



NOTES TO PARENTS

F S M H

March 2009



An important event for 2009 will certainly be the inauguration of President Barack Obama. Friends School students were able to view the ceremonies with their peers and teachers; middle school students met together in one room while the lower school students gathered in the library. I enjoyed watching our Pre-Kindergarten students proudly identify our new president (with accuracy) and the White House (with slightly less accuracy). What was most remarkable was the immediate response of student cheers as Obama was sworn into the presidential office of the United States. Their sense of patriotism and ownership of this democratic process was extraordinary. Teachers realize that most students will not remember the speeches of the day, but they will remember that they were at Friends School for this historical moment in history.

Later that afternoon an alumnus of Friends School Mullica Hill and T. Wayne's classmate, Richard Jackson, visited the school. It was his experience as an African American student at Friends School that prompted a special trip on inauguration day. He shared, "I needed to come to the one place where I believed that this day was possible."

Since Richard Jackson's visit, I have thought often of his statement. I wonder how our present students will reflect upon their experiences at Friends School several years from now. Our academic curriculum has successfully prepared students for the next level of their education, having all of our present eighth graders accepted to the private high schools of their choice. However, it is the intangibles, carried in their hearts, that may have more impact on shaping their character and determining their future. Friends School teachers strive to create an environment which inspires individually, critical thinking, leadership, creativity, and fairness (T. Lesley). Our teachers are given the chance to teach as much about responsibility, integrity, and service as about reading, writing, and math (T. Glenn). I hope that this edition of *Notes to Parents* provides you a glimpse of their work with your children.

In closing, let me share a few thoughts from Kindergarten students when they were asked on inauguration day, "How will you be the change for the future?" Brady pledges to teach people to not cut trees down. Bella pledges to recycle. Dylan pledges to clean the ocean. Trey pledges to be a good big brother. Austin pledges to you that he will help protect animals. And Aristotle pledges to listen to his mom and dad. Maybe many years from now Brady, Bella, Dylan, Trey, Austin, and Aristotle will visit Friends School and say, "Trees, less trash, clean oceans, animals, and caring people ... Friends School is the place where I believed they were possible."

Patti Sanderson
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Community Service News

MLK Jr. Voluntary Day of Service



On January 20th an enthusiastic and dedicated group of volunteers from the Friends School community participated in this important country wide day of service. It was another monumental success with over 100 students, teachers, friends, parents, and grandparents all teaming together to be of service to those in need. This year there were four planned activities. The campus cleanup group focused on much needed work beyond the normal tasks. Volunteers raked leaves, scrubbed walls, dusted/cleaned tables, and washed windows. The Ronald McDonald House group assembled donated items to make **488** snack bags. The used clothing group folded and organized the wonderful donations. The clothes will be donated to a group that helps local women dress appropriately for job interviews. The last group traveled to the Friends Village in Woodstown to spend time with the elderly. Volunteers played bingo and a balloon circle game with the residents. The experience was filled with enthusiasm and a sense of hope. Thank you to all those who volunteered and we look forward to seeing you all next year at the next MLK Jr. Voluntary Day of Service.



Service Work in Pre-K

The pre-K class has been collecting can goods for a local pantry. Their goal was to have 100 can goods to sort and count for our 100th day of school. These energetic students enjoyed sorting, counting, and measuring the cans.

First Grade Cam-Care Book Drive

During the month of February the first grade classes held a Valentine's Day book drive. The goal of the book drive was to collect books that would then be donated to Cam-Care, a free clinic that is part of Cooper hospital in Camden. During the book drive the first grade classes counted the books that arrived daily and kept track of the number with a graph. Once the drive was complete the eighth graders put labels into the books. The books were then placed into gift wrapped boxes and delivered by Teacher Meredith. Thanks to the generosity of the Friends School community, the first grade class collected **660** books!



Fourth Grade Service Projects

The fourth grade is tackling some new and exciting service projects. Recently they collected "Jeans for Teens" and donated them to needy teens in the tri-state area. The fourth grade will be "fixing up" the amphitheater next to the Cope Building. Some years ago this amphitheater was constructed by a Friends School student as part of his Eagle Scout requirements. The class hopes to paint, mulch, plant, and fix this wonderful outdoor theater. The class plans on using this refurbished site for the spring "green" readings from William Shakespeare and for their rendition of *A Midsummer Nights Dream*.

Second Grade Blanket Project

Second grade students are working diligently to complete their winter service project. They were asked to donate two pieces of fleece fabric from which a tie blanket will be made. The blankets will be donated to a local hospital. These students are hoping that this small donation will help comfort sick children during their time of need/comfort.

Special Letter from a Neighbor

There are many occasions when the faculty is extremely proud of Friends School students. One instance was from an email that was received soon after the holiday break. The authors, Jim and Wendy Nolan, live near our school and witnessed first hand how our service work at Friends is having an impact on how our children care about the environment and our community. In some way the Nolans' email validates our mission for educating the whole child.

Dear Mr. Smith and Ms. Sanderson,

*We'd like to recognize some of your students from the Friends School that organized a volunteer community activity this past weekend. **Madison Seabrook** [current 6th grader] and some of her friends organized about 15 classmates to clean up a section of Commissioner's Road and the Ella Harris Park that was ridden with trash because of a wind storm from the week before. The storm happened on the same day as trash day. Trash was blown all over the park, roads, properties, and a large field before it was to be collected. We can only imagine how many trash bags the team filled as part of their efforts. Had it not been for Madison and her friends' efforts and ambition – there is no doubt it would be a long time, if ever, before the trash was cleaned up. We happen to live on Commissioner's Road near the park so I was directly affected by the problem. We weren't aware of Madison's efforts until we were fortunate enough to watch it as it was happening. Madison's mom was one of the parents overseeing this effort. She mentioned to us that Madison saw what had happened as a result of the storm and thought something should be done about it. So she helped organize the team for Sunday morning to tackle the problem. They spent several hours covering the area and showed great display of community activism. This group of students and parents made Mullica Hill and our community look better this weekend and we wanted to make sure they are thanked for all their efforts. Way to go, Madison and friends!!!*

*Sincerely,
Jim and Wendy Nolan*



Black History Month Assembly

During Black History month, it seemed appropriate to highlight a member of our school community, **T. Julie-Ann Green**, who teaches in the Friends Fine & Performing Arts program. In addition to training young vocalists,

she has had a successful performance career. Singing with the Opera Company of Philadelphia since 2001, she was featured in their productions of "Porgy and Bess" and "Il Trovatore." Popular music performances have been with Barry Manilow, Michael Crawford and Barbra Streisand. Her vocal talents have attained her numerous honors including the Marian Anderson Award.

On February 19th first through eighth graders gathered in the Meetinghouse to learn more about African American history. As T. Julie-Ann retraced historical events, she interwove musical pieces that were familiar in each time period. Students participated by singing and clapping to familiar songs from African chants to "We Shall Overcome". After a discussion about opera, T. Julie-Ann concluded the presentation with a performance of the aria "Summertime" from "Porgy and Bess". The students were mesmerized!

Welcome to T. Debbie Rozanski!

T. Debbie Rozanski joins our teaching staff as the new second grade teacher (T. Kayla is relocating to Switzerland). She recently retired with more than 30 years teaching several elementary grades in the Audubon Public School system. Retirement left her missing children and, lucky for us, she returned to the classroom. She joins a staff that is composed of:

- 41% of teachers attended a Friends School.
- 28% of teachers attended FSMH.
- 50% of teachers have 10 or more years of teaching experience.
- 34% of teachers have taught at FSMH for 10 or more years.
- 34% of teachers have a master's degree (if you include those working toward a master's, it would increase to 47%).

Lower School News

Third Grade Puppeteers

On February 27th the third grade showcased their dramatic and artistic talent by performing a puppet show of some of Aesop's fables. The puppet show was the culminating event of a three-week long workshop led by visiting puppeteers, **Dr. George and Mrs. Anne Neff** of Rowan University. The students began by reading about Aesop and studying many of his famous fables. After choosing which stories they wanted to perform, they learned about dramatic form and the art of puppetry with the Neffs. The students then created their own puppets and scenery in Art class with **Teacher Diane**. Finally, the music department, led by **Teacher Sue Greenspan**, chose and performed the perfect music to accompany the performance. It was a very rewarding and fun learning experience that we won't quickly forget.



Pre-K Celebrates the 100th Day of School

A yummy counting snack 10 raisins, 10 pretzels, 10 marshmallows ...



Building a Lego tower with 100 Legos.



Quaker Studies

Quaker Studies is a new "special" that lower school students now attend. The curriculum examines the Friends Society's testimonies of peace, simplicity, equality, integrity, stewardship, and community. **T. Corri** meets with each class for one period a week.

For February, the focus in Quaker Studies was equality. Initiating the discussion of this topic, the younger students heard the story of Bessie Coleman, the first African American pilot and equal rights activist. Her story is depicted in the children's book "Fly High!". The students enjoyed illustrating their favorite parts. Third and fourth graders were busy working on posters showing their perspectives on equal rights and freedom, as well as an artistic timeline of Bessie Coleman's life. Fifth graders are continuing to work on interviewing and drawing each other to explore their similarities, differences, and unique qualities. When they are finished, all their hard work will be compiled into a keepsake book.

For all students, the focus for the second half of February was on the Underground Railroad, and how Quakers peacefully helped this fight for freedom. Younger students will hear "The Patchwork Quilt"; fourth and fifth graders will read "Under the Quilt of Night." Both stories will be inspirations for beautiful works of art!

Pennies for Peace Concert

For the second year in a row fifth grader **Emily Herman** organized a fundraiser concert for Pennies for Peace at the Crescent Moon Café. Her efforts raised \$255.86 for the cause. There are still donation cans in each home-room that students can donate pennies to help promote world peace through supporting education and the building of schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Kindergarten Activists

In **T. Lesley's** kindergarten class, lively discussions about fairness have been held. The children were then asked to talk with their parents about what they feel is not fair to them. In school, they wrote about what it means when something is not fair. T. Lesley's hope is that from the list of things they discussed with their parents, the class will brainstorm, choose one idea, and create a social action project from that.

Middle School News

Math Counts

This year T. Joseph has introduced a new activity to FSMH: Math Counts. Since the beginning of the year, **T. Joseph** has met before and after school with a group of middle school students dedicated to honing and improving their math skills. The Math Counts put their hard work to the test on February 7th when they competed in the annual Math Counts Middle School Competition at Rowan University. Eight FSMH students competed against 28 other groups of middle school students. The FSMH team was very competitive with **Lauren Brill**, a 7th grader, winning an award for her personal performance. The Math Counts program has been a welcomed addition to FSMH and will only continue to grow in the future.

Take It To The Bank Charity Basketball Tournament

This special event was held in the Friends gymnasium on January 17-18 to help fund a micro finance village bank in the impoverished nation of Haiti. The weekend was filled with basketball, food, contests, and entertainment (the 76'ers cheerleaders!). The micro banking system helps banks make small loans to individuals hoping to start small businesses. Amazingly 98% of these loans are paid back on time! The event raised \$3,000. Special thanks to the **Daniel Leone** and his family for their time, energy, and generous donations.

The Penny Challenge

The whole school campaign to help raise funds for Pennies for Peace experienced a new twist in December. **T. Joseph**, middle school math teacher, organized the Penny Challenge between the 5th through 8th grade homerooms. Each penny counted as one point and silver coins counted as the opposite of their value. The homeroom's goal was to collect as many pennies as they could while also sabotaging their opponents with silver coins (pennies were positive value and silver was negative value). Bags of coins appeared throughout the week with energized students dashing to reduce other homerooms' totals with silver coins. At the end of the week-long game over \$500 was raised.

Advisory

The past few Advisory periods have been dedicated to African American history. The middle school students began this process by defining the term "hero" and then identifying those individuals or groups in African American history who exemplified their definition. The diversity of definitions and heroes was incredible. Heroes ranged from Sojourner Truth and Maya Angelou to Sydney Poitier and our own **T. Wayne**. Each Advisory group made a visual representation of their definition and heroes. The next step in the process was to experience "sorting exercises" developed by PBS in order to examine the idea of "race." The students were given very specific, narrow categories and asked to sort themselves. Some of the sorting exercises were done according to their preferences of pets, seasons in which their birthdays occur, and length of hair. After these exercises, the students attempted to sort pictures of people according to the census categories of race. All of these exercises were done in order to question the nature of racial categories and expose their social construction.

Winter Sports Update

At Friends School everybody makes the basketball team. Together, the players practice, travel, study, and learn important on and off the court lessons (ie. teamwork, respect, dedication, commitment, and hard work). With a difficult schedule playing many larger local public and Friends schools, the boys "A" team only managed one win. **Coaches Peter and Wayne** were impressed that the boys never gave up. The girls "A" team, led by **Coaches Shaner and Nicole**, finished with 10 wins and only 5 losses. The most exciting win came against Hopewell Crest when the girls rallied to win by one point 34-33 in the closing minute of the game. The entire team showed heart, class, and athleticism to pull out the win. The girls and boys "B" teams had success and finished with winning records.



*Father & Daughter
battle for position in the
Parent-Teacher-Student
game.*



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Winter Fun at Friends School



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