

Cougar Connection

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

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

— Helen A. Keller



Principal's Pen

Dear Parents:

We are excited to announce the launch of a new resource for you: the **PRINCIPAL'S SERIES**.

The **PRINCIPAL'S SERIES** will be a monthly evening meeting devoted to providing information related to topics **you** want to explore. It will be designed as an expression of our mission and our commitment to partnering with you. Its purpose is to bring together conversation, experience and resources, all with a focus of sharing strategies and successes.

Events include:

September 30, 2009 7:00p.m. "Aha! Experiences" at HKMS: The impact of Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI) and the new Learning Disabilities Guidelines.
Joan Parker, principal, HKMS
Dr. Donna Dekle, director, special services

October 29, 2009 7:00p.m. Bullying: What you should know and what you can do.

Joan Parker, principal, HKMS
Sue Kaplan, vice principal, HKMS.

November 18, 2009 7:00p.m. The Social Media Revolution: An overview of the latest trends in social media with a focus on blogs, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube.

Megan Parker, Social Media Communicator, GE

Reading/Writing Strategies as well as **Resources for Educating the Gifted** are topics being considered for the New Year.

Please let *Laura Jones* (stoneycbell@sbcglobal.net) or *Heidi Adair* (hadair@optonline.net) know of a topic you would like addressed.

Sincerely,

—*Joan C. Parker,*
[*\(jparker@eastonps.org\)*](mailto: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.

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>

From Our Assistant Principal

Dear Parents,

Those of you who have never bullied or been bullied at school were probably observers of bullying at some time. In the past bullying was considered a natural part of growing up that people needed to accept as part of the process of becoming strong adults. People used to believe smoking was okay, not a problem. Now we know better. People used to believe bullying was acceptable, to be tolerated, not a big deal. Now, we know better. Researchers have identified the real, long term emotional and physiological effects that chronic bullying can cause.

The State of Connecticut has passed legislation in response to new knowledge about the effects of bullying on children. On June 12, 2008, Governor Rell signed into law a measure that strengthens state and local efforts to prevent school bullying. The law, An Act Concerning School Learning Environment (P.A. 08-160), requires – among other things - that every school board implement a bullying prevention strategy, that the State Department of Education develop model practices, and that bullying prevention become an in-service training topic for school personnel.

Under the law “bullying” means “any overt acts by a student or a group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds, at a school-sponsored activity or on a school bus, which acts are *committed more than once against any student during the school year.*” This new language replaces the prior law’s phrase: “*repeated against the same student over time.*”

Simply put, bullying has no place in our schools. The new law states that a student who has two documented bullying offenses within a school year must be given an in-school suspension. The suspension is documented and becomes part of the child’s permanent school record. The record is expunged upon a student’s graduation from high school. Notification of the suspension is given to the Superintendent of our district and is also reported to the State Department of Education.

Mrs. Parker and I are committed to promoting and ensuring that the school climate at Helen Keller Middle School remains conducive to teaching and learning that is free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behavior. You will be notified by one of us directly should your child be involved in a verified act of bullying. I urge you to review the Easton Board of Education policy on

bullying with your child. You may find this policy numbered 5131.21 in the er9.org website, where you can see details of specific behaviors classified as bullying. All district policies and regulations may be found under the link to the Easton Board of Education. We do not have an ugly or unhealthy environment at Helen Keller Middle School: bullying is in fact rare. But we want to keep it that way, and this new law will help to ensure that.

If your child is suffering in any way from what you believe to be bullying, please inform Mrs. Parker or myself so that we may respond promptly. Some of the saddest situations I have encountered occurred when a student or parent informed me – in May or June – that bullying had taken place against a student all year long. Please – don’t just close your eyes and hope it will go away. Let us help.

As you send your child off to school each morning, please remind him or her to be nice and work hard at school. If every student focused on those two simple principles, we would have a better learning environment for all.

Sincerely,

—Susan J. Kaplan,
(skaplan@eastonps.org)
Assistant Principal



News from the PTA Presidents



Letter of Thanks from your PTA Presidents

Thanks for all the support and cooperation as we start up this new school year! We especially would like to thank **Gina Orticelli** and her volunteers for coordinating Picture Day last month. Thanks also to **Kathleen Wasmer** for her work to make this Fall Fundraiser a success. We are grateful to everyone who has sent in their order, and ask that anyone who has not placed an order consider doing so before the deadline, now set for October 2. Remember that 50% is full profit for us which goes towards our children's enrichment programs and activities that the PTA coordinates.

More Opportunities

Thanks to everyone who has signed up to help with this year's initiatives. If you didn't get a chance to sign up yet, or if you signed up for general help, please review the list below for specific help needed and let us know if you are interested:

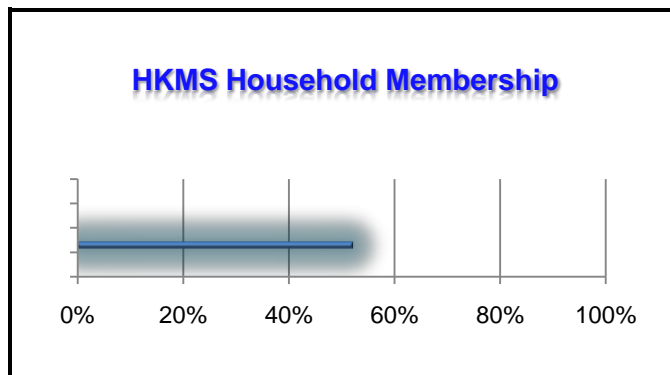
- Coordinate the Commemorative Brick Program
- Act as liaison with teachers for student Enrichment Program opportunities
- Assist in the HKMS Library with re-shelving and Book Fair twice a year

Sincerely,

Heidi Adair (hadair@optonline.net)
and **Laura T. Jones**
(stoneybell@sbcglobal.net)
Easton PTA HKMS Co-Presidents



OUR MEMBERSHIP IS GROWING!



Membership for HKMS is at 52%.

Please join or renew your membership to help support our teachers and students.

On their behalf...THANK YOU!

(join at www.eastonpta.com)

BE INVOLVED in October

COME to a PTA Meeting

(Fri. 10/9 at 9:30 Easton Public Library)

JOIN us for our Principal Series: "Bullying – What you should know and what you can do."

(Wed. 10/29 at 7pm - HKMS Media Center)

CHOOSE an extracurricular activity with your child

EMAIL thoughts on relevant middle school issues you'd like to hear about in our Principal Series discussions
(hadair@optonline.net)

Media Center Update

Media Center Seeks Fall and Spring Book Fair Assistant

Our 8th grade, Book Fair Coordinator will leave after this school year. We are looking for one parent volunteer to learn the ropes this year and serve as our Book Fair Coordinator next year. This volunteer position involves marketing, advertising, communication, volunteer coordination, set-up and clean-up. To learn more, contact Lisa Burghardt at 459-0881 or LBurghardt@aol.com.

HKMS Ski Club Registration Thursday, October 15th

We are pleased to announce changes to our Ski Club program for Keller students. Skiing will take place at Mt. Sundown in New Hartford on Fridays, January 8th, 15th, 29th and February 5th. Sundown offers more terrain for our skiers and a better learning environment for our beginner skiers. Official registration is Thursday, October 15th at the **Easton Library Community Room** starting at 7:30 PM. Registrations **will only** be accepted at this meeting and are first come, first serve. Space is limited. If you cannot make the meeting, please send in your forms with another parent. A brief meeting will take place during registration for newcomers.

Forms are available electronically and in the main office. We look forward to skiing with your children!
Lisa Burghardt
LBurghardt@aol.com

Charity Car Wash Saturday, October 3rd

"Gang Green and Kids Who Care" will hold a joint charity Car Wash at the EMS (next to the Village Store) on Saturday, October 3 from 9:30 - 2 PM. The monies raised from this car wash will help fund our green and community initiatives. Bring your dirty cars and we will do all the work!



For more information, contact
Mrs. Nancy Culliton
nculliton@eastonps.org

Please Help Support a Library (or Two!) in Africa....

Junior Girl Scout Troop #31202 (5th grade) and other Easton G.S. troops are assisting a Peace Corps volunteer in a children's book drive to help stock school libraries in two small towns in Africa. The goal is 1,000 books to create two sustainable libraries for the schools and communities. Any and all (gently) used children's books are needed, including:

- Baby board books
- Paperback easy readers
- Paperback children's picture books
- Paperback juvenile literature/chapter books
- K-8 textbooks (English, math, geography & science)
- Encyclopedias & atlases (post 1990)
- Paperback dictionaries

Through November 24th, donations may be placed in the collection box in the HKMS foyer. Please help us with this community service project and worthwhile cause!

Contact Monica Chioffi mchioffi@optonline.net for further information.



Friends of the Easton Public Library
Presents
A Country Fair
Old Fashioned Fun at Old Fashioned Prices

Saturday, October 3rd on the Library Green
1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. Rain or Shine

Wholesome Fun for Everyone!

Cow Chip Raffle – Purchase squares on the Library Green for \$25 each (only 500 squares will be sold) & watch and wait for “Dewey the Cow” to “deposit” a chip on a square. If the chip lands on your square, you’ll win \$500.

Apple Pie Baking Contest-Submit your famous apple pie for judging and win Easton bragging rights!

Refreshments: Baked Potatoes (\$1 each), Lemonade (\$.25 a cup), Sugar Cookies (\$.50 each), “Penny Candy” and more

Entertainment: Pony Rides, Potato Sack Races, Bean Bag Toss, Pie Eating Contest, Face Painting, Tractor Touch, pony rides and more!

Cow Chip Raffle - \$25 Donation per Field Square

of Squares _____ X \$25.00 = _____ # of People Attending= _____

Field Grid and Names will be posted in the Library & on the Library’s website (www.eastonlibrary.org) by October 2nd along with complete rules.

Name: _____ Phone# _____

Address _____ email _____

Please make checks payable to Friends of Easton Library & mail to Easton Public Library, P.O. Box 2, Easton, CT 06612. Cow Chip receipt, which will include your square’s location, will be held at the Library for your convenience. For more information: (203) 261-0134 or www.eastonlibrary.org.

All Proceeds to Benefit the Library

October 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 Charity Car Wash at the Easton EMS 9:30am – 2pm
4	5	6	7	8	9 Come to a PTA Meeting Easton Public Library 9:30am	10
11	12 Columbus Day NO SCHOOL	13 Board of Ed Meeting 7:30pm	14	15 HKMS Prof. Dev. Minimum Day Dismissal 12:10pm Ski Club Registration Easton Library 7:30pm	16 JRMS/HKMS 8th Gr. Transition Dance 7pm – 10pm	17 Easton Public Library Parade
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29 Principals Series: Bullying - What you should know and what you can do. HKMS Media Ctr. 7pm	30	31