

The Polaris Post

Serving the Families of Ebert Elementary School

Volume 9, Issue 4

November 13, 2008

Dates to Remember

Monday, November 24
PTO meeting, 6:00pm

Wednesday, November 26
- Friday, November 28
Thanksgiving holiday,
no school

Thursday, December 4
-Night at the Bookies

Dear Polaris Families,

There is a chill in the air and warmth in our hearts as we prepare for the upcoming holidays with family and friends. I'd like to extend an invitation to each of you to join us for our annual holiday fundraiser night at The Bookies (4315 E Mississippi Ave. Denver, CO 80246) on Thursday, December 4th from 5:30-8 pm. Many people consider The Bookies to be the best children's book and toy store in the region. I will be there along with Mrs. Axt, our librarian, and Dr. Howard to help with recommendations for books that may spark your child's interest. We're sure to have teacher "wish lists", new book suggestions, free gift wrapping, and refreshments during this holiday fundraiser. I hope to see you there.

Over the years, our school has cultivated a wonderful giving program known as SOS (Support Our School). The Support Our School or SOS direct-giving campaign is Polaris PTO's most profitable fundraiser and has enormous advantages over other conventional school fundraisers. Each cent of every contribution goes directly to supporting our school's programs and every gift, regardless of size, is significant to our school.

One of the ways you can see how SOS supports our school is by visiting the tech lab. Through SOS fundraising, the PTO was able to upgrade the equipment in the lab this year and also purchase some wonderful new learning tools. We are now using a Promethean Board (also known as a smart board) for instruction and learning. The new board allows children to interactively learn through touch as well as visual connection. They are creating collaborative maps in 2nd grade, building a data chart in kindergarten and developing a classroom graphic organizer in 1st grade with this new piece of equipment. With this funding we were also able to purchase three new LCD projectors and a DocuCamera. All have been traveling throughout the school as teachers show wonderful educational videos, create collaborative slide shows, and utilize a larger instructional venue to reach all children in our classrooms. Ms. Cori welcomes parent visitors anytime to the tech lab. Please stop in and see how our 5th graders are animating myths and charting data, 4th graders are becoming proficient internet researchers and mastering the elements of publishing using the computer, and 3rd graders are learning to use email as a tool for learning. Without the support of parents, and programs like SOS, we would be unable to offer this type of instruction, which provides children the necessary skills needed for success as the educational landscape evolves for the 21st century.

We are hoping you will consider becoming a supporter of our SOS campaign. Please visit the Polaris website for more information and necessary forms for contributions. <http://polarisprogram.dpsk12.org/SOS> or contact Kirsten Kahn via email kirstenkahn@gmail.com

With winter just around the corner I'd like to remind you to dress your children appropriately for the weather. Those of us who have resided in the state for many years know how the temperature can fluctuate during the day. Many of our children are coming without appropriate warm weather apparel. As the temperature decreases please remind your children to dress accordingly.

Hats, coats and gloves,

Karin Johnson
Principal



A local author visits 1st Grade

POLARIS SAFETY REPORT

This is the first of several special reports on the things our school safety committee is doing to help make Polaris@Ebert a safe place.

As you may have noticed, *Westword* did a feature story on abandoned apartments and lots on the corner of Glenarm and Park Ave, right across from the back side of Ebert, in which people were sleeping at night and leaving drug paraphernalia in the area. Our safety committee has brought this matter to the attention of DPS security, Denver Police, and Neighborhood Inspections. This matter was already on their radar and we can expect the situation to be much improved in the near future.

At the beginning of the year, members of our safety team attended an Emergency Response and Crisis Management training workshop held by Denver Public Schools. The training was based on a comprehensive policy manual published by DPS that covers a variety of emergency situations. Copies of this manual are available to look at in the school office. Some of the immediate things we did to comply with the policy guidelines were to conduct a fire drill, a lockdown drill, which means that nobody can enter or leave the building and children lay low in their classrooms, and a "shelter in place" drill in which children are led to interior hallways for safety in the event of a threat to the building such as a tornado. We've also increased our playground supervision—our standard now is to have three supervisors on the field at all times during recess. And we have increased our efforts to enforce the locked door policy during periods of the day when children are not at recess or lunch. During these times, people coming in the building must buzz for entry.

We know that some schools in DPS are stricter than others in their policies around visitors gaining access to the building. Interestingly, the DPS policy is that individual schools can make their own decisions about how strict they wish to be regarding access to their buildings. Some schools require immediate reporting to the front office and wearing visitors' badges. Some do not. We are now encouraging visitors to wear "visitor" or "volunteer" stickers after signing in at the front office while in the building. We welcome parent feedback on these issues. Look for more safety updates in upcoming Polaris Posts.

The Polaris Safety Committee

Parent representatives: Mark Herlinger, Susan Robertson, Brad Nelson
Staff representatives: Marion Parker, Yolanda Dulaney, Danny Mey, Karin Johnson



E Book Order Forms Go Out Today!

Thanks for your patience and please help support Polaris! E Books are now ready. Please sell some books and purchase your own.

We would prefer all E Book sales to be completed using the white envelopes provided. The white envelopes and sell sheets have been distributed and should be in this week's Thursday folder. Using the envelopes will allow us to better control the E Books and the prizes earned by the students who sold them.

Each E Book still only costs \$10. Just by using the coupons at King Soopers, one can save more than the book costs.

The monies and/or checks should be placed in the white envelope with your child's name and teacher. The envelopes can be left in the front office for me. Upon receipt of the envelopes, the E Books will be delivered to your child at his classroom.

Alyson Probst

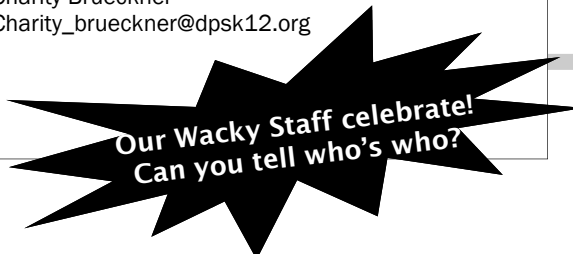
Dance, Dance, Dance!

First of all, I would like to say, I am thrilled to be a part of such a wonderful community.

Teaching dance to such amazing children has been such a blessing. This quarter students are working on expressing emotions. Students have been divided and are learning to express different emotions through dance. One group from each 4th and 5th grade class will be chosen by the students to perform the dance during an assembly on December 19th. We have decided on a holiday theme; therefore, students will be showing emotions one may feel during the holidays. The students are very excited about this activity and I appreciate the all the support given. Please feel free to contact me with any questions! Thank you!



Charity Brueckner
Charity_brueckner@dpsk12.org



POLARIS STAFF PROFILE

TEACHER – SCHOLAR – LEADER – WISE

Eileen Marie Toscano Wise, our beloved kindergarten teacher, was born in New Kensington, Pennsylvania. She has two grown children, Dylan, who is 24, and Scout, who is 20. Eileen has always loved animals, and wanted to be a biologist when she was young. After she had her children, she made a home for two dogs, a cat, rabbits, fish, snakes, gerbils, etc. The news leaked out that Eileen would take in homeless animals, and now she owns 49 – birds, chickens, ducks, rabbits, goats, a guinea pig, dogs, cats, lizards, frogs, turtles, snakes, tortoises, a hedgehog, tarantula and hamster. Eileen brings the animals in the classroom to help the children develop an appreciation of other creatures without fearing them; a metaphor for harmony in the world. If you visit her home, you'll see many species wandering around together.

I'm not sure when she finds the time, but Eileen also enjoys music, movies and exploring bookstores. She reads voraciously, having at least three books going at one time - the title of her all time favorite book is Bill Bryson's, "A Brief History of Nearly Everything."

Eileen's love of music began before she was in kindergarten student, imitating a singer in the park, using her fist as a microphone. When she reached second grade she didn't want to go to school. After complaining about a stomach ache, Eileen would stay home and entertain her mother with song and dance routines while she did laundry. She got her first guitar when she was in fifth grade, began performing in 8th grade, and by high school, was singing in coffee houses and in music festivals! Her performance days are over, just playing and singing for fun, but she secretly wishes to be a lounge singer...wouldn't you like to be a fly on the wall?

We're so fortunate that Eileen decided to be a teacher – she has so many talents. She became a teacher because she didn't like school when she was growing up, and was determined to create an environment where children would love to learn. That determination is a gift to everyone who passes through her classroom door. Her most amusing teaching memory involves her telling the children that one morning she was driving to work, feeling happy to be going there. One of the children asked, "Where do you work?" It sounds like she never stops.

Bookies Night (to benefit the Polaris Library)

While you begin your holiday shopping, come help us raise funds for our school library. This is a great time to socialize with friends and family and buy your holiday gifts at the same time.

Date: December 4, 2008 Time: 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

(Snacks & Beverages will be provided)

Located at: 4315 E Mississippi Ave. Denver (... just off of Colorado Blvd and Mississippi)

Our very own Karin Johnson and Gail Axt, will be there throughout the evening to help you find the perfect selection of books for your child, your relatives and your friends. This is also a great opportunity to shop for teachers. There is always a "wish-list" available for each class. Mums the word, but there may also be a guest appearance from Dr. Howard....more details to follow once we know her availability in December.

How the event benefits our school...

For all purchases made with cash or check – we receive 20% & for all purchases made with a credit card – we receive 15%. If you cannot make it to Bookies Night for Ebert, you can still help!!!! The library will receive credit for all sales the week of December 4 – December 11th.

Please mention Polaris at Ebert when you are paying for your purchases and the library will receive your purchase credits.

Please spread the word to family and friends so everyone can help with this worthy cause.



4th Graders designed Cartouches with Mrs. Axt in the Library... Take a look at this great work!



MEET THE STAFF



**Meet . . . Eileen Wise
Kindergarten Teacher**

Check the Lost & Found



As cooler temperatures descend upon us we find our lost & found area filling to the brim at the end of each week. If your children shed their winter gear, please remind them to check the Lost & Found area outside the lunchroom for missing hats, gloves and coats.

It is always a good idea to label outdoor gear to help ensure your children can identify and collect their garments. Any item not claimed from the lost and found will be collected for donation at the end of each month. Please note, in years past we donated only once a year. This has changed ,so it is important to have children check the area frequently.

YEARBOOK UPDATE

November has arrived, and we are in need of many photos from the fabulous events here at Polaris! If you have pictures from any school event please consider sharing them with the yearbook committee. Our yearbook is completely kid created and the candid photos that fill the pages are one of the best things about our yearbook! Please drop your photos in the office (note: these will be cropped and trimmed so they will not be returned) OR if you have digital images please email them to

cori_herbst-loehr@dpsk12.org

*1st Day of School – Sock Hop – 5th Grade Greek Celebration – Electives
Ice Cream Social – Balarat – Everyday Moments at Polaris– Grandparent Tea*

Thanks so much for helping in the success of this Polaris tradition!

Second Grade Happenings

We are in the midst of our Mexico studies. The students are making connections with geography, culture, and language that we are exploring in other books, writings, and projects. The students are enjoying the adventure and look forward to our further studies of the Latin American Region before we head off for the holidays.

As part of our connection with Library this quarter, we are exploring the fascinating genre of Fairy Tales. Some of the students have begun to write fairytales during Writer's Workshop. We have been studying fractured fairytales and comparing them to the traditional versions. The students will be performing a Reader's Theater of Fairy Tales in December, keep an eye out for announcements in the Second Grade Thursday Letter.

4th GRADE UPDATE:

CHICKEN PHAROAHS DEAD: BURIAL PROCESSION PLANNED

The 4th grade is sad to announce that three beloved chicken pharaohs died of natural causes during the tragic week of October 13-17. The young pharaohs will be mourned and buried during the second quarter. Mummification has begun on the three unnamed pharaohs. "It is actually quite sad," lamented Mrs. Quinby, "the children are at a loss-it seems that our chicken pharaohs get sick and die every year at this time." Last year, Cluckmosis III and two other chicken pharaohs died suddenly, at this very time of the year. Authorities have not ruled out fowl play.

Funeral rites include packing the chickens in salt for the required 40 days, writing a full chronicle of the life of the chicken, and collecting treasures and food for the chicken's trip to the afterlife. Obelisks are being erected in the pharaohs honor, and a burial procession is planned for Decemeber. "We still haven't gotten over the loss of Cluckmosis last year," added 5th grader Connell Smith. "We 5th graders know how hard it is to lose a pharaoh, so we send our sympathies to the 4th grade."

FOURTH GRADE STUDIES CAMOUFLAGE SO WELL THAT TEACHERS CAN'T FIND STUDENTS

The fourth grade's study of "structural adaptations" took a decidedly odd twist in October when students studying types of adaptations, such as "mimcry," "counter shading," and "camouflage," proved so effective at their studies that many of the 9 and 10 year-olds simply disappeared. "I can't explain it," an exasperated Mr. Isaac muttered to authorities, "one minute we were studying camouflage, and I turn around, and half of my class is gone." Custodial staff and teachers alike have been searching bushes and trees to look for signs of stripes, spots, and other patterns that might not quite match the surrounding vegetation. "I think I hear giggles sometimes," added Mr. Semler. "Perhaps when the kids get hungry they'll reveal themselves. Right now, all I know is that every student who disappeared gets an A+ in science class." Parents are excited about the progress displayed by their children and have stated that while their homes are cleaner and quieter since the studies began, they hope that the kids return home before Thanksgiving. "We've got relatives coming, so it would be nice to have her home," commented one parent who wished to remain anonymous.