2008-2009 Property Tax Relief

Two years after Governor Rendell signed Act 1 of 2006, the long awaited first allocations to fund property tax relief will be incorporated into property tax bills this July. There are many questions circulating around the community regarding this “tax relief.” Following are some answers that will hopefully clarify the facts.

Q) How much will I be receiving in the form of Property Tax Relief?
A) Based on the $1,406,690 total property tax relief allocation, each qualified property owner will receive $239.

Q) How will I receive my Property Tax Relief?
A) The property tax relief will be automatically incorporated into your 2008-09 Real Estate Tax Notification. It will appear as a reduction in assessed valuation of $10,330 which based on the District’s millage rate equates to $239.

Continued on page 4

KCSD Strategic Available for Review

The Kennett Consolidated School District’s Strategic Plan has been drafted and is ready for the community’s review and comment. The plan was developed by committees that included parents, teachers, school staff, community members, administrators, and students.

Public Review. The plan is available to the Kennett Consolidated School District community for review and comment from May 8 to June 9, 2008. A printed copy of the plan can be accessed at the District Office and at Bayard Taylor Memorial Library, and an electronic copy can be viewed or downloaded from the District web site. If you have comments or questions regarding the plan, please contact the District Office at 610-444-6600 or email the Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Vicki Gehrt (vgehrt@kcsd.org) or our Strategic Planning Consultant, Dr. Sue Giancola (s Giancola@kcsd.org). Please note that expense or other resource estimates are not included in the plan; resources required will be identified and estimated by the committees charged with implementing the plan and by the Board of School Directors during annual implementation planning each summer.

District Committees. The District will be forming four ongoing, new committees based on the recommendations from the Strategic Planning Steering Committee and subcommittees.

Continued on page 3

KCSD and Kennett After-School Association Honored with State Award

In April, Ms. Jane Buttermore, Vice President of Operations for Sodexho School Services presented the Kennett Consolidated School District and the Kennett After-School Association with the 2008 Civic Star Award for Pennsylvania for their partnership that brings After-The-Bell to middle school students.

“We are so proud of our partnership with the Kennett Consolidated School District,” commented Ceil Sheffy, Executive Director of the Kennett After-School Association. “We are thrilled to have our partnership be recognized nationally.”

After-The-Bell is the only program that the Kennett After-School Association provides, is free for students, and comes at no cost to the District. The After-The-Bell program has three six-week cycles of fun and educational activities such as bowling, basketball, soccer, homework help, arts and crafts, ceramics, cooking, photography, computers and many more! immediately after school (3:15 – 5:30pm) on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Celebrating the presentation of the 2008 Civic Star Award for Pennsylvania are (L-R) Kennett After-School Association’s executive director Ceil Sheffy, After-The-Bell participants Guadalupe Ortiz, Karla Zavala, and Emma Nordgren, Kennett After-School Association’s Board President Sue Yocom, Kennett After-School Association co-Founder John Wood, Superintendent Dr. Rudolph Karkosak and Jane Buttermore, Vice President of Operations for Sodexho School Services.

Carole Koroluck Named Citadel Heart of Learning Award Finalist

Congratulations to Kennett Middle School teacher Mrs. Carole Koroluck for being named the Citadel Heart of Learning Award finalist! Mrs. Koroluck is an eighth grade reading and language arts teacher and has been working in the Kennett Consolidated School District for 36 years. She was pleasantly surprised by the announcement during a faculty meeting, as all nominations are kept secret. In addition to teaching, she promotes a passion for literature both inside and outside the classroom.

“It is an absolute honor to be recognized,” commented Mrs. Koroluck. “The reaction of my colleagues and my students who are sharing this joy with me is what touches me the most.”

Mrs. Koroluck began her educational career in the Kennett Consolidated School District at the middle and high school level where she taught reading to special education and English as a Second Language students. “I always knew I wanted to be a teacher,” commented Mrs. Koroluck. “I loved school, and I loved visiting libraries. I never wanted to be anything else.”

As an eighth grade reading and language arts teacher, Mrs. Koroluck is always finding innovative ways to get her students passionate about literature. Throughout the years Mrs. Koroluck has been instrumental in organizing several activities outside the class-room. One such activity are book clubs for both boys and girls including a Mother-Daughter Book Club. For 23 years she organized Reading is Fundamental book distributions for Kennett.

Another great initiative Mrs. Koroluck introduced to the middle school was the annual “One Book, One School” celebration where each middle school student reads the same book to enhance literacy skills and to bring the school community to-
You’ve Got a Friend in Me

Friendships are the most powerful connection we can have with someone, and at Kennett Middle School the Special Friends Club celebrates the power of friendship! The Special Friends Club promotes not only diversity and acceptance but also encourages friendship among every student in the middle school.

“The Special Friends Club meets a need for every child involved in it,” explained club advisor and special education teacher Ms. Amy DeFeo. “Our District teaches our students the importance of acceptance and diversity in our culture, and the Special Friends Club embraces these values while emphasizing the power of friendship.”

For some students the chance to experience the special bond of friendship is difficult. The Club gives students with physical or mental disabilities, as well as students that need to refine social skills, the opportunity to develop friendships among their classmates. “There are very few avenues for students with these challenges to make friends,” commented Ms. DeFeo. “The things they learn in the Club will follow them for the rest of their lives.”

From playing a game of Monopoly to reading a book together Club members share experiences that strengthen the bond of friendship. The time students spend in the Club makes a positive impact on their lives. Ms. DeFeo emphasizes that everyone in the Club is equal. Every student benefits from the Club, whether they are a volunteer or a student with a disability.

“My favorite thing about Special Friends Club is that we get to play fun games and learn interesting things about other people,” commented eighth grader Alicia Hipson. Currently there are about 40 active members. The Club is open to any 6th through 8th grade student. Friends get together during eighth period for about four times a week where they participate in special activities, games, and projects. If you are interested in joining the Special Friends Club, please contact Ms. DeFeo at the middle school for more information.

Kennett Consolidated School District Newsletter

The Kennett Consolidated School District Newsletter is published by Kennett Consolidated School District

Kristine Parkes, M.A., Editor

Designed by Gripp Communications
Produced and printed by Chesapeake Publishing

Page 2

Kennon Education Foundation’s Fundraiser a Success

On May 7, the Kennett Education Foundation (KEF) held its annual spring fundraiser dinner raising approximately $28,000. All funds raised at the dinner will go towards innovative grants, scholarships, and the endowments that support them. The KEF would like to thank the event’s sponsors for their support: premier sponsor Genesis Health Care, Eelon, Longwood Gardens, Longwood Rotary Club, Phillips Mushroom Farms, Walmart, The Bryn Mawr Trust Company, Edward A. Wood GEP (Wiemken & Associates), Bernardon Haber Holloway Architects PC, The First National Bank of Chester County, The Krapf Bus Companies, National Penn Bank, Taylor Oil & Propane Inc, and The Tri-M Group LLC.

The fundraiser, now in its 3rd year, was highlighted by keynote speaker and retired teacher Ms. Karen Geidel, Assistant Principal.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Kennett Consolidated School District does 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 compliance 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 Dr. Michael Barber, Principal, 601 Sunny Dell Road, Kennett Square, PA 19348, (610) 444-6620.
KCSD Strategic Plan Ready for Public Review

New committees currently include:
- District Communications Committee
- District Safety Committee
- District Security Committee
- District Additional Learning Opportunities (ALO) Committee

In addition to these new committees, the District also has the following District-wide committees:
- District Professional Development Committee
- District Technology Committee

It is hoped that each of these committees will include strong parent and community representation, in addition to participation by teachers, school staff, administrators, and students. Committee descriptions will be posted on the District’s web site; we hope that you will review the descriptions and consider volunteering your time and talent to one of these important committees. Parent and community participation is critical to the success of the implementation of the Strategic Plan. If you would like to be considered for one of the new committees or have your interest in one of the existing committees shared with the current chair, please contact Dr. Gehrt or Dr. Giancola.

Comments or Questions. We hope you enjoy reading the plan...many people who care about Kennett, including your neighbors and our local educators, volunteered their time and energy to create this plan for our community. We sincerely hope that you have comments or questions regarding the plan you will contact Dr. Gehrt or Dr. Giancola.

Thank you for taking the time to read the Kennett Consolidated School District’s proposed Strategic Plan.

Warm regards,
Dr. Rudolph Karkosak and Dr. Vicki Gehrt

Joining Together to Understand Differences & Similarities

In April, over 500 high school and college students, teachers, and community members from throughout Chester and surrounding counties came together for Kennett High School’s Multicultural and Diversity Awareness Conference. To kick-off the full day of empowering and thought-provoking workshops, keynote speaker Mrs. Tamala Edwards, reporter and anchor on WPVI TV Channel 6, delivered a poignant and honest speech highlighting the barriers she overcame in her life and the people and experiences who inspired her to open herself up to cultural exploration.

Mrs. Edwards grew up in a predominately African-American area of Houston, Texas. “I entered college knowing how to be black; it was the other cultures that I needed to learn about," Mrs. Edwards stated. “College forced me to look at being black in a different way.”

Mrs. Edwards concluded her presentation by telling the students “how lucky they are to be living in a moment in time that their parents and grandparents would never have imagined!”

The purpose of the conference, as explained by Mr. Ray Fernandez, Assistant High School Principal and Conference Coordinator, is “to share an understanding of the various efforts that people have made to promote a more successful living environment for everyone and to develop an association of people from many backgrounds, experiences, interests and goals.”

Mr. Fernandez explained that, “It is the joining of diversity that assists the participants in realizing that although we may be slightly different on the outside, we are all the same on the inside ... we all share the same dreams and fears.”

Kennett High School alumni Ms. Gaby Pedroza brought friends with her from Marywood University. Ms. Pedroza and her friends are members of La Raza LIFE (Latinos in Full Effect). “My goal is to bring a deeper cultural awareness to Marywood University,” Ms. Pedroza commented. “Being able to replicate this event at Marywood would be a dream come true!”

Ms. Pedroza and fellow Marywood University students lead a workshop entitled “Defining Stereotypes in a Non-Diverse Community.”

This year’s conference was the first for Kennett High School’s newest administrator, Dr. Michael Barber. “It is wonderful to see so many students from the region come together for a positive experience!”

The Multicultural and Diversity Conference committee would like to thank the sponsors: Exelon, Chatham Financial, Basiani Mushroom Farms, The School at Church Farm, Krapf Bus Companies, Giant Food Store #105, Burton’s Barber Shop, W&S Tax & Consulting, and Peter Lumber Company.

Greenwood Elementary Families Go Green

Greenwood Elementary School celebrated their annual Family Fun Knight with a “Go Green” theme to raise awareness of environmental issues while helping students and the community becomes eco-friendly citizens.

“The goal of our annual Family Fun Knight is to bring the Greenwood community together for a fun, entertaining time for the whole family,” explained Ms. Heather Connolly, co-chair for the event. “This year we wanted to encourage earth-friendly habits in the home and in the community.”

Families had a choice of numerous activities to participate in such as Paint Can Potting where plastic cans decorated with paint samples served as a miniature golf course. In addition, several local organizations were in attendance to demonstrate the numerous ways that families can pitch in to help better the environment. The Ashland Nature Center discussed the importance of keeping habitats for animals. Longwood Gardens talked with families about gardening and how recycling creates healthy environments. A representative from the Chester County Solid Waste Authority handed out information packets highlighting ways families can become environmentally friendly at home. Stars on the Move, a movable planetarium, illustrated what a nighttime sky would look like without pollution. It was such a great night,” commented Ms. Connelly. “We hope that by giving our families the necessary tools and resources to make healthy, responsible, environmentally friendly choices, we can educate the community as a whole.”

Over 500 people attended this year’s Family Fun Knight. All decorations, as well as the games and projects, were crafted out of recycled materials. Greenwood Elementary School would like to remind the community of the importance of reducing, recycling, and reusing to help create a better environment for everyone!

Showcasing KMS Science Fair Projects

Each year students worldwide compete in school-sponsored science fairs. Since January, sixth graders at Kennett Middle School have been busy working on their science fair projects as part of the science curriculum. The projects were presented to the school community and judged during the middle school’s open house.

“After learning about the scientific process, the students were charged with designing their own experiments,” explained science teacher Mrs. Rebecca Wesselman. “From researching their topic and writing a hypothesis to carrying out experiments, the students did it all. We are proud of the students’ work.”

Katie Otto won a first place ribbon for her project entitled “Deal or No Deal,” which focused on whether buying generic products is really a good deal. “My dad always buys the store brand of Cheerios, and I wanted to prove to him that there is a difference in taste,” Katie commented.

For her experiment, Katie conducted blind taste tests for soda, cookies and cornflakes. Her results showed that while 70% of those tested preferred Kellogg’s Cornflakes over the generic and 96% preferred Chips Ahoy over the generic, 68% of those tested preferred generic cola over Coke-Cola!

Other projects focused on whether organic cleaners were better than traditional chemical cleaners and what was the best product to use when frying eggs.

In addition to reviewing their peers’ science projects the day after the open house, the students welcomed scientists to their classroom. Professionals from various fields including cancer research, veterinary science, sound mixing, and kitchen chemistry spoke to the sixth graders about their careers.

Sixth graders Alex Herritt, Madisson Marin, Katie Otto, and Liliza Lopez pose with their Science Fair projects.
 Role models encourage us to make a difference in our society and at Mary D. Lang Elementary School role models are making a positive impact on elementary student’s everyday, thanks to the new Reach Out Committee (ROC) program at the high school!

Kennett High School Assistant Principal Ms. Tomorrow Jenkins created the ROC program in an effort to encourage high school students to give back to their community. “The program is designed to help prepare our seniors for the 21st century,” explained Ms. Jenkins. “As 21st century learners, students must focus on leadership skills, integrity, trust, and responsibility, in addition to their academics.”

As the pilot year of the program progresses, ROC is bringing high school seniors into Mary D. Lang Elementary School where they offer one-on-one help mentoring and tutoring for elementary students. The goal of the program is to create community service opportunities for students that help students grow beyond the four walls of the classroom. The program gives high school seniors the flexibility to volunteer in the community during the school day.

Seniors are selected based on numerous factors. Seniors must have passing grades and be in “good” standing with teachers and administrators, as well as good attendance. “We look for seniors that are interested in giving back to the community by becoming a mentor for elementary students,” explained Ms. Jenkins. “In addition to selecting seniors based on a variety of criteria, their daily schedules are also reviewed when being selected. It’s a great way to get seniors out into the community without interfering with after-school activities, sports, and/or jobs.” The selection process concludes with an informal interview.

Students are asked to commit to a minimum of one hour a week at Mary D. Lang Elementary and any Mary D. Lang teacher who is interested can become involved in the program. Fourth grade teacher Ms. Jacqueline Smith participates in the ROC program where senior Ryan Dicce visits her classroom everyday.

“Ryan is great with the students,” commented Ms. Smith. “It’s wonderful for the students to see a high school senior taking time out of the day to spend it with them. Ryan has been involved with the program since it started in October and anticipates visiting Ms. Smith’s class everyday.

“I’ve always enjoyed working with children,” stated Ryan. “It’s great to see how excited they are when I come in.” Ms. Smith says that Ryan is really great at observing the students and finding out what they need for a particular project.

Ms. Smith and Ryan work hand-in-hand helping students with assignments. For example, Ryan will spend a few minutes with each student to see if they may have any questions or need any help. “The students are really able to benefit from the extra one-on-one time,” commented Ryan.

“Ryan has been a wonderful contribution to my classroom,” stated Ms. Smith. “He even got the students interested in playing Scrabble to help with their spelling skills.” Although Ms. Smith has been trying for some time to create excitement in playing Scrabble, Ryan was able to take some students up on a challenge.

“One day Ryan and I decided to have the students watch us play Scrabble so they could learn how to play,” explained Ms. Smith. “Everyone gathered around us and soon after, everyone wanted to try to beat Ryan!”

The ROC program provides individualized attention as well as positive role models for the elementary school students. “The elementary students can see what they can be in a few years if they work hard and stay in school,” commented Ms. Smith. “Since many of our teachers here are female, it’s great to have a positive male role model for our students.”

Currently there are about 15-20 high school volunteers, and Ms. Jenkins is anticipating growth in the program. “Ultimately, I’d love the ROC program to expand into other community venues where students could volunteer,” said Ms. Jenkins. “By providing our students with community service opportunities, students become responsible young adults.”


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Continued from page 1

2008-2009

Property Tax Relief

Q) Does the amount of property tax relief vary per property?  
A)  No. All qualified properties regardless of market value, assessed valuation, and real estate tax liability will receive the exact same tax relief of $239.

Q) Does the amount of property tax relief vary by school district?  
A)  Yes. Each Pennsylvania school district received an individualized allocation of property tax relief funds and each district will have a different number of qualified homestead/farmstead properties.

Q) What is meant by “qualified” properties?  
A)  The property tax reduction is available only to those properties which have qualified as a homestead and/or farmstead. The Chester County Department of Assessment is the sole authority for determining which properties are qualified as a homestead and/or farmstead. To check on the status of your property, please visit the KCSO.org website and click on the Homestead/Farmstead button.

Q) Does the District benefit financially from the State’s Property Tax Relief Program?  
A)  No. The District is required to distribute the entire property tax relief allocation dollar-for-dollar to the taxpayers. In fact, the Board of School Directors was adamant about waiving the right to retain a 2% administrative fee.

Q) Where do the Property Tax Relief Funds come from?  
A)  Act 1 of 2006 provides two separate funding streams for property tax relief. First, the District receives a portion of the state-wide gaming receipts based on a very complex formula which includes consideration for the District’s real estate market valuation and personal income. Secondly, an allocation is based on credits applied against the District’s earned income tax by Philadelphia wage earners under the Sterling Act.

Q) KCSO’s Proposed Final Budget requires a real estate tax increase of 5.42%. What will be the net impact of the budget increase and the tax relief allocation on my 2008-2009 real estate taxes?  
A)  It depends on the assessed valuation of your individual property. If your property has an assessment of $194,500 or less, you will receive a net tax decrease. If you have an assessment of $194,500 or more, you will experience a net tax increase for 2008-2009.

For more information regarding Kennett’s Proposed Final Budget or real estate taxes, please visit the District’s website at KCSO.org or contact the Business Office at 610-444-6600. Additional information on the Pennsylvania’s 2008-2009 Property Tax Relief can be found at www.pde.state.pa.us/proptax.

Mother’s Day Café at New Garden Elementary

New Garden Elementary School fourth grade teacher Mrs. Kate Walls transformed her classroom into a hip, café-styled atmosphere to host the class’ first poetry session. Each fourth grade student was dressed in black and ready to snap as their classmates took center stage to present a special Mother’s Day poem (shown above; Samantha Anthony presents her poem).

In honor of National Poetry Month, students studied ten different types of poems throughout April. The poetry styles that the students studied included acrostic, cinquain, uta/tanka, haiku, sonnet, end rhyme, internal rhyme, limerick and triolet. After learning about each type of poem, students were challenged to write their own poem in the particular style. The only requirement for the assignment was that one of the poems the students wrote had to be about their mother. These poems were then presented at the Mother’s Day Café event.

“Poetry is important to teach students because it creates an outlet for their feelings,” explained Mrs. Walls. “Poetry is a type of writing in which all students can excel because it’s not the traditional written essay format. Creativity is encouraged when writing poetry.”

Mrs. Walls enjoys teaching her students poetry to increase their writing skills. “Poetry writing allows me to teach my students figurative language, counting syllables, and word choice in a fun, innovative way!” explained Mrs. Walls. “My students have come to love poetry by working on their own poems.”
Kennett High School
Dedicates New Steinway Grand Piano

The Kennett High School music department performed a special night of music during a dedication ceremony featuring its new Steinway Grand Piano. The purchase of the new piano was made possible by a generous grant from the Longwood Foundation.

"We are deeply grateful to the Longwood Foundation for making it possible to purchase a beautiful new Steinway Grand Piano," commented high school instrumental teacher and director of the orchestra, Mr. Martin Beech. "It will serve the District and our community for many years to come."

The concert featured the handcrafted, seven-foot Steinway as faculty members showcased their musical talents. Steinway Grand Pianos are known for their uncompromising standard for sound, touch, beauty, and value. Solos and ensembles by Mr. Martin Beech, Mr. Robert Hoch, Mr. Anton Romano, Mr. Eric Rutledge, Ms. Catherine Soukup, and guest pianist, Ms. Donna Beech, entertained the audience.

"The new Steinway Grand Piano will be used for a variety of events, including high school choral concerts, chamber music concerts and special events, such as the dedication recital that we held," explained Mr. Robert Hoch, music department chair. "It will also occasionally be used by outside groups such as the Kennett Symphony."

A grand piano is indispensable to a quality music program that serves as the cultural center for music. Instruments such as the piano are an investment for many years. The grand piano will be used by generations of Kennett students.

Mr. Hoch, Ms. Soukup, Mr. Beech and Mr. Romano teach instrumental music at Kennett High School. Mr. Hoch also directs the high school's band. Ms. Soukup directs the choir and chorus at the high school, and Mr. Beech directs the orchestra. Mr. Romano directs the high school's marching band. Mr. Rutledge teaches instrumental music at Mary D. Lang and New Garden Elementary School and also directs the middle school's chorus.

KMS Presents Willy Wonka Jr.

Ronald Dahl's timeless story of the world-famous candy man and his quest to find an heir came to life in the Kennett Middle School's stage adaptation of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. The young thespians and stage crew members should be applauded for their hard work and dedication to the production. The audience members laughing and singing along. This delightful performance was directed by Mrs. Heather Uster. Mrs. Patty Mancuso served as music director and Mrs. Karen Onew served as stage manager.

"The Ompa Lumpas sing of the whoas of being glutenous to Augustus Gloop played by seventh grader Andrew Yeni."

Greenwood Students Tour the Borough of Kennett Square

Greenwood Elementary School first graders experienced the hustle and bustle of Kennett Square as they participated in a walking tour of the borough during their social studies unit. The students were given a budget and supplies to build their own community as they took an inside look into the Kennett community!

"After reading several books about communities, we thought the tour would be a great addition to our social studies curriculum," explained first grade teacher Ms. Andrea Smith. "We visited all the buildings that are important to making a community."

From the post office to the police station, students discovered the importance of each building in their community while meeting friendly community workers on the way. Starting at the Kennett Area YMCA, students joined an adult aerobics class and even sneak a peek into the massage room! The Kennett Area YMCA provides community members with a variety of activities to help improve the quality of life for everyone in the community.

Next on the tour was the post office. A few students brought a letter with them to mail while they were there and received a stamp from the clerk at the front desk! Students also learned many interesting facts about the postal service. "Did you know that the U.S. Postal Service delivers about 8,000 pieces of mail per second?" asked Ms. Smith. "In order to deliver the mail, they use planes, trains, trucks, cars, boats, ferries, helicopters, bicycles, hovercrafts, subways, and even mules!"

At the Kennett Square Police station, students got a behind-the-scenes tour of the building, even the jail cells! Officer Santiago led the group through the station explaining the everyday tasks of the police men and women who serve the Kennett community. "If someone is not being good, they are brought in here," explained Officer Santiago as he opened the door to the jail cell. Students were amazed to see not only how small it was but also that there were no pillows or blankets either! The group concluded the tour of the police station in the meeting room where the police department gets together to discuss tactics, strategies, and other concerns the community may be experiencing. "We are very thankful to have these men and women in our community to protect and serve us," explained Ms. Smith.

Among other places the group visited was the Kennett Paper where they met the editor, Ms. Christine Barber. Students also stopped at La Michoacana, the local ice cream store, for a quick snack before returning to the Kennett Area YMCA.

Once students returned to Greenwood Elementary, they began thinking about creating their own community. "After reading about communities and experiencing our community first-hand, students were asked to build their own community," commented Ms. Smith. "They decided which buildings to include in their community and were given a budget and supplies."

Students described their community's building, its purpose, and the individuals who work there. Students held an official ribbon-cutting ceremony for parents to celebrate their community!
Discovering the World of Crime Scene Investigation

On the hit CBS show CSI: Crime Scene Investigation, Gil Grissom and his team of forensic investigators solve crimes by examining the evidence. At Kennett High School there are approximately 150 students who are learning that crime scene investigation is a difficult and time consuming job. This lesson is being taught by Technology Education Department Chair Mr. John Ferraro in the high school’s newest elective, CSI. The course, which runs three days a week, was designed to fit around core course labs and other electives.

“The district was looking for a high-interest course that would improve students’ logical thinking, deductive reasoning, and observation skills,” explained Mr. Ferraro. “The class is designed on the popularity of the television shows but is not intended to produce CSI techs.”

In fact, many students currently taking the class admit that they were attracted to the course simply because they like the CSI shows. However, many of the students also admit that they have found the class to be extremely interesting and engaging.

Just like Grissom and his team, the students work in teams to collect and process evidence. Each team is assigned a CSI lot that contains all the tools the students need to capture fingerprints, footprints, and “blood” samples (simulated blood is used). The course begins with the “processing” of a mock crime scene, and each week students are introduced to a different type of analysis from fingerprinting and hair and fiber analysis to questionable documents and interviewing witnesses.

The course concludes with students solving the crime based on the evidence they have gathered and processed.

“The goals of each week’s lesson are to first understand the field work or lab test that is presented,” explained Mr. Ferraro. “Once the students understand the hows and whys of the test, they are then challenged to process evidence in order to exclude individuals from the suspect pool.”

In addition to running tests, the students are given questions related to a particular type of evidence and test that are meant to challenge their reasoning. For example, when studying blood typing, this question was posed to the class: “As the client’s attorney, you have been provided with police videotape of the crime scene analysis. Do you notice that one of the investigating officers has a bandage on his hand. How could you use this evidence to your advantage?”

Mr. Ferraro is looking forward to teaching the course during the 2008-09 academic year. “It is a really cool course,” he stated. “I am pleased with the number of students who have taken to it!”

Mary D. Lang Fourth Graders Make New Friends

For the past four years fourth graders at Mary D. Lang Elementary School have been sharing friendship with preschoolers at Fairville Friends School in Men enhall. The friendship program, which pairs students from each school in a mentoring relationship, strives to enrich each student’s view on diversity.

Fourth grade teacher Mrs. Lorraine DesJardien explains that the partnership has multiple benefits for her students. “Activities such as partner reading helps to build the students’ confidence,” stated Mrs. DesJardien. “My students leave each visit with our friends at Fairville Friends feeling good about themselves and their ability to help others.”

In addition to sharing a love for books, the students sing and play games that get them working together as a team. Fourth graders Laura Corona and Ashley Peterson agree that spending time with the preschoolers is a lot of fun. “We like spending time with our new friends,” Laura commented. “It is fun teaching them things like how to do a treasure hunt.”

The students get together four times a year. Between visits they stay in touch by sending cards and letters to their friend. As Mrs. DesJardien explained, these writing activities help the students at both schools practice their writing skills.

Fairview Friends School’s principal Ms. Barbara Marchese explained that the school initiated the program to introduce its students to the diversity of the Kennett community. “Our partnership with Mary D. Lang Elementary School is a great way to connect with the greater community,” Ms. Marchese commented. “In addition to helping students explore cultural diversity in a hands-on environment, the model is a wonderful way to create goodwill.”

Kennett High School Graduates Ready to Work

Graduation is fast approaching, and while many of Kennett High School’s graduates will be starting college in the fall, some will enter the workforce. To assist students who will be looking for entry-level positions this June, Kennett High School business teacher Mrs. Jean O’Neil will be holding after-school classes on resume writing, interviewing skills, and office procedures.

“Over the years I have been approached by students who need help preparing a resume,” Mrs. O’Neil explained. “This year I thought that in addition to teaching students how to prepare their resume, I would help them understand the entire process from applying to interviewing to being in an office setting.”

Mrs. O’Neil points out that while the class is geared to the student who is looking for full-time employment after graduation, graduates who will be looking for summer employment are welcome to attend. Interested students should see Mrs. O’Neil.

Mrs. O’Neil is also hoping that businesses who are looking to fill entry-level positions will contact her. “I envision myself as a match-maker for businesses looking to hire a recent graduate,” Mrs. O’Neil commented.

Mrs. O’Neil can be reached by calling Kennett High School at 610-444-8620 or by email at Joneil@kcsd.org.

Civic Star Award. Continued from page 1

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Kennett High School seniors (L-R) Jena Rumer, Matt Cook, and Chris Baxter work as a team to determine “blood” types in order to rule out suspects.

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KHS Students Inducted into National Technical Honor Society

KHS Students Put Their Skills to the Test

Earth Club Members Plunge for a Good Cause

KMS Students Pickpocket for Poetry

Campus (CAT-B). Congratulations to Michael Hobson and Georgina Sanchez, who also won first place at the district competition. Michael and Georgina continued on to the SkillsUSA state convention in Hershey where they both took fifth place!

Members of the Kennett High School Earth Club joined over 250 people for the Brandywine Valley Association’s first-ever Make a Splash Polar Plunge event in February. The club raised $200 for the watershed organization which protects and conserves the natural resources of the Brandywine Valley. The event raised a total of $6,128 for the watershed organization.

"It's so important to conserve natural resources," commented club member Mark Longacre. "This area is booming with development, and we need to remember, now more than ever, to conserve what we have."

Several contests also took place at the polar plunge event. The club received an award for the group who raised the most donations! "It's a fun way to raise money for a great cause," explained club member Sarah Row. With 108 plungers jumping in the 42-degrees water of the Brandywine Creek, club members all agreed it was a wake up call. "It's a rush," stated Mark. "There was energy in the air and white legs everywhere!

Prior to the plunge, swimmers warmed up by a bonfire while drinking coffee and hot chocolate as they prepared for the cold dip! Many may think that going for a swim in the middle of February is just crazy; however, club members who took the plunge said they would definitely do it again. "We're Earth Clubbers," said Natalie Gustavsson. "That's what we do."

What line contains repetition in "A Noiseless Patient Spider" by Walt Whitman? To what does McKay compare the hills in "The Tropics of New York”? What colors are contrasted in "Peace on Earth" by William Carlos Williams? Poetry was on the minds and in the pockets of eighth grade students at Kennett Middle School during the school’s recent Pickpocket for Poetry event, where students were encouraged to pick their classmates pockets as often as possible!

"In honor of National Poetry Month, each student carried a poem in their pocket," explained eighth grade teacher Ms. Judith Jester. "Throughout the day students searched for answers to questions given to them by picking their classmates poems out of their pockets."

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Congratulations to eighth grader Katelyn Johnson who turned in the completed "pickpocket" sheets with the most correct answers. She was awarded a $20 gift certificate for Borders bookstore.

"We were very pleased with the student's effort in this poetry celebration," commented Ms. Jester. "The students were very excited!"

Ms. Jester read about Poem in a Pocket day on the National Council of Teachers of English website. "The faculty thought it was a great way to increase exposure to poetry," said Ms. Jester. "KMS certainly put their imprint on it!"

In addition, students also celebrated National Poetry Month with a poetry slam where students performed in front of their peers. Eighth graders also created an anthology of poems which can be presented to someone as a gift.
Mock Trial Team Presents a Winning Case

Kennett High School’s mock trial team went to court in late February as part of the Pennsylvania Bar Association’s Mock Trial Competition. This year marks the first time the high school has entered the competition. They made a big entrance by beating out West Chester East!

“Students benefit from the Mock Trial Competition by learning about the legal system, working together as a team, and sharpening their public speaking and debating skills,” commented Mrs. Colleen Barber, the team’s advisor. “Some students may enter the legal profession or decide to major in law and this team provides experience, support, and networking opportunities.”

The team put its legal expertise to the test, preparing both the commonwealth’s and the defense’s side of a kidnapping case. Over the two day competition, each team presented both sides of the case.

“Students began preparing for the competition in November,” explained Mrs. Barber. “It was a lot of hard work. Each student did a great job representing Kennett High School.”

Team members took on the roles of lawyers, litigants, and witnesses. The competition took place at the Chester County Courthouse. All cases were presented before a judge while attorneys and community leaders volunteered to serve as jurors.

The Pennsylvania Bar Association Mock Trial competition has been in existence for 24 years and includes over 290 high school teams. It is one of the largest competitions in the nation. Kennett High School’s team included Casey Brown, Paul Gaver, Kate Hanick, Richie Kletter, Colleen Shiflet, Elsya Skeirik, Jordan Liviningston, and Ryan Dicci. The team would like to thank attorneys Mr. Pete Dicci and Mr. John Jaros and school advisor Mrs. Barber.

KMS Plants Community Garden in Connection to One Book, One School program

Kennett Middle School’s third annual One Book, One School program invites faculty, staff, students, and community members to read Seedfolks by Paul Fleischman. One Book, One School is a school-wide reading program that brings the community together under a literary theme and incorporating a service project. This school-wide reading program blends the social aspects and rewards of reading with academic instruction.

KMS Reading Specialist and Chair of the KMS Reading Specialist and Chair of the One Book, One School program, Mrs. Alyse Haplin, explained, “One Book, One School draws us together as a community,” explained Mrs. Haplin. “Over the next few months we will transform ourselves by working together to build our community and our garden. We are looking forward to a wonderful experience!”

One Book, One School is a national service learning program designed to promote literacy and enhance students’ understanding of the natural world. It achieves these goals by connecting young people with nature, communities, and their school libraries.

The Kennett Community Garden Ms. Suzanne Mertz played a key role in the success of the community garden! She was instrumental in collaborating with the Kennett Area Parks Authority, the Community Gardens of Chester County, La Communidad, and 4-H to make the community garden a reality.

A plot of land has been set aside for each grade level, and students were invited to submit garden designs. The winners of the contest were seventh grader Michael Testa for the middle school, sixth grader Eric Hyzny and Danielle Eland.

Prior to the ground-breaking celebration, students enjoyed a behind-the-scenes look at Longwood Gardens. Students toured working greenhouses and discussed the technology of greenhouses in preparation for planting their garden. They also visited Longwood Gardens working vegetable garden and learned it produces 3,000 pounds of produce each year for area food cupboards!

Swimmers Excel at PIAA State AA Championships

Congratulations to Ryan Lynn and Kelsey Lafferty for their outstanding performance at the PIAA State AA Swimming Championships! Ryan placed third in the 500-yard freestyle and fifth in the 200-yard freestyle. He was also named Pennsylvania All-State and the Boys Outstanding Swimmer at the PIAA District 1 AA Swimming Championship. Kelsey placed twelfth in the 100-yard backstroke and was named the Pennsylvania All-State Honorable Mention.

KHS Wrestler Excels on the Mat

Congratulations to Kennett High School junior Kyle Bove for placing 7th in the 125 pound weight class at the PIAA State AAA Wrestling Championship. Kyle also placed second in the PIAA Southeast Regional AAA Wrestling Championships which qualified him for the state championship.