

Stephen Knolls Newsletter

Information for Parents of Stephen Knolls Students

June 2011

Stephen Knolls School • 10731 Saint Margaret's Way, Kensington, MD 20895 • 301-929-2151

Friday, June 10

Preschool Graduation 1:00 pm

Monday, June 13

Community Meeting 7:00 pm

Wednesday, June 15

Last day of school for preschool students

Thursday, June 16

Last day of school for
K-12th grade students

Friday, June 17

Professional day for teachers

Thursday, June 23

Report cards mailed

**Have a Safe and Healthy
Summer from the PSA!**



Graduation

This year, three students are graduating from Stephen Knolls School. They are Shoshana Kruger, Chae Persons and Unique Royster. The commencement ceremony was held on Tuesday, June 7th at 1:00pm in the school gymnasium. We are pleased to announce that our keynote speaker was Mr. Michael Lenett, former Maryland State Senator (19th District). It was a very special event as we honored our three graduates and their families! There was a reception immediately following the ceremony.

Big Thanks!

Thank you to Johnson Florist in Kensington for donating mulch, soil conditioner, top soil, and a \$25.00 gift certificate for the last two years for our Children's Garden. And a big thanks goes to Roseann Robb and Arlene Tennant who have donated their time to help on weekends with the weeding, planting, transplant, trim and mulch the garden. The garden looks beautiful!

PRINCIPAL'S CORNER

Dear Stephen Knolls School Families:



By now you should have received the message that my tenure at Stephen Knolls School is coming to an end. I am very excited about this next step for me but saddened that I will be leaving Stephen Knolls School. This school and you are very dear to me. As of July 1st, I will be the principal intern at Luxmanor Elementary School.

I know that you had some questions about who will replace me. The county has a process to follow. **On June 13th there will be a staff meeting during the school day and an evening meeting at 7:00 pm for everyone from the community who would like input on qualities you would like in your next administrator.** Ms. Bronda Mills, Community Superintendent, will be addressing the staff and community to get your input. I am certain that whoever comes in my place will be wonderful and take this school to the next level. We will be working to ensure a smooth transition to the next administration.

I want to thank everyone for the opportunity to serve this school as the administrator for the past three years. The staff embraced me and we were able to take the school from being 'good' to being 'great'. We can proudly say that we are an MCPS school, we offer rigorous instructional practices, and our school has met the state requirements for meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)! The next administrator of Stephen Knolls School will proudly continue our mission of offering a rigorous instructional program in a safe and nurturing environment for our students.

As I prepare for the next steps, I would like to thank all of you for everything you have done for our students and our school. Everyone has had a voice in making certain our students succeed. Thank you for giving our students a voice. My wish is for Stephen Knolls School to continue on the path of success for our students.

Sincerely,
Tina Shrewsbury
Building Administrator
Stephen Knolls School

Our Students Have a Voice!

The Stephen Knolls School community, consisting of students, parents, and staff, strive to be a respectful and collaborative student-centered educational environment composed of individuals committed to student achievement and professional development.

The Classroom Corner

Preschool Update

The preschool classes have been busy welcoming in the warmer weather through a variety of "spring" related themes and activities. In April, the preschool students read a number of books about spring topics such as planting and growing in gardens, weather changes, and animal life cycles (such as that of chicks, butterflies, and frogs). The related books they read included: *First Comes Spring*, *The Carrot Seed*, *Growing Seeds into Plants*, *Bugs Bugs Bugs*, *Grow Flower Grow*, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, and *My Spring Robin*. They spent time observing all the signs of spring and new growth happening outside. The classes celebrated Earth Day through a variety of activities, including planting their own bean and flower seeds and learning about recycling and the ways they can help take care of the earth. The students have enjoyed watching their seeds sprout and begin to grow, as well as taking care of their plants by making sure that they have enough sunlight and water. They also loved getting out on the playgrounds once again as they have been so excited to ride the bikes and play games with their classmates.

The preschool classes supported their "Aquarium" theme with a field trip to the National Aquarium on Thursday, May 26th. Through a variety of books such as *My First Visit to the Aquarium*, *Rainbow Fish*, *Herman the Helper*, and *Commotion in the Ocean*, the preschool students learned about the various jobs people have in an aquarium, discovered the various types of aquatic animals that are found in an aquarium, and learned how the employees at the aquarium take care of all the different kinds of aquatic life. In culmination of their classroom learning, the students had the exciting opportunity to participate in the Aquarium field trip, gaining hands-on learning experience.

Elementary School Update

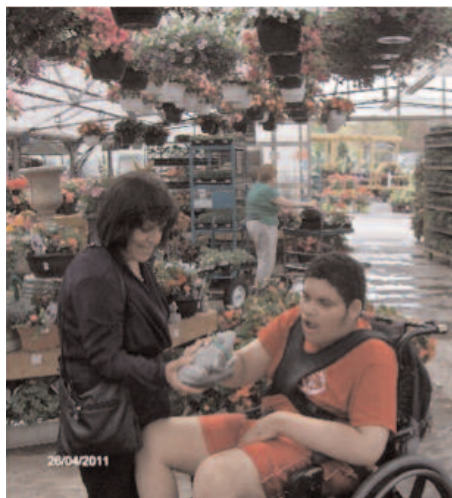
In Ms. Rowe's class, the students have been able to link both social studies and science units in their investigation of the environment. Both units involve learning about how humans impact and care for the environment. Their Earth Day activity occurred on a beautiful, sunny day when they went outside to the back fence in the school yard and planted their 4-inch tall bean plants close enough to the fence so that the seedlings will be able to climb it. Their hope is that the fence soon will be supporting a feast of beans that will feed the woodland creatures. They also took a trip to Johnson's Garden Center where they made note of plant features that enable the plants to live in different environments. Upon returning

to school, using their voice-output devices, the students then did oral reports on their plants of choice. They also spent time observing wildlife and their habitats in a few of the local nature centers.

In Mrs. Robinson's class, the 3rd, 4th and 5th graders have been busy using their voice output devices to recite poetry and identify rhyming words in reading group. In math group they have been counting everything from coins to seeds. In social studies group they focused on ways that the student citizens can keep our school, our community and our planet clean and conserve resources. In science group we have been learning about how different sounds are made and how our ears help us to hear them. They have really enjoyed the recent community trips to different libraries in our area and exploring all of the different books that we can read there. Their teacher, Ms. Robinson was the coordinator of the school-wide Earth Day activities.

Middle School Update

In Mr. Tarloff's class, in honor of Earth Day, they read the story, *Something from Nothing*. This is a story about a boy who owns a coat that he wears so much that it has to be made into a vest, and then the vest wears out and it has to be made into something else, until all he has left of the coat is a button. The theme the students discussed was the benefits of recycling.



In Ms. Kleiler's class, they recently enjoyed a sunny, warm morning at Johnson's Garden Center in Olney, Maryland. Their goals were to: identify the many colors in the flowers they saw, ask a Johnson's employee about the germinating period of various flowers, choose 5 flowers to grow from seeds in our



greenhouse, and discover many other garden materials that would enhance the beauty of a landscape. The employees of the Johnson's Garden Center were very helpful in answering the students' many questions. The packets of seeds that they chose were for planting Zinnias, Marigolds, Bachelor's Buttons, Impatiens and Black-Eyed Susan.

High School Update:

The High School hosted the annual Prom for all of the senior high students on May 19th. Ms. Sarah Riffle and Ms. Cathy Kleiler outdid themselves in planning for this year's City of Light event. The PSA generously paid for a live DJ to entertain the students (and their guests). The high school students voted Mr. Chae Persons as King and Ms. Unique Royster and Ms. Shoshi Kurger as Queens of the 2011 Prom.

Mrs. Moore's class held a fundraiser to benefit the victims of the Japanese tsunami and earthquake. Two hundred dollars in donations for the American Red Cross were collected. Thank you for all of your donations to this worthy cause.

Giant Bonus Bucks, Safeway, Target, and Box Top for Kids

Thank you for supporting all of these worthy projects. The school has been able to collect several hundred dollars in funds that will go to benefit the school students. Please remember to sign up again next school year for these worthwhile programs.

Healthy Minds & Active Bodies

Over the last few weeks, the students have been very busy in their physical education and health program. They have been learning about hockey, basketball and T-ball/kickball. Their basketball unit even ended with a school wide intramural activity! The students were able to play baseball using a Nintendo Wii. The Wii enabled students who normally would be unable to fully participate in team sports to have that authentic experience. Also, parachute and bowling games have been a big part of the students' large group, game sessions. In their health studies, the students learned about their different emotions, their perceptions of themselves, and their healthy food options.

Preschool really enjoyed their lessons about spring. They did a great job putting tennis balls on all of the cones to "make flowers". They also enjoyed putting colored cones inside different colored hoops to make flower pots. They finished the month of April by learning about the great American national past time, running the bases in the game of baseball.

The students participated in the Stephen Knolls School May Fair on Sunday, May 15th, where they had field day games, food and music, and a Moon Bounce! Thank you, PSA!!



The Therapeutic Touch

At a recent IEP meeting, a parent made a comment that, "I wish someone had taught me how to assist and teach my child how to transfer. When my child was young, it was much easier and faster to pick him up and position him. It never occurred to me that I needed to engage him, take the extra time, and have him do as much as he is able to do. Now, in a blink of an eye, he is grown, he weighs more than eighty-five pounds, and he does not know how to transfer."

Parents, it takes extra time for our students to learn new skills, to "own" the skill, and to generalize the skill across settings. Transferring and movement are not any different. If a child is taught or expected to be passive, remain still, and wait for an adult to pick him or her up, then this is what he/she will do. If a child learns to set up his wheelchair, scoot forward, put his feet down to bear weight, and push up to stand when he/she is young, there is a greater chance that he/she will continue when he/she is older and much heavier.

If there is consistency across the home and school settings, this learning is accelerated. In school, the steps of the transfers are taught to all the staff, so that they are consistent between students. Time is a luxury that school provides which is more difficult to provide at home. There are schedules in school, and time is allotted for transfers. In the classrooms, there are at least two adults which is another luxury at school. Additional adults or a team approach is helpful when teaching a transfer.

Suggested strategies for involving your child in transfers: Ask your Physical Therapist (PT) or the classroom teacher to review the techniques they use. See how the school transfer techniques will work for you in your home. Your PT should be able to provide you with alternative strategies if these techniques are suited for home use. Once the best practice techniques are determined for home and school, chose one step to focus on at a time and begin working to master it. Also, choose a time that is not rushed, when everyone is calm and relaxed, and when your child is transferring to go to a desired place or activity. Be patient, be consistent and let us all work together as a team.

ESOL Award



Brandon Lopez, who is graduating from the PEP program this year, was recognized for outstanding achievement at the MCPS ESOL Awards Ceremony on May 21st at Kennedy High School. Brandon has been in Ms. Beth Freeze's class last year and Ms. Gail Garrett's class this year. He will be attending Arcola Elementary School in the fall. Congratulations, Brandon!

SKS PEP Rally

Stephen Knolls School ended Spirit Week with a spirited PEP Rally. All of the classes participated in special days such as favorite t-shirt or color days. The classroom voted the class with the most spirit was B-6 Ms. Tricia Skelly's classroom. They had the most students participating in the spirit activities and won the ice cream party. The PEP Rally led up to our big May Fair/Yard Sale event held on May 15th.



The Supporting Arts

Music Update

On Bring-Your-Child-To-Work-Day, Thursday, April 28th, all students were treated to a lesson and mini-concert presented by several of our staff's talented children. Ms. Ann DuBose, music teacher, coordinated the program into 5 sessions of musical performances.

Classes signed up for a convenient time and came to the music room to be enriched by these talented and intelligent musicians. Performers presented their instruments and told us a little bit about them, including history facts, how they, personally, came to play the instrument, and how long they have been playing. Instruments that were presented include the piano, violin, cello, electric keyboard, and cajon (a large Peruvian box drum, and the crowd-pleaser of the day). We also were delighted by two singers performing popular selections that they already were preparing for their own schools' talent shows. In addition, the performers also told us a little bit about the composers who wrote the songs they performed. The musicians presented songs from Beethoven, to folk tunes, to Ragtime, to Taylor Swift and Glee. There was a very wide variety of musical time periods represented in their selections and the students were fully engaged in the performances for each of the 40 minute sessions.

At the end of each session, the students were given an opportunity to play a song with our special guests. A "Jam Session" if you will! Each student was given a rhythm instrument to play along as our performers and staff played and sang Old MacDonald Had A Farm complete with puppets and improvised accompaniment. Our prekindergarten students were particularly delighted by this song and many of them did a great job of singing along as they played their instruments. The school-aged students were delighted to play their instrument to a song they already knew. A special thanks to the parents, teachers and para-educators who brought their talented children and their instruments and a very special thanks and congratulations to the very talented musicians who presented!

Science Fair

This year's science fair took place on Thursday, May 12th and like the two previous science fairs, we had impressive participation by all our classes. All the classroom teams put together interactive-type activities in order to give each student the opportunity for hands-on science learning during a general school assembly. The experiments encouraged the students to use the important investigative question formats of "how", "why", etc. and outlined the steps taken by each science team to complete their



experiment (as a means for encouraging scientific exploration by visitors to the science fair).

The classroom teachers modify the general education science curriculum and use a variety of picture communication symbol formats as well as voice output devices to allow the students an opportunity to answer questions and make choices. Each classroom team developed a science activity to engage the rest of the student body.

Many of our students used this assembly as a way to work on gross motor skills as well as they utilize a variety of motor equipment like gait trainers, mobile standers, and mobile Rifton chairs to navigate through the science fair in our school's gym. When classes went to the science fair, the students had an opportunity to explore a wide range of science topics ranging from investigating how a seed germinates into a plant to exploring how the various organs of the human body function.

A number of the science projects provided a tangible item for the students to take home with them in order to share their science experiences with their families. The items

included worksheets, Oobleck (green gelatinous goo mentioned in the Dr. Seuss story, Bartholomew and the Oobleck), a seed planted in a cup, etc. A number of the lessons / projects were also aligned with reading and math indicators while others dealt purely with science indicators. During the science fair the students were able to mix polymers, effect plant growth, safely dig for fossils, and many other tasks.

The Science fair was later experienced by family members and the general public during the school's May Fair Celebration held the following Sunday (May 15, 2011). Thank you to Mr. Rob Tarloff and Ms. Gail Garrett in assisting with this yearly event.

The Media Connection

Take advantage of all the resources available at your public library this summer! The theme of this summer's reading program is entitled, "One World, Many Stories". To find out more information, simply log on to www.montgomerycountymd.gov and on the left hand column click on "libraries". Then, on the next screen displayed, click in the left column on "kids". You also can access BookFlix from there. BookFlix will read aloud books to your child from your home computer, including showing them the pages. The Rockville branch of the library also houses the Disability Resource Center which has a wealth of information and support. In addition, you can search the library website for "disability resources" to get links to suggested websites which you can read from home. Enjoy!

Coke Rewards

We were able to get a digital camera for the school from the Coke Rewards points. Currently we are well on our way to getting another item for the school. Don't forget to save your points over the summer. You can either enter them directly on-line and donate to the school or send them in during ESY and we will enter the points. Thank you to Sheila Johnson, Health Tech, for taking time in the evenings to enter points for our school. Every little bit helps!