does

in fact, cause distress to a less dominant individual (the victim). The aggressive behavior may take the form of direct physical and/or verbal attack or may be indirect. More than one bully and more than one victim may participate in the interaction (page 9).

Davis makes several significant points. These include

- Bullying is about power. Bullies experience a wish for power that is stronger than their empathetic strength. They hurt others in order to have power over the victim, which is much more important to them than getting any concrete rewards (such as lunch money).
- Bullies choose targets with little social support. They focus on differences, often picking on children who have less self-confidence and attacking a physical feature, disability or difference.
- One of the most hurtful forms of bullying is excluding the victim socially. When bystanders buy into the bully's action, the victim is hurt even more.

The School Safety Team, which is led by our school social worker, is made up of representatives from all components of our community...the principal, parents, teachers, middle school students, the nurse, recess aides, and a police officer (our DARE officer). The mandate of this committee is to review complaints and develop strategies to reduce bullying at Elysian.

At Elysian there is a historical commitment to work with children to prevent bullying. Long before the media highlighted these issues, we were providing character education, having our social worker teach lessons that develop empathy (one of my favorites is her 5th grade lesson entitled, "Walk a Mile in My Shoes"), provide circle time and organize lunch groups. We also use disciplinary strategies that focus on learning correct behavior rather than punishment.

At an organizational level, we have a policy (Elysian School Policy 5131.1—see the [parent page](#) on our website to navigate to our policies if you would like to read the entire policy) which reflects New Jersey State Law and provides the following definition of bullying:

"Harassment, intimidation or bullying" is defined as any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents, that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school

grounds, at any school-sponsored function or on a school bus, or off school grounds.

Some interesting components of this definition include:

- The use of “electronic communication”—email, texting, Facebook, cell phones, etc.—are now part of the school’s obligation to investigate
- The use of “off school grounds”—for example a playground incident after school—is also now part of our responsibility.
- For an incident to be defined as an official act of bullying, it must be motivated by one of the characteristics listed in the policy.

So where does all of this leave us? If an incident meets all of the criteria of the legal definition, we will discuss the issue with the parents, provide appropriate consequences for the bully, provide support for the victim, and work with everyone to ensure that this does not happen again. *If it does not meet the legal definition criteria we will do the exact same thing.* The only difference will be the amount of paperwork that follows a bullying incident.

Of course our major goal is prevention. Over the next few weeks we will spend more time talking about this. However, I would like to make some key points.

- Prevention is about developing character, a sense of community and a sense of empathy.
- It is also about teaching children how to negotiate with each other in social situations—some children do this instinctively, others have to be taught.
- Prevention is about teaching children how to control their emotions and not let frustration take over their actions.
- And most importantly, prevention is about helping children develop a sense of themselves and a sense of confidence.

News from the Friends of Elysian

The 2011-2012 ANNUAL APPEAL will begin just after the holidays. The Friends of Elysian Annual Appeal raises needed funds that help the Elysian Charter School provide for facilities, fund capital improvements and underwrite projects that help our students and teachers succeed. Look for the Appeal Letter to arrive in your mailboxes during the first week of January. Donations will be accepted by mail or on-line at www.friendsofelysian.org. The goal of this year's appeal is 100% participation from all Elysian families. Thanks for helping us reach our goal.

SAVE THE DATE: The Annual Friends of Elysian Dinner Dance and Fundraising Auction will be held on Saturday, March 10th from 7-11PM at Westin Hotel in Jersey City. This adults-only fun and festive evening will featuring several auctions, fantastic food and drink and of course rocking music and dancing. To see highlights of last year's event visit www.friendsofelysian.org and click on the fundraising events tab.

This is a major event for Elysian and therefore, volunteers are needed to help sell tickets, solicit auction items and handle event logistics. If you are interested helping out with this event, please email Grace Leong at gtleong@verizon.net.

STILL NEED A FEW LAST MINUTE GIFTS? THE ELYSIAN SCHOOL STORE HAS WHAT YOU NEED!

If you missed the School Store table at Kuumba Day or in the Rue Building last week there is still time to get your Elysian branded holiday gifts. Select items are available for sale (cash or checks only, exact change appreciated) in the Rue Office. Items include, pencils and sharpeners, rulers and calculators, knit caps, booklights and flashlights, pencil and coin cases, two pocket folders, erasers and mouse pads. Great for stocking stuffers or just to show off your school pride, these items are out just in time to restock book bags and desk drawers for the second half of the 2011-2012 school year.

Penny A Page

Reminder: Participants who raise the most receive a Barnes and Nobel gift card courtesy of the Kusner Family. The first collection date is February 17, 2012. If you have any questions, contact Christiano Kusner in the 8th grade.

From the Lunch Program

We hope you will all have a look at some of the new food items on both our lunch and vegetarian January menus. We had a request to offer fewer foods with processed vegetable protein and I think kids will like these items regardless of whether they are vegetarian or not. Also available now is a dairy free menu for both lunch and vegetarian menus. There is not a specific Dairy Free menu, but foods offered will be similar to what is on the daily menu. For example, macaroni and cheese and cheese rigatoni would be replaced with pasta with meat sauce. Pizza would be replaced with chicken nuggets. When ordering, follow the instructions on the order form.

We would also like to request that for families with children in both buildings, that orders and payment be brought to the building where your child's classroom is located. If possible, it helps to have separate orders sent to each location.

Suggestions or questions? We would love to hear from you! Susan Gilbertson suzgilbertson@yahoo.com

Make a Wish Foundation

Dear Elysian Families,

My name is Meryl Kurland and I'm in the 8th grade. In humanities we are working on our Improve a Life Project, the point of which is for us to improve at least one person's life. My friends Raymundo, Avery, and I have chosen the Make a Wish Foundation which is a charity that gives kids with fatal diseases a chance to have their one wish fulfilled. We will be sending flyers home with all the students this week asking families to buy a star for \$1 to help us raise the money to make a wish come true. After filling out the flyer and turning it in to your child's teacher, we will give your child a blank white star which is to be colored in. These stars will be displayed on the wall to the left of Kate's 6th grade. Families may buy as many stars as they would like as long as the money is included with the form. We hope you will all help us out to reach our goal of fulfilling at least one wish.

Thanks,

Meryl, Raymundo, and Avery

To date, I have not yet received any club volunteer proposals. I've had a few conversations, but no club plan has been submitted on paper or email yet. Please remember to submit your proposal as soon as possible. And remember, there are no clubs without volunteers! Your help is needed! Thanks! Susan Gilbertson /suzgilbertson@yahoo.com

Be A Volunteer Club Leader for Elysian's Afterschool

Enrichment Clubs!

Thinking about hosting a club? Here is some information that might help you decide.

SESSION I – January 16 – March 2

(Session I proposals due back Wednesday, January 4th, 2012 – e-mail or office)

“Free” After School for your child on the day of the club! Elysian parents who wish to lead a club can have their child/ren attend the After School Program for free during the time of the club. The children must be of the ages of K – 8 and must attend our school. As of this time, we do not have care options for children under the age of Kindergarten.

What are Enrichment Clubs? The Clubs are fun/educational groups run by Elysian staff, parents or friends of the children of Elysian. Their purpose is to provide experiences outside of school which will further enrich the lives of our children. Clubs in the past have provided opportunities in many areas that children might not normally experience. The philosophy of the clubs mirrors that of the school, in that children will be encouraged to explore their potential and experience the joy of learning in a safe, nurturing environment.

What does a Club Leader do? The Club Leader is someone with a hobby, talent or interest that he or she would like to share with children. Leaders volunteer their services, but can expect to be reimbursed for materials purchased (please keep receipts). He or she should be comfortable working with a small group of children (usually no more than 10). Club Leaders should arrive no later than 2:45 PM and may leave as soon as all children are picked up at 4:00 PM by either their parents or After School. Leaders are responsible for clean up afterwards. If a Club meeting is canceled for any reason, it is up to the Club leader to notify parents, students and the Elysian office that the Club will not meet.

Times - Clubs meet Monday through Thursday. Clubs are not held on Fridays. Please call Susan at 201-876-0102 to discuss other possibilities.

Club Leader Assistance – Thinking of leading a club but afraid to do it alone? We can sometimes find others interested in helping out. Call Susan and 201-876-0102 or e-mail at suzgilbertson@yahoo.com

Yes! I would like to lead a club!
CLUB PROPOSAL FORM
Session I – January 16 – March 2 (6 weeks)

Proposals Due Wednesday, January 4 / Return to Office
Or email: suzgilbertson@yahoo.com

Name: _____

Child: _____ Class: _____

Telephone: Hm. _____ Cell: _____

E-Mail: _____ Work: _____

Name of Club: _____

Grade levels included: (Circle all that apply) K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

How many children total in the club? _____

List the type of space needed: _____

Give a summary of what a typical club day would be like. Be sure to include topics and activities.

List expenses associated with this club as well as necessary items & how much they will cost. You will be provided a reasonable amount up to which you may submit receipts for reimbursement. If you feel expenses will be more that \$10 per child, list the expected cost per child.

Days Available - Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday

*Questions? Call Susan at 201-876-0102

Basketball Practice Info

The Little Eagles Basketball Team practices Wednesdays, Rue Gym, 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM. If there is any change, parents will be notified by phone or e-mail in advance.

Girls' Varsity Basketball practices Thursdays, Rue Gym, 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM. If there is any change, parents will be notified by phone or e-mail in advance.

Biddy Basketball practices Fridays, Demarest Gym, 3:30 PM to 5:30 PM. If there is any change, parents will be notified by phone or e-mail in advance.

Boys' Varsity Basketball practices Fridays, Rue Gym, 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM. If there is any change, parents will be notified by phone or e-mail in advance.

PTSO Corner

Upcoming PTSO Events: Topics	Date	Chairpersons and Speakers-
PTSO Meeting	1/4	Kathy Mone has invited Kathleen Nugent to speak on Parent Political Advocacy for Charter Schools
Chili Dinner	1/21	Paul Demopoulos, Ted Mauseth
Square One Art	January	
PTSO Meeting	2/1	
PTSO Meeting	3/7	
Annual Meeting	3/13	
Spring Fling	3/16	
PTSO Meeting	4/4	
PTSO Meeting	5/2	
PTSO Meeting	6/6	

End of Year Picnic

6/14

Melissa

Half Gallon Milk Containers Wanted

The second grades are collecting rinsed out half gallon milk containers for an upcoming project. Please drop containers off outside of Alyssa's second grade classroom in Demarest or outside the Rue office.

Last Call...Sibling Registration Forms?

We will set aside spots in next year's kindergarten and/or give preference on the 1st-8th grade wait list if you turn in a registration form for in-coming students. Call Lynne Shapiro to discuss.

Peace Corps Donations Accepted Through December 23

We're collecting books (picture books to teen reads), board games, educational software and popular PG-rated movies. Donations may be left in boxes outside of your child's classroom or under the community board at Demarest. If donating money, make checks out to Elysian or pay online via escnj.org to help offset shipping costs.

Lunch on Tuesdays

Send in a bag lunch for the Hoboken Shelter. We collect lunches every Tuesday. Contact: Jennifer Giattino, 201.780.6779

Donate By Giving....Or At Least Shopping!

The time is here to shop & pay, so help our school along the way.

5+ simple ways to raise holiday cheer for Elysian Charter School:

1. Target Takes Charge of Education: A fabulous Target REDcard receives an amazing 5% discount at www.target.com and in stores. [Register](#) this card so 1% of your Target purchases are donated to Elysian.

2. Campbell's Labels for Education: No, A&P does not participate, but Shoprite does. For Campbell's eLabels, [register](#) your participating store card. Each participating product that you purchase will earn 1 point which is credited to Elysian's account.

3. Amazon: Yes, Virginia, there is a new Amazon widget on our [Donate](#) page and if you use it, up to 10% of each purchase is donated to us.

4. [Innisbrook](#) donates an incredible 50%! Use code #120231.

5. Can You Top This? Shop online at 200+ stores like Oriental Trading, JCPenny and Lands' End to donate 8% to Elysian's art, music and gym programs. General Mills Box Tops from your home purchases are gladly received at the head office at Rue. www.boxtops4education.com

6. iGive.com Shop at 900+ stores on the web or add the new iGive App to donate up to 26% of each purchase to Elysian! iGive.com is where shopping at any of now 939 stores like Best Buy, Home Depot, Staples, Pottery Barn, Travelocity and Apple mean a 1-26% donation to your favorite cause. Remember to pick Elysian Charter School of Hoboken as your cause. Because, because, because... happy shopping. [See info and participating stores in PDF]

7. Matching Gift Programs: Some companies will double, or even triple, individual tax-

deductible contributions made by their employees to non-profit organizations. Friends of Elysian Charter School is a 501/C non-profit association whose sole purpose is the support of the Elysian Charter School. All donations to the Friends are tax-deductible. Check with your company's human resources department to find out about your company's program. They can give you a form to fill out and send to the Friends with your contribution.

Thank you for your continued support by shopping all year around.

December Calendar

Monday, December 19

Board of Trustees Meeting, 7:00 PM, Rue Building.

Friday, December 23

Half Day of School, 12:30 PM dismissal. The After School Program is available until 4:00 PM only.

Monday, December 26 - Monday, January 2

***** note change of return to school date*******

School Closed for Winter Break. See you on Tuesday, January 3.

January Calendar

Wednesday, January 4

PTSO Meeting, 6:30, pizza and childcare available. Rue building. Kathleen Nugent speaks on Parent Political Advocacy for Charter Schools.

Saturday, January 7

Open House for Prospective Parents, 10:00 AM sharp. Volunteers wanted.

Tuesday, January 10

6th grade to Old Barrack's Museum

Thursday, January 12

3rd grade to see *Miss Ophelia*, New Victory Theater

Friday, January 13

Communiunity Meeting. All students should be dropped off at Rue Building, 8:30 AM. Families are invited. Encore presentation of KUUMBA day dance by 3rd grade. Lottery Registration forms are due by 5:00 PM in order to be included in the lottery for 2012 -13 school year.

Wednesday, January 18

Lottery for Admissions, 2012-13 school year, 11:00 AM

Saturday, January 21

Chili Dinner

Monday, January 23

Board of Trustees Meeting, 7:00 PM, Rue Building

301 Garden Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030
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