PRINCIPAL’S MESSAGE

Ah, but a man’s reach should exceed his grasp….Or what’s a heaven for?

--- Robert Browning

Dear Parents,

As our school year draws to a close, this is an opportune time to reflect and plan for our future efforts for the coming year. This past year our school had a great many successes….in November our school was officially designated a National Blue Ribbon School by the United States Department of Education; our students’ State Assessment results were outstanding across all subject areas in all grades; we were recently invited by the New York State Department of Education to apply for recognition as a school with model best practices in special education; and, we continue to serve as a New York State Support (model) School for the Board of Regents’ Essential Elements of Standards focused Middle-Level Schools and Programs.

As part of our ongoing commitment to improvement, we measure students’ academic achievement and affective domain development through validated and reliable independent instruments. Our students continue to show growth in personal and civic responsibility. Students and parents view our faculty, staff and administration as accessible and responsive. However, while we have a great deal to be proud of here at Garden City Middle School, we can never rest on our laurels…indeed, we must continue to reach ever higher as we strive to better meet the needs of our students.

I also wish to gratefully acknowledge how our school community comes together in the face of tragedy. We saw, once again, that we are indeed a caring family. I also wish to take this opportunity to thank our community for their support of our faculty and staff during that very difficult time. Our middle school is a very special place.

Please accept my very best wishes for a peaceful and restful summer vacation.

Best wishes,

Peter Osroff, Ed.D.
Congratulations Dr. Osroff!

Dr. Osroff received the PTA Life Time Achievement Award and Lifetime membership for all he has accomplished during his time at the Middle School.

A Special Thank You to the PTA

The Middle School faculty and staff would like to express its sincerest thanks to the PTA for the wonderful Teacher/Staff Appreciation Luncheon. The faculty room was transformed into an exquisite dining room filled with delicious food, stress-reducing massages, and treats galore! Your kindness is greatly appreciated!

National Junior Honor Society Induction Ceremony

The National Junior Honor Society Induction Ceremony will be held on Thursday, June 11, 2009, in the High School auditorium at 7:30 pm. Parents, please arrive with your child no later than 7:00 pm.

7th Grade Pool Party

The 7th grade Pool Party is right around the corner. This annual event will take place on Thursday, June 25, 2009 at the Garden City Pool from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. Students may stay after 1:00 pm, but school staff will only be supervising the children until 1:00 pm. Parents are responsible for the drop off and pick up of students. The general public will be allowed into the pool at 12:00 pm.

Before the students will be allowed to purchase a ticket they MUST turn in the permission slip. The cost will be $7.00 and it will be used to pay for the student’s lunch, snacks and drinks. Checks should be made payable to the GCMS. Checks will be the only form of payment accepted.

ABC Expo

ABC is proud to announce that they will be hosting their annual ABC Expo on June 10 and 11 in the library. Students and faculty will have the opportunity to visit the museum and vote for their favorite Home Base character trait sculpture. In addition, classes can participate in five team-building activities in ABC Survivor, play a variety of anti-bullying games, and/or add an artistic creation to several school-wide posters.

Have a safe and relaxing summer vacation!

See you in September!
The Recreation and Connections Club

The Recreation and Connections Club would like to thank all students and volunteers for another fantastic year! The students, along with Mr. Camilleri and Mr. Caputo, took part in many fun-filled activities. We are looking forward to next year!

Young Authors’ Contest Winners

Victoria Bee, an eighth grader, and Conor Donachie, a seventh grader, were selected as winners of the Young Authors’ Contest sponsored by the Nassau Reading Council. These students were selected for their personal narratives that were written as part of a creative writing class under the tutelage of Ms. Paloubis, seventh grade English and creative writing teacher. They will be honored at Molloy College, Wilbur Arts Center on June 1, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

The contest required students to write a personal narrative. Over 80 schools in Nassau County participated. The ceremony will be attended by administrators, teachers, and proud family members. Each winner reads his/her personal narrative and receives an anthology including all the winning entries, as well as a journal for future writing. Congratulations to our young writers!

Eighth Grade Students Plant a Victory Garden

A few weeks ago, Ms. Sheehan’s social studies students began a project on planting victory gardens. In their study of WWI, the students learned about how families planted their own gardens at home as a way to conserve food or buying food. This would allow for more food to be sent to our troops fighting in the war. These gardens were called "Victory Gardens" as they were seen as a way for citizens to help out with the war effort and to ensure our victory. To help students understand their importance, they planted seeds of vegetables such as tomato, cucumber, lettuce and beans. They started to grow the seeds in small cups. Students will be taking them home for Mother's Day to plant in their own gardens. Ms. Vitucci also did this project with her students, and they planted them with the help of the Environmental Club in one of the courtyards.

Middle School Students Perform with Garden City High School Wind Ensemble

Fifteen brass players from the 7th and 8th grade bands, along with Ms. Iovino and Mrs. Boonshaft, took part in Spring Concert I with the Garden City High School Wind Ensemble. Having spent extra time to learn the parts of “Praise Jerusalem” by Alfred Reed, the trumpet and trombone players were part of the finale along with members of the Wind Symphony. They provided the antiphonal brass choir that completed this composition and the concert to a rousing standing ovation.
Highlights from Spring Concert I

The Band’s spring concert was a great success. The concert opened with the second performance of the newly created Late Night Jazz Band under the direction of Ms. Jenifer Iovino. They performed four selections of varying styles including jazz standard “My Funny Valentine.”

Playing to a full house, the 6th grade band opened their performance with a piece entitled “Trombonanza”. It featured the ten trombone players from the band who were joined for the last third of the piece by the trombone players from both the 7th and 8th grade bands and Mrs. Boonshaft. All totaled 28 middle school trombone players delighted the audience with this traditional Sousa style march. The band then dedicated the performance of their final composition called, “Legacy” to classmate Catherine Parente. The program read, “In loving memory of 6th grade flute player, Catherine Parente. May her legacy live on in all of us forever.”

The 8th grade band also performed a feature. Highlighting their percussion section, playing the marimba and xylophone in a piece called “Fandango for Mallet Percussion and Band” Kevin Calame, Ethan Gustavson, Stefan Hugel and Robert Vani amazed the audience with their talent and agility in this difficult instrument.

French Classes Visit Cooking School

Mr. Strauzer’s 8th grade students recently enjoyed a hands on, gastronomical experience when they visited À La Carte Cooking School in Lynbrook. Students were divided into five work stations, told to appoint a group leader, given a safety demonstration, and then were directed to “get to work.” They prepared authentic dishes such as Ratatouille, dessert Crêpes, Pissalidières (a cheeseless, pizza type dish served in Nice), Poulet Suprême in an Herb Sauce, and Gougères (Cheese puffs). Each student had a particular task to follow and worked successfully and collaboratively. Upon completion, the dishes were displayed in buffet style and students were able to enjoy the “scrumptious rewards” of their hard labor!!!! When they returned to class the next day, their job was to write a follow up thank you note in French to the cooking school according to New York State Second Language Proficiency Standards. Everyone had a great time. A job “très bien fait.”

8th Grade Band and Late Night Jazz Receive High Marks at Competition

The 8th Grade band under the direction of Mrs. Martha Boonshaft and The Late Night Jazz Ensemble, under the direction of Ms. Jennifer Iovino received high marks at the 2009 Music in the Parks Competition on Friday, May 8th. The Band performed two works from their concert entitled Fiesta De Los Bravos and Black Granite III. They received a superior rating and took the first place trophy. The Late Night Jazz Ensemble, completing their first year of existence, took 1st place with an excellent rating. They also took the Esprit de Corps, Best Overall trophy in their genre for outstanding spirit. Sixth grade jazz pianist, Andrew Andron was given a special medal of achievement as Best Jazz Soloist. The students spent the remainder of the day enjoying 6 Flags Great Adventure Theme Park in New Jersey. The awards were given out at a ceremony following the day’s events.

National Italian Exam

This year, several students in Mrs. Sorace’s eighth grade Italian classes participated in the National Italian Exam on March 10th, 2009. The exam consisted of culture, grammar, listening comprehension and reading comprehension. Joseph Ienna won fourth place on this exam. He received a monetary award of $50.00 and a certificate of excellence for a job well done. Erica Giarraputo, Jaclyn Larocca and Neil Quigley received a certificate of Honorable Mention. We are very proud of all of them! Congratulazioni!
Summer Reading for Grades 6, 7, and 8

Garden City is committed to meeting the challenges of the New York State Standards and to ensure that all students have the reading experiences they need to be successful. Through a summer reading assignment, students will reinforce important skills, create good independent reading habits, facilitate vocabulary development, and reading comprehension. We have highlighted a variety of books and contemporary authors from the recommended reading lists of the National Council of Teachers of English. Students should select a book from this list as well as complete the accompanying graphic organizer. The lists will be available on the Middle School website. Enjoy the adventure and happy reading!

Summer Math Practice

The summer vacation is a wonderful time to take a break from the structure of the school year and participate in a variety of other activities. However, the summer vacation is often also a time when important math skills tend to become a dusty, distant memory. Of course, there are always those days in late August when students long to be back in school learning new ideas. For the past several years, the Mathematics Department has prepared summer practice exercises distribute through our Elementary and Middle School math classes. This year, the practice is extended to the rising 9th and 10th grade Integrated Algebra and Integrated Geometry students.

The summer practice is offered through the on-line site CastleLearning.com (formerly SchoolIsland.com). All Garden City Middle and High School students have accounts with CastleLearning. Many Middle and High School teachers use CastleLearning as a regular part of their instructional plan. Students can logon to the site and access the Summer Practice assignment under the current teacher’s name. This site presents students with hints and clues to answer multiple choice questions. It also provides explanations for incorrectly answered questions. Another great feature of CastleLearning is that students can create their own study guides and practice exercises, at any time, for a wide variety of courses and Regents examinations.

In September, the Math Department will download aggregated statistical data pertaining to the Summer Practice and use this information for making a variety of curriculum decisions. If over the summer there is difficulty logging into the site, our district’s CastleLearning administrator, Mrs. Jeanne Hilton (hiltonj@gcufsd.net), can reset passwords and provide assistance. The Math Department hopes that the Summer Math Practice will dust of mathematical memories and help to hone valuable skills for the start of a new school year.

Congratulations to Nicole Gemmiti and Michael Vincent Crapotta

Nicole Gemmiti, a sixth grader in Ms. Egan’s class, and Michael Vincent Crapotta, a sixth grader in Ms. Reide’s class, received distinguished awards by Nassau County’s Poet Laureate, Maxwell Coryon Wheat. On Saturday, April 25, 2009, Nicole received the silver award for her poem entitled, “The Shot Heard ‘Round the World.” Michael Vincent received the bronze award for his poem entitled, “My Hush Puppy.” Two thousand children throughout Nassau County participated in the poetry contest. Both Nicole and Michael received their medals and certificates along with an autographed copy of YOUNG VOICES: An Anthology of Voices from Mr. Wheat. The anthology contains all 196 contest winners’ poems from kindergarten through 12th grade. Every Nassau county library will have a copy of this anthology. A copy was also presented to Dr. Osroff, Mrs. Lee, and Mr. Marr to be placed in the Middle School library.
Students in the 8th grade Spanish classes of Mrs. Linardos, Mrs. Porter, and Mrs. Scarola participated in the 2009 National Spanish Exam. The National Spanish Examination is a very difficult online, standardized assessment tool given voluntarily by over 3000 teachers throughout the United States to measure proficiency and achievement of students who are studying Spanish as a second language. From 1957 until 2005, the National Spanish Examination was administered in a written format. Beginning in 2006, the National Spanish Examination was administered in an online format through the Quia Corporation and will continue as the first online national foreign language exam. The National Spanish Examination is recognized by many administrative and teaching associations and organizations at the local, state and national levels. The National Association of Secondary School Principals has placed this program on the NASSP National Advisory List of Contests and Activities for 2008-2009. The mission of the National Spanish Examination is to recognize student achievement and to promote language proficiency in the study of Spanish.

The purpose of the National Spanish Examination is:

1. to recognize achievement in the study of the Spanish language
2. to promote proficiency in interpretive communication in the Spanish language
3. to assess the national standards as they pertain to learning Spanish
4. to stimulate further interest in the teaching and learning of Spanish

Students scoring at/or above the 95th percentile are awarded a Premio de Oro. Students scoring from the 85th through the 94th percentiles receive a Premio de Plata. Students scoring from the 75th through the 84th percentiles receive a Premio de Bronce. Students scoring at or above the 50th percentile (national average) through the 74th percentile are awarded a Premio de Excelencia. Congratulations!

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8th Grade Students Remember Veterans

Respect and Remember Our Veterans was the theme for the interdisciplinary assembly that took place at the Garden City Middle School on April 24, 2009. Team cohorts, Elaine Feerick and Alison Vitucci along with their teammates, worked with music teacher and Band Director, Martha Boonshaft, to create an assembly that enriched the students’ understanding of the Vietnam War and at the same time honored Vietnam veterans.

Mrs. Boonshaft led the band in the Star Spangled Banner. The band then performed Black Granite III, a difficult piece that the band practiced tirelessly. While the band played, a Power Point presentation was displayed on the screen. The presentation included pictures of relatives of the band, team, and faculty members who are/were veterans.

Mr. Lawrence Connors, a Vietnam veteran who served with the 1st Calvary Division, volunteered his time to come to the school and speak with the students. After talking about his experiences in Vietnam and the home front when he returned, he answered questions. Also present and honored at the assembly was the Middle School’s very own Mr. Nick Mascitti who is a Vietnam veteran and the recipient of several medals including three Purple Hearts.

After the assembly, students went to Eisenhower Park where they explored the memorial section. There they read poetry and letters written by military personnel in the Vietnam War in front of the Vietnam Memorial. Students returned to their classrooms with a better understanding of the material they are reading in the classroom, and a newfound respect for our veterans.

Fine Arts Department

The Fine Arts Department is excited about the first issue of their art magazine. It will be available this month to all students and staff. It will feature projects from 6, 7, and 8 grade students.

We’d like to thank everyone who has contributed to this year’s eighth grade art show.

The Math Research Club

The Math Research Club had another successful year! Eight students from the middle school won medals for their research projects at the Al Kalfus Long Island Math Fair held at Hofstra University on May 1, 2009. Congratulations to gold medalist Dominick Fulgieri, Thomas Mage, and Dru Falco; silver medalist Dan Fortino and Brian Nicholas; bronze medal winners Devan Oodal, Nikhil Patel, and Chris Saeli.

This has been our most successful year with over twenty-five members. Mr. Hoffman invites all interested students to sign up for next year.
### My One Hundred Adventures

By Polly Horvath

The winner of a National Book Award, a Newbery Honor, and countless other awards has written her richest, most spirited book yet, filled with characters that readers will love, and never forget.

Jane is 12 years old, and she is ready for adventures, to move beyond the world of her siblings and single mother and their house by the sea, and step into the “know-not what.” And, over the summer, adventures do seem to find Jane, whether it’s a thrilling ride in a hot-air balloon, the appearances of a slew of possible fathers, or a weird new friendship with a preacher and psychic wannabe. Most important, there’s Jane’s discovery of what lies at the heart of all great adventures: that it’s not what happens to you that matters, but what you learn about yourself.

### The Last Olympian

By Rick Riordan

All year the half-bloods have been preparing for battle against the Titans, knowing the odds of victory are grim. Kronos’s army is stronger than ever, and with every god and half-blood he recruits, the evil Titan’s power only grows. While the Olympians struggle to contain the rampaging monster Typhon, Kronos begins his advance on New York City, where Mount Olympus stands virtually unguarded. Now it’s up to Percy Jackson and an army of young demigods to stop the Lord of Time.

In this momentous final book in the *New York Times* best-selling Percy Jackson and the Olympians series, the long-awaited prophecy surrounding Percy’s sixteenth birthday unfolds. And as the battle for Western civilization rages on the streets of Manhattan, Percy faces a terrifying suspicion that he may be fighting against his own fate.

### The Remarkable & Very True Story of Lucy & Snowcap

By H. M. Bouwman

Set on fictional islands off northeast America in 1787, this story features two twelve-year-old girls from different cultures who must join forces to save themselves, their people, and one special baby. It’s part historical (based on convicts who were sent to the Americas and Australia) and part fantasy. Above all, it’s a captivating adventure in the tradition of The Princess Bride with shipwrecks, curses, chases, murder plots, magic (of all kinds), romantic legends, thieves and politicians (sometimes both), a caring schoolteacher and a handsome horse groom, a pair of feisty (sometimes difficult) heroines, and the mysterious power of storytelling at its center!