

# Cougar Connection

A Publication of Helen Keller Middle School and the Easton PTA  
March 2009

*"One can never consent to creep when one feels an impulse to soar.."*  
— Helen A. Keller



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The Cougar Connection is a monthly publication of Helen Keller Middle School and the Easton PTA.

Previous issues of the Cougar Connection can be found on the Helen Keller Middle School website at:  
<http://www.helenkellerps.org>

and the Easton PTA website at:  
<http://www.eastonpta.com>

## Principal's Pen

**Dear Parents:**

A school budget is the mirror of what a community values and aspires to. Given these tight economic times, however, it also becomes a source of confusion, frustration and pain. Therefore, my purpose today is to provide you with a clear and useful communication regarding the 2010-11 Easton School budget as it pertains to Helen Keller Middle School.

This past Wednesday, February 24th, 2010, the Board of Education unanimously recommended a proposed budget increase of 2.79%. In order to reach 2.79%, the staff and program reductions at both schools will be deep and could impact your child's education. Here at Helen Keller, two positions have been eliminated: a full time Music teacher and a full time Physical Education Teacher. And, a \$7,265 cut has been made to our extra-curricular activities.

Reducing a music teacher means we will no longer have a full time Choral Program nor will we have a full time

## CALENDAR @ A GLANCE

- March 1-26 CMT Testing
- March 9th Board of Education Meeting at 7:30 pm. (HKMS)
- March 10 Board of Education presentation of proposed budget to Board of Finance at 7:30 pm (Town Hall)
- March 11 Progress Reports
- March 12 PTA Meeting at 9:30 am Guest Speaker - Al Treidel, Board of Education Chairman (Easton Public Library Community Room)
- March 22 Public Hearing (SSES)

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Instrumental program. Rather, we will have two half-time programs. Not all students who want to play a musical instrument or participate in a choral program will have that opportunity. While not 'core' subjects, choral and instrumental programs provide the very spark that excites many students



about school when math, language, arts, social studies, or science simply do not. Not only do these Fine and Practical Arts classes frequently engage students in different modes of thinking and hands-on activities that appeal to diverse learning styles but the 'special' teachers often bring fresh perspectives to instruction.



Reducing a physical education teacher means our children will have less physical education time. Health education will be embedded within their physical education time. Physical education is critically important in early adolescence, when young people are concerned about their body image, physical development and attractiveness.

As I have often mentioned, research underscores the importance of 'school connectedness' for your adolescents' emotional well-being and avoidance of risky behaviors. Diverse studies suggest that extracurricular activities contribute more to adult success than do traditional academic measures. One study of thousands of students found that those who participated in extra-curricular activities, compared to non-participants, got higher grades, felt better about school, had higher morale, drank less alcohol and used drugs less often.

I ask all of you to show your commitment to all of our students. You can do so by:

- Make it your business to obtain as much information as you can.
- Attend the Board of Education Meeting at HKMS on March 9th, beginning at 7:30 pm.
- Attend the Board of Finance Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, March 10th at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Conference Room as that Board will next review the Board of Education's budget.
- If you can't attend a meeting, you can always email any member of the Board of Education. Contact information may be found by accessing the district's web site @ [www.er9.org](http://www.er9.org)
- Your voice must be heard. Do not remain silent only to speak later about what was or was not done.

Best regards,

**Joan C. Parker,**  
[jparker@eastonps.org](mailto:jparker@eastonps.org)  
**Helen Keller Middle School Principal**



## News from the PTA Presidents



### Attention Parents:

As Easton's educational budget is being debated, please be aware that: **WE'RE AT A TIPPING POINT.** To date we have done a great job with limited resources, but **WHY IS THIS YEAR DIFFERENT?...**

The consecutive years of deterioration to the budget have already meant critical cuts to our education. Additional losses will certainly damage the core integrity of our school system.

The infrastructure of our schools needs to be preserved: basic services, quality education, diverse opportunities. We already operate at a level of spending that is \$500 per student below the state average.

The town of Easton was recently voted #1 in Connecticut for small towns according to the Connecticut Magazine, but this designation cannot be maintained if the educational system isn't supported.

Hear the details and show your support for a strong educational system in Easton. Choose to attend **ONE OR ALL** of these key gatherings and make a difference:

March 9th, Board of Education Meeting (HKMS)  
 March 10, Board of Education presentation of proposed budget to Board of Finance (Town Hall)  
 March 22, Public Hearing (SSES)  
 April 26, Town Meeting (SSES)

**Heidi Adair** ([hadair@optonline.net](mailto:hadair@optonline.net))  
**and Laura T. Jones** ([stoneycbell@sbcglobal.net](mailto:stoneycbell@sbcglobal.net))  
**Easton PTA HKMS Co-Presidents**

## BE INVOLVED

Tuesday, March 9 at 7:30 pm  
 Board of Education Meeting  
 Location: HKMS

Wednesday, March 10 at 7:30 pm:  
**BE PRESENT** at the  
 Board of Ed/Board of Finance Meeting  
 Location: Easton Town Hall Conference Room.

Friday, March 12 at 9:30 am - PTA Meeting  
 Guest Speaker - Al Triedel, Board of Education Chairman  
 Location: Easton Public Library Community Room

Tuesday May 4 (tentative date)  
**VOTE, VOTE, VOTE** at SSES

## Certificate of Appreciation



With heartfelt thanks to the students of Helen Keller Middle School comes a certificate and a hand-written note. The actual certificate is signed by Col. Bricker, the Commander of the 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade and Command Sergeant Major, Larry Farmer. It may be seen in the display case in the front lobby. The hand-written note is from LTC Michael Morgan, Commander of the 1-17 Cavalry (part of the 82nd CAB). The soldiers were delighted to receive the snacks, toiletries and cards from our students. The certificate is one that we can be very proud to have received.

Mrs. Weinshel is encouraging students to continue their support even when these troopers come home because there will be more to support ... those who are taking their place.

**Carol S. Weinshel**  
[cweinshel@eastonps.org](mailto:cweinshel@eastonps.org)  
 Director, Learning Resources and Technology  
 Helen Keller Middle School  
 360 Sport Hill Road  
 Easton, CT 06612  
 203-268-8651 Ext. 419

The Students of Helen Keller Middle School, Feb 10  
 We sincerely appreciate the "Goody Box" you sent. The cookies, coffee, and computer generated cards were generous and thoughtful. Your cards were colorful and well stated! Thank you for your support of our Troopers!  
 With Warm Regards,  
 AIRCAV!!  
 Mike Morgan  
 LTC, U.S. Cavalry  
 TF Saber Commander  
 Kandahar Airfield

## Media Center News

The Media Center is delighted to report that Birthday Book money has provided these books...and more:

### FICTION

Diary of a Wimpy Kid series by Jeff Kinney  
 "Hunger Games" & "Catching Fire" by Suzanne Collins  
 "Crocodile Tears", book 8 in the Alex Rider series  
 Caroline B. Cooney's latest mystery "If the Witness Lied"  
 "Don't Judge a Girl by Her Cover", by the best-selling author of "Cross My Heart and Hope to Spy", Ally Carter

### NON-FICTION

"Almost Astronauts, 13 Women Who Dared to Dream"  
 "Mission Control, This is Apollo"  
 "Claudette Colvin", the National Book Award Winner

## Helen Keller Ski Club

Our Ski Club season has ended with memories to last a lifetime. This year, more than 120 students skied with us. We would like give our heartfelt thanks to our sponsor, the Easton PTA. Ski Club is organized by two parents; however, we rely on the generous help and support from the 25 dedicated Keller parents listed below, many who attended all four ski trips this year. A special note of thanks to Joan Parker and Sue Kaplan for their direction and support throughout the season.

Ski Club has ended and we're looking for parents to help run the club next year. We are also specifically looking for a parent to handle registration and data input of student information into Excel. If you are interested, call Lisa at 581-0850. We enjoyed the Ski Club crew this year. Their smiling faces will be missed.

***Lisa Burghardt and Bill Gardella***

Tom Auray  
Azarian Hilde  
Dave Bartlett  
Joan Bennett  
Denise Bigelow  
Tim Brady  
Julie Dawid  
Linda Dilworth  
Robert Fey  
Tricia Fey  
Jim Gutmann  
Laura Jones  
Mitchell Kaufman

Michael Keden  
King Gerry  
Rose Knott  
Shelagh Kuhsel  
Paul LaGaipa  
Kyle MacGillivray  
Steve Miller  
Mark Mirowski  
Paul Provonost  
Shikha Sharma  
Scott Wilson  
David Wolfsohn



## Easton Boy Scout Troop 66 Hosting Fourth Annual Gourmet Breakfast



Easton Boy Scout Troop 66 will be hosting its 4th Annual Gourmet Breakfast on Saturday, March 13, 2010 from 7:30 am to 12:00 noon. The event will be held at the Easton Community Center located at 364 Sport Hill Road, Easton, CT. This event is the single largest fundraiser by the Easton Boy Scouts, which helps support their educational and skills development as future leaders within the community.

The gourmet breakfast features local culinary chefs, some trained at the renowned Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York. The chefs will be cooking made-to-order omelets, Belgian waffles, crepes and Danish Ebleskivers. You'll have to attend to find out what those are, but "delicious" immediately comes to mind! Traditional pancakes, bacon, sausage and beverages will be available as well. The Boy Scouts will be greeters, servers and bus boys.

Last year's third annual event was very successful and a delight to all. Due to popular demand we've started earlier for those early birds! It's sure to be a great way to enjoy a delicious breakfast with your family, friends and neighbors.

Tickets may be purchased in advance for \$ 10.00/Adults or at the door \$12.00/Adults, \$8.00/Seniors (65 and over) and \$8.00/Children (10 and under). Advance tickets are available directly through the scouts. Donations are welcome as well. For more information contact 452-9190.

Save the Date:

### 37th Annual Spaghetti Dinner

6-9 pm in the HKMS Cafeteria  
Friday, May 7, 2010

Tickets on sale in March.



Hope to see you there!!!



## **2010 Little League Registration**

Open to boys and girls residing in Easton born May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1997 - Apr 30<sup>th</sup>, 2005

**The in-person registration period for league  
and clinics has ended**

All registrations must now be completed online:

<http://eastonlittleleague.com>

2010 League Fees:

- \$175 baseball
- \$125 t-ball

Registration for winter hitting and fielding clinics may also be done online

***Winter clinics are subject to space availability and are first-come-first-served so register early!!***



## 2010 Little League Clinics

**Easton Little League is offering 6-week hitting and fielding clinics for all players**

Hitting / Fielding Clinic: 2/21, 2/28, 3/7, 3/14, 3/21, 3/28

Session I: Ages 5 – 7                      1:00 - 2:00 pm  
Session II: Ages 8 – 10                    2:00 - 3:00 pm  
Session III: Ages 11 – 12                3:00 - 4:00 pm

Clinic Location: Samuel Staples Elementary School Gym  
Sessions consist of 60 minutes of instruction  
Limited to 20 players  
Cost: \$ 100.00

All registrations must now be completed online:  
<http://eastonlittleleague.com>

**\*\*\*\*ALL NEW\*\*\*\***

**Free beginners clinic for new players**

Beginner Clinic: 3/7, 3/14

Session I: Ages 4 – 7\*                    1:00 - 2:00 pm

Clinic Location: Samuel Staples Elementary School Small Gym  
Cost: **FREE**

*\*Must be born before May 1, 2005*



# EASTON AYSO SOCCER



**PLAY TRAVEL WITHOUT PAYING FOR TRAVEL!**

**REGISTER FOR THE 2010 SPRING SEASON!**

EASTON AYSO SOCCER (A DIVISION OF THE AMERICAN YOUTH SOCCER ORGANIZATION) IS CURRENTLY REGISTERING PLAYERS FOR THE SPRING 2010 SEASON. EASTON AYSO'S PHILOSOPHY IS "EVERYONE PLAYS." WE WELCOME AGES 4 UP TO AGE 19 TO OUR PROGRAM. ALL PLAYERS IN THE U-12 & U-14/16/19 AGE DIVISIONS PLAY AYSO TEAMS IN OTHER NEARBY CT TOWNS AND GET PLENTY OF PLAYING TIME! EASTON AYSO COSTS A FRACTION OF MOST TRAVEL SOCCER PROGRAMS. WE WELCOME PLAYERS OF ALL ABILITIES & INTEREST LEVELS - JUST BRING A DESIRE TO PLAY! SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE.

***REGISTER BEFORE MARCH 20TH AND ENTER OUR  
RAFFLE –  
GREAT PRIZES!***

REGISTER ON LINE AT [WWW.EAYSO.ORG](http://WWW.EAYSO.ORG) (FOLLOW ON-LINE INSTRUCTIONS).

- **PLAYERS MUST REGISTER BY APRIL 7TH.** PLAYERS REGISTERING AFTER THAT DATE WILL BE WAIT LISTED AND PLACED ON TEAMS AS THEY BECOME AVAILABLE.
- REGISTRATION FEE FOR OUR SPRING SEASON IS \$85 INCLUDES T-SHIRT FOR U5/U6 & U12 & U14 DIVISIONS FOR FALL & SPRING SEASONS, AS WELL AS END-OF-SEASON TROPHY AND PICNIC. ALL PLAYERS MUST HAVE SHIN GUARDS AND CLEATS.
- IF YOU ARE NEW TO THE PROGRAM YOU MUST PROVIDE US WITH A COPY OF THE PLAYER'S BIRTH CERTIFICATE TO OUR REGISTRAR, AS WELL AS THE PHONE NUMBER OF YOUR LOCAL PEDIATRICIAN.
- CONTACT CHRISTINE CALVERT, EASTON AYSO'S REGISTRAR, WITH QUESTIONS ([CCALVERT@OPTONLINE.NET](mailto:CCALVERT@OPTONLINE.NET)).
- VISIT OUR WEBSITE [WWW.EASTONAYSO.ORG](http://WWW.EASTONAYSO.ORG) FOR MORE DETAILS ABOUT US.
- CONTACT TOM AURAY ([TOMA@BPTFITTINGS.COM](mailto:TOMA@BPTFITTINGS.COM)), WITH AYSO PROGRAM QUESTIONS AND/OR IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN BECOMING A COACH/ASSISTANT COACH OR REFEREE (ADULT & YOUTH).
- SOCCER EXPERIENCE IS NOT REQUIRED FOR ANY AYSO VOLUNTEER POSITION. WE WELCOME BOTH ADULTS AND YOUTH VOLUNTEERS! FREE COACH & REFEREE TRAINING IS OFFERED TO ALL. WE ARE A VOLUNTEER BASED ORGANIZATION!

## ON-LINE REGISTRATION IS EASY

NOW YOU CAN REGISTER ON-LINE AT [WWW.EAYSO.ORG](http://WWW.EAYSO.ORG)! SIMPLY GO TO THE WEBSITE AND FOLLOW THE ON-LINE INSTRUCTIONS. ONCE YOU ARE DONE, FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) PRINT TWO COPIES OF THE REGISTRATION FORMS (PER PLAYER)

2) SIGN BOTH COPIES

3) MAIL THE TWO COPIES, ALONG WITH YOUR CHECK, TO:

CHRISTINE CALVERT  
10 NORTH STREET  
EASTON CT 06612


YOUR CHILD WILL NOT BE FULLY REGISTERED UNTIL TWO SIGNED COPIES OF THE REGISTRATION FORM AND YOUR PERSONAL CHECK. ALL NEW PLAYERS NEED TO SEND US A COPY OF BIRTH CERTIFICATE FOR AGE VERIFICATION! ALL REGISTRATION PAPERWORK MUST BE RECEIVED BY 4/7/2010.

PLAYERS REGISTERING AFTER APRIL 7TH WILL BE PLACED ON A WAIT LIST AND WOULD BE CONTACTED IF THERE IS AN OPENING ON AN EASTON AYSO TEAM IN THE APPROPRIATE AGE DIVISION.

- REGISTRATION IS \$85 PER CHILD FOR OUR SPRING SEASON.
- MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO "EASTON AYSO."
- PLEASE CONTACT CHRISTINE CALVERT WITH REGISTRATION QUESTIONS  
([CCALVERT@OPTONLINE.NET](mailto:CCALVERT@OPTONLINE.NET)).
- *A "LAST CHANCE, IN-PERSON" PLAYER REGISTRATION WILL BE HELD ON APRIL 7<sup>TH</sup> FROM 5:30 TO 7 PM AT THE EASTON COMMUNITY CENTER'S CAFÉ.*

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING EASTON AYSO!

 **March 2010**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 CMT Testing	3 CMT Testing	4 CMT Testing	5	6
7	8	9 CMT Testing BOE Meeting atHKMS beginning at 7:30 pm.	10 CMT Testing BOE presentation of proposed budget to Board of Finance (Town Hall) 7:30 pm	11 CMT Testing  Progress Reports	12	13
14	15	16 CMT Testing	17 CMT Testing  St. Patrick's Day 	18 CMT Testing	19	20
21	22	23 CMT Testing	24 CMT Testing	25 CMT Testing	26	27
28	29	30	31			

