

Cougar Connection

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

"One can never consent to creep when one feels an impulse to soar."

— Helen A. Keller



Principal's Pen

Dear Parents:

All of us at HKMS want to partner with you to inspire our students to soar! Your talents, energies, and resources enrich our school and your involvement brings a viewpoint that informs our educational program.

To promote effective communication between us, please find below contact information. **Never hesitate to write an email.** Please know we strive to respond within twenty-four hours.

Contact the *Classroom Teacher* with questions about:

Classroom assignments and activities
Homework – grades and tests- interim report cards
Any concern regarding an aspect of students' classroom experiences should be directed **initially** to the classroom teacher.

Contact the *Team Leader* (Gr. 6 – Mrs. Linda Maggi, Gr. 7- Ms. Ann Scrivani; Gr.8 – Ms. Nicole Solis;

Fine and Practical Arts – Ms. Roberta Cioppa) with questions about:
Team policies – interdisciplinary activities
Scheduling of tests and assignments
Grade level issues
(i.e. field trip, etc.)

Contact the *Guidance Counselor* (Mrs. Pat Thomas) with questions about:

Scheduling
Adjustment concerns
Peer relationships

Contact the *School Psychologist* (Mrs. Meredith Klatt) or *Social Worker* (Mrs. Kim Heran) with questions about:

Mental Health Issue
Behavioral concerns, etc.
Family crisis

Contact the *Assistant Principal* (Mrs. Susan Kaplan) with questions about:

Student discipline
Bus issues
School activities
Attendance/tardies

Contact the *Principal* with questions about:

Any item not listed elsewhere
Any unresolved matter
Overall curriculum
Facilities
School-wide communication
Budget

Best regards,,

—Joan C. Parker,
(jparker@eastonps.org)
Helen Keller Middle School Principal

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

This is the first issue of the 2009–2010 school year.

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>.

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HKMS Birthday Book Club Form	http://www.eastonpta.com/pdf/hkms_birthday_book_club.pdf
ELF Stars Form.....	http://eastonlearningfoundation.org/stars_hkms.pdf
ELF Sports Equipment Super Sale Collection	http://eastonlearningfoundation.org/scoop09.pdf

News from the PTA Presidents



Welcome Back!

Welcome new and returning parents! Your HKMS PTA is being headed this year by Heidi Adair, a new Keller parent, and Laura Jones, a returning Keller parent. We are so excited to have this opportunity and look forward to your ideas, input and feedback as to how we can make the most of your child's experience at Helen Keller.

Our role is to serve as the liaisons between the parent community and the Keller community of teachers and staff. Our efforts this year are being driven by our desire to take an active role in our children's middle school years. It is so encouraging what has been demonstrated to date - there is a true desire from all of you to take an active role in helping enrich our children's middle school experience as well.

The amazing generosity that funded the extracurricular programs is case in point. Your donations have stimulated this community and proven that we are truly a special generation of parents. It's clear that we acknowledge how special these years are in our children's lives. We all remember our own years in middle school, our special extracurricular activities and how important they were to us. So, we all thank you for your donations and ask that you stay involved.

Our conversations with Principal Joan Parker have been so exciting and productive. We are happy to share with you that one of the PTA's focuses this year is to promote the many ways that parents can continue to be involved and also to create more opportunities for us to be involved in our children's middle school experience.

That involvement could be anything from helping out with one of the extracurricular clubs, sharing a special skill or interest you have, putting a fresh coat of paint in the school store or simply taking advantage of the resources at HKMS to enrich your family's experience with middle school. HKMS is your school and we're eager for you to get to know all that it has to offer and encourage your involvement. We're very excited about our new Principal Series of discussions. See our announcement below.

Most importantly, we want you to know that the PTA is here to do whatever we can to enrich the parents and teachers experience with our children, all in an effort to make these middle schoolers the best that they can be.

For those of you who like to know the numbers, here's a few details...

- Number of schools = 2; Number of PTAs = 1 (the PTAs share membership, meetings and many of the responsibilities for the various activities. They work very well together.)
- The amount it costs per family to contribute to the PTA = \$15 (plus some of your time if you want to lend a hand)
- Number of programs/activities/services provided by the PTA = approximately 57 throughout the year.
- Number of students participating in Extracurriculars last year = 398; total numbers of students at HKMS was 375. Some students were involved in more than one extracurricular program.
- Operating budget for the joint PTA = \$135,000
- Amount donated to Helen Keller student's through some of the PTA enrichment funds:
8th grade trip to Yale/New Haven for a high-level math program = \$2000
The Fossil Hunter" for 6th graders = \$400
Pedometers = \$300
"Physics is Fun" = \$600
- Numbers of hours volunteered by parents for helping PTA with these and many other activities = 60,000 (not really, but it's many, many hours -- too many to count)
- The benefit that your children get from all that PTA does in collaboration with administration and staff, making Helen Keller the wonderful school that it is = PRICELESS.

We look forward to working with you throughout the school year,

Very sincerely,

Heidi Adair (hadair@optonline.net)

and Laura T. Jones
(stoneybell@sbcglobal.net)

Easton PTA HKMS Co-Presidents

New at HKMS: Principal Series

We are happy to introduce a new on-going series of discussions with Joan Parker and the staff of HKMS. Getting within the walls of the school, becoming familiar with what it has to offer and utilizing that knowledge as a resource for you and your family is invaluable.

We invite you to join us for a monthly discussion of relevant topics geared towards the middle school experience both social and academic. The programs that HKMS has in place, and the talented staff available to our children, are so impressive. We are eager to share that with you and invite you to share with US some of the topics you'd like us to tackle. This can range anywhere from bullying and peer pressure to the pro's and cons of Twitter vs. Facebook. We are all going through this together, so let's learn as much as we can to help our children.

Upcoming Principal Series Discussions at HKMS:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Wednesday Sept. 30	7:00 pm	HKMS Academic Support /SRBI
Thursday Oct. 29	7:00 pm	Trials and Tribulations of Friendships for Middle School Girls

Join/Renew Your 2009/2010 PTA Membership

Easton has one PTA that supports programs for Helen Keller Middle School and Samuel Staples Elementary School.

Go to the PTA website at www.eastonpta.com for a membership form.

PTA Meeting Schedule

The PTA held its first meeting of the 2009-2010 school year on August 13. Future meetings are scheduled as follows:

Day	Date	Time	Location
Friday	September 11, 2009	9:30 AM	Easton Public Library Community Room
Friday	October 9, 2009	9:30 AM	Easton Public Library Community Room
Thursday	November 5, 2009	7:00 PM	Easton Public Library Community Room
Friday	December 11, 2009	9:30 AM	Easton Public Library Community Room

Media Center Update

The Media Center will be selling 2 gb. flash drives for \$10. We would prefer students using these since we know they are compatible with our computers, thereby decreasing any difficulties they might encounter.

Additionally, the School Store has notebooks, folders, pens, pencils, sharpeners and other items that your children might need for school. All items are affordably priced!

Continue to check our website (helenkellerps.org) for updates. With a click of the mouse, the drop-down menus on the top and along the side will lead to important information for students, parents and teachers. Bookmark the website for ease of use.

—*Carol Weinschel*,
Director, Learning Resources and Technology
(cweinschel@eastonps.org)

Nursing Notes

Healthy Students Make the Grade

Just a few healthful tips that you may wish to follow.....

Nutrition....Remember to start the day off right by urging students to eat breakfast at home daily, and save sweets for an occasional treat. Always do lunch, students should know that skipping lunch is not an option because lunch gives them the energy needed to get through the day. Parents should realize that encouraging kids to eat a lunch rich with essential nutrients like calcium and protein, is very important.

Rest and exercise.....Also very important is talking with students about the importance of allowing themselves at least 10 hours for sleep each night, I do this all the time! Remember to keep moving too....encourage kids to participate in sports and other physical activities in school and out of school. Discourage them from eating in front of the television at home.

Personal Hygiene.....Remind kids to brush their teeth at least 3 times daily, to wash their hands after using the bathroom, and before eating, and to shower daily using shampoo and deodorant! Remind them to try to keep their hands away from their face, and items such as pens, and pencils out of their mouths! Did you know that 40 million Americans get sick each year from bacteria transmitted by unwashed hands!! Spending just 30 seconds washing your hands with soap and water will help you stay healthier!!

Don't develop bad health habits.....Tell kids in no uncertain terms not to smoke and to stay away from secondhand smoke!

Keep the following items in your medicine cabinet.... And keep a 2nd first aid kit with essentials in your car just in case.... (and/or prepare a travel size first aid kit to keep at home and packaged to take with you on vacations):

- Antiseptic, like a small bottle of hydrogen peroxide and/or a small tube of Bacitracin,
- thermometer,
- a package of throat lozengers, cough drops,
- a couple of disposable cold packs,
- pain relievers like Tylenol and/or ibuprofen,
- a small tube of petroleum jelly, great for chapped lips and moisturizing,
- scissors, tweezers and safety pins,

- sterile non adhesive bandages, band aids, large and small,
- adhesive tape,
- Poison Control Center CT., # 1-800-343-2722, (enter the number into your cell)
- sunscreen,
- anti-diarrhea medication, antacid, and any special medication that may be needed ASAP...like an asthma inhaler.
- enter all doctors/dentists phone numbers into your cell phone, so you always have them available to you where ever you are.

Being prepared with a first aid kit at home, and on vacation, or in the car will prepare you for any unforeseen incident. Also practicing healthy habits will keep you feeling better and you will make the grade!!!!

—*Mary Jane Bellenot, RN,*
(mbellenot@eastonps.org)

WOMEN'S LITERACY PROGRAM SEEKS VOLUNTEER ESL/READING/ MATH TUTORS

Mercy Learning Center seeks volunteers to teach English as a Second Language (ESL), Reading, and/or Math skills in its tutoring program. Tutors meet with their students at the Center for two hours twice weekly from September through early June.

Mercy Learning Center provides basic literacy and life skills training to low-income women in the Greater Bridgeport Area. In addition to offering a full-time, classroom-based intensive study program, the Center offers a one-on-one or small group tutoring program four hours per week. Over 500 women participate annually.

New tutors are always needed! Training is provided; teaching experience is not necessary. A training session will take place on Wednesday, September 9, or Thursday, September 24, or Thursday, October 15, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (lunch will be provided). For more information about volunteering as an ESL, reading or math tutor, or to register for a training session at Mercy Learning Center, please contact Diane Holmes by phone at 203-334-6699 or by email at diane.holmes@snet.net

September 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 First day of school	3	4	5
6	7 LABOR DAY No school	8	9 7:00 pm Open House	10 Bicycle safety @ 2:45 pm With Officer Mark	11 Jazz Band 7:30 pm	12
13	14	15 Portrait Day Yearbook 7:30 pm	16 12:10 pm Prof. Dev. Day Dismissal	17 Field Hockey will be on Wednesdays 3:00 – 5:00 pm and on Thursdays 3:00 – 4:00 pm Except on days of early dismissal	18	19 Rosh Hashanah
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28 Yom Kippur No school	29 Volleyball 3:00 – 5:00 pm	30	<h1 style="font-size: 2em; color: blue; text-shadow: 2px 2px 4px #000;">Welcome Back!</h1> 		