



Happenings on the Hill

2014 Winter Newsletter

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Newsletter Editor: *Carmie Burton*

Letter from the Ryerson PTO Executive Board

Dear Ryerson Families,

Happy 2014! The new year has started off with a bang. Not only is Ryerson humming with all the amazing learning taking place during the school day, but also this winter there are activities aplenty before and after school hours. On Tuesday mornings, the Chess Club is learning to play chess, the game of kings. On Friday afternoons, over 125 children are participating in Winter Workshops ranging from basketball to baking to building blocks.

The upcoming months will be filled with the arts and sciences at Ryerson. We have started off our cultural arts program in 2014 with violinists Artemis Simerson and Mark Rike, whose brilliant violin playing had the children spontaneously singing and clapping along. Ask your child how they played a Mozart piece on the same music stand, with Ms. Simerson playing the music right side-up and Mr. Rike, the music upside-down -- and yet somehow the music fit together beautifully! And for something completely different, our next cultural arts event will feature hip hop dancing with Poetry in Motion Crew. Look for Square 1 Art to be coming home, where your child will be able to create an artistic masterpiece to adorn mobile device cases, mugs, and more. High Touch-High Tech will be coming to Ryerson to bring science into the classrooms for various grades. We are busily making plans for our 3rd annual Science Fair and *Ryerson Loves Science Week* in April.

All of these PTO activities, and others, could not happen without your dedication and support. To continue supporting the arts and sciences at Ryerson, please join us at *Give to Grow 2014* on March 7th at the Madison Winter Club. Tickets currently are on sale, and the best way to support *Give to Grow 2014* is to come to the event!

Please look through this newsletter for more information about the PTO activities at Ryerson. We have added a new feature, our PTO Semi-Annual Financial Report, which details some of our incoming funds from membership dues and fundraisers and outgoing expenses for activities. If you would like to volunteer or have any questions, please feel free to contact any PTO Executive Board member. You can find each member's contact information, as well as our newsletters and Ryerson PTO meeting minutes, on the [Ryerson PTO website](#).

Best wishes,

Ryerson PTO Executive Board

Carol Ahljianian
Carrie Burton

Lei Jin
Linda Maniatty

Nicole Tanner
Nancy Tong



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Upcoming Events



Cultural Arts

The PTO has planned the following cultural arts programs for 2014:

- January 15th : Music for Two Violins by violinists Artemis Simerson and Mark Rike
Ms. Simerson is the Assistant Concertmaster of the New Haven Symphony Orchestra and of Orchestra New England, acting also as soloist and concertmaster on numerous occasions. Mr. Rike has performed around the world as soloist and concertmaster with conductors such as Giuseppe Sinopoli, Yehudi Menuhin, Sandor Vegh and Leopold Hager. Both Ms. Simerson and Mr. Rike are also violin teachers.
- February 4th : Hip Hop Dimensions by Poetry in Motion Crew
The Poetry in Motion Crew is a diverse collection of dancers with raw talent in hip hop and break dancing. While electrifying audiences, they inspire youth to think of dancing as a positive outlet for artistic expression. Audiences are educated on the history, culture, foundation, and the dance styles of hip hop.
- June 6th : The Highville Steel Bands
We are excited to welcome back the Highville Steel Band, led by Deborah Teason and Kenneth Joseph. Members of the Highville Steel Band play on steel drums, or "pans" -- these are skillfully hammered 55-gallon oil barrels which have been carefully tuned by hand to produce perfect musical tones.



January 31-February 14: Box Tops for Education

It's that time again! Box Tops collection dates will be January 31st, February 7th, and February 14th. Please neatly cut out your Box Tops and send them in to your child's teacher. The classes who collect the most Box Tops in grades Kindergarten through 2 and in grades 3 through 4 will win a PTO-sponsored pizza or sundae party.

As a result of your efforts in the fall, the PTO earned \$1,024 from Box Tops. Mrs. Voitans's class collected the most Box Tops for grades Kindergarten through 2, and Mrs. Ott's and Mrs. Pinski's classes tied in collecting the most Box Tops for grades 3 through 4. Special thanks go to Box Tops chair, Shannon Leckinger, and volunteers Heather Crawford, Janice Lehman, Lori Hall, and Colleen Anderson.

As a reminder, please keep clipping your Box Tops all year round!



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February-March: Square 1 Art

Square 1 Art, chaired by Beth Pantano, will be rolling out this month! This is a program with a primary goal of creating a passion for art in students. Art creation promotes problem solving skills, self-esteem, and thinking outside the box. Square 1 Art is a great way to incorporate art into the academic curriculum. Please have your child complete his or her masterpiece on the Square 1 Art template and return it to school by January 31st. Order forms and free stickers of your child's artwork will be sent home through backpack express in middle to late March.



March 7: Give to Grow 2014

On Friday, March 7th, please join us at *Give to Grow 2014*, our 2nd annual fundraiser to support the arts and sciences at Ryerson. This is also a night out for us to come together, strengthening our community and having fun! *Give to Grow* will be held from 7 to 10 pm at the Madison Winter Club. The ticket price per person is \$40. The deadline for ticket orders is February 24th and, as tickets are limited, they will be available first come, first serve. There will be food, drink, and music, as well as live auction, silent bidding, and take-a-chance drawing of donated items. In the event of inclement weather on March 7th, *Give to Grow* will be held the following week on March 14th, same location and time. We are still seeking volunteers to help make this event a success. If you would like to volunteer or have any questions regarding *Give to Grow*, please contact Kristen Waterman at kristinadubbs@sbcglobal.net or Nancy Tong at tong_nancy@hotmail.com. Whether you bring your spouse or make this a ladies' (or gents') night out -- we hope to see you there!



March 10: PTO Meeting – Presentation by Superintendent Thomas R. Scarice

Please join us at the PTO meeting, **Monday, March 10th**, at 7:00 pm in the library. Mr. Thomas R. Scarice, Superintendent of Madison Public Schools, will make a presentation regarding the proposed 2014-2015 educational budget for Madison.



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April 7-11: 3rd Annual Science Fair and Ryerson Loves Science Week

The third annual *Ryerson Loves Science Week* will be taking place from April 7th through 11th, with the Science Fair to be held during that week. During this time, the children will engage in many exciting activities with the goals of exploring the wonders of science and nature, nurturing their scientific curiosity, and developing a lifelong love of science. Children will have the opportunity to design and carry out their own science experiments, then display and share their results at the Science Fair on the evening of April 9th. More information about finding a science experiment and creating a poster for the Science Fair will be coming home with your child by March. If you would like to volunteer, or have any questions regarding *Ryerson Loves Science Week* or the Science Fair, please contact Sharon Vagell at sharon.barr@gmail.com or Karin Staschke at knt714@aol.com.

In addition, the PTO is proud to fund one High Touch-High Tech science program for each grade level this year. With High Touch-High Tech, children learn by doing hands-on science experiments. In September, the 1st grade participated in *The Shadow Knows*. During this program, the 1st graders investigated the shadowy side of light, saw how shadows form, used shadows to learn about the motion of the sun, and built a working sun dial. Ask your child about the science going on in the classroom during these upcoming High Touch-High Tech programs:

- On January 30th, the 3rd grade will participate in *Biome Sweet Home*.
- On February 3rd, the 4th grade will participate in *The Tao of Science*.
- On February 19th, the 1st grade will participate in *Force of Habit*.
- On February 20th, the 3rd grade will participate in *Mixed Up Matter*.
- On April 10th, the kindergarteners will participate in *ChemFun*.
- On April 24th, the 2nd grade will participate in *What's the Matter*.



May 8: Staff Appreciation Breakfast

The traditional Staff Appreciation Breakfast, held during Teacher Appreciation Week, will take place on May 8th. During the breakfast, Ryerson staff will also have the opportunity to win gifts in a drawing. Hospitality chair Beth O'Keefe will be organizing this event. If you are interested in obtaining gift donations and/or providing goodies for the breakfast, please contact Beth at elderok@hotmail.com. In addition, volunteers will be needed to cover each classroom while the teachers are attending the breakfast. If you are interested in helping with coverage, please be on the lookout for your room parents' request for coverage as the breakfast draws nearer.



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May 17: Fun Fair

This year's Fun Fair, Ryerson's longest-running fundraiser, will be held on Saturday, May 17th. The theme is *Kickin' It Old School*. If you would like to volunteer for the Fun Fair, please contact Kristen Waterman at kristinadubbs@sbcglobe.net or Beth Ackerman at pbandjeli6@cox.net.

Past Events



Winter Workshops

Thank you to Maxine Howard for chairing another wonderful Winter Workshops! This year, there are 12 programs that offer something for everyone:

Acting/Theater
Baking
Basketball
Computers

Games
Japanese
Legos
Let's Get Crafty

Rainbow Loom - Beginner
Rainbow Loom - Advanced
Kindergarten Building Blocks
Kindergarten - Arts & Crafts

Thank you also to the dedicated instructors and aides who devote their time to making the Winter Workshops such a rewarding experience for our children. These individuals are as follows: Shannon Leckinger, Dorothy Cohen, Beth Flanagan, Kim Yahara, Lisa Brown, Kristen Waterman, Jeff Waterman, Marybeth Hughes, Brian Hughes, Jack Hughes, Phoenix Billings, Florie Earle, Justin Earle, Nancy Anselmo, Sofie Anselmo, Scott Mongillo, Sheri Rossi, Jeanne Allen, Jacob Allen, Beth O'Keefe, Suzanne Owen, Lori Hall, Amy Johnson, Violet Johnson, Emma Rode, Emily Webster, Amie Freeman, Laura Lynch, Beth Ackerman, Noreen Slevin-Koczak, Bill Dunsmore, Meghan McGuire, Anne Theel, Alexis Theel, Heather Crawford, Diane Vyce, Bennet Sprague, June Nuzzi, Kayla Howard, Allie Nelson, and Justin Howard.



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2013 Charitable Contributions

Thank you to the Ryerson families for your generous support of our charitable activities in 2013:

UNICEF: Thank you to the Ryerson children who, while trick or treating on Halloween, collected \$513.15 for UNICEF.



Food Drive: Thank you to the Ryerson families who, through the Food Drive, collectively donated 162 pounds of food to benefit the Madison Food Pantry. Special thanks go to Food Drive chair, Lisa Preikszas, and volunteers Lisa Brown, Nancy O' Brien, Kiley Russell, and Brenda Warner.

Toy Drive: Thank you to the Ryerson families who, through the Toy Drive, donated a huge box of toys to benefit Madison families and the New Haven Hospital Children's Toy Closet. A special thanks goes to Janis Goodrich, Toy Drive chair, who coordinated the collection with the Madison Police Department. We especially appreciate the Goodrich family's decoration and delivery of the enormous sub-zero refrigerator box to the school lobby. The giant collection box encouraged children to keep bringing in toys to fill it!



Book Fair

During October 7th through 11th, the Scholastic Book Fair netted \$2,014 for the PTO. In addition, the Book Fair earned Scholastic dollars which were donated as follows: \$250 to the Literacy Lab, \$250 to the library, and \$25 each to the classroom teachers (\$325 total). A heartfelt thank you to Book Fair co-chairs Carol Ahlijanian and Diane Vyce, and volunteers Karen Anderson, Susan Barrett, Kelly Bettuchi, Lisa Brown, Stacy Bungiro, Karen Burns, Michael Butsch, Heather Crawford, Maxine Howard, Lori Hull, Katie Jorens, Kimberly Keily, Happy Marino, Laura Osterman, Beth Pantano, Lisa Preikszas, Cara Rich, Tammy Rogers, Sheri Rossi,



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Meg Sawyer, Caroline Sinofsky, and Noreen Slevin-Koczak, for all of their efforts in making this years' Book Fair a resounding success!



Veterans' Day Assembly

At the Veterans' Day assembly on November 11th, Ryerson celebrated our veterans. Led by music teacher Mrs. Soderberg, the children sang patriotic songs. Fourth graders Emily Alletzhauser, Sydney Aboulian, Peytyn Geis, Liam Lynch, Bridgid O'Keefe, and Matthew Rossi read their essays honoring veterans. Fourth graders Emily Alletzhauser, Emma Kobelia, Kaia Lind, Sebastien Lowy, Bryar Russell and Rachel Zimmerman played *Taps* on their recorders as the veterans saluted the flag. Beth O'Keefe, Hospitality chair, provided light refreshments for the veterans to enjoy.



Holiday Luncheon for Ryerson Staff

On December 18th, the PTO sponsored our traditional holiday luncheon for the Ryerson staff. Beth O'Keefe, Hospitality chair, organized and oversaw this beautiful event. Special thanks go to all the parents for their generosity and time in contributing the savory dishes, sweet treats, and refreshing drinks for our spectacular Ryerson staff to enjoy!



Winter Solstice Celebration

On December 20th, the Ryerson community celebrated the Winter Solstice with a program entitled *Winter Celebrations around the World*. Mrs. Spooner read *Winter Lights* by Heather Conrad. Kindergarteners shared traditions from India and Holland. First graders shared traditions from Germany, Turkey and Russia. Second graders shared traditions from the USA and Guatemala. Third graders shared traditions from Mexico, China and India. Fourth graders shared traditions from Israel, Ethiopia and Europe. As part of their program, the children also sang songs, incorporated sign language, played maracas, and processed around the room. Fourth graders Jack Ackerman, Emma Kobelia, Kaia Lind, Sebastien Lowy, Zachary Preikszas Matthew Rossi, Bryar Russell, J.D. Starkey, Rachel Zimmerman, and Shirley Zullo played holiday music on their recorders. The celebration concluded with an exuberant holiday sing-a-long led by music teacher Mrs. Soderberg.



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Announcements



2014 Calendar of Events

[Click here](#) for the calendar of events for the 2013-2014 school year.



Semi-Annual Financial Report

This Semi-Annual Financial Report as of January 21, 2014 reflects some of the activities of the PTO to date, and the associated incoming funds and/or outgoing expenses.

2013-2014 Incoming Funds

Book Fair	\$2,014	
Box Tops	\$ 946	
Contributions	\$ 750	
Intramurals	\$ 290	
PTO Membership Dues	\$3,455	
School Store	\$ 201	
Winter Workshops	\$2,695	(does not take into account any expenses (e.g., materials))

2013-2014 Outgoing Expenses

Accounting	\$(300)
Administrative-Postage stamps	\$(9)
Bulletin Board	\$(23)
CT Loves to Read	\$(400)
Cultural Arts	\$(3,000)
Field Trips	\$(1,215)
Hospitality & Events	\$(306)
Science & Science Fair	\$(505)
Teacher Classroom Startup	\$(650)



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Parents' Representative Council (PRC) MADE Challenge Superhero Fun Run

The Parent's Representative Council (PRC) for the Madison Public Schools and MADE of Madison invite you to participate in a Superhero Fun Run at the Madison Surf Club on Sunday, April 6th. This event is part of the Closing Festival for the MADE Stronger Health and Wellness Challenge. The Superhero Fun Run is a great opportunity for families to do something healthy together. More information along with how to register for the Superhero Fun Run will be sent home soon!



Board of Education (BOE) News

The Madison Board of Education (BOE) held Budget Workshops on January 14th and 16th for the 2014-15 school year. Public comments on the proposed 2014-2015 educational budget will be heard at upcoming BOE meetings. For a calendar of BOE meeting dates and other BOE information, please refer to the [BOE website](#).



Helping Hands

There are families within the Ryerson community who are in need of a helping hand. If you are interested in supporting them, whether it is through meal preparation, carpooling, or shopping, please contact Mrs. Spooner.

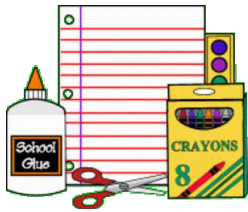


2013-2014 Ryerson School Yearbook

Co-chairs Diane Vyce and Karen Burns have been busily capturing those memorable moments this school year for the yearbook! You may have seen them in the building with their cameras, snapping away. Please help them put together the best yearbook yet. You can help by making sure that that your child's classroom is well-represented by sending any pictures you have taken this year of the children in the classroom to Diane at di.vyce@gmail.com or Karen at tucker_monkey@hotmail.com. They are also looking for volunteers to help with layout. Any help on the yearbook would be greatly appreciated. Also, look for the yearbook order form coming in backpack express in late January/early February at just \$12 per copy.



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School Store

The school store will be open from 8:15am to 8:50am in the main lobby on the following dates:

- February 7th
- April 25th
- May 16th
- June 6th

If your child is interested in working at the school store, or if you would like more information, please contact School Store chair, Kristi Sweitzer, at krdswertz@aol.com.

We also want to take this opportunity to thank Kristi, for all the years she has run and stocked the school store. On days when the store is open, Kristi is always there with a smile for everyone to brighten our day. Kristi is the parent of Seth, a 4th grader, and we will miss Kristi and the Sweitzer family next year!



Garden Committee

Thanks to Garden chair Sheri Romblad and volunteers Beth Ackerman, Kristen Waterman and Caroline Sinofsky for their hard work in beautifying the grounds surrounding the Ryerson entrance. This fall, the Garden Committee secured a donation of ten mums from Hockings that were displayed in the front entrance. The Garden Committee is looking forward to spring planting, with the goals of improving the main entrance and interior garden quad. If you would like to donate your time with the Garden Committee, please contact Sheri at theromblads@comcast.net.



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Going Green

Please help Ryerson with its efforts to Go Green! Rather than sending hardcopies of notices and flyers through backpack, Ryerson is trying to move solely to electronic versions sent to your email. To receive electronic notices and flyers, you must sign up each year. Sign-up instructions can be found on the Ryerson website at [Backpack Express Sign-Up](#). In addition, you can always click on the Backpack Express icon on the lower left of the [Ryerson website](#) home page for current and past notices and flyers sent throughout the school year,



In Appreciation of Vicki Earl

We are pleased to recognize Vicki Earl, whose volunteer service for the Ryerson PTO in 2013 has resulted in a gift from the Verizon Foundation's Employee Volunteer Program to the PTO of \$750. Vicki is the parent of Andrew, a 4th grader, and Nicholas, a 2nd grader. We are grateful to Vicki for her selfless dedication and service to the Ryerson community!

If you have anything you would like to include in our upcoming newsletters, please email information and photos to Carrie Burton at carrieburton@aol.com.