


HKMS Cougar Connection

September 2011



CALENDAR @ A GLANCE

Wed., Aug. 31	First Day of School! <i>Welcome back!</i>	
Mon., Sept. 5	NO SCHOOL – Labor Day	
Tues., Sept. 13	Easton Board of Ed Meeting; 7:30 pm; HKMS	
Thurs., Sept. 15	Parent Open House; 7 pm	
Sat., Sept. 17	ELF Used Sporting Goods Sale; 9 am – 3 pm; HKMS Tennis Courts	
Fri., Sept. 23	EARLY DISMISSAL; Prof. Development; 12:10 pm; (SSES at 1 pm)	
Mon., Sept. 26	Picture Day	
Thurs., Sept. 29	NO SCHOOL – Rosh Hashanah	
Fri., Oct. 7	NO SCHOOL – Staff Development Day	
Mon., Oct. 10	NO SCHOOL – Columbus Day	
Tues., Oct. 11	Easton Board of Ed Meeting; 7:30 pm; HKMS	
Thurs., Oct. 27	EARLY DISMISSAL; Prof. Development; 12:10 pm; (SSES at 1 pm)	

Principal's Pen by Susan Kaplan

Do you remember the Heinz ketchup commercial about the “anticipation” (lyrics by Carly Simon) of waiting for the thick ketchup to pour out of the bottle? I am sure that I am not alone in my feelings of anticipation for the school year to begin. Tropical Storm Irene took care of increasing our anticipation for the new school year. While thankfully no one in Easton was physically injured by the storm, many of us in Easton needed to contend with the anxiety and tribulations of living without electricity for more time than any of us would have preferred.

There was great positive energy in the building on Friday, September 2nd when the staff was finally able to return to prepare for the opening of school. While there are many internal changes to Helen Keller Middle School, our staff will remain committed to working in partnership with you through your child's middle school journey.

If there is a silver lining to the delayed opening of school, it may be the extra time that it afforded me to work with our new Assistant Principal, Mrs. Kathy Burke, before school begins. I can assure you that we absolutely made the right choice. Her warmth and insights are wonderful, and I know that when you meet her you'll agree that she is a perfect fit for our school. In addition to Kathy Burke, the following staff members are new to the Easton School District:

- Mrs. Tiffany Antkies: 6th and 8th Grade Science Teacher
- Mr. Adam Bourret: Health and Physical Education Teacher
- Ms. Lindsay Fuchs: Student Teacher in 7th and 8th Grade World Language
- Ms. Mary Giunti: 7th and 8th Grade Spanish Long-Term Substitute Teacher
- Ms. Nicole Gross: Counseling Intern
- Ms. Megan Martin: 6th and 7th Grade Spanish Teacher
- Ms. Sarah Newman: Strings and Choral Teacher
- Mr. Jeffrey Schupp: 7th and 8th Grade Science Long Term Substitute Teacher
- Mr. Aiden Stewart: Speech and Language Paraprofessional
- Ms. Toni Veteri: Special Education Teacher

I look forward to introducing these staff members to you during the evening of our Open House on Thursday, September 15th. The program will begin promptly at 7 pm in the cafeteria.

2011 – 2012 Calendar

The finalized calendar for this school year is online at:

<http://www.er9.org/Calendars/RevisedApproved2011-2012SchoolCalendar.pdf>

The current (tentative) last day of this school year is Tues., June 19, 2012.

Introducing the HKMS Support Services Staff

Helen Keller Middle School is fortunate to have a **School Counselor**, a **School Psychologist** and a **School Social Worker** working as a team within the building. Their offices are located directly across from the Main Office in the Guidance Suite. Although the team does share many similar roles, below you will find a description of the types of services each staff member provides to the Helen Keller Community. Please find the link to the Counseling Services website: <http://www.hkmscounseling.com> on the HKMS main webpage, where you will find additional information and program descriptions; such as peer mediation, lunch bunch groups to assist with transition and to make new friends, and the developmental guidance curriculum.

Mrs. Patricia Thomas is the school counselor. She addresses student's academic, social, and emotional needs in order to maximize school success. Mrs. Thomas works to ensure that a safe environment is provided for all students and that the human rights of students are not violated by other staff or peers. She does this through advocacy, leadership and collaboration. Mrs. Thomas also provides individual and group counseling, parent consultation, in addition to teaching Developmental Guidance classes to all grade levels.

Mrs. Meredith Klatt is the school psychologist. She collaborates with teachers, parents and administrators to find solutions to learning and behavior problems. She also provides psychological evaluations when a child is referred through the Planning and Placement Team (PPT). She also provides individual and group counseling. Mrs. Klatt collaborates with the school social worker, school counselor, and private mental health therapists regarding students' social-emotional functioning.

Mrs. Kim Heran is the school social worker. The school social worker works to make sure children's physical, social, emotional and educational needs are being met within the school. Mrs. Heran provides individual and group counseling to students in need and offers parent support and guidance. She also consults with teachers, administrators and other school personnel regarding student's social-emotional functioning. Additionally, Mrs. Heran collaborates with the school psychologist, school counselor, and outside professionals. She can provide referrals to families in need of outside counseling or other community resources.

Evening Benefits Outdoor Classroom in Memory of Joan Parker

"Fall into Fashion", a family-friendly event being planned by the student council, will be held on Fri., Oct. 14 from 7-9 pm at HKMS. The evening features a fashion show of students and teachers modeling trends generously provided by area clothiers, as well as sweets, treats, a silent auction and other entertainment. All proceeds benefit the development of an outdoor learning environment at HKMS, which was long the dream of beloved late principal Mrs. Parker. Tickets, which range from \$10 - \$25, are available in the office or can be purchased at the door.

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

To new and returning parents: Welcome to the 2011-2012 school year! We are your PTA co-presidents for Helen Keller, and we are excited to have this opportunity. Our role is to serve as liaisons between the parent community and the Keller community of teachers and staff. We look forward to

your ideas, input and feedback as to how we can make the most of your child's experience at Helen Keller.

Your involvement is still important, even though our children find more independence at HKMS compared to elementary school, and we try to make it possible. Here are some ways that you can make a difference at the school:

- Coordinate or help at the BOOK FAIR
- Help at the SCHOOL STORE
- Chaperone SKI CLUB
- Bake for special events
- Assist at SCHOOL LIBRARY
- Offer your special talents/interests through EXTRACURRICULARS

Please email us if you are able to help, or if you have any questions. We look forward to a wonderful year!

Dona Zappulla (6zappullas@gmail.com) & Ruth Straughn (straughn.ruth@gmail.com)

Meet Your PTA Executive Board

- HKMS Co-President - Ruth Straughn: This is Ruth's first year on the board and she has a son in 6th grade and a daughter in 4th grade.
- HKMS Co-President - Dona Zappulla: This is Dona's first year on the board and she has a daughter in 9th grade, a son in 6th grade, a daughter in 4th grade, and a son in 1st grade.
- Membership - Caryn Jack: This is Caryn's first year on the board and she has a son in 4th grade and a daughter in 3rd grade.
- Recording Secretary - Jill Jarvis: This is Jill's second year on the board she and has a son in 1st grade and a two-year old daughter.
- Corresponding Secretary - Melinda O'Brien: This is Melinda's second year on the board and has daughters in 9th, 8th, and 5th grades and a son in 3rd grade.
- Treasurer - Christine Eden: This is Christine's first year on the board and she has a daughter in 6th grade and a son in 5th grade.
- Treasurer - Cathie Gordon: This is Cathie's second time being on the board; she was on several year ago as treasurer and has graciously agreed to take on the same position again. She has sons in 9th and 8th grades and a daughter in 7th grade

PTA Fall Fundraiser

Your student should have brought home an Innisbrook packet in his or backpack, with a selection of wrapping paper, magazines, treats and more. ***The PTA has reduced our number of fundraisers, but we really need to raise \$10,000 on this one to be able to maintain our level of support for the many programs we fund or subsidize at HKMS and SSES.*** The deadline for ordering is Sept. 28th. Questions to Rachel Rios at rachelrios01@sbcglobal.net.



HKMS School Store

The School Store will be open on the following Fridays, selling HKMS spirit wear and some fun school supplies:

9/16	3/16
10/21	4/27
12/16	6/1
1/27	

We are looking for student volunteers to work during their lunch period, and parents to assist our workers from 10:45 am to 1 pm. Please contact Liz Dehler at ebufano@optonline.net if you or your son or daughter would like to help.

Book Drive Update



Thank you to all who contributed books last spring to the very successful book collection for the United Way/Read-to-Grow Book Drive. We collected 2,585 books – surpassing our lofty goal of 2,500 -- within two weeks, thanks to contributions from SSES and HKMS families, as well as the general Easton community. The project, coordinated by the Easton PTA, several SSES teachers and this year's new 6th graders, benefited children in the Fairfield County area by providing new and gently used books to those who otherwise wouldn't have books for their summer reading. The United Way/Read-to-Grow's total goal for this summer reading program was 100,000 and they surpassed it by reaching 101,773, thanks in part to this tremendous contribution from Easton.

ELF's Super Sporting Goods Sale is This Saturday - Donate Now

Drop off your sports equipment in the lobby of the Easton Public Library, the ECC, SSES or HKMS, or at the "Pod" container at the HKMS tennis Courts. ***The mega-sale will take place at the HKMS tennis courts on Sat., Sept. 17th from 9 am to 3 pm.*** Early bird admittance at 8 am for \$10. All proceeds will support the Easton Learning Foundation and benefit our teachers and students!



What to donate? Bikes, jog strollers, exercise equip., snow clothes and boots, skis, skates, rackets, playground toys, hockey, baseball, lacrosse, golf, tennis equipment, cleats...if you use it when you are sporting, we will take it! Please, no large plastic play structures.



Save the Date: ELF Cocktail Party and Silent Auction is Saturday, Dec. 3rd at Aspetuck Valley Country Club.

Around Town:

- The Easton Public Library's Annual Country Fair & Cow Chip Raffle is Sat. Sept. 24th from 1-4 pm. Featuring a pie-eating contest, apple pie back-off and much more. Buy a \$25 lawn square for a chance to win \$500.
- The Easton Senior Center is accepting donations for their Oct. 16th tag sale. Please drop-off items between 7 am and 3:30 pm on weekdays.

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



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Easton, CT 06612

phone: 203.261.8651

Easton PTA Membership 2011-2012

Dear Parents/Guardians, Teachers, and Staff:

We invite you to join The Easton PTA. The PTA provides many programs for the students of Samuel Staples and Helen Keller Schools. By becoming a member, you will assist in providing these programs and many other activities. For existing members, this is your opportunity to renew your membership. For families, teachers, and staff new to our school, now is your chance to join and become an active participant of the Easton PTA. We also realize that due to busy schedules, many people are not able to donate as much of their time to the PTA as they would like, but we still encourage you to become a member of the organization.

Why Become a Member?

- The proceeds go to support many programs at SSES and HKMS, some of which are listed below.
- You **must** be a member to be a room parent or to be a committee chairperson.
- Membership shows our children how much we care for and support our school.
- You will receive a complimentary Easton PTA, Student Directory 2011-2012.

Activities and Programs Supported by the PTA

enrichment Programs – \$1,000 per grade	5-8 Agenda Planner Notebooks
Parent/Student Directory	Wagner Connection – HKMS Newsletter
Samuel Staples School Calendar	University Day
Student Enrichment Events	Grade Play Productions
SOOP – SSES Newsletter	Cream Social
Sport Events & Family Activity Nights	School Store
Parent Education	Reflections

Please mail or return your tax-deductible check payable to **Easton PTA** to Caryn Jack-Membership, 85 Norton Road. Attn: PTA Membership to help support 2011-2012 programs. Thank you.

✂ _____ ✂ _____ ✂ _____ ✂ _____

Parent Name _____

Student Name(s) _____

Address _____ Phone _____

E-mail _____

Annual Membership Levels:

___ \$15 family membership ___ \$25 patron ___ \$50 star ___ \$100 superstar ___ \$6 teacher

Parent/Guardian at: ___ SSES ___ HKMS ___ BOTH



HKMS..... "MEDIA MADNESS "

The HKMS Media Center would greatly appreciate your support!

With your donation we can continue to build and update our media center with new book releases and student favorites.

A **\$20** donation will be used to purchase books for the students to enjoy reading as well as academic books for enrichment. Books purchased will be marked on the inside cover with a bookplate(s) dedicated to your child or family. Donations can be made at any time during the school year.

Student reading suggestions are always welcome and encouraged!

Questions? Please e-mail Kim Lenoci at: mrskiml@yahoo.com.

***** tear off *****



Enclosed is our \$20 donation to the Media Madness book drive.

Checks may be made payable to : "Easton PTA - Media Madness" and brought/sent to the Main Office. Please note "Media Madness" on your envelope.

Child's/Family name for dedication
