



KENNETT

CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Early Spring 2011

Message From Our Board

The School Board and the Community

Public education is our most important activity as a community and the largest financial commitment that we make as a community. In many ways, the School District defines our community. The fact that our children go to the same middle school and high school has long created a shared identity for residents of the District and established social ties among residents of the borough and the townships in the District that are very different from those we have with other neighboring areas.

The Kennett community places a high value on education and expects excellence in our schools. It is the School Board's duty to represent the community in oversight of the schools, to hold the District accountable for its performance, and to ensure that needed resources are available. In Kennett, the Board has high expectations for both student success and efficient operations. We have seen the District make great strides in recent years with innovations in teaching and a strong focus on continual improvement of student outcomes. Our District administrative team is exceptional, providing a clear vision and strong leadership as well as the management skills that enable success.

The great challenge to the District is providing the resources and opportunities that allow all of our students to succeed while limiting tax increases. School Board members have a direct awareness of the consequences of our choices. The costs and the benefits of the system are all local. We answer to our neighbors if the schools are not effective in teaching their children, and we answer to them when we raise taxes. We share their concerns, as many of our own children attend Kennett schools, and we experience the same tax burden. We are fortunate that the Kennett community strongly supports education, but the Board understands that we have to earn the community's trust continually and respect for our choices.

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Bancroft Elementary School Remains On Schedule to Open September 2011

Even with a harsh and snowy winter bearing down on the region, the construction on Bancroft Elementary has continued steadily with only a few minor setbacks. Currently, roofing and window installation are ongoing, as is the installation of the rough plumbing, electrical, and HVAC ducts.

"In spite of the coldest December since 1990 and January's snow and wind that slowed down installation of the roof, we are still on schedule for a late-August opening," said Mr. Bob Perzel, Director of Construction and Facilities.

Continuing construction updates can be found on the District's website.



New Schools, New Faces

At the March 14 school board meeting, the Kennett Consolidated School District Board of School Directors approved the hiring of Mrs. Leah McComsey as the principal of Bancroft Elementary School. Also approved were the transfers of Mrs. Susan McArdle, current principal of Mary D. Lang Elementary School, to New Garden Elementary School, and Miss Carla Horn, current assistant principal of New Garden Elementary School to the new Mary D. Lang Kindergarten Center.

Mrs. Leah McComsey, Bancroft Elementary School

Mrs. McComsey joins the Kennett Consolidated School District from the Oxford Area School District where she has been serving as an assistant principal at the elementary level.

"It is very exciting to establish a brand new school," said Mrs. McComsey, of being hired as Bancroft Elementary School's first principal.

Mrs. McComsey is a graduate of Avon Grove High School and West Chester University where she earned her degree in Spanish. After graduating, she taught high school Spanish before taking time off to raise her family. After eight years as a stay-at-home mom, Mrs. McComsey returned to teaching as an ESL specialist in the Oxford Area School District. She then received her Master of Arts Degree in Language and Literacy from Millersville University and her principal certification from Immaculata University.

"For my family, coming to Kennett is really like coming home," commented

Mrs. McComsey, whose husband grew up in Kennett Square and is an alumni of Kennett High School. Her husband currently works as a seventh grade social studies teacher in the Avon Grove School District. They reside in Oxford with their two teenage children, Hannah and Noah.

At Bancroft Elementary School, Mrs. McComsey is looking forward to using her bilingual skills to grow a strong school culture amongst everyone. "I want to make parents and students feel comfortable in their new school environment," she commented. "I will work hard to bring everyone together as a family as we all work toward the goal of giving students a strong educational foundation."

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Mary D. Lang Kindergarten Center on Schedule to Open September 2011

Beginning with the 2011 - 2012 school year, with the completion of Bancroft Elementary School, Mary D. Lang Elementary School will open as a full-day kindergarten center. This past fall, the Kennett Consolidated School District began preparing for the transition by offering full-day kindergarten at all of the elementary schools in the District. Nationally and in Canada, full-day

kindergarten has proven to be beneficial to students by better preparing them for elementary school. By adding a school devoted exclusively to kindergarteners, the Kennett Consolidated School District will be able to provide its youngest

students with the best possible start to their educational careers.

"Many interesting things can happen when we devote an entire building to

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Information Nights

Open House for All Kennett Schools

Thursday, April 28 at Kennett Middle School at 7:00 pm.

Come and see what the Kennett Consolidated School District has to offer your child. Meet the superintendent, speak with principals and teachers, and learn why District may be the right choice for your child.

Informational Meeting for Parents of Kindergarteners Starting in the Fall

Tuesday, April 26, in the Kennett High School auditorium at 7:00 pm.

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District Directory

KENNETT CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Kennett Square, PA 19348
610-444-6600
Fax: 610-444-6614
www.KCSD.org

Board of School Directors

Heather Schaen, President
Dr. George P. Drake, Jr., Vice-president
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Dr. Victoria C. Gehrt, Assistant Superintendent
Mark Tracy, Director of Business Administration
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Sharon Bennett, Director of Special Education
Robert Perzel, Director of Construction and Facilities
Jane Pedroso, Curriculum Supervisor for Language Arts and Social Studies
Mary Lynn Vincent, Curriculum Supervisor for Mathematics and Science

Kennett High School (grades 9-12)

100 East South Street
Kennett Square, PA 19348
610-444-6620
Dr. Michael Barber, Principal
Raymond Fernandez, Assistant Principal
Dr. Tomorrow Jenkins, Assistant Principal
Jeffery Thomas, Athletic Director

Kennett Middle School (grades 6-8)

195 Sunny Dell Road
Landenberg, PA 19350
610-268-5800
John E. Carr, Principal
Lorenzo DeAngelis, Assistant Principal
Karen Gerlach, Assistant Principal

Greenwood Elementary School

420 Greenwood Road
Kennett Square, PA 19348
610-388-5990
Tracey Marino, Principal

Mary D. Lang Elementary School

409 Center Street
Kennett Square, PA 19348
610-444-6260
Susan McArdle, Principal

New Garden Elementary School

265 New Garden Road
Toughkenamon, PA 19374
610-268-6900
Cathy Robine, Principal
Carla Horn, Assistant Principal

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Kennett Consolidated School District will not discriminate in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices, based on race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, ancestry, union membership, or any other legally protected classification. Announcement of this policy is in accordance with state and federal laws, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990. Kennett Consolidated School District students and parents who have an inquiry or complaint of harassment or discrimination, or who need information about accommodations for persons with disabilities, should contact the Superintendent's Office at 300 East South Street, Kennett Square, PA 19348, telephone (610) 444-6600.

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KHS Alumni Spotlight: Nancy Ayllon-Ramirez

Nancy Ayllon-Ramirez is a 2005 Kennett High School graduate who attended Bloomsburg University, graduating in 2009 with dual degrees in sociology and Spanish, as well as dual minors in Latin American studies and ethnic studies. She now serves the State of Pennsylvania as a district representative for Senator Dominic Pileggi, the senate majority leader. Her position entails providing community outreach and social services, helping with state-related issues, and handling community calls and walk-in requests at the office. In this role, Nancy has many opportunities to get directly involved in the community by attending a variety of community meetings and holding office hours at community centers throughout Southern Chester County.

Nancy says it was the education and support she received from the Kennett Consolidated School District that enabled her to find the drive and determination that has led her to be so successful. She began attending New Garden Elementary School in the first grade, shortly after her family moved to the United States from Mexico. At the time, she

spoke no English and was the only first-grade student from Mexico. However, Nancy says she was warmly welcomed into the Kennett community. "Kennett is an amazing place that really helped me become who I am," Nancy said. "From the beginning, the ESL teachers made me feel very comfortable in the school."

During her time at Kennett High School, Nancy was involved in a variety of activities. In addition to serving as the historian for the student government for a year, she was also involved with the French Club, UNIDAD (a Hispanic students club), National Honor Society, and Hermanitas (a Hispanic girls' leadership club). She also volunteered for the Kennett After-School Association's After-The-Bell program.

Nancy took the same drive and motivation she originally found at Kennett and applied it to her higher education at Bloomsburg University. Here she was selected to receive the prestigious Board of Governors Scholarship, which provided her with full tuition all four years. In order to keep this scholarship, she had to maintain a high grade point average

while remaining active in community service. Towards the end of her collegiate career she became a member of the Board of Governors advisory board and mentored younger scholarship recipients.

During her time at Bloomsburg University, Nancy took advantage of a study abroad program to spend six months in Veracruz, Mexico. She also reinstated a local chapter of Chi Upsilon Sigma National Latin Sorority at Bloomsburg University and continues to serve on the national board of the sorority.

"Kennett definitely prepared me for college and life," Nancy said, "I have used the skills I first gained at Kennett both in college and in the real world. The teachers always saw potential in me. They pushed me and opened many doors that I may not have otherwise had available."

If you know of a Kennett High School alumnus who would be a good candidate for a spotlight, please email Kristine Parkes at Kristine@KrispCommunications.com.

Kindergarten Center *continued from page 1*

kindergarten," said Ms. Jane Pedroso, District language arts and social studies supervisor, "from having school-wide assemblies targeted to the needs of kindergarteners to playground equipment designed just for little ones."

Teachers and students at the elementary schools are already seeing the positive outcomes of full-day kindergarten in their classrooms. Teachers are able to become familiar with each student's developmental needs because they have half as many students for twice as long each day. The added time in the day also provides teachers with more opportunities for individual and small group instruction for remediation and enrichment.

The benefits that have been seen nationally by switching to full-day kindergarten are very exciting. Not only are students able to form stronger connections with their teachers, they are able to form stronger social connections with their peers. Full-day kindergarten is also associated with increased literacy and numeracy skills, smoother transitions to first grade, and increased post-secondary graduation rates. The opportunity to participate in special area programs such as art, music, informational literacy, physical education, Spanish, and developmental guidance is yet another benefit that full-day kindergarten provides.

In preparation for the transition to becoming a kindergarten center, Mary D. Lang Elementary School is already seeing some minor changes to the building and more changes are coming. "The school is in very good condition," said Mr. Bob Perzel, Director of Construction and Facilities. "It just needs an internal face-lift and some minor changes to make it suitable for kindergarteners."

Some of the changes that will occur over

the summer months at Mary D. Lang Elementary School include:

- playground modifications to make the equipment "kindergartener-friendly"
- exterior fencing to make the playground more secure
- adding an additional set of doors at the entrance of the school to increase security
- installing air conditioning in the multi-purpose room, making the building fully air conditioned

- repainting the inside of the building
- adding all new kindergartener-sized furniture throughout
- replacing all flooring
- replacing all classroom cabinetry

"We have a group of teachers who are passionate about teaching kindergarten," continued Ms. Pedroso. "That passion is so important to building a solid foundation for our children. Everyone is very enthusiastic about the opening of the District's kindergarten center."

Kennett Education Foundation Annual Spring Fundraiser

Keynote Speaker Dick Vermeil

Wednesday, April 13, 6 PM
at The Mendenhall Inn

Tickets \$100 per person

Email KEF@Kennett.net for more information or to order tickets.

Money raised benefits the Kennett Education Foundation (KEF). The KEF is a community-based foundation devoted to enhancing the educational experience in the Kennett Consolidated School District by providing support and scholarships to students, and innovative grants to teachers and educators.



District News

Kindergarten Registration April 4th –April 29th

The Kennett Consolidated School District welcomes you to our District. **Note:** Students must have attained the age of 5 years on or before September 30 for kindergarten. All registrations will be processed at the Administration Office by appointment only beginning April 4 through April 29. You may schedule your appointment by calling 610-444-4235. The Administration Office is located at 300 East South Street in Kennett Square.

Below is the list of required documents at the time of your scheduled registration appointment:

Two (2) current proofs of residency (Valid proofs of residency consist of a lease signed by both parties, deed, real estate tax bill, settlement contract, or current (within 30 days or quarterly) mortgage statement or utility bill (water or electric)). **Further documentation may be requested at the discretion of the school district.**

1. Parent/Guardian identification: valid driver's license, state issued ID or passport
2. Student's original birth certificate, baptismal certificate, or valid passport
3. Immunization record
4. Parent Registration Statement (provided in the registration packet) Form must be notarized.
5. Home Language Survey (provided in the registration packet)

If applicable: Residency and Guardianship Affidavits will be considered after July 1.

1. If parent/guardian and student are residing in someone else's home, a notarized Residency Affidavit must be completed by both resident and parent/guardian. At the time of registration all parties must be present. **Note: Two (2) proofs of residency and identification of the resident and of the parent/guardian must**

be provided when submitting for approval. Acceptable proofs of residency and identification are listed on the forms. Forms are included in the registration packet. Further documentation may be requested at the discretion of the school district.

2. If student is residing with someone other than the parent, a notarized Guardianship Affidavit must be completed by

the guardian with the Superintendent's signature prior to registration. **Note: Must request an appointment with the Superintendent's office prior to registering and two (2) proofs of residency and identification of the guardian must be provided when submitting for approval. Further documentation may be requested at the discretion of the school district. Telephone the district office to schedule an appointment.**

3. If student is placed with a family by a

court system or foster agency, an original placement letter is required at the time of the registration appointment.

4. If student is receiving Early Intervention services, a copy of most recent IEP and evaluation report is necessary.

Inscripción en Kindergarten 4 de abril – 29 de abril

El Kennett Consolidated School District le da la bienvenida al distrito. **Nota:** Para asistir a kindergarten, los estudiantes deben tener los 5 años cumplidos el 30 de septiembre. Las inscripciones serán procesadas en la oficina de la administración, entre el 4 de abril y el 29 de abril y será necesario pedir una cita. Establezca una cita llamando al (610) 444-4235. La oficina de Administración se encuentra en 300 East South Street, Kennett Square PA, 19348.

A continuación encontrará una lista de los documentos necesarios que deberá llevar a la cita para la inscripción:

Dos (2) pruebas actuales de residencia (pruebas válidas de residencia son un contrato de arrendamiento firmado por ambas partes, una escritura, una cuenta de impuestos a la propiedad, un contrato de pago, una declaración actual (correspondiente a los últimos 30 días o trimestre) de la hipoteca, una cuenta de servicios (agua o electricidad)). **Es posible que el distrito escolar le pida más documentación.**

1. Identificación del Padre/Tutor: licencia de conducir válida, identificación emitida por el estado o pasaporte
2. Certificado de nacimiento original

del estudiante, certificado de bautismo o pasaporte válido

3. Certificados de vacunación
4. Parent Registration Statement Form (formulario de declaración de inscripción para padres). Este formulario se incluye en el paquete de inscripción) debe ser firmado ante notario público.
5. Home Language Survey (cuestionario del idioma que se habla en el hogar). Este cuestionario se incluye en el paquete de inscripción.

Si corresponde: La declaración jurada de tutela y residencia se considerará después del 1º de julio.

1. Si el padre/tutor y el estudiante residen en la casa de un tercero, tanto el residente como por el padre/tutor deben presentar una declaración jurada de residencia firmada ante notario público. Todas las partes deben estar presentes en el momento de la inscripción. **Nota: Al enviar la aprobación, deben entregarse dos (2) pruebas de residencia e identificación del residente y del padre/tutor. Los formularios contienen una lista de los documentos que se pueden utilizar como prueba**

de residencia e identificación. Los formularios se incluyen en el paquete de inscripción. Es posible que el distrito escolar le pida más documentación.

2. Si el estudiante reside con otra persona que no sea el padre, el tutor debe completar una declaración jurada de tutela firmada ante notario público que contenga la firma del Superintendente antes de la inscripción. **Nota: Se debe pedir una cita con la oficina del Superintendente antes de la inscripción y se debe proporcionar dos (2) pruebas de residencia e identificación del tutor al enviar los documentos para que sean aprobados. Es posible que el distrito escolar le pida más documentación. Llame por teléfono a la oficina del distrito para establecer una cita.**
3. Si el tribunal coloca al estudiante con una familia o con una agencia de acogida, se necesitará presentar una carta original de colocación cuando se vaya a la cita de inscripción.
4. Si el estudiante está recibiendo servicios de intervención temprana, es necesario presentar una copia del IEP más reciente y un informe de evaluación.

Kennett Education Foundation Announces SMART Grant Program

Partnering with the Kennett Consolidated School District since 2001, the Kennett Education Foundation (KEF) aims to encourage innovative ideas, invest in programs that improve academic progress, promote family involvement, and recognize the outstanding achievements of educators. The KEF recently created a grant program for students called the SMART (Students and Mentors Applying Resources Together) Grant Program. Under the program, students in the Kennett Consolidated School District can apply for grants of up to \$2,000 to assist them with projects/programs that bring new ideas and resources that will make a difference within the school community.

"The Kennett Education Foundation board is excited to be able to offer this program to the youth of the District," commented Mrs. Elizabeth Stinson, president of the KEF. "The students have amazing ideas to bring new programs or practices into the classrooms and for extracurricular activities and just need the money to get started."

The types of programs the Kennett Education Foundation is looking to fund under the SMART Grant Program must benefit the Kennett Consolidated School District directly. In particular, the KEF is looking for unique programs that benefit as many members of the school

community as possible and promote collaboration among students, teachers, and the community.

All students of the Kennett Consolidated School District are welcome to apply for grants, and the application process is straightforward. First, the student must review ideas with their District sponsor (a staff member) who must approve the idea. The student then must secure approval to implement his/her idea from the building principal and/or the District Office. Once the student has the required support, a SMART grant application, which can be downloaded from www.kennetteducationfoundation.com,

needs to be completed. Once submitted, the application will be delivered to the SMART Grant Committee for review where it will take a minimum of seven days to process and review the request.

This grant program is an exciting opportunity for students to discover and implement innovative ways to better their education and improve the lives of others throughout the Kennett Consolidated School District community. Interested students should visit www.kennetteducationfoundation.com for more information.

All Around the Schools

Science Explorers Club Explodes into New Garden and Greenwood Elementary Schools

Students at New Garden Elementary School have been having a great time exploring “Explosive Art,” “Freaky Physics,” and other exciting science experiments through the after-school Science Explorers Club. The club has been meeting twice a week at New Garden Elementary School and has now expanded to Greenwood Elementary School. The club is run by Mrs. Jill Shinn, a New Garden Elementary School parent, who decided to start the club after her son, Evan, attended a Science Explorers summer camp.

“My son loves science, and Science Explorers provided a way to foster his interest,” said Mrs. Shinn. “After seeing how much he loved the camp, I thought we could share this love for science with other students in his elementary school by starting a club of my own.” Evan is now in fourth grade and is proud to report that Science Explorers Club has inspired him to become a scientist.

Each week, Mrs. Shinn chooses activities that reinforce a different science concept. The activities, which are fun and extremely hands-on, are designed to show children how exciting science can be. At the beginning of each session, Mrs. Shinn provides the students each with a science name, such as “Explosive Evan” or “Solar Sophie.” “The students really look forward to getting their science names,” said Mrs. Shinn, or Mrs. Shinn-ergy as the Science Explorers call her.

Each five-week session of the club has a different overall theme on which the experiments are based. Students are currently participating in a session titled “Freaky Physics.” Activities in this session range from learning about the properties of dry ice by dropping cubes into water to learning about structural integrity with pipe cleaners and everything in between. “It’s wonderful to see kids’ faces light up when we do experiments,”

commented Mrs. Shinn, “I love to see them get excited about science.”

Sophia Waker, a fourth grade student at New Garden Elementary School who has been with the club since the beginning, commented, “I liked the volcano experiment the best because it exploded and looked really cool.” Third grade student Nate Judd added that he “really likes when we explode things.” He even commented, “Science is my favorite subject in school now.”



Currie Che looks on as Mrs. Shinn creates “slime” from a few basic ingredients during a recent Science Explorers Club session.

Message from Board

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To strengthen our connections to our constituents, the District has made a systematic effort to improve our communications. The Board is always interested in active input from the community and encourages attendance at our meetings, which are open to the public. Most of the work of the District is done in committee meetings. This is where detailed discussions are held on student achievement, curriculum and instructional delivery, finances, budgeting, and taxes. The Finance Committee meeting is generally on the first Monday of each month, while the Curriculum Committee meeting is usually on the last Monday. A detailed schedule can be found at www.kcsd.org.

Over the coming months, the Board and the District administration will face many difficult choices. Our tax base is shrinking, and the Governor has proposed large cuts in our state funding. Meanwhile, our enrollments are increasing, and, as in most organizations, our personnel costs are going up. A significant tax increase will be needed simply to avoid deep cuts in our programs. Over the last few years we have already achieved many cost reductions, and there are no easy budget cuts to make. Our options are limited by state mandates, our contract with the teachers, and our obligations to our students. As we finalize the budget for the current year, we will provide clear communication about our choices, and we will look to the community for your input and seek to earn your continued support.

Traveling the Globe Through Literature at Mary D. Lang

Throughout the school year, Mary D. Lang Elementary School students have been traveling around the world without ever leaving their classrooms. Kindergarten through fifth grade students are participating in the school’s reading incentive program, entitled Reading Around the World. Students earn “miles” by reading on their own or being read to and track their miles in a log book. The miles allow them to earn prizes and contribute towards the school-wide goal of reading around the world, which is 25,000 miles.



A few of the many students who helped Mary D. Lang “Read Around the World”: Front row (l-r): Benjamin Wainstein (2nd grade), Karen Juarez (kindergarten), Jose Lopez Lopez (1st grade), Back row (l-r): Juan Guerrero (4th grade), Becky Juarez (5th grade), Edwin Guerrero (3rd grade).

Mary D. Lang Elementary School’s library media specialist, Ms. Kristi Pizzini, explains that Reading Around the World does more than encourage reading; the program also integrates social studies, geography, and math.

“The program has been extremely successful this year,” commented Ms. Pizzini. “Students are invested in reading and they love the places that they have traveled to through their journey in books ... and I am excited to announce that we surpassed the school-wide goal of traveling around the world at the end of January!”

As a result of surpassing the school-wide goal, the students earned a World Market Day where they will be able to buy items with “money” that they earned through their reading logs.

When asking fifth grade students what they liked about Reading Around the World, they agreed that the program is “cool because you can imagine that you really are traveling the world ... it is fun to be creative.”

Kennett Middle School presents



Friday, May 6 at 7 PM
Saturday, May 7 at 1 PM and 7 PM
Tickets available at the door

Bilingual Parent Seminar Nourishes Hearts and Minds

This fall, parents and their children were given the opportunity to bond and learn together through the Corazon Alimentado/ Nourished Hearts Seminar. The seminar was held over the course of three Saturday sessions, three hours in length each. The sessions provided Spanish-speaking parents of students aged 9 through 13 an opportunity to play an active role in the education of their children and for the families to learn together how to bring a child through the often difficult middle school years by giving the parents strategies to help their children succeed.

Ms. Maribel Gonzalez, the District's social services liaison, organized the seminar. In her role with the District, she helps connect parents and students with community organizations that can provide them with services such as medi-

cal care and housing. For this program, Ms. Gonzalez partnered with the Kennett Area Communities that Care, the District's Title I Program, and the Chester County Intermediate Unit's Migrant Education Program.

"We saw a need for more parent involvement with our students," Ms. Gonzalez said. "This was a wonderful opportunity to address parents' concerns with their child's transition to the United States as well as their child's developmental growth."

The seminar's success went above and beyond expectations. In total, 22 parents participated in the seminar, and everyone left wanting to continue the discussion at the end of the third day. "I was very touched to see how emotionally involved everyone was in the seminar," said Mrs. Jane Pedroso, supervisor of

language arts and social studies. "These parents want so deeply for their children to succeed. There wasn't a dry eye in the room the final Saturday." She also added that it was clear as well that it meant a great deal to the children to have their parents involved in this way. Mrs. Pedroso said that the seminar was so successful partially because it focused so much on culture. "This event provided them with a support system in their language," she commented.

The seminar was broken down into three sessions, with each session focusing on a specific topic. The first day began with a background on positive discipline. The second Saturday focused on what to do when positive discipline isn't enough. On this day, families were given an opportunity to share positive experiences that they had with the program.

The third Saturday also gave parents an opportunity to ask questions or voice any struggles or successes they had with the assignments given during the previous classes. This final Saturday also culminated with the children singing a song they had prepared for their parents and presenting them with a certificate. At the end, everyone shared a luncheon of food that the families had brought to share.

"At the end of the program, many parents asked to continue the discussion even further," Ms. Gonzalez said. Plans are being made to potentially bring the seminar back in the future and provide the conference in both Spanish and English. "There are valuable strategies that all parents can learn from the Corazon Alimentado model," Ms. Gonzalez said.

Did He See His Shadow? Greenwood Elementary School Fourth Graders Celebrate Groundhog Day

It didn't matter to fourth graders at Greenwood Elementary School if Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow or not on February 2; they were too busy celebrating this unique Pennsylvania tradition. As fourth grade teacher Ms. Lisa Cole explained, the fourth grade curriculum focuses on Pennsylvania so incorporating Groundhog Day is a perfect fit. With activities that spanned all classes, Groundhog Day provided a great opportunity for the students to explore a part of Pennsylvania's traditions.

One of the most exciting parts of the day for students was when Mr. Keith Mullins from the Pennsylvania Game Commission came in to speak with students. Bringing with him a real groundhog pelt as well as other furry critters for students to see, Mr. Mullins traveled to the different classes to teach students about Pennsylvania wildlife.

"The presentation by the Fish and Game Commission is an educational, interactive, experience with hands-on activities that integrate our ecosystem science unit with

plant and animal adaptations across all content areas," Ms. Cole said. "Of course, it is always exciting for the students to see and touch actual bear, groundhog, beaver, coyote, and raccoon skins."

Other activities throughout the day consisted of the students finding Punxsutawney, PA on a map, learning about the hibernation and life span of groundhogs, creating acrostic poems, and completing a groundhog math activity. The culminating activity was for students to

make a craft that showed a groundhog popping out of his burrow. The students truly enjoyed the day and had the chance to have some fun while learning about Pennsylvania.

At the end of the day, classes received a special visit from the school's mascot, the Greenwood Groundhog. "This is the best Groundhog Day ever," commented fourth grade student Olivia Phillips.

Middle School Museum Art Project Provides Adventure

For the second time, Brandywine River Museum graciously opened its doors to Kennett Middle School students to participate in a museum art project. Last year, students read *Pieces of Georgia* by Jen Bryant, and the author, a Downingtown resident, came and spoke to students. Much of the artwork present in *Pieces of Georgia* can be found in the Brandywine River Museum.

With the success of last year's project, eighth grade language arts teacher Ms. Judy Jester and middle school art teacher Ms. Maryanne Uhl wanted to bring this opportunity back for their students. Looking at the strong presence of paintings from *Treasure Island* and other narrative adventure paintings present at the museum, it seemed that an adventure literature theme would fit for this year's project. At the end of the 2009-10 academic year, middle school students were given a list of eight adventure books to choose from and read over the summer.

After reading the books over the summer, the students were invited to attend a field trip to the Brandywine River Museum where they used inspiration from the paintings to create their own art based on the books they read. Fifty students completed the readings associated with the project.

"Many of the students had really interesting ideas and used inspiration from trompe l'oeil pictures - art that looks almost three dimensional and fools the eye - to create scenes from the books they had read," said Ms. Jester.

The art created by the students was displayed in the middle school during the week of parent-teacher conferences so that all of the parents, as well as their fellow students, could see the incredible result.

Additionally, students wrote a blog post about the experience. "For many of the students, it was their first time blogging or ever writing for the Internet," said Ms. Jester. "The assignment gave them an opportunity to get their feet wet."

For Ms. Jester, the goal of the project was also about trans-mediation. "As a language arts teacher, my interest is to help improve students' writing," Jester said. "And drawing what they read about can actually improve writing and enforce comprehension."

The teachers hope in future years to get even more students involved in this project that connects art, reading, and writing while providing students with the opportunity to experience a wonderful museum.

New Schools, New Faces

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Mrs. Susan McArdle, New Garden Elementary School

Mrs. McArdle, who has worked for Kennett Consolidated School District as principal of Mary D. Lang Elementary for the past five years, will begin serving as principal of New Garden Elementary School in the 2011-2012 school year.

"In my five years at Kennett, I have collaborated with the staff and the community to create a supportive and nurturing environment in which the students can thrive and be academically successful," commented Mrs. McArdle. "We have a caring environment dedicated to culturally relevant and rigorous instruction that meets the individual needs of each child. It is these things that make the Mary D. Lang community special, and this is the school culture I aim to replicate at New Garden Elementary School."

Mrs. McArdle earned her bachelor's degree from the State University of New York and a Master of Science Degree in Educational Leadership from California State University. She also holds a certification in ESL language acquisition and has classroom teaching experience that ranges from first through eighth grades. Prior to coming to the Kennett Consolidated School District, Mrs. McArdle served as an elementary school principal in the North Penn School District.

"I am looking forward to the wonderful opportunities that await all of us as we support students, staff and families in the transition to their new elementary schools," Mrs. McArdle continued. "This will truly be a team effort. Working to build community with a cohesive and dedicated staff and helping students build meaningful connections to enhance their overall educational experience will be a top priority."

Miss Carla Horn, Mary D. Lang Kindergarten Center

Miss Horn has worked for the Kennett Consolidated School District for seven years, all of those years serving as the assistant principal of New Garden Elementary.

"I am excited about becoming the first principal of the Mary D. Lang Kindergarten Center," commented Miss Horn. "I am looking forward to the new challenges that lie ahead in opening a new center and bringing all of the kindergarten programs together. Together, we will work to build a strong educational foundation on which our students can grow and achieve."

Miss Horn earned her bachelor's degree from Penn State University. She continued on to receive her teaching certificate, reading specialist certificate, and master's degree from Millersville University. Miss Horn then earned her principal certification from Penn State University.

Celebrating Youth Art Month

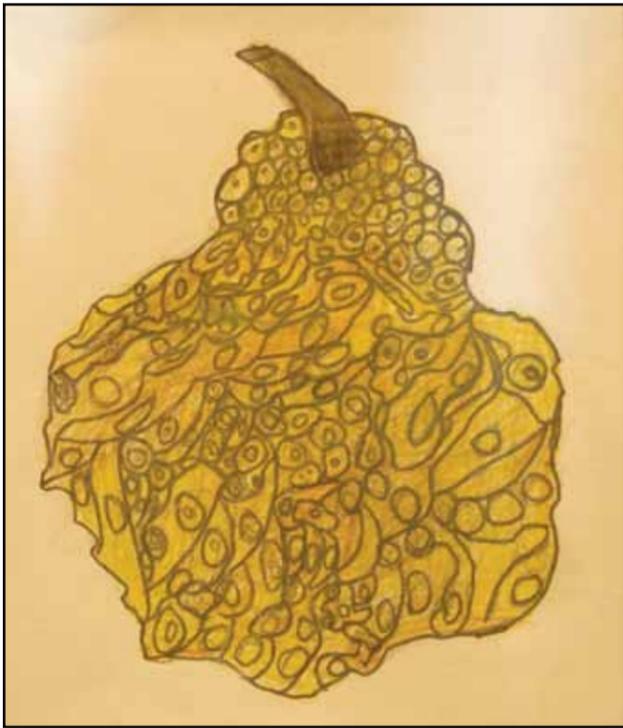
March is Youth Art Month, and below is a small sample of the artwork produced by Kennett Consolidated School District students during the year. From Crayon to acrylic, pottery to watercolor, every student has the opportunity to work in different mediums and learn the basics of creating and viewing art. Art is a vital part of exercising the creative side of students' minds and teaching skills that may blossom into a life-long hobby or steer students into one of the many art-based careers. Join us in celebrating art year round!



Ceramic Teapot by Kennett High School student Lizbeth Lara



Watercolor and cut paper by Kennett Middle School 6th grade student Rocibeth Mendiola



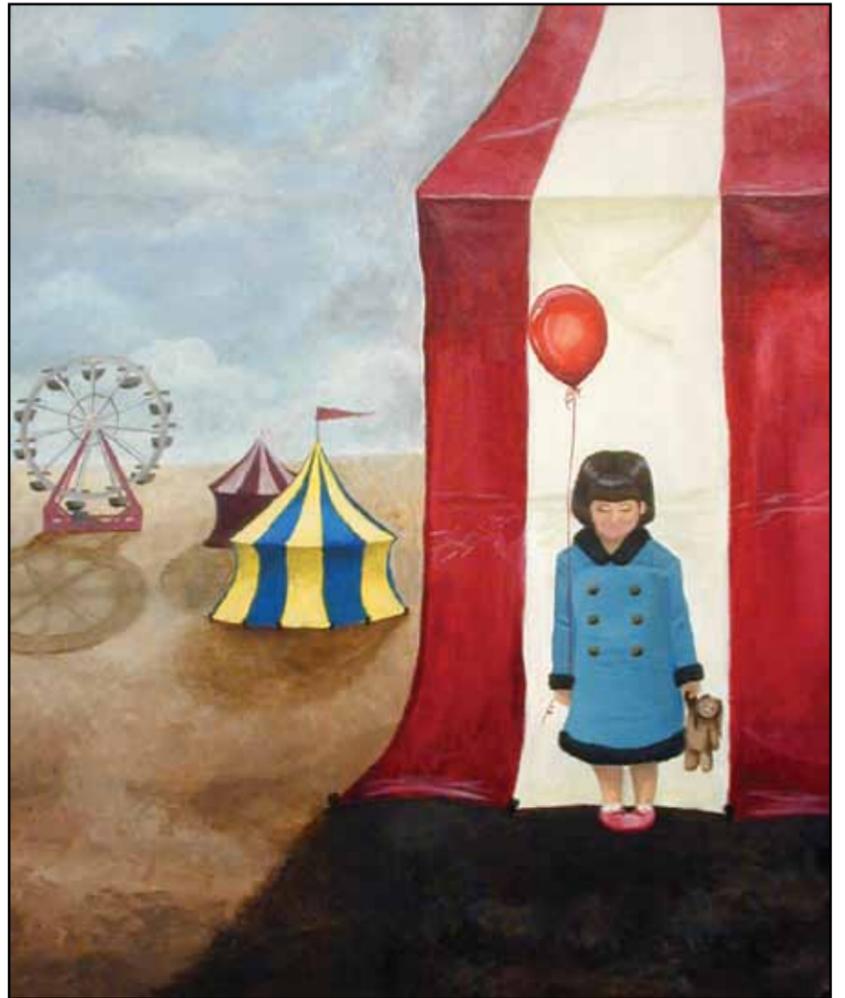
by New Garden Elementary School third grade student Yaneli Aguilar



"A Journal Page from Lady Kennett's Pressed Fairy Book" by Kennett Middle School sixth grade student Araceli Ayllon



"Flag" - Acrylic painting by Russell Reidinger, Kennett High School, Grade 12



"Untitled" - Acrylic painting by Loren McCarthy, Kennett High School, Grade 11

Celebrating Music in Our Schools Month

March is Music in Our Schools Month, and to celebrate we are highlighting the excellent music program that is offered to students throughout the Kennett Consolidated School District. Starting at the elementary level and moving through the high school, students are offered an array of choices that allow



them to grow and foster an appreciation and love for all genres of music. To facilitate this learning, Kennett has a staff of devoted music teachers that help students grow into talented musicians and graduate with a solid foundation in music.

“We make certain that every student has the opportunity to pursue all of their musical interests,” said Mr. Martin Beech, orchestra director and strings teacher at Kennett High School. He has been with the District for 37 years and has seen the program grow exponentially in that time.

“It was not too long ago that there were only three or four instrumental teach-



ers across the entire District,” said Mr. Beech. Today, with more teachers and more classes available at all the schools, students are truly able to pursue any and every musical interest they have. At the high school level, students who play string instruments may play in a full orchestra (along with several of the top woodwind, brass and percussion players) as a credit class and in addition may add String Techniques, a smaller class with individual instruction on their string instruments. These classes are taught by Mr. Beech. Along with Mr. Beech, Mr. Anton Romano and Ms. Katie Soukup complete the music department’s teaching staff at the high school.

Mr. Romano has been with the District since 1991 and currently serves as the school’s marching band director. Dur-

ing his tenure with the District, Mr. Romano has played an integral part in a change in the school’s music program - the creation of a full performing marching band from a parade band.

“It was fun to be part of building a culture in the school and the community with the creation of a football team and marching band,” said Mr. Romano. The marching band has continued to grow every year since its creation, with 78 student participants this year. The band competes in the Cavalcade of Bands circuit. “With the creation of the marching band, we have seen a

massive increase in instrumental music as a whole, from the elementary level on up,” Mr. Romano continued. “This year we have 150 students in middle school band, so we expect the number of students in both marching and concert band to increase at the high school.”

Many of the students who participate in marching band also participate in concert band (a year-round class scheduled into the student’s day). But, as Mr. Romano commented, “Since marching band rehearses after school and is only in the fall, it allows students who are carrying very heavy academic schedules an opportunity to still pursue their instruments.”

On top of the marching band, concert band, jazz band, orchestra, and small group lessons, both Mr. Romano and Mr. Beech oversee several student-led ensembles. Currently KHS has a woodwind ensemble, brass ensemble, string trio, and string quintet, but these groups

vary each year by student interest and ability.

Ms. Katie Soukup teaches vocal music at the high school as well as piano lessons. As with instrumental music, the high school also offers a variety of options for singers of varying interests and ability levels. Ms. Soukup teaches concert choir, a class which any student interested in singing may register for and participate in. She also teaches show choir and chorale (smaller, audition-based ensembles) and supervises several student led groups, including an all-female capella group. In addition, she directs the school musical, which rehearses after school and for which any student may audition.

Again working to accommodate the

musical interests of all students, Kennett High School also offers music appreciation and piano lessons, as well as two levels of music theory classes.

While continued participation in music education is optional at the high school, it is required at the elementary and middle school levels. In elementary school, a music class is built into the weekly schedule so that students receive two periods of instruction during each six-day cycle. The elementary music teachers follow both the Orff Schulwerk method and Kodaly philosophy in their teaching. These extremely hands-on methods of teaching focus around singing, speaking, movement, and learning the fundamentals of playing both pitched and un-pitched instruments.

Students at the elementary level have the option to begin taking string instrument lessons in third grade and band instrument lessons in the fourth grade. Fourth

on, tangible way,” said Ms. Barnes. “I want to get them up and moving in my classroom, singing and continuing to experience music.” Students in middle school have music class twice during each six-day cycle.

In eighth grade, all students in the general music program are given guitar lessons as their music class, providing all students with the fundamentals of a musical instrument.

The Kennett Consolidated School District starts from an early age providing students with as many opportunities as possible to learn and grow musically in any direction they choose. “One thing we focus on is not forcing students to choose between chorus, band, and orchestra,” said Ms. Soukup, “We want them to be able to explore every facet of music that interests them. That is one thing I love about the District.”



and fifth grade students also have the option to participate in chorus.

“The goal of the elementary music program is to build a strong foundation that will carry into the upper levels,” said Mrs. Cheryl Haley, Greenwood Elementary School’s general music teacher. “Each grade builds on the previous year, so students learn to read music, play instruments, and improvise to create their own music. We want to allow each child to express themselves as an individual,” Mrs. Haley continued.

At the middle school, students begin to have a wider variety of options available to them regarding their music studies. Students may participate in orchestra, band, or chorus, or simply continue with general music. Ms. Roseann Barnes is a middle school general music teacher. She taught at Mary D. Lang Elementary School for 29 years before moving to the middle school this year. At Kennett Middle School, Ms. Barnes has been working to build students’ knowledge on the foundation that was established at the elementary level.

“I want the students to still have the opportunity to experience music in a very hands-

The music programs at each level build on the foundations formed in the elementary school, and all the teachers work closely together to make sure students are getting the best music education possible, regardless of their interests or future goals. “All of the teachers truly help each other, and our classes feed back and forth off of each other,” continued Mrs. Haley, “and the students can tell.”

“Some of our students go on to professions in which music plays a major part, but many more students are likely to make music a special part of their lives, either as amateur participants or as active listeners. Music is so embedded into our lives,” commented Mr. Beech. “My hope is that what our music students learn and do here will stay with them and will help to make their lives richer and more rewarding.”



Students From Greenwood & Mary D. Lang Elementary Schools Attend Pennsylvania Technology Conference

A group of fifth grade students from Mary D. Lang and Greenwood Elementary Schools recently represented the Kennett Consolidated School District at the Pennsylvania Educational Technology Expo and Conference (PETE&C) in Hershey. The students, along with their teachers Mrs. Kelly Figueroa (Greenwood Elementary School) and Mr. Ray Schwab (Mary D. Lang Elementary School), presented the CNN Student News project that their classes have been collaborating on throughout the year.

At the beginning of the school year, Mrs. Figueroa and Mr. Schwab began having their students watch CNN Student News to introduce them to a news broadcast and keep them informed of current events. The collaboration began when the teachers developed a wiki page (a website that allows for the creation and editing of a number of interlinked web pages to facilitate collaboration) to facilitate student discussion around the current events. Each week, students were required to read or watch a specific student news story and post their reactions to the story to the class wiki. Current events topics discussed typically pertained directly to students, such as the federal government mandating school

lunches or bullying in the classroom. Mrs. Figueroa commented that "because these topics were close to students, they worked well to spark debate."

"The wiki was an excellent way to get a discussion going," said Mrs. Figueroa. "The students were excited about interacting with students from another school." Because the students became curious about the students at the other elementary school who they were discussing current events with, Mrs. Figueroa and Mr. Schwab even set up several Skype sessions so that the students could discuss events with each other "face-to-face."

Then one day, a student had an idea to take the project a step further.

"A student came to me and asked if we could make our own student news show," said Mrs. Figueroa. "I thought it would be an excellent way to get students more involved in learning about current events." Mrs. Figueroa and Mr. Schwab each chose four students from their classes to create a news broadcast that they called "KCS Student News." They worked with Mr. Francis Vander-slice's film class at Kennett High School

to edit and produce the broadcast. Students in Mr. Schwab and Mrs. Figueroa's classes then watched the broadcast and discussed the events by leaving comments on the wiki page as they had done before with the CNN Student News.

"I liked watching the news, so I really enjoyed creating my own news broadcast," said Merritt Connolly, a student in Mrs. Figueroa's class. "It was cool to talk about things happening in our own school and community."

At the Pennsylvania Educational Technology Expo and Conference, students who worked on the broadcast presented the KCS Student News broadcast and explained the project to conference attendees. The students also showed a short news clip and then used Flipcams (pocket-sized video cameras which are extremely easy to operate) to interview attendees about a current event, bringing their project directly to the conference. "The students were able to do a project while at PETE&C which made it even more exciting for them," said Mrs. Figueroa.

Mrs. Figueroa and Mr. Schwab's classes

are continuing to work on their wiki project by providing their opinions and discussing current events from CNN Student News. "The students continue to be excited about the project," commented Mrs. Figueroa.

Liam Sweeney from Mrs. Figueroa's class was one of the students who worked on the broadcast. He found that this project helped him in all aspects of school. "I had trouble with voicing my opinions in the past, but the news broadcast really helped me come out of my shell," he said. "I participate in class a lot more now."

Jennifer Escutia from Mr. Schwab's class liked that she gained experience working in a group. "I know that when I go to the middle school next year I will have to get along and work with other kids," she said. "This project gave me a chance to work with older students from the high school ... This is a memory I will cherish forever!"

Plans are currently underway to broadcast another segment of KCS Student News this spring with a new group of students.

Celebrating Kennett High School's 11 National Merit Finalists



The Kennett Consolidated School District is thrilled to announce that (back row, L-R) Sagar P. Karandikar, Casey Christopher Brown, Eric D. Allenstein-Lyon, Mark J. Koninckx, Justin Michael Lardani, (front row, L-R) Kenneth H. Bui, Rohit Ramanathan, Tess T. Amram, Elyssa Anne Skeirik, Abigail Catherine Frank, and Wenting Han have been named National Merit Finalists by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation.

More than 1.5 million students entered the 2011 National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), which served as an initial screening of program entrants. The 2011 National Merit Finalists represent less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors and are the highest scoring entrants in the country.

These eleven Kennett High School students will now compete for one of 2,500 Merit Scholarships that will be awarded on a state representational basis. In addition, the National Merit Scholarship Corporation estimates that approximately 200 colleges and universities are expected to finance some 4,900 college-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards for finalists who will attend the sponsor institution.

Parent/Student Resource Corner



Welcome to the Kennett Consolidated School District's Newsletter's Parent/Student Resource Corner! In each issue of the newsletter, parents and guardians will find educational web sites to keep their student academically engaged and challenged outside of the classroom. These web sites will assist students at various grade levels in literacy and mathematics:

The Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL)

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

The Purdue OWL is a wonderful online writing resource center for students in grades 7-12. This resource offers guides to MLA and APA formats, style guides, grammar rules, information on how to write different types of essays, and much more. No username or password are needed to access this website.

Online Writing Lab for Elementary Students

<http://www.edina.k12.mn.us/concord/teacherlinks/sixtraits/sixtraits.html>

This website is a great resource for students in our younger grades to explore writing with their parents. It focuses on six traits that make good writing work and provides useful information as well as activity ideas. No username or password are required to access this website.

Figure This!

<http://www.figurethis.org>

Figure This! is a website that offers a variety of mathematical challenges aimed at middle school students and their families. The challenges are designed to teach students how to apply complicated mathematical principles in real-world situations. No username or password are required.

PBS Kids Cyberchase

<http://pbskids.org/cyberchase/>

Cyberchase offers a variety of mathematical problem-solving games for students in grades K-8. The games are targeted to each specific grade level and offer a fun, challenging way to reinforce math skills taught in the classroom. No username or password are required.