

HKMS Cougar Connection

October 2011



CALENDAR @ A GLANCE

Wed., Oct. 19	Ski Club Parent Orientation Meeting hosted by PTA; 7-8 pm; Media Center
Fri., Oct. 21	School Store open during lunch periods
Fri., Oct. 21	8 th Grade Transition Dance; 7-9:30 pm; Joel Barlow
Thurs., Oct. 27	EARLY DISMISSAL; Prof. Development; 12:10 pm; (SSES at 1 pm)
Fri., Oct. 28	Student Council Dance
Wed., Nov. 2	"Parenting Tweens" Coffee; 9:30 – 10:30 am; HKMS Media Center
Wed., Nov. 9	EARLY DISMISSAL; Prof. Development; 12:10 pm; (SSES at 1 pm)

PRINCIPAL'S PEN by Susan Kaplan

The newness of the school year is over and we are all settling into our routines. Extracurricular activities are starting up and I encourage you to review our website with your children to see the different activities available to them, and to encourage your children to get involved.

Our new student leaders have been elected, and it is my pleasure to announce them to you.

Student Council Officers:

Scott Howard, President
Carly Lenihan, Vice President
Vanessa Loo, Secretary
Reed Wilkerson, Treasurer

Eighth Grade Government Officers:

Scott Bindelglass, President
Lizzy West, Vice President
Katherine Waugh, Treasurer
Emily Powell, Secretary
Steve Gordon, Administrative Liaison

Congratulations to all our new officers. I know that they are already hard at work planning many great events for the school year.

On another note I would like to share the Helen Keller Middle School goal for the academic year with you. Our goal is "To embrace and adapt to changes in technology, student behaviors, and academic standards in order to prepare students for their rapidly changing world." Each staff member will be writing a professional growth goal related to this school goal.

On Friday, October 7, 2011 the teacher professional development day was devoted to two important learning activities directly related to our school goal. Teachers spent three hours learning about Google Apps and how they could be used to enhance student learning. Additionally, teachers spent three hours learning about the Common Core State Standards that the Connecticut State Department of Education recently adopted. We are required to adopt these standards effective 2014, as are all public schools at all levels throughout the state. This will involve significant work by all our teachers to meld these standards into our existing teaching, and our work on Friday is just the first step.

"The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a state-led effort to establish a shared set of clear educational standards for English language arts and mathematics that states can voluntarily adopt. The standards have been informed by the best available evidence and the highest state standards across the country and globe and designed by a diverse group of teachers, experts, parents, and school administrators, so they reflect both our aspirations for our children and the realities of the classroom. These standards are designed to ensure that students graduating from high school are prepared to go to

college or enter the workforce and that parents, teachers, and students have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. The standards are benchmarked to international standards to guarantee that our students are competitive in the emerging global marketplace.” - 2011 Common Core State Standards Initiative

There is much work ahead for us all this year and we are well positioned for a very successful school year.

Instruments Wanted

Do you have an old band or string instrument lying around the house collecting dust and you don't know what to do with it? Donate it to our wonderful Helen Keller Middle School. Regardless of its condition, we guarantee that it will be put to good use. Upon receipt you will be given a letter of donation with an appraisal value that you may use as a tax deduction. Thank you! Bob La Valle and Sarah Newman of The Music Department.



HKMS Newspaper Club Meets Mondays

The Keller Teller Newspaper Club will be meeting every Monday from 2:45-3 p.m. in the Media Center starting Monday, October 17th. The club is open to all sixth, seventh, and eight grade students interested in helping with the various aspects of putting together a school newspaper including; story development, editing, reporting, writing and photography. All interested students are encouraged to attend a meeting to find out more.

Developmental Guidance at Helen Keller Middle School

I teach the Developmental Guidance Curriculum to each student during the trimester that she/he is scheduled to have Health through the Fine and Practical Arts rotation. Below is a list of the major areas taught to each grade:

6th Grade

- 7 Habits for Highly Effective Teens
- Bully Prevention/ Harassment
- Digital Citizenship
- Decision Making/Problem Solving
- Career Exploration

7th Grade

- Rumors/ Reputations and Communication
- Career Exploration
- Sexual Harassment
- Peer Mediation/ Conflict Resolution
- Flirting vs. Hurting

8th Grade

- Character Education
- Cliques, Hazing and Initiations
- Risky Behaviors/ Relational Aggression
- High School Transition
- Career Exploration Continued

For more information please visit the Counseling Services page of the HKMS website or go directly to <http://www.hkmscounseling.com>.

Sincerely,
Patricia Thomas; HKMS Counselor

Nov. 2nd Coffee Topic Will Be Parenting Tweens

Please come join our Helen Keller Middle School Support Services team – Mrs. Thomas, Mrs. Heran, and Mrs. Klatt – for coffee and what will sure to be lively discussion about parenting tweens on Wednesday, November 2nd from 9:30-10:30 am in our Media Center. If you can squeeze in some time to read between now and then, please read *How to Hug a Porcupine: Negotiating the Prickly Points of the Tween Years* by Julie A. Ross. This parent coffee will be the first of a series of three book discussions that our school counselor, school social worker and school psychologist will facilitate for HKMS parents. Please RSVP by emailing Kim Heran, our school social worker, at kheran@eastonps.org.

Stop & Shop A+ School Rewards Program

From Oct. 6, 2011 through March 29, 2012, Helen Keller will have the opportunity to earn cash through your purchases at Stop & Shop. All you have to do is grab your Stop & Shop Rewards card and either:

1. Go to www.stopandshop.com/aplus; or
2. Call 1-877-275-2758 to register your card over the phone

Even if you registered your card last year, you must re-register this year for HKMS to receive credit. Your grocery receipt will tell you how many points you've earned for HKMS. *Peapod purchases count, too!* At the end of the program, we will receive a check to be used for any of our school's educational needs. **HKMS' ID is #07694.** Also, don't forget to encourage friends and grandparents to register their cards, too.



A Note from Your PTA Co-Presidents – Dona Zappulla & Ruth Straughn

Now that the school year is officially underway, the PTA would like to say thank you. Thanks to all of you who have signed up to support the PTA. Back to school night was wonderful, and there were so many people who signed up to volunteer their time to help at HKMS. We will be calling! As of now are enrollment is at 227 families that is 67%. Please consider joining -- the form is at <http://www.eastonpta.com>. Can't remember if you already joined? Please contact Contact Caryn Jack (carynjack2@optonline.net). Once again, if you ever have comments or concerns please contact either Dona Zappulla (6zappullas@gmail.com) or Ruth Straughn (straughn.ruth@gmail.com)

Pumpkin Patch at SSES

Sport Hill Farm will again be selling pumpkins grown in the fields they lease in front of SSES on Saturdays and Sundays from 10 am to 5 pm through October 30th. A percentage of sales benefits the Easton PTA and ELF, so please consider purchasing your pumpkins there.



HKMS School Store

The School Store will be open on Friday, Oct. 21 and Friday, Dec. 16, selling HKMS spirit wear and some fun school supplies:

Around Town:

ELF Cocktail Party and Silent Auction; Saturday, Dec. 3rd at Aspetuck Valley Country Club.



ECC Events for Middle Schoolers (not HKMS affiliated):

- **Battle of the Bands;** Sat., Oct. 22nd (flyer in this newsletter)

- **Middle School Trip to Lake Compounce's Haunted Graveyard.**

Rides will be open, as well as other scary surprises. Friday October, 28th; 3:30-10:30 PM; \$50 for members, \$60 for non-members. Transportation provided by the ECC. Limited spots available. Call 203.459.9700 to register by 10-24.

Easton Clean Energy Task Force Plans Electronics Recycling Collection

Easton residents can properly dispose of unwanted electronics on Saturday, Oct. 29 from 9 am to 2 pm in the parking lot behind Samuel Staples Elementary School.



Residents can recycle anything that plugs in or needs a battery, including the plugs and batteries, e.g. computer monitors, towers, laptops, keyboards and mice; cell phones; fax machines; stereos; speakers; telephones; TVs; plasma, CRT and LCD screens; copy machines; calculators; and household appliances. The company protects the “identity” of a recycled computer’s owner by securely erasing all data left on the machines, “within the standards of the Department of Defense, five times over.”

The collection, being handled by West Haven-based eReclaim, is sponsored by the Easton Clean Energy Task Force, in conjunction with Girl Scout Troup 31173 and the Joel Barlow High School Boys Hockey Team. The Easton Public Works Department is helping to oversee the event.

The Joel Barlow Boys Hockey team will be at the drop-off site to remove old electronic items from residents’ cars for them. (They will also gratefully accept any monetary donations for their team.) For information call eReclaim at 203-687-4445 or go to e-reclaim.com.



Hey 8th Graders

Wanna' come see how Barlow LIKES TO PARTY?

You are the VIPs at this dance!

Who: 8th Graders from HKMS and JRMS

What: Fall 8th Grade Transition Dance

Where: Joel Barlow High School Cafeteria

When: Friday, October 21st from 7:00 - 9:30 P.M.

Why: To meet future classmates, dance, eat, and PARTY!

Cost: A check for \$12.00 made out to JBHS along with signed permission slip **MUST** be returned to your middle school office by Tuesday, October 18th. No student can sign up after this date or pay at the door.



And don't forget to shine because... This fall's theme is Movie Star Night

Sponsored by JBHS X-Period Group **REACT** (formerly TLMA)

Redding & Easton Association for Counseling Transition

Refreshments Donated by **JBHS PTSA**

This event is fully chaperoned with a police presence to ensure student safety.

Cougar Connection Info

The Cougar Connection is a joint publication of the Easton PTA and Helen Keller Middle School. It is produced the 15th of every month, September through June, and distributed by HKMS' email Listserv. To add or change your email information go to www.er9.org/sses/ and click on "Join Our Listserv".

Please submit any information – in MS Word format -- by the 12th of each month. Questions and submissions to Cathy Dunsby at cdunsby@yahoo.com

Important Websites

www.helenkellerps.org

www.eastonpta.com

www.er9.org



Helen Keller Middle School

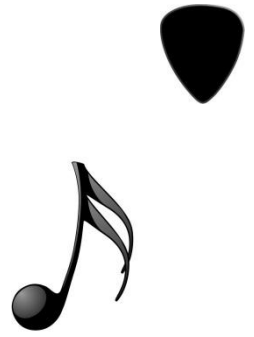
360 Sport Hill Rd.
Easton, CT 06612

phone: 203.261.8651

Easton Community Center

BATTLE OF THE BANDS

Live Your Dream of Being a Rock Star!



Start Preparing TODAY

Deadline to sign your band up is Tuesday, October 4th!



Sign up TODAY to guarantee a time slot in the Battle of the Bands. Bring all your friends to watch your band display its talents. We will have a panel of judges in order to pick the winners of the exciting prizes!

Time & Date

Saturday, October 22nd at 6:00pm - 9:30pm

Ages: Middle School Students

\$5 Admission at the door for fans

Bands Enter for FREE

Prize

The winner will receive a free professional recording session with SureSound Studios, a recording studio to Easton.

Contact Billy Barrett at (203) 459-9700 or email at billy@eastoncc.com to sign your band up.