

FORT RIVER PARENT NEWSLETTER

SUCCESSFUL LEARNING FOR ALL STUDENTS

October 16, 2009

Dear Fort River Families,

As the air cools and October offers us some snowflakes, I'd like to take some time to share a few of the happenings around the building these past two weeks.

I had the opportunity to visit Deb Felix's kindergarten class and their Family Literacy Workshop earlier this week – what an event! Many parents attended and learned about early literacy and strategies they can use to support their child's learning at home. I know Deb Felix and Susan Raker appreciate the family support, and I want to thank both Deb and Susan for sponsoring this wonderful learning opportunity for the families. The children were excited to share what they know, and they all had the opportunity to take home literacy tools.

In Rachel Sautter's third grade classroom, I observed a writing lesson that incorporated the important elements of our writing curriculum integrated with Smartboard technology. Rachel Sautter co-taught this lesson with Torie Weed, our ESL teacher, in order to support not only the ESL students but *all* students with what I simply call "excellent teaching" strategies. These third grade students also had the opportunity to view a video clip of a teacher-student writing conference (on the Smartboard) to help them learn what is expected from them in their writing and in their discussions about their writing. It was a pleasure to watch two terrific teachers as they teamed to support all students while utilizing all of the teaching tools at their disposal. (Not sure about Smartboard technology? Ask your child! We, too, are continuing to learn ways to utilize technology to support our instructional goals.) Our teachers work so hard each day, and it is truly a pleasure and an honor to work with such a terrific staff.

On a very different note, you may have heard the very disturbing story in the national news concerning a 15 year old student who was severely injured by his peers. I'm raising this issue because I want you to know that we take bullying very seriously at Fort River. As part of our *Second Step* (pro-social skills curriculum) program, which teachers and counselors implement with the students, there are lessons that help students to differentiate between "responsible telling" and "snitching" - not always an easy distinction. We must continue to be diligent around social development and the issues that children face in social situations. Please do not hesitate to contact us if there are concerns you or child may have, as *effective partnering with you* is what results in a school community that is consistently focused on healthy learning and growing.

I hope you have terrific weekend.

–Ray Sharick

A note from Joan Gallinaro, our Technology Integration Specialist

It was a pleasure to speak with many of you at the Open House. A few of you had questions about good websites for children to use. Below are just a few of our favorite sites. I have tried to include a wide variety of activities for all age levels.

Keyboarding

[BBC - Schools - Dance Mat Typing - Home](#)

Spelling practice: You can add your own words or choose from a list.

<http://www.spellingcity.com>

Math activities for all grades

<http://nlvm.usu.edu/>

Math Activities: for all grades

<http://www.mathplayground.com/thinkingblocks.html>

Many activities: math grammar, and more

<http://www.funbrain.com/kidscenter.html>

Early literacy

www.starfall.com

Geography, science, math

www.factmonster.com

MCAS prep

<http://www.studyisland.com/>

All students in grades 3-6 have an account created for them. We are beginning to get them logged on in the next few weeks. If students remember their old login and password,(that they used to get into study island last year), they can login now.

It is full firstname.lastname@arps

Please feel free to email me with questions or comments.

gallinaroj@arps.org

FUTURE DATES

Elementary Early Dismissal @ 1:20...Thurs., Oct. 22nd...Parent Conferences
Elementary Early Dismissal @ 1:20...Tues., Oct. 27th ...Parent Conferences
School Committee Meeting...Tuesday, Oct., 27th...High School Library @ 7:00
Fall Festival.....Friday, October 30th.....6:00 - 7:30.....Fort River Cafeteria
Coffee With A Principal...Friday, November 6th...8:30 am...FR Cafeteria
Veterans Day.....Wednesday, November 11th.....NO SCHOOL

FYI: Future Chorus Concert Dates

Thursday, January 14th...7:00 pm...Middle School auditorium

Thursday, May 6th...7:30 pm...Middle School auditorium

Discover the Power of BRAIN GYM

It can help you, your students, or your child to:

focus, concentrate, improve academic & physical skills, perform something more easily, face a tough challenge, increase self-confidence, help kids with Attention Deficit Disorder

**Wednesday, October 21, 2009 7:00 pm JFK Middle School, 100 Bridge Street,
Florence**

BRAIN GYM is a program of quick and enjoyable physical activities that directly enhances learning ability. BRAIN GYM develops the brain's neural pathways the way nature does: through movement. Since 1990, BRAIN GYM has been endorsed by the National Learning Foundation and has been taught worldwide in thousands of public and private schools. It is used by both children and adults including students, business executives, athletes, teachers, artists, performers, doctors and people in rehabilitation programs, in over 20 countries. **Join us for an introduction to BRAIN GYM!**

Led by Susan Wilbur, a certified BRAIN GYM Practitioner licensed through the International Kinesiology Foundation in Ventura, California. www.braingym.org.

For more information call Martha Jenkins at 413.586.5113 or email marthasjenkins@gmail.com or Valle Dwight at 413.584.4165 or email vedwight@yahoo.com.

Please let your teachers know, too! This is a free workshop!

HITCHCOCK CENTER EVENT:

Don't miss the **Hitchcock Center's Enchanted Forest!** This non-scary Halloween family event takes place **Friday, October 23 and Saturday, October 24 from 5-8:30p.m.** Adults and children of all ages will enjoy meeting our magical "Animals in Disguise" as you are guided along the pumpkin-lit trail. Walks leave the Center every 15 minutes and last 45 minutes. Enjoy crafts, games, and snacks for sale. Pre-registration required. Register early as this event fills fast! Call 413-256-6006

The Fort River Parent Council presents
Fall Festival

Friday, October 30th 2009

6:00-7:30 pm

COSTUME PARADE

Lots of games and prizes

Face painting and craft activities



Admission:

K, 1st, and 2nd grades -- snack or baked good to the Snack Table

3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th grades - - food contribution to the Survival Center Donation table

WE NEED MANY VOLUNTEERS!

NO "DROP-OFFS"- ALL CHILDREN MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT!

_____ I can set up and decorate (4 people needed, 5:00 to 6:00)

_____ I can run a game or craft (specific instructions/directions will be provided; 20 people needed, 5:30 to 7:30)

_____ I can monitor the hallways or the snack table (5 people needed, 5:30-7:30)

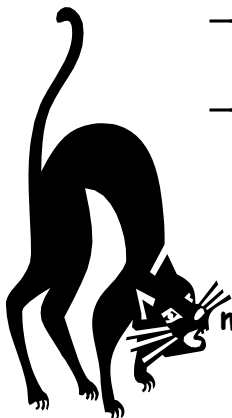
_____ I can clean up (4 people needed-7:30 to 8:00)

_____ I can donate supplies (cupcakes, sugar cookies, cookie decorations, knives and plates, We Need A LOT!)

Easiest way to sign up is go to the "Please Bring It" link on the blog and just sign up for what you want to do!

Or you can send this form in to the Parent Council box in the main office, or contact Diane Caraker - Dianec711@comcast.net

(413) 687-8833





Amherst Education Foundation, Inc.

Investing Today in Our Children's Future



Amherst Education Foundation announces the 15th Annual Trivia Bee

Amherst's "Not to Miss" Fall Event!

Thursday October 29th, 2009

7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Amherst Middle School Auditorium

The Amherst Education Foundation proudly announces the date for their Fall fund-raiser. This has become the Amherst fall event "not to miss"! Sponsor a team for only \$175.00, or join a team and test your trivia IQ.

Under the direction of Ellen Story, over 30 teams will vie for bragging rights to be "Trivia Bee Champion". Citizens Bank was the 2008 Champion. The fun evening will include refreshments, lots of trivia and a raffle.

Admission is free with donations to AEF welcome.

See our website for details

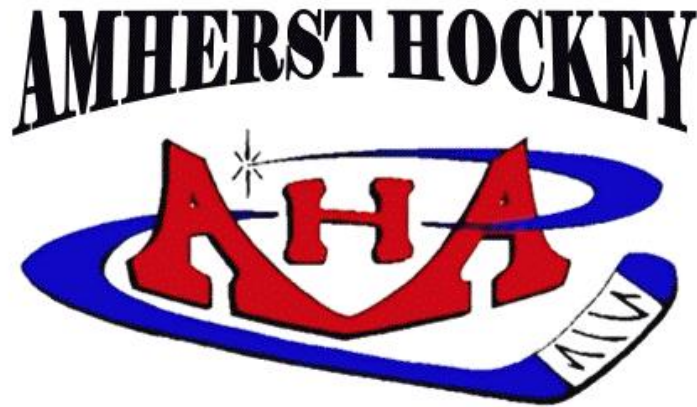
www.amhersteducationfoundation.org/

or contact

Mary Donoghue at 253-7016

Aj.donoghue@verizon.net

We look forward to your support!



Do You Want to Learn to Skate?

The Amherst Hockey Association's Learn to Skate program would love to provide you with the skills and confidence needed to safely enjoy yourself in the rink. We welcome all children ages 4 to 8. Please visit www.amhersthockey.org for registration information or to register online. Feel free to contact Dan Feldman at danfeldman@amhersthockey.org with any questions.

Amherst Hockey also fields coed travel teams, playing in the Greater Springfield League, available to all ages of children.

Not A School Sponsored Event