

*“You know that children are growing up when they start asking questions that have answers.”*

**John J. Plomp**

# Grey Matters

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Congratulations to all involved for a glorious success at this year’s Project Wellness. While almost derailed by the 3/8 snow storm, this was the best Project Wellness Day yet. Almost 800 family members from the RJG community, as well as forty staff members and guests, took over Merrimack College and dedicated the day to investigate ways to maintain and enhance the lines of communication between parent/guardian and child.

The steering committee for Project Wellness 2005 consisted of Sue Horn, Carolyn Imperato, Christina Granahan, Jan Couch, Celeste Margolius, Linda Minkoff, Dave Peters, and myself. While this committee put in countless hours, the event would not have happened without the support of parent and community volunteers before and during the event. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the following volunteers for giving their time and energy to making this event happen:

Judy Gray

Alison Clement

Sandy Lamb

Mac Reid

Bonnie Masserange

Debbie Doherty

Linda Raymond

Bridget Nedzi

Melissa Hatanaka

Eve Frasier-Corp

Cindy Maher

Dana Hartman

Cindy Hulecki

Monique Gross

Michele Hauser Tkacs

Dot Curtis

Josh Geller-McGrath

Carol Brady

Sue Hart

Lucinda Wright

Lucy Awizsus

Fundraising committee:

Linda Minkoff

Tina Grosowky

Julie Soberg

Dolores Crofton-Macdonald

The feedback that we received during the day and in the evaluations has been overwhelmingly positive. Both adults and students commented on the quality of the workshops and emphasized the importance of spending the day together. On the evaluation forms, many students and parents wrote about how taking the day off from work meant a great deal to all involved and sent a positive message to our students that we care about them. For example, in response to a question regarding the “most positive aspect of the day,” some students and parents/guardians wrote, “*Great to see families connecting and spending quality time together,*” “*...whole RJG 7<sup>th</sup> grade community coming together,*” “*... time with my son/daughter,*” and “*It opens the door to good communication on difficult issues with your children.*” Thank you to all of the families who attended and made this event such a success!

During my opening comments, I posed a challenge to all attendees. I asked students and parents/guardians to take a risk. Specifically, I asked that everyone use the information gathered in the workshops to help formulate “that question” that they have been reluctant to ask. From conversations with past attendees, I have heard that a great opportunity for such conversations occurs during the ride home from Merrimack College or over the next few days. If any participants are willing, please email me examples of new questions asked and/or new topics broached. This information will be quite useful for future planning. Additionally, with your permission, I would also like to share your stories in a future issue of *Grey Matters*. As unique as we all feel as parents, we can learn a lot just from listening to each other.

On Tuesday, March 22, 7:00-9:00 PM, RPTSO, CAFY, NAMI, and our own RJG staff will be hosting, An Evening Forum: Recognizing Preadolescent/Teenage Depression and Anxiety. Questions to be addressed include: “*What are the symptoms of depression and anxiety in youth? It may not look the same as it does in adults.*” “*How can you tell the difference between moods that are normal and moods that may be an indication of a more serious problem?*” “*How prevalent are depression and anxiety disorders in this population?*” A former AB student will be a guest speaker and provide insights into these disorders by sharing his personal story – his struggles and triumphs. Dr. Carolyn Imperato, school psychologist, and Dr. Cathy Schen, a local psychiatrist, will lend their expertise to the presentations and also answer questions from the audience.

The next 8<sup>th</sup> grade dance is scheduled for this Friday, March 18<sup>th</sup> from 6:30PM- 8:30PM. In an effort to invigorate interest and excitement for this event, the Student Council has added a theme to this dance, the 50’s, 60’s, and 70’s. It’s time to dig out the hair grease and poodle skirts, paisley shirts and bellbottom pants, polyester shirts and platform shoes and rock the night away. It should be an exciting – if not frightening – event to behold!