



Happenings on the Hill

2014 Spring Newsletter

In This Issue

Upcoming Events

- 6/9: PTO Meeting/ Election of PTO Officers for 2014-2015
- 6/5: Field Day
- 6/6: Highville Steel Bands
- 6/13: Fourth Grade Celebration

Past Events

- Box Tops for Education
- Give to Grow 2014
- Ryerson Loves Science Week & Ryerson 3rd Annual Science Fair
- Square 1 Art
- Staff Appreciation
- Kickin' It Old School/ Ryerson Fun Fair 2014
- Art Show and Poetry Evening

Announcements

- Helping Hands
- Garden Committee
- Farwell to Mrs. Barbara Soderberg

Newsletter Editor: *Carrie Burton*

Letter from the Ryerson PTO Executive Board

Dear Ryerson Families,

The 2013-14 school year has been filled with continuing Ryerson traditions and establishing new ones. For the Kicking' It Old School Fun Fair, we once again dusted off the signs, placed the cones, fired up the grill, set up the games, and organized the prizes -- then welcomed family and friends to our school on the hill for Ryerson's venerable fair. For our upcoming Field Day, we look forward to our children taking to the Ryerson fields to run, jump, and laugh. And as we bid good-bye to our 4th graders, the Class of 2014, we will honor them, "Ryerson style," with high-fives on the blacktop and then an awesome party during the Fourth Grade Celebration.

We also continued our traditions of honoring the dedicated and amazing Ryerson teachers and staff who have the education of our children. From the back-to-school luncheon in August to the staff appreciation breakfast in May, we have expressed our gratitude for the Ryerson teachers and staff -- who are simply the best.

This year, we hosted our second *Give to Grow*, and proceeds from last year and this year continued the PTO's support of the arts and expanded the PTO's support of the sciences. Our cultural arts programs encompassed theater and drama, singing groups, instrumental music, and dance, and included the comedic (clowns), dramatic (a reluctant dragon), classical (violins), and contemporary (hip hop). For Science Week, our children participated in hands-on science experiments; discovered the properties of fire and explored the science of dry ice; and engineered ways to protect an egg from breaking after a fall from the Ryerson roof. At our third annual Science Fair, over 110 children, from every grade, submitted a science project, and we saw budding engineers build towering structures using only 1 large marshmallow, 20 sticks of spaghetti, masking tape, and yarn. And, throughout the year, the PTO supported science in the classroom with High Touch-High Tech. These arts and science programs are the direct result of your support, and we hope to plant the seeds so that *Give to Grow* will develop to provide ever greater support for the arts and sciences at Ryerson.

All the PTO are able to accomplish could not happen without the time and talent of our dedicated volunteers, for which we thank you.

It has been a wonderful year. Enjoy your summer, and we look forward to seeing you in the fall!

Ryerson PTO Executive Board
2013-14

Carol Ahlijanian
Carrie Burton

Lei Jin
Linda Maniatty

Nicole Tanner
Nancy Tong



Happenings on the Hill 2014 Spring Newsletter

Upcoming Events



June 9: PTO Meeting/Election of PTO Officers for 2014-15 School Year

Please join us at our last PTO meeting of this school year on Monday, June 9th, at 7:00 pm in the library. At the meeting, the slate of officers for the Ryerson PTO Executive Board for the 2014-15 school year will be put forward. Returning officers who will be serving the second year of their two-year term are Nancy Tong, President; Carol Ahlijanian, Vice-President; and Linda Maniatty, Vice-President. New officers, subject to approval at the PTO meeting, are Diane Vyce, Vice-President; Karen Burns, Treasurer; and Karin Staschke, Secretary.



June 5: Ryerson Field Day Aiming for Fun

One of Ryerson's most memorable and exciting traditions is quickly approaching! Field Day will be held on Thursday, June 5th (with a rain date of Monday, June 9th). This year's theme of "Aiming for Fun" will showcase target activities, water games, team challenges, and some new surprises! Please send your Ryerson student to school with sneakers, sunscreen already applied, a hat, and water bottle.

We want to take this opportunity to recognize Lisa Caruso, who has chaired this popular event for many years. Lisa is the parent of Riley, a 4th grader, and we will miss the Caruso family next year.



June 6: Cultural Arts Highville Steel Bands

From Highville Charter School in Hamden, CT, we are excited to welcome back the Highville Steel Bands, led by Deborah Teason and Kenneth Joseph. Members of the Highville Steel Bands 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.



Happenings on the Hill 2014 Spring Newsletter



June 13: Fourth Grade Celebration

On June 13th, the 4th grade students will be honored as they graduate from Ryerson. For each member of the Class of 2014, the PTO will be making a gift of a Ryerson T-shirt. The PTO will sponsor the traditional Fourth Grade Celebration, chaired by Beth O'Keefe and Kristen Waterman. Fred Muzer will DJ, playing favorite musical selections of the 4th graders. Robert's Food Center will be donating popsicles. Helping to organize and support this celebration are Ryerson parents Kristi Sweitzer, Caroline Sinofsky, Licia Ciotti, Vicki Earl, Haley Zimmerman, Melissa Balletto, Carol Cruz, Megan McGuire, Sheri Rossi, Shannon Leckinger, Nancy Tong, Beth Ackerman, Katie Jorens, Jody Catalano, and Jayne Waterfall.

Past Events



Box Tops for Education

As a result of your efforts for the January and February collections, the PTO earned \$423 from Box Tops. Mrs. Figurelli's class collected the most Box Tops for grades Kindergarten through 2, and Mrs. Pinski's class collected the most Box Tops for grades 3 through 4. These classes enjoyed a party sponsored by the PTO.

We take this opportunity to thank Shannon Leckinger, who has chaired Box Tops for the past three collections. Shannon is the parent of Ava, a 4th grader, and Ben, a 2nd grader, and we will miss the Leckinger family when they move to North Carolina at the end of this school year.

We are pleased to welcome our new Box Tops chair, Janice Wolf. For next year, Janice is planning to have Box Tops collected at home and brought into school throughout the school year, with designated counting deadline dates to determine the winners of the class parties. **As a reminder, please keep clipping your Box Tops during the summer, and all year round!**



Happenings on the Hill 2014 Spring Newsletter



Give to Grow 2014

On March 7th, the PTO Board hosted *Give to Grow 2014*. This was a night for us to come together to celebrate Ryerson, raise funds, and to have fun while doing so. Attendees were fêted with food from the Madison Winter Club, drinks donated by Caroline and David Sinofsky and by Donna and Harv Gates, and music by the Daniel Hand High School Jazz Band led by John Gage. The Madison Winter Club was the elegant setting for the live auction, silent bidding, and take-a-chance drawings which raised funds of \$7,610 to support the arts and sciences at Ryerson.

Special thanks go to Nancy Tong and Kristen Waterman, for co-chairing the event; Jeff Waterman, who acted as auctioneer; Lisa Brown, Maxine Howard, Kim Kelly, Martina Lind, and Inger Schoelkopf, who conceived and led the Ryerson children's art for the live auction; Caroline Sinofsky, who headed ticket sales; Carol Ahlijanian and Linda Maniatty, who headed pre-sale take-a-chance ticket sales; Lei Jin, who was responsible for all things financial relating to the event; Beth Ackerman, Amie Freeman, and Sheri Romblad, who were involved with planning; Pete Ackerman, Michael Ahlijanian, Melissa Balletto, Carrie Burton, Vicki Earl, Kim Kelly, Ryan Kelly, Christopher Lowy, Michelle Menard, Tim O'Connell, and Nicole Tanner, who volunteered at the event; and Kelly Spooner, Liz Solin, Jen Carone, and all the talented and generous Ryerson teacher and staff who supported *Give to Grow 2014* with their enthusiasm, time, and donations.



Ryerson Loves Science Week & Ryerson 3rd Annual Science Fair

During the week of April 7th, Ryerson celebrated Science Week. Acting as hands-on scientists, students tested out different scientific principles at various stations with Cool-ology:

- Kindergarten - Weather Wonders
- First Grade - Water Wonders
- Second Grade - Amazing Matter
- Third Grade - Forces and Motion
- Fourth Grade - Design It/Build It

Through classroom visits by *eeSmarts*, students learned about clean, renewable sources of energy and the power of recycling. At an all-school assembly, students were introduced to the power of "Fire and Ice" by Mad Science.



Happenings on the Hill 2014 Spring Newsletter

The Science Fair itself was held on April 9th and provided a showcase for students to share their projects with their peers, teachers, family, and friends. Over 110 students, representing every grade, participated in the Science Fair. In addition, the Science Fair featured a demonstration entitled “How Cold is Cold?” by Sharon and Mike Vagell, as well as a see-and-touch table by the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History. Finally, students participated in a new activity at this year’s fair -- the Marshmallow Challenge! Teams of 2-3 students competed to build the tallest structure, in 15 minutes, with only 1 large marshmallow, 20 sticks of spaghetti, masking tape, and yarn. The teams building the tallest structure, by grade, were:

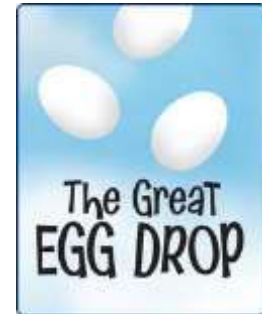


- Kindergarten - Grace Ackerman, Jane Barrett, and Maev Webster
- First Grade - Antoinette Lowy and Noah Lynch
- Second Grade - Jacqueline Vyce and Morgane Reed-Roth
- Third Grade - Kate Burton, Caitlin Koczak, and Grace Barrett
- Fourth Grade (tie) - Brigid O’Keefe and Emily Alletzhauser; and Sebastien Lowy, Liam Lynch, and Robbie Washburne

The finale of Science Week was The Great Egg Drop. Each class protected their egg inside a small box with materials brought from home. One class placed their egg inside a hollowed-out football!

Mrs. Spooner climbed to the roof of Ryerson and dropped each egg.

Out of the 13 classes, 11 classes had eggs surviving the drop. The classes with intact eggs after the drop enjoyed a popsicle party sponsored by the PTO.



Huge thanks go to Sharon Vagell and Karin Staschke, co-chairs of 2014 Ryerson Science Week and Science Fair, who conceptualized and organized these amazing events. In addition, special recognition goes to Caroline Sinofsky and Kristen Waterman, who headed the Marshmallow Challenge; all the parents who volunteered for Coology; Kristen Jerger, Matt Jerger, Angela Vagell, and Mike Vagell, who volunteered at the Science Fair; Peggy Bell, Sue Daub, Jennifer Figurelli, Laleh Karimi, Stephanie Jarvis, Lorrie Schaller, Elizabeth Solin, Kelly Spooner, and John Wiggins-Strada, the Ryerson staff who volunteered at the Science Fair and acted as judges; Beth O’Keefe and all the members of the Hospitality Committee, who provided cookies and milk for the Science Fair; and Connecticut Science Center, The Purple Bear, Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History, and Sharon and Mike Vagell, who donated raffle prizes for the Science Fair; and Jennifer Carone, Peter Leonetti, and all the teachers and staff who supported 2014 Ryerson Science Week and Science Fair with their time, talent and enthusiasm. Last, but not least, congratulations to all of the Ryerson scientists who presented a project at the Science Fair!



Square 1 Art

Many of you are now enjoying your children’s masterpieces as mugs, mouse pads, and memo pads from Square 1 Art! Thank you to Beth Pantano, who chaired this event, and to all the families who participated in Square 1 Art to make this fundraiser a success. Because of your participation, the PTO raised \$1,397.



Happenings on the Hill 2014 Spring Newsletter



Staff Appreciation

On May 8th, the PTO held the traditional Staff Appreciation Breakfast for our wonderful teachers and staff at Ryerson. At the breakfast, each Ryerson staff member received a travel mug with the Ryerson logo from the PTO. In addition, each staff member was automatically entered into a drawing to win gifts generously donated by Ryerson parents. A tremendous thank you goes to Beth O'Keefe, chair of the Hospitality Committee, for overseeing, organizing and, together with daughter Brigid, creating the spring-themed centerpieces; MaryBeth Hughes, for overseeing donations of raffle gifts; and Kristi Sweitzer, for organizing the travel mug gifts. And, of course, thank you to the dedicated members of the Hospitality Committee who provided the fantastic fare, the parents who generously donated raffle gifts, and the parents who provided classroom coverage so that the teachers could enjoy the breakfast.

This spring, the PTO also expressed our appreciation to three very special people at Ryerson: Kelly Spooner (Principal's Day); Elizabeth Solin (Administrative Assistant's Day); and Stephanie Bulyk (Nurse's Day). Each received a gift card.



Kickin' It Old School Ryerson Fun Fair 2014

On May 17th, the Ryerson community gathered to celebrate our annual Fun Fair. This year's theme was "Kickin' It Old School" and featured games, food, music, crafts, a photo booth, speed pitch, karaoke, prizes, and more. The Fun Fair once again featured the return of rescue heroes from the FBI, paramedics, and fire and police stations. Fair-goers also met Ranger Russ from Meigs Point, Mario from the Child ID services, and entertaining musicians from the School of Rock. Approximately \$5,000 was raised.

Our thanks go to Beth Ackerman and Kristen Waterman, who have co-chaired this event for their second successful year. Many thanks also go to Gino Cozza and Caroline Sinofsky, concession food coordinators; Carol Ahlijanian, ticket coordinator; Laura Osterman, Fun Fair treasurer; Gita Sullivan and Jennifer Santi-Montero, PR coordinators; Caroline Sinofsky, Donna O'Connell, and Beth O'Keefe, cake walk coordinators; the Earl family -- Vicki, Travis, Andrew, and Nicholas -- for Fun Fair setup; Maxine Howard, Andrea Birdsey, and Tina Kasper, prize coordinators; and Stacy Bungiro, donations coordinator. Additional thanks go to the Ryerson room parents; Ryerson faculty and staff; Meigs Point; Amber Alert; FBI; Madison Police Department; Madison Fire Station; students and Art Criddle from the DHHS Interact Club; volunteers and Melissa Balletto from the Madison Youth and Family Services; and the musicians from School of Rock.



Happenings on the Hill 2014 Spring Newsletter



Art Show and Poetry Evening

On May 21st, Ryerson sponsored the annual Art Show and introduced something new, the Poetry Evening. During the evening, art created by the students with art teacher, Mary Smith, was showcased throughout the building. Each student was represented by his or her artwork, which included animal tumblers, weaving, self-portraits, drawings, rubbings, and pottery. In addition, each student showcased his or her poetry in the multipurpose room. The poetry took a variety of forms, from acrostic poems to haikus. Students also had the opportunity to share their poems by reciting them at the open mic on the stage. The evening was a celebration of the creativity and talent of Ryerson students -- BRAVO!

A big thanks goes to Mrs. Smith, for teaching and inspiring our children, as well as selecting and displaying all the artwork; Mrs. Spooner, for supporting art and poetry at Ryerson; and all the teachers who helped inspire the students to become poets.

Announcements



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.



Garden Committee

When your child comes home at year-end with his or her portfolio of art, you will notice a drawing or two of the Ryerson courtyard, abloom with flowers and plants. Or perhaps you have been at school for any number of year-end events, and noticed the beautiful landscaping and whimsical pinwheels at the entrance. For this, we have Sheri Romblad to thank, who has been hard at work in beautifying the courtyard as well as the entrance at Ryerson. In the courtyard, Sheri raked, pruned, and trimmed the courtyard garden, planted



Happenings on the Hill 2014 Spring Newsletter

several varieties of potted plants, including Lantana, Lobelia, Sweet Potato Vine, Stone Crop, and Phlox, and filled the birdfeeder with seed and suet. At the entrance, Sheri mulched the front entryway and planted a beautiful Endless Summer Hydrangea which will bloom until fall. Our thanks go to Sisto Mellilo of Save & Discount on Route 80 in North Branford for providing a generous discount on mulch and flowers. We also want to thank Pete Leonetti, who provided invaluable help with the removal after the spring cleaning. Last but not least, special recognition goes to Luke and Owen Romblad, who donated the giant pinwheels. If you would like to volunteer as a member of the Garden Committee in continuing to beautify the Ryerson courtyard and grounds, please contact Sheri at theromblads@comcast.net.



Farewell to Mrs. Barbara Soderberg

After 13 years at Ryerson, music teacher Mrs. Barbara Soderberg will be leaving Ryerson for Jeffrey. Over the years, Mrs. Soderberg has taught our children to sing, to dance, and to play music. We have seen our children grow and learn, from their earliest years at Ryerson singing songs, playing the xylophone, and dancing at the informances, to the 4th grade performing songs on their recorders at various assemblies. On Veterans' Day and Memorial Day, the children have honored our veterans with patriotic songs and recorder music. From the school-wide Winter Solstice celebration to the Third Grade International to the Fourth Grade Connecticut Famous People Day, our children's voices, footsteps, and smiles have filled the auditorium and warmed our hearts. Throughout, Mrs. Soderberg led these programs with her amazing vocals and virtuoso piano playing.

From the first day our children stepped into her classroom, Mrs. Soderberg set the highest goals and helped our children reach them. Thank you, Mrs. Soderberg, for your dedication to our children. Through the music programs you have led, you have provided the most memorable moments of our children's time at Ryerson. We will miss you here at Ryerson, and wish you all the best.