



The Harris School Happenings

Volume 2, Issue 1

January 9, 2008

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The Harris School Gives Back

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Each year, the students and families of The Harris School participate in a community service project. This year, when hearing about the losses suffered at Trinity Episcopal School in Galveston, there was no question that this would be the project for 2008.

Trinity Episcopal School, housed in one of Galveston's beautiful historical buildings, was filled with five feet of water during the hurricane. This destroyed all of the kindergarten and first grade classrooms, as well as the administrative offices. The teachers and students lost all of their furniture, books, supplies and center activities. The school was closed for weeks after the storm so that crews could clean up, power and water could

be restored and classrooms could be rebuilt.

The students and families of The Harris School decided to adopt a kindergarten class and help the teacher, Mrs. Dobbs, put her room back together. Every H.S. student and their families donated one or more items for the kindergarten learning centers. Puzzles, games, art supplies and building blocks filled several large shopping bags.

On December 11, eight H.S. students and their parents drove to Galveston and delivered the donations. The kindergartners were thrilled.

"It is very humbling to be on the receiving end of such thoughtfulness", said teacher

Mrs. Dobbs. "We are usually the ones giving, not receiving. However, the hurricane left most of us without homes, toys and clothing. It has been a true character building experience."

For The Harris School students, being able to help and give to others was also a true character building experience.



Harris School & Trinity Episcopal School students



Message From The Director

The first semester of the school year was filled with so many events; some very challenging and some very rewarding! The stress of the economy and the damage from Hurricane Ike were a bit discouraging and brought out many emotions in all of us. But, with the

support of our parents, foundations, board members and individuals who believe in our mission, we were able to "weather" the storm! It is a great feeling to know that we have so many people supporting our efforts!

I look forward to the

second semester and the progress that the students will make. The whole nation is facing a challenging year, but I believe our school will do just fine if we keep up the hard work and stay focused on why we are here. Happy New Year!

Susan Spencer, M.Ed.

Harris School Families Give Thanks

During the months of October and November, the students at The Harris School participated in a school wide theme: The Harvest. Each class used the theme to learn about plants, the economy, the history of celebrations and much more.

In November, the students hosted a Thanksgiving family feast for their parents. Working in teams, they made placemats and center pieces for their families' dinner table.

Each class prepared and performed a Thanksgiving presentation. The Koala Bears performed a finger play

and the Panda Bears and Polar Bears performed a skit about the history of the harvest celebration.

Each family brought a covered dish to share. They feasted on brisket, casseroles, salads and desserts!

The Panda Bear class constructed a "sukkah" outside on the playground where the families could visit after their meal. A sukkah is a temporary dwelling with three walls and is a very important element in the celebration of the Jewish Sukkot festival.



The sukkah



Children's Book Illustrator Visits

Bill Meganhardt, illustrator of several children's books (Hayfest, Don't Eat the Bluebonnets, Giraffe of Montana) and father of student Michael, visited the students in December to share his knowledge and talent. Mr. Bill took the students through the steps of creating their own story while he illustrated their creation. The students got the opportunity to develop

characters and a plot.

After his presentation, Mr. Bill donated several of his books to the school library and also several of the original art boards from his published work.

His work inspired several of our students to create their own original books, with illustrations!



Bill and Michael Meganhardt

Enrichment Classes Teach Valuable Lessons

Karate Seeks to Improve Mind, Body and Spirit

On Friday mornings, every student at The Harris School participates in karate lessons. Led by master instructor Thomas Plumber, lessons are carried on in a positive atmosphere with different age levels working together.

Karate is used as a tool to teach discipline, self confidence and coordination. Students learn to respect themselves and others, which is an important goal that we strive to instill.

Karate teaches the students that difficult tasks can be completed, even if they seem too hard or if they failed the first time. The discipline they learn helps them to stay focused and work hard to reach their goals.

“Karate has helped me learn self defense and also how to move on and try again if I get or feel defeated”, says one student.

City Art Works “STRETCHES” Creativity

This is the first year that The Harris School has worked with City Art Works, a non-profit agency providing children in the community with meaningful art experiences.

The instructor, Ms. Caroline, works weekly with the students to help them develop their creative side. The products are beautiful and are displayed throughout the building.

We chose to work with City Art Works because we share the same philosophies. We believe that children flourish when given the opportunity to explore their own creativity. Exposure to the visual arts can help children develop a deeper understanding of their world and social environment. Art education directly impacts a child’s higher order thinking skills, problem solving ability and motivation to learn.



Mad Science Sparks Imaginative Learning

The students at The Harris School think science is “cool” thanks to Aquatic Alli, their Mad Science teacher. Aquatic Alli visits weekly and brings fun, hands-on science experiences to the students. The kids actually get to “do” science, not just hear or read about it.

Shooting rockets, making goop, learning about chromosomes and recycling are just a few of the topics the students have worked on this semester.

From the Desk of Sharon Gerber, Clinical Coordinator

I had some time over the winter break to revisit some “old friends” - books from 10 years ago that I haven’t seen for quite a while. One book, *Creativity and the Young Child* by Joan Isenberg and Mary Renck Jalongo, reminded me of how children can get very involved with a “project” and seem to lose track of time, forgetting to eat or even get to the bathroom. How often has that happened to us, the adults, in a child’s life? Maybe we get absorbed in a work related project, but then the duties of daily life and our pressures of time interfere. Those are the times when some of us think fondly of our single days, with no responsibilities for homes and families.

A school for young children must be a place where children feel safe, a place which diminishes stress and anxiety. It must offer children the opportunity to explore, discover the process of learning rather than memorize facts by rote. Children should be encouraged to share ideas with one another rather than compete for “rewards”. A healthy respect for different opinions, different points of view, must be emphasized. With these elements in place, children can provide their own imaginations and creativity as well as build feelings of trust. It is my wish that all of our children be free to be creative in their play and grow up to be creative and responsible adults. Welcome to 2009!

NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTIONS FROM SOME OF OUR STUDENTS

“Be nicer to my little brother.” “Have a positive attitude with life!” “Help take care of my mice, fish, cat and dogs.”

“I will do my alter serving duties without arguing.” “Win more trophies, be more nice and save more money.”

“Put some of my money to charity” “Resolutions are stupid and don’t work!”

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The Harris School, Inc. is now an independent organization, no longer a part of the Houston-Galveston Psychoanalytic Institute. Our mission, to support the educational and emotional development of children and their families, remains the same. We continue to use psychoanalytic and psychodynamic principles to carry out our mission. Our program is accredited by SACS/CASI.

We use a team approach to help our students learn to work collaboratively with others, to communicate effectively his/her feelings and needs, to move on and recover when faced with challenges, and to be able to transition to more mainstreamed school settings and perform successfully.

Mucky Duck Benefit Raises over \$20,000

The Harris School held a benefit concert and silent auction on December 6 at McGonigal's Mucky Duck featuring the talent of the band **Sisters Morales**.

The afternoon began with food and drinks while eager bidders competed for 50+ auction items including a week at a Florida beach house with 4 airline tickets, spa days, jewelry, sports memorabilia, wine baskets and much more. Parents, friends, alumni, referrers, teachers and board members mingled and socialized with one another. Over 120 tickets were sold and the little pub was "buzzing" with excitement.



Lisa and Roberta Morales perform an original song.

When the band began playing, the energy level rose even higher! Sisters Morales rocked the house with their original Texas rock music mixed with a traditional Mexican flair. This tal-

ented group of musicians were the perfect entertainment for this event!

Hands were clapping and feet were tapping as the group performed for a little over an hour.

The afternoon ended with all of the auction items being sold and many donations collected.

The Harris School sends out a big thanks to Rusty and Theresa, the owners of the Mucky Duck, for donating their facility and to the members of the band for donating their time and talent. Thanks also go to the parents who volunteered their time to organize the event and to the individuals and businesses that donated the fantastic auction items. Great job everyone! These overwhelming acts of generosity made this a very successful event.