



The Sky's the Limit!

November/December 2009

THE HORIZON HAWK

Apple Monthly Newsletter of Horizon Middle School PTA • Central Valley School District • Spokane Valley, Washington

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Nov. 21 "FILL THE BUS" Food Drive at 32nd Ave. Albertson's !!!
- Nov. 25 EARLY RELEASE @ 11:45
- Dec. 1 Choir Concert, 7pm
- Dec. 8 PTA Mtg. in Library, 6:30pm
- Dec. 11 REPORT CARDS sent home with students
- Dec. 21 - Jan. 1 CHRISTMAS BREAK

NEXT YEAR!

- Jan. 5 Welcome Back!
- Feb. 5 Crooked Cane Classic Parent vs. Teacher Volleyball game
- June 11 Party with the Hawks!

**CV SNOW HOTLINE
228-5572**

PARENTS! You must Opt-In to receive the Horizon Newsletter!

Just a reminder. Horizon's newsletter is published electronically, meaning that we send it out via email. It is also available for download on our website. If you would like to receive a paper copy please send a note to school, or email us and give us your information.

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Parents,

What do you suppose I hear most often from parents when I ask what it is they want/need from their child's middle school? The answer: More Communication. Communication from teachers, administrators, and secretaries. Communication about school events, policies, curriculum, and expectations. Communication via phone, email, letter, or in person.

Here are some ways for parents to increase effective communication:

1. Be specific about what you want to know from a school staff member. 2. Initiate contact early on, especially if you are concerned or just want to ask a question. 3. Be specific with teachers about the means of contact that is best for you (phone vs. email). 4. Go to the source with your questions. 5. Don't believe the myth that suddenly it is taboo to contact teachers in middle school!

Another option I want parents to know about is attending our PTA meetings. Since we do not currently have a Site Council or Parent Advisory Committee, I get about 30 minutes to discuss topics that parents are interested in during our regular PTA meetings. It's great that PTA has allowed me to have this time to hear from you directly and allow for some open dialogue.

At the building level, it is a significant challenge at times to connect with our constituents in a manner that works well for all. We are continuing to explore better ways and strive to be timely and efficient in our communication. Our goal is to improve our standard of communication and open the lines between parent, school, and student.

This will be our last full newsletter prior to Christmas break. Enjoy the Holidays!

Sincerely, Mr. Hardt

*Horizon Middle School
The Sky's the Limit!*

HORIZON MIDDLE SCHOOL

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FILL THAT BUS!

FOOD DRIVE...

Horizon's annual "Fill the Bus" food drive campaign will be Saturday, November 21st, from 8-4 at Albertson's on 32nd Ave. Stop by; do a little Thanksgiving grocery shopping; and help our students fill the bus that will be parked out front. We are competing against the other CV middle schools, and all food and money collected benefits our local Spokane Valley Partners' food bank. Let's help make the holidays special for our families in need. And thank you for your continued support!

LETTER FROM YOUR PTA PRESIDENT

PTA UPDATE...

We had some new faces at our last meeting which was very nice! It's great to have more people involved. As we get more people involved, we will be able to do more, and thus help support our students and our school.

We are changing meeting times, due to a conflict with the University High School Booster Club meetings. We will now meet the first Tuesday of each month, however, our next meeting being an exception, it will be on the second Tuesday, December 8th, at 6:30 in the school library. Hopefully this new time will bring in more people.

We have set the dates for the "Crooked Cane" volleyball game and "Party with the Hawks." The Crooked Cane is a fun evening at Horizon where the students get to watch their teachers and parents (that's you!) huff and puff, up and down the court. **The Crooked Cane is scheduled for February 5. Party with the Hawks is scheduled for June 11** and is a fun, family event for the whole family with music, games, food and an auction. Please put these events on your calendars, they'll be here before we know it!

Our PTA voted at our last meeting to purchase two new projectors for the classrooms to replace projectors that have broken. These projectors have been ordered and should be in the classroom in a matter of weeks.

Our PTA meetings have been a great opportunity to talk with our Principal, Mr. Hardt. He brings current and upcoming information to share at the meetings. There is also time for questions and concerns. This is a valuable opportunity for you as parents to talk with Mr. Hardt in a group and to hear first hand what is going on at Horizon. I invite you to attend our meetings. The next meeting is Dec. 8 at 6:30pm in the library.

I know I say this at every meeting, email and newsletter, but if you have any concerns or questions please contact myself or someone on the PTA executive board. Recently, it was brought to our attention by a parent new to our school, that there is some misinformation floating around about our PTA. Fortunately, this parent came to us and we were able to address those concerns. If you are one of those parents who has been unhappy or turned off by PTA, please give us another chance. Our PTA is trying to do more to communicate and involve parents. We can always use fresh faces and ideas. You can't be part of the solution unless you participate.

*Have a Great Holiday, Kandee Sabo
Horizon Middle School PTA President 2009-2010*

Student Directory

We still have 2009-2010 Horizon Student Directories. If you haven't joined PTA to get your FREE Horizon Directory you can find out how on our PTA website at www.horizonmstpa.com. Directories are free to PTA members or \$3 each for non-members.

Horizon Clothing

Horizon students and parents can now order Horizon apparel. It is offered through E-Stores by ZOME. Lots of different items, with several logos and colors to choose from. Show your school spirit and support the ASB. You can find a link on our website at www.horizonmstpa.com.

HMS CONFERENCES FEEDBACK

Middle school conferences are a work in progress this year. I want to thank parents for your flexibility as we transition from one system to another. It is important to consider why we have students closely involved in conferences at the middle level. According to the National Middle School Association, "...Students should set personal goals for achievement of knowledge and behaviors..." they go on to say, "Students' self-evaluation is an important means of developing a fair and realistic self-concept." And finally, "Student-led conferences with teachers and family members lead to continuous two-way communication between home and school."

Here are some comments from parents following conferences:

6th: "I think it was well organized. I like having the students take responsibility. I would like to see more evening options. Thanks"

"I do not think my 11 year old daughter should be running her conference. I want time with her teachers to collaborate on her education."

7th: "This format was much improved. I appreciated being able to speak directly to each teacher. It was important to touch base with them-with my daughter. Thank you."

"Thank you. Both our son and us as parents thought this was a great format. It gave our son a chance to tell us what he learned, but we also got to speak to the teachers to go over the grades and get suggestions."

8th: "Really liked the goal setting process. Loved having access to the teachers—open forum was great. Thx."

"Really great format. Loved seeing the kids write their goals. I think they will get better with more practice. Also like being able to talk with his other teachers during arena time!"

More information will be coming to parents soon to give you a better idea of how the 2nd conference will look in February. Stay tuned!

— Mr. Hardt

Central Valley Schools Prepare for Winter Weather Reporting

As winter weather approaches, Central Valley School District is prepared to report school closure and delay information. The district will continue to report using an automated system which streamlines reporting to the local media. This same system is shared by dozens of school districts in the area. In addition to automatically alerting the local media about delays and school closures, the "Media Notification" system will instantly post the school closure or delay information online (www.cvsd.org click on "School Delays and Closures"). As was established last year, we will also post any urgent information directly on our district home page.

Any decision to close or delay school due to winter weather will be made prior to 6 a.m. Parents should listen closely for information about Central Valley School District schools which will be broadcast on local television and radio stations. Even when school is running on time, buses may be running late as they slow down to safely travel on winter roads. Some buses may follow "snow routes" in the higher elevations of our district. Information about changes in bus routes due to winter weather will be available by calling the Central Valley Snow Hotline at 228-5572. We appreciate your patience and assistance in the event of adverse weather conditions. Your child's safety is a top priority for our schools and transportation department. Thank you!

Want to volunteer at school?

We have heard from parents that they are interested in volunteering at Horizon. PTA feels this is an underused resource for our teachers and we are setting out to remedy that. We will compile a list of those who want to volunteer, with their dates and times available. This list will then be available to teachers who would like volunteers. It may be for a project, or a teacher who is interested in having someone in their classroom on a regular basis. At any rate, if you are interested in being more involved at Horizon, please go to the PTA website at
www.horizonmspta.com and use the "Contact Us" tab. Please give us as much information for dates and times available, and any other information you would want to include.

Parent and Student Input Key to Strategic Planning Process

More than 260 parents, students, employees and community members shared their thoughts about Central Valley schools during a series of 13 focus groups held last month. The focus groups are one of eight steps in the district's year-long strategic planning process. Focus group participants were asked to answer and discuss a series of questions designed to develop a common understanding of shared responsibility and commitment to Central Valley Schools. Reams of notes, draft commitment statements and other feedback are now being compiled for analysis. This feedback will be combined with other input to help shape the direction of Central Valley schools for the next three to five years. Thanks to everyone who took the time to participate in a focus group! For more information about the strategic planning process, visit www.cvsd.org.

DID YOU KNOW???
Horizon PTA recycles ink and laser cartridges and your old cell phones!
Simply send them in with your student. The collection box is in the hall near the office. THANK YOU!

Stay up to date with Horizon's PTA website ⇨ www.horizonmspta.com ⇨

Wish list for our library

Did you know our wonderful Horizon Librarian has a wish list?

Please visit the PTA website to check out the books that are needed. Maybe while you are out Christmas shopping or just shopping you could add one of these books to your cart?

Albertson's Cards

You must renew your "Community Partner" Link on your Albertson's Card every year. You can go to our website under Fundraising, and then to Albertson's CP Program to find a link to do that. Albertson's has been great to us. We want to take advantage of this opportunity, so be sure your card is up to date and you are directing your contribution to Horizon! This fundraising takes a small effort and is no cost to you!

Regular PTA Meeting Days Changed

Due to a conflict with the University High School Booster Club, we have decided to change our meeting days for PTA. We will now meet on the first Tuesday of each month, at the regular time, 6:30 pm, in our school library.

The exception will be the December meeting which will be Tuesday, December 8.

LEADERSHIP

Where do I possibly begin? I'll start by saying the Leadership class is busier than we have ever been this year. We just completed a rousing assembly that did a wonderful job of honoring our nation's Veterans. The entire class did an amazing and respectful job that brought tears to the eyes of many Veterans in attendance that day – including mine!

We have also completed more sports murals in the gym and are currently adding a little pizzazz to the boy's locker room. We are also creating a plan to display recognition for all our students of the month. Next on the agenda, we will be developing skits to be presented during 8th grade science classes with their focus being an anti-bullying message.

From the Principal Assistant's Desk

It is hard to believe we have completed nine weeks of school. Open house, football season, conferences, progress reports, and even Halloween are signs we have rolled up our sleeves and are fully committed to this year. It has been a positive start to the year and has continued on that path thanks to parents, students, and staff that make up our Horizon family.

So what's been happening?

THE GOOD!

- Students have been doing a great job of respecting our expectations with cell phones.
- Our dress code has been followed well with student willingness to follow directions.
- Conferences had a positive feel with an effective level of communication.

THE NOT SO GOOD!

- Textbooks are having a tough time finding their way into lockers.
- Our lost and found table has turned in to two with an ever-growing amount of clothing.
- We can't seem to get students to go home. They have enjoyed their day at Horizon so much that they attempt to blend two days into one.

The question is how to eliminate the "Not so Good" list? This is where I ask for your help.

- **Please remind students to put their textbooks away or possibly bring them home to use on homework.**
- **If your student is missing clothing from their closet, please feel free to come in and look through our lost and found table(s).**
- **Remind students of our expectation after school, going home by foot, bike, parent or bus, or heading to after school sports. Those staying after for academic reasons must prearrange with their teacher and parent and have a way to get home.**

Thank you to our families for their participation in our new conferencing format. We appreciate feedback to continue to meet the needs of our community. Please don't hesitate to call me with questions or concerns at 228-4944 or email me at tlarsen@cvsd.org. — Ty Larsen

6th Grade Math & Science

The sixth grade math classes are expanding their knowledge with the new math curriculum. We are finding that this challenging curriculum provides an opportunity for more skills practice. Most recently we have been interpreting and creating different types of graphs and determining the measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode and range).

The science classes have been studying the theory of plate tectonics and how this theory has shaped and continues to shape our dynamic planet, Earth. The next unit of study will be volcanoes. We will be finding out how and when they form, and about the composition of magma.

6th Grade Language Arts/Social Studies

In Language Arts we just completed the novel, Sparrow Hawk Red. The culminating activity was to complete a character map that showed how the main character, Ricky Diaz, changed since the beginning of the novel. We will continue examining the elements of character through selected stories in our Write-In-Reader.

In Social Studies we are studying the culture and geography of Ancient Egypt. The students finished a salt/dough map on Egypt and are currently engaged in analyzing the importance of the Nile River to the Ancient Egyptian people. They are writing expository paragraphs that reflect that research.

7th Grade Language Arts/Social Studies

Over the last few days I have excitedly shown Mr. Hardt the progress my students have made in their writing and ability to answer complex essential questions. It has taken at least eight weeks to develop the skills that allow a student to "gather information from a variety of sources". It has taken equally long to show students how to use concrete detail and commentary to show their understanding and "insight" about medieval feudalism. I am happy to report that I am so proud of my students because during the week of 11/9 through 11/13, they effectively answered an essential question each day. They were so very serious in their efforts and the results showed great growth in critical thinking, organization, and expository writing skills. Make sure to look at your child's efforts and congratulate them.

Now, from each assessment I also was able to determine the writing skills they will continue to work on.

- Expository topic sentences
- Expository concluding sentences
- Strategies to organize ideas and paragraphs
- transition words and phrases
- spelling... spelling... spelling
- capitalization... capitalization...

So, even with celebration of growth, the journey of skill development is far from over!

My students will continue learning how to use multiple resources to answer complex essential questions in literature and social studies. They will independently decide if a source is reliable and cite that source. They will continue to observe patterns of geography and social interaction, economic and political systems as we move from medieval history to Washington History.

Thanks for your Wonderful Kids! — Ms. Kielbon

6TH PERIOD

7TH GRADE EXPLORATORY: PUBLIC SPEAKING

On November 6th, sixteen students from Ms. Kielbon's Public Speaking class went over to Chester Elementary and told classic stories to the elementary students. Horizon students were required to memorize stories or paraphrase in order to be better storytellers. They were working on voice volume and inflection, connecting with their audience and being engaging. Earlier, "Jay" Kennedy, from KXLY, came to the class to work with students. He gave advice about using your voice to connect with your audience. His daughter, Emma, was one of the students preparing to tell a story. Thanks "Jay", the kids enjoyed your visit!

My students said that the hardest part was practicing their stories in front of peers. All students said it was difficult or even scary, but everyone managed to get through! Chester students gave feedback and thanked Horizon students for taking the time to give back to the community. Mr. Hardt was at Chester and also heard the stories and later gave each student a "Hawk Character Award".

Next, they will recite a poem from memory and prepare a demonstration speech around the holiday ideas & foods of Thanksgiving! — Karen Kielbon

JUST A FRIENDLY REMINDER FROM THE AD:

BOY'S BASKETBALL BEGINS MONDAY JANUARY 4TH!!

7th and 8th grade boys should listen for their sign-up meeting! All paperwork (physicals, eligibility forms, concussion forms, etc) and fees should be ready to turn in, before break, or on the 4th! **No physical, concussion, and activity eligibility forms = NO practice!!**

START DATES FOR REMAINING SEASONS:

Girl's Basketball-February 16th
Baseball, Track and Tennis-April 5th

VOLLEYBALL

Volleyball season is in full swing with all the bumps, sets, and spikes we could hope for. Please note, due to home wrestling matches we will still need to have three morning practices. They will run from 6:30-7:45am.
7th grade: December 1st-Tuesday
8th grade: November 24th-Tuesday & December 8th-Tuesday.

HORIZON COLLECTS

Box Tops for Education!

And why not? It's totally no cost to you and Horizon receives 10 cents per box top! Please send your Box Tops into the office and put them in the white Box Tops box near the window by the office. If you have received any grocery store **Bonus Box Tops** (they print at the register), you can put those in the box too!



Inside this issue of:



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FILL THAT BUS!



FOOD DRIVE...

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Bus" FOOD DRIVE campaign on Saturday, November 21st, from 8am-4pm. Everything collected benefits our local Spokane Valley Partners' food bank.

- **PTA HAPPENINGS!**
- **Letters from Hardt & Larsen**
- **Box Tops & Recycling Opportunities**
- **Grade Level News**
- **Boys Basketball begins in January**
- **Nov/Dec. Athletic Calendars
COME OUT AND SUPPORT
OUR HORIZON TEAMS!**



HORIZON MIDDLE SCHOOL

3915 S. Pines Rd.

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