

“Forget injuries, never forget kindnesses.”

Confucius

Grey Matters

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On Friday, we held our second 8th grade dance of the year. Chatting and laughing, with a little less dancing than usual, the 160+ students in attendance had a great time. Thanks go to chaperones Joyce Kelly, Gabby Berberian, Mike Balulescu, Allen Warner, George Roadman and Debbie Ahl. We also appreciated the participation of parents Michelle Mckelvie, Bev Zambrano, Mong-yu Blancha, and Keith Gutfreund. It was extremely helpful to have all parents and guardians pick up their children so quickly after the dance. Thank you so much for your cooperation.

Please be aware that students will be bringing report cards for Term 1 home this week, and you'll want to be on the lookout for this important document. In addition to reviewing the grades, please let us know if there are any errors in the demographic data (i.e. spelling of names, correct address, etc.). Questions regarding grades should be directed to each specific teacher. Demographic corrections should be directed to the RJ Grey main office.

It is important to note that a Parent and Guardian Conference Request Form will be attached to the report card. Conferences will be held on December 6th, 13th, and January 3rd from 11:30AM - 2:30PM. Please identify your preferred date on the request form, the teachers with whom you wish to meet, and return the form to the Junior High Main Office as soon as possible. While conferences are scheduled on a first-come-first-serve basis, every effort will be made to accommodate your specific request regarding conference times.

RJG has a tradition of community service and one such project is the RJG annual Acton Food Pantry Walk. Members of the RJG community will be asked to bring in donated food items next week and on November 30th, 7th and 8th grade students from all teams will walk to the Acton Food Pantry to deliver the donated food. While the pantry is grateful for and accepts any food item that has not exceeded its expiration date, cereal, pasta, canned beans, bagged white rice, peanut butter, jelly, spaghetti sauce, macaroni and cheese, tuna, canned fruit, and infant formula, tooth brushes and toothpaste are particularly well received.

As mentioned last week, November 6th was the district's annual Professional Day. On behalf of the RJG staff, I wanted to express our gratitude for all the parents who took the

time to sponsor the Staff Appreciation Luncheon. Recognizing the efforts of all involved, this is an event that teachers enjoy attending every year. More than 35 parents volunteered to cook, with dishes including jambalaya, a variety of salads, as well as figs with bleu cheese and pecans! We offer a special note of thanks to Meghan Steines and our own Kerry Byrne for coordinating this annual event. We also appreciated the special efforts of our own Marcia Charter. From set-up to clean-up – we couldn't have done it without her.

As research indicates that a supportive school climate is the most important step in maintaining a safe learning environment for all students, the staff of RJG spent the November 6th Professional Day focusing on preventing incidents of bullying and harassment, including cyberspace. This was an extremely productive day with outcomes that included:

- Recognizing student conduct that leads to bullying and harassment
- Identifying approaches, lessons, language, and interventions to reduce incidents of bullying and teasing
- Identifying causes of unsafe cyber practices among preteen children
- Understanding the legal implications of cyber-behavior, including the right to free speech
- Developing a list of strategies to proactively raise awareness about cyber safety and to reduce incidents of such behavior in the future.

Of particular merit was a presentation from Dr. Elizabeth Englander, the Director of the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC) at Bridgewater State College. Dr. Englander talked about the various factors that can lead to cyber bullying, and the many ways that cyber bullying is manifested in our growing digital age.

As raising parent awareness and understanding of these topics are a priority, we have invited Dr. Englander to give a presentation on issues of cyber bullying and cyber safety as a part of our RJG Parent Forum series on March 26, 2008. Please save the date as this promises to be an informative evening.

With the Thanksgiving break soon upon us, I want to remind all parents and guardians to let the office know if your child will be out of school for one or multiple days. Knowing about such absences ahead of time allows us to better prepare in the classroom and at the front office. We also ask that you contact us in writing if your child is being picked up during the school day by someone other than a parent or guardian. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Have any parents and guardians noticed that the pile of clothing in your child's room is getting smaller? I hate to tell you this but it is probably not because of a dramatic improvement in putting things away. It is more likely that those items, usually lying across their floor, are currently sitting in our Lost and Found. Please make sure students check to see if their items are still in the school building before it is too late. We will be

emptying the lost and found on Wednesday, November 21st, and donating the items to charity.

As another reminder for this Wednesday, we will be following a special schedule. After following a truncated schedule, students will attend an all school Thanksgiving Assembly which will include student speeches and performances by the school Chorus and Band. It is a wonderful time for students and faculty to pause and reflect on the blessings we have as a school and as part of the Acton-Boxborough community as a whole. Following this assembly, students will be dismissed at 11:06AM for the Thanksgiving break.

Have a wonderful holiday weekend.