

The Renaissance

DECEMBER 2006

35-59 81st Street, Jackson Heights, NY 11372
 www.renaissancecharter.org • 718-803-0060 • 718-803-3785 (fax)

Charter School

“RENAISSANCE AT 14”

Please join Monte for the December 20 PTA meeting at 7 p.m. as he talks about the past 14 years at Renaissance and discusses the exciting things ahead. Child care is provided for PTA meetings. Please help us to celebrate the upcoming new year and bring a dessert to share.

TRCS HIGH SCHOOL – A SPECIAL PLACE TO LEARN

By Stacey Gauthier

Mission: The Renaissance Charter School High School is based on the conviction that a change in the destiny of a single individual can lead to a change in the destiny of a community, nation, and ultimately humankind. Its mission as a K-12 school is to foster educated, responsible, humanistic young leaders who will through their own personal growth spark a renaissance in New York. Its graduates will be global citizens with an abiding respect for and active contribution to peace, human rights, the environment and sustainable development.

TRCS' high school has 200 students in grades 9 through 12. Our student body comes from all over New York City. Many of our students have younger siblings who also attend Renaissance. Most began their educational journey in much earlier grades – many as young as kindergarten! The faculty are all highly qualified and actively involved in the leadership of the high school. They bring to our school varied and rich educational and experiential backgrounds. Clara Hemphill recognized Renaissance High School in her book, *“Best Public High Schools in New York City”*. Each year our admissions' department receives many more applications than available seats from students in all the boroughs hoping to attend in 9th grade.

Our high school program is college preparatory, however at its core it is about so much more. Renaissance High School is personal, warm and inviting while promoting high standards. Renaissance High School is based on collaborative leadership that involves students, teachers and parents. We firmly believe that as an urban school we can reach high standards while ferociously guarding humanistic values. We offer a rigorous program, which includes regents' courses, honors level work and AP classes. All TRCS high school students choose a 3 to 4 year art major in drama, music or art. Opportunities for independent study, College Now classes and internships are readily available. Our College Bound Program spans all four years and is unique in that it intertwines individualized counseling, PSAT/SAT preparation, literacy development, the college decision and application process and career exploration into one comprehensive, cohesive and cumulative curriculum. Students have access to our Learning Center, which offers opportunities for academic assistance and advancement through seminars, mini-classes, tutorials, and distance learning. We also have an extensive offering of after-school opportunities from homework help to clubs to sports to student council.

Renaissance High School has some very special traditions including Social Justice Day and Rensizzle Week. The junior class in consultation with their faculty advisor, Ana Falla Riff, creates Social Justice Day.

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Collaborative School Governance

Cluster 1 (K-3)	Kirsten Westphal
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Cluster 3 (6-8)	Karen Joseph
Cluster 4 (9,10)	Mark Satinoff
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Treasurer	Hannah Li
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December 2006

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30

F	1	High School Rensizzle Week
W	6	CSG, 5 p.m.
		Board of Trustees, 7:30 p.m.
W	13	PTA Executive Board, 6:15 pm
W	20	PTA General Meeting, 7 p.m.
M-M 12/25-1/1		Winter Recess
		No School

“Developing Leaders for the Renaissance of New York”

Students design, teach and attend workshops on topics such as Sexism, Ageism, and Racism among others. Look for more to come on our upcoming Social Justice Day in January or February. During Rensizzle Week all regular classes are suspended. Instead students and faculty work in mixed-grade interest groups on topics selected by the students. We believe that by engaging a young person's passion we help to develop both a love of learning and a desire to be a self-motivated, independent learner. This year the groups included: Culinary Arts, Dance, The Bronx, Weird New York, Cycling, Video Games, The Urban Environment Project, Creating a Record Label, Queens Diamondz, Extreme College Bound, Extreme TLC and Athletics. Groups took trips around the city, met with experts in various areas, shared meals together, created culminating projects and ended in a wonderful whole high school lunch, sharing and presentation. A Homecoming Pep Rally for our boys' basketball team – The Renaissance Knights, followed it.

In 2006 we had a 97.4% graduation rate, which far surpasses the city and state averages. Additionally, 97% of our high school students were accepted to colleges and universities around the country including: New York University, Hunter College, Connecticut College, Skidmore College, DePauw College, Farleigh Dickinson University, Georgetown University, Vanderbilt University, Lafayette College, Boston University, Wheaton College, Dickinson College, Colby College, Stonybrook, Parsons, University of Massachusetts, SUNY Oswego, University of Pennsylvania, Smith College, Sarah Lawrence College, Brandeis University, College of the Atlantic, Queens College, Baruch College, St. John's University, Clark University, Syracuse University, Binghamton University, SUNY Purchase, Marymount College and others. The class of 2006 received over \$2,500,000 in financial aid. Four of our students received the prestigious Posse scholarship, which awards full tuition to private colleges and universities around the country.

We invite all of our families to visit our wonderful high school and see for yourselves what a stimulating learning environment it is!

REPORT ON CSG MEETING OF DECEMBER 6, 2006

By Mark Satinoff

The December meeting of the Collaborative School Governance Committee (CSG) continued its discussion and evaluation of the school-wide initiatives established last April. Three initiatives were on the agenda:

1. English Language Arts - Goals include: 1. Promote achievement at grade level in reading, writing, and critical analysis, 2. Infusion of arts into the ELA curriculum, 3. Encourage student engagement and portfolio building through technological resources, and 4. Maintaining literary skills classes and college bound classes.
2. The Learning Center - TLC strives to create a unique educational environment that nurtures cognitive, social, and creative excellence. It assists in the development and implementation of Individualized Learning Plans for all students. It seeks to provide the technology, materials, and personnel to every student for both remediation and enrichment.
3. Middle School Restructuring Pilot - The MSRP was implemented as a test program in the 7th and 8th grades in response to: 1. Flat standardized exam scores, 2. Students entering HS not properly prepared, and 3. Lack of student engagement. The school day was extended by fifty minutes. Student feedback has led to the implementation of interest groups/courses and after-school clubs. Math and literacy skills classes are offered for those who need additional academic support, including a math academy that meets Saturday mornings. There is greater collaboration between HS and MS teachers.

Shawn has been hired to replace Annette, who resigned, as our new fifth grade teacher. Rensizzle week in the HS just ended and it is felt it was the best ever. We will know within the next few weeks whether or not we are the recipient of a sizeable geography grant to fund our geography initiative.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DECEMBER BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

By Jacob Levich

As usual, money issues were central to December's meeting of the TRCS Board of Trustees. CPA Dennis Stamm presented a line-by-line analysis of our certified financial report for the year ending June 30, 2006, rating the financial picture as "OK to good" but warning that increased outside funding will become critical in the years ahead.

Accompanied by our development consultants, Rebekah Oakes summarized recent progress in securing grants, discussed the advantages of hammering out a five-year strategic plan, and presented the first draft of an ambitious development plan aimed at attracting serious money.

Anybody who has questions or wants further financial lowdown is encouraged to contact parent rep Jacob Levich, jlevich@earthlink.net. And remember: meetings of the Board and its committees are public, and you're welcome to attend.

INCLEMENT WEATHER REMINDER

In case of bad weather, we may decide to close the school for the entire day, delay the start of school, or dismiss students at an earlier time.

We will generally follow the decision made by the Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education. The Chancellor will make his decision by 6 a.m. Information will be broadcast on the following radio stations: WINS (1010 AM), WCBS (880 AM), WABC (770 AM), WLIB (1190 AM), WADO (1280 AM), WBSL (107.5 FM), WNYE (91.5 FM), as well as the following television stations: WCBS (CHANNEL 2), WNBC (CHANNEL 4), WNYW (CHANNEL 5), WABC (CHANNEL 7), WNYE (CHANNEL 25 AND NY 1 (CHANNEL 1) and on cable television.

If schools open late, start time will be at 10:30 a.m. School buses will operate, but the arrival times will be delayed by two hours to accommodate the delayed schedule.

2006 MATH TEST RESULTS

By Shelley Brevda

The NYS Math Examination of 2006 was the first time all students in grades 3-8 were tested and compared to the other students in the state, city and districts. Once again, the TRCS students have proven that we are on track. As you can see in the list below, TRCS was able to beat the state, city and district in all grade levels.

	<u>NY State</u>	<u>NY City</u>	<u>District 30</u>	<u>TRCS</u>
3rd Grade	80.5%	61.5%	71.6%	100%
4th Grade	77.9%	58.9%	66.2%	88%
5th Grade	68.4%	56.7%	64.4%	88%
6th Grade	60.4%	48.6%	57.3%	62.5%
7th Grade	55.6%	44.2%	51.9%	68.8%
8th Grade	53.9%	36.6%	43.2%	80.4%

Commissioner Ricahrd Mills issued a statement that these math examination were much more representative of the work on grade levels. In prior years, the 4th and 8th grade exams included sections that were from earlier grades. Therefore, we cannot compare the results from years past with the results of 2006. These are now the baselines for future comparisons.

Congratulations to all - students, parents and staff for a job well done.

AFTER-SCHOOL ART CLASSES

Niizeki Hiromi (mother of Yui in first grade) has generously offered to hold art classes in the after-school program for the month of December. Classes meet in front of the first grade classroom and run from 3:30-5 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The same project will be taught each week, but will change weekly. Children, who choose to participate on both days, may do a more involved project or may do multiple projects. While there is an hourly charge for after-school, there is no additional charge for this fun and exciting class.

Ten children (from grades K-4) attended the first class held on December 5. For this class, the children made "Magic Books" with a simple piece of card stock, scissors and a piece of tape. The books can open to reveal secret pages complete with wonderful drawings by each student using colored pencils, markers and Letraset letters. In subsequent weeks, Hiromi hopes to do holiday projects, possibly including candle decoration, game making and a small hanging sculpture.

Hiromi holds degrees in painting and art education from Musashino Art University in Tokyo and the Art Students League of New York. She has published and exhibited extensively and is currently represented by George Billis Gallery (www.georgebillis.com/artists/n_hiromi)

If you are interested, please come see the class. Or if you have any questions or suggestions, please let her know (zhiromi@yahoo.com). We hope that you can attend!

SUPPORT OUR RENAISSANCE KNIGHTS!

Please support our boys' basketball team by attending any of the home games on December 18, January 5, 8 and 19. All games start at 5 p.m. and are played at I.S. 145 at 33-34 80th Street in Jackson Heights.

WISHES AND WANTS

Teachers and staff have made the following requests. Please help grant their wishes and wants. Remember any wish or want can come true.

Botball team needs a few old laptops for robot programming. Laptops must have:

- serial port
- network jack (RJ-45)
- charger/power supply
- original restored disk

Carol's second grade class is looking for:

- old-fashioned wallpaper sample books to use for writing workshop book covers (pretty colors and designs)
- old CDs for art projects (snowflakes, sun catchers, etc.)

TRCS STUDENTS HELPING THE COMMUNITY

Carol's second grade and Daniela's third grade kids raised \$277.22 through donations for the NYC Rescue Mission. This amount will provide 141 dinners for people in need.

The seventh and eighth grade student advisories sponsored a coat drive from December 4-15 to benefit the 18th Annual NY Cares Coat Drive. There was an overwhelming response from the TRCS community.

Cristine's Class 601 had a canned food drive in December.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers are needed for Open Houses on January 10, 25 and February 13, 2007. Large numbers of families are expected to tour the school. The open houses run from 8:30-11 a.m. You can volunteer for all or part of the time. No experience is needed. We will provide you with information about the school. Contact Hannah at hli57@yahoo.com or 718-803-0060, ext. 102.

