

"To attract good fortune, spend a new penny on an old friend, share an old pleasure with a new friend and lift up the heart of a true friend by writing his name on the wings of a dragon."

Chinese Proverb

Grey Matters

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Happy New Year! I hope everyone is rested and relaxed and ready to tackle 2004. Aside from the perennial vacation ear infection and colds, it was a great vacation in the Hardimon household. In addition to doing some hiking in the warm weather, we watched a number of movies and we continued to play a lot of family poker. Maya has clearly mastered "the bluff". What is more frightening is that *Celebrity Poker Showdown* has made it to the "Top 5" favorite TV shows, kicking *That's So Raven* off the list. But there is no need to worry; *Lizzy McGuire* is still #1!

While there are many activities and opportunities available to our student body after school, some students have complained that there is "nothing to do and no place to go" on the weekend. With this in mind, Assistant Superintendents George Frost and Jonathan Landman, Facilities Director Steve Desy, Community Education Director Linda Mathinos, and I have been working together over the past few months to investigate the possible creation of a "Teen Center" type opportunity for RJG students here at the school co-sponsored by the AB Region and managed by Community Ed. After a significant amount of research, including meeting with the student council, I am pleased to announce that starting in late February, we will have a trial run of a Teen Center/Activities Night at RJG. While all the details have yet to be worked out, our current plan is to have a trial run twice a month through May. On these evenings, the Teen Center/Activities Night will be open from 7 to 10pm. For \$5, RJG students will be able to get out of the house and be with their friends in a non-structured, supervised environment where they can play foosball, ping pong, air hockey, watch movies, and/or just hang out.¹ As we get closer to our "grand opening" a flyer will be sent out. Keep your eyes open!

Please note that we are aware that members of the AB community are working to create a separate community based teen center called Danny's Place. We support this plan and by no means wish to create competition. At the same time, bringing Danny's Place from concept to fruition will take time. Our goal is to get something up and running this year. If, after the trial run, our teen center is successful, we will consider continuing the activities next year. In the future, whenever Danny's Place is up and running, the need

¹ We at RJ Grey want to ensure that each student has the opportunity to participate in all school sponsored events and activities. Please contact me or your child's counselor to discuss a waiver, financial assistance, or a scholarship if you are in a difficult financial situation at this time. The information will be kept confidential.

for RJG to run a teen center will probably evaporate and we will help transition our activities over to the new facilities.

On the day before the Winter break, the school was informed that another student was diagnosed with Pertussis, or whooping cough. As per the Massachusetts Department of Public Health mandate, parents and guardians of all students potentially exposed were contacted. While I believe it is important for me to keep all staff and parents informed of such incidents, I also need to follow the law regarding confidentiality and may not release any further information regarding the student. I want to reassure you that the school administration is working closely with the school health staff and the Massachusetts Dept. of Public Health to assure that the parents and guardians of potentially exposed students are contacted. If you have not been contacted, your child was not determined to be at risk of exposure. If, however, you have any remaining concerns specific to your child, you should call your child's pediatrician.