



RENAISSANCE NEWS

December 2006

Highlighting accomplishments and efforts of students, staff, parents and partners.

THANKS TO NEW COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Zantaz, Inc. funded \$6,000 of wishlist items for our **Specialty Department**. This donation includes a keyboard lab for music classes, tap shoes for dance classes, pedometers for PE classes and mural making supplies for art classes. Earlier in the year, Zantaz donated backpacks and school supplies and funded an Apple Picking trip for a kindergarten class. Thank you Zantaz!

The **Rustic Kitchen**, a new restaurant in Park Square, hosted 12 students for a tour, cooking class, and delicious lunch. This special treat was a reward for students, recognizing their excellence in school. Thanks Rustic Kitchen!



NEW COMPUTER LAB SERVES 25% MORE STUDENTS

The computer lab purchased with our Targeted Assistance Grant is in full use and has allowed us to accommodate 25% more students for daily reading fluency enrichment with the program **Read Naturally**. Additionally this year, each Primary School classroom has four additional computers. This has increased the opportunity for students to work on their math and literacy fluency skills throughout the school day.

HEALTHY LESSON FOR KINDERGARTENERS

Two **Northeastern University** senior nursing students joined resources with **Chartwell's School Dining Services** to present an educational program linking healthy snacks to physical activity. The lucky recipients of this unit were all of the K-2 students. The picture illustrates the students drawing their favorite physical activity along with circling pictures of healthy snacks. After the lesson they all munched on grapes, carrots and apple juice or water courtesy of Chartwell's. The learning continued at home when the lesson was shared with their parents and siblings. Thank you to Northeastern University for sending us these energetic students and to Chartwell's for the nutrition information and the delicious snacks!



RECIPROCAL TEACHING: NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL INITIATIVE

100% of **Primary School Teachers** have been trained in Reciprocal Teaching. Reciprocal teaching refers to an instructional activity that takes place in the form of a dialogue between teachers and students regarding segments of text. The dialogue uses four strategies: summarizing, question generating, clarifying, and predicting. The teacher and students take turns assuming the role of teacher in leading this dialogue. We believe this initiative and teacher training program will greatly impact our students' ability to comprehend grade level text and to perform successfully on the third grade MCAS test.

MORNING MATH CLUB Volunteers Needed

Just when Primary School students at the Boston Renaissance Charter Public School thought they knew what to expect from the school breakfast menu, the breakfast fairies sprinkled a little pixie dust across the cafeteria and a pair of golden arches appeared to serve up some additional brain food.

Along with usual morning decisions like Fruit Loops or Frosted Flakes, whole milk or two percent, students will be placing orders for whole numbers with a tall glass of addition and subtraction, courtesy of the Morning Math Club, a new community partnership program.

The Morning Math Club was designed to maximize student learning between 8 and 9 am, after arrival at school but before classes start. By cooking up a few mathematically tasty activities mixed in with a cup of dedication from a healthy serving of volunteers, the program's goal is for 1st and 2nd grade students to gain math fact and fluency skills, the critical building blocks for success.

Who's up for some problem solving?

Math expertise is not a requirement for Morning Math Club volunteers. After a one hour training, volunteers will visit the school one day a week to work with students on math games and review. All ingredients will be provided by the school. **The only factor missing from the equation is YOU!**

To learn more about Morning Math Club, or to sign up as a volunteer, call or email Jessica Dugan, Director of Development & Partnerships, 617-357-0900 x1005 or jdugan@bostonrenaissance.org.

See you at breakfast!

FOURTH GRADE BRINGS LEARNING TO LIFE

To conclude the **4th grade** "Living Things" unit, each class attended a wonderful live animal presentation by a company called **Curious Creatures**. The facilitator, Justin, presented students with 10 different animals, including a 60 year old tortoise, a skunk named Flower, and a baby alligator. Justin discussed each animal's needs and adaptations, reinforcing curriculum learned earlier in class. The students were able to interact with the animals, bringing learning to life.



What better way to understand the life of an immigrant in the year 1900, than to actually be one? That is what the **4th grade** set out to do this year. On October 31, 2006, the 9th floor was turned into **Ellis Island** in the year 1900. Each student was given an immigrant identity, which told details about his or her country of origin, previous job, family, medical conditions, and more. Assuming the immigrants' identities, students visited four stations: Health, Skills, Background, and Clearance. At each station, the immigrants went through a difficult interrogation and inspection by Ellis Island officials played by teachers and students. After visiting each station, the immigrants were either welcomed into the United States or deported. This was an authentic learning experience for all.



AMBASSADORS FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Just inside the front door of the Renaissance School is the **Parent Center**, a space dedicated for parents to meet, use computers, gather information, and share ideas. The Center, staffed by **Delanie Pryor and Francine Thames**, is open from 8am to 3pm. Thames and Pryor, along with **Alexandra Buckmire**, the Director of Family & Student Services, are working hard to bridge the gap between home and school, increasing parental involvement. They make phone calls to welcome new parents and conduct surveys to determine parents' needs. They work to improve communication and information dissemination through mediums like the room parent program, parent meetings and the Book Bag Express parent newsletter. And they lead initiatives like the Box Tops for Education Program that helps students and their families raise money for their school.



Research shows that parental involvement is directly linked to students achievement. As the Renaissance School strives to improve student test scores, increased parental involvement is critical. Our Parent Center ambassadors are working hard to reach this goal, getting more parents more involved.

MAKE A GIFT TO RENAISSANCE

As you would believe, it costs more to educate a child at Renaissance than the school receives from state and federal funding. The difference between what we receive and what it actually costs to educate a Renaissance student is called the "gap". This year, the gap is \$850 per child, which totals just over \$1 million.

Each year we appeal to the community for donations to help us bridge the gap. Your support, at any level, is a signal to the community that you believe Renaissance programs are critical for our student's success. Your support will help us leverage more donations from corporations, foundations and individuals who want to invest in the school.

Please support the *Bridge the Gap* Annual Campaign.

Donations can be made at www.bostonrenaissance.org.

THANK YOU!

RENAISSANCE TRIVIA

- * Renaissance was recognized for significant improvement on reading test scores, receiving an \$823,000 grant from the Department of Education.
- * Students practice reading and math on mobile computer labs that travel between classrooms.
- * Teachers report to school up to two weeks earlier than their students for intensive professional development.
- * Every Renaissance student participates in music, art, physical education or dance class every day.
- * A network of over 50 community and business partners supports students and initiatives.
- * Renaissance classes are taught by teaching teams that include regular educators, reading and math specialists and special educators, allowing for specialized small group instruction.