

The ICS Link

A monthly newsletter for families at Independence Charter School
"Opening Worlds of Opportunity"

March 2009

Dear ICS Families:

Last Wednesday (3/25/09) was a very special day at Independence Charter School, as we were awarded the *Goldman Sachs Foundation Prize for Excellence in International Education*. The prize was created in 2003 in partnership with the Asia Society, and recognizes the most promising and successful examples of international education in the United States. Prizes are awarded in a variety of different categories including elementary/middle school, high school, media etc. It recognizes a school that engages all or most of its students in learning about other world regions, cultures and language. The prize is awarded to only one US school (in each category) a year, and includes a \$25,000 award.



Independence Charter School is the first charter school in the nation to win this award. We expect that this award will help raise awareness about ICS's unique program enable us to share practices with other schools and educators so we can help bring this model to more urban students. We will use the prize money to explore the idea of establishing a regional leadership institute focused on global education in urban public schools, enhance ICS professional development opportunities focusing on global education, and support student after-school programs that extend global studies.

Five days after ICS opened its doors in September, 2001, our nation was devastated by the September 11th tragedy. At a time when many in our country turned themselves inward from the rest of the world, the founders, staff and family community remained focused on the ideal that learning about people and the world was essential to building strong local and global citizens. Eight years later, we are thrilled to celebrate our perseverance and help lead the way for other schools to realize the power of connecting students to other communities around the world.

Congratulate yourselves, ICS community. This award represents everyone's hard work, from the families who believe in our mission and vision, to the staff members who continually reflect on the school's progress in developing a successful program, to the students who commit to the ideals that are so important to developing strong local and global citizens.

Thank You, Principal Stephanie

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I.C.S. Bulletin Board

UPCOMING EVENTS

4/1– Mural Arts Committee Meeting, 7PM

4/2– Report Card Conferences

No School for Students

4/3 Professional Development Day,

No School for Students

4/6-4/10– Spring Break

4/16– Board Meeting, 7PM

Thank you so much to everyone who bought Cheesecakes from the 5th grade. Your support is greatly appreciated and helps us offset the expense of the 5th grade camping trip. We hope you enjoy the cheesecake!!

Opportunity to Host a Guest from Spain!

ICS has recently learned that the Spanish Academies has a program that could send Spanish Classroom Assistants to our school. ICS is exploring this possibility. Part of ICS's commitment would be ensuring that housing is found for these assistants. As part of our exploration, we are asking if any ICS families would consider hosting one assistant for either the full school year or half the year. The person would, of course, need his or her own bedroom. If your family is interested, we will need a commitment no later than April 13th in order to proceed with the application process. In the meantime, if you are interested in considering this opportunity, please contact Megan Steelman-megans@independencecharter.org or 215-238-8000 extension 2292

Attention Lower School Parents–

SAVE THE DATE

Middle School Night
for Lower School Parents

Wednesday, April 22nd 6PM

Come Learn About Middle School Life at ICS. This night is designed for you to hear from teachers and students about middle school design, expectations, enrichment opportunities and general information, so you can best prepare your student (and yourselves!) for the changes of middle school.

Attention All 8th Grade Parents!

Temple University's Math Science Upward Bound Open House

April 9, 2009

6-8 PM

Kiva Auditorium, Ritter Annex

13th Street and Cecil B Moore Avenue

RSVP by April 2, 2009 with Ms. Dorsey

At 215-204-3636 or sdorsey@temple.edu

The Upward Bound Program is a year round intensive college prep academic program that includes a six week summer component on the campus at Temple University. The program includes a core curriculum of math, science & English, SAT preparation, career development workshops, and opportunities to develop and improve communication skills.

A Message from the Board of Trustees

Dear ICS Community,

By now, I'm sure you have heard the exciting news that ICS received **The Goldman Sachs Foundation Prize for Excellence in International Education**. We are bursting with pride in our phenomenal staff and students who have accomplished this and grateful for the recognition for our fantastic school. We know this will open many doors for us to showcase our school. It is truly an honor for a charter school to be able to fulfill this role in the educational community.

At our last board meeting we passed a resolution to adopt a "global education" stance as we move forward in curriculum development and strategic planning. The ongoing work of the Global Education Task Force will produce some specific recommendations in the coming months. This work is the fulfillment of our current Strategic Plan for the Curriculum Committee.

You will soon be seeing a letter about the upcoming election for a Parent Seat to the Board. We hope you will consider this important way of serving our school. For those of you who know you cannot make this time commitment, we welcome your ideas and suggestions for community members who might contribute in a leadership role at ICS. We welcome your thoughts and suggestions at any time.

Sincerely

**Pam Prell, Co-President
ICS Board of Trustees**

News from the ICS Food Services Committee

We apologize for not being able to send home all students' meal account transaction information in the beginning of March as we had planned; those will be given out on Report Card Day (Thursday, April 2nd). Thank you to the many ICS families who have been diligent in making sure their children's meal account balances stay under the negative \$20 limit. Families whose children have large balances are reminded that the balances need to be paid off in full before the end of the 2008-2009 school year in order for students to remain in good standing.

We'd like to thank everyone for their tolerance of every possible type of turkey dish imaginable over the past many weeks!!! The federal school lunch program offers commodities (various bulk items that the school receives for little or no cost), which help keep the overall meal program budget balanced. Since this is our first year dealing with commodities, it has been a learning experience which will inform our meal planning decisions for next year.

Due to a problem with students purchasing cookies in the cafeteria at lunchtime and then eating them in class, we will no longer offer cookies as an *a la carte* item (a cookie will still come with lunch when pizza is on the menu). Please remember that students can now only use cash when buying a la carte items.

The committee welcomes your FEEDback about any aspect of the food service program; send comments to Tr. Neyza at neyzac@independencecharter.org or call her at 215-238-8000. Tr. Neyza is also available to give you up-to-the-minute information regarding your child's meal account.

Kindergarten is studying about time and coins in Math. We are planning to go to the Children's Festival with first grade. In Immersion...kids are starting to read simple words in Spanish. In Social Studies...kids are studying the numbers in Chinese, and took Tai Chi's classes, learning the three first movements.



Kindergarten



March has been an exciting and busy month in the first grade! In math we have begun learning about place value and comparing two and three digit numbers. We are concluding our unit on the Dominican Republic, and are excited to begin learning about France after Spring Break. We also look forward to upcoming trips to the Children's Festival and Art Museum. Have a healthy and happy vacation!

Grade 1

Spring is upon us! Second graders have been busy with creative projects reflective of their Chilean country studies: creating volcanoes, making Easter Island Moais, creating huge 3-D maps, learning traditional Chilean folk songs and dances. We will begin our final country study soon- India! In math, we're all beginning to explore fractions (equal parts of wholes), and we've wrapped up explorations with geometry and regrouping practices! Mercado de Frutas continues to be a huge success. It is wonderful to see so many youngsters making healthy snack choices. We have not yet decided, as a second grade team, what to do with the profits from this effort. More on this to come...as we'll keep you informed! Two of our classes headed out to recently see Cinderella, a ballet. A great time was had by all! Thanks very much to all of the parents who supported that event and all of those who continue to help us run the fruit market. We just couldn't do it without your awesome sup-



Grade 2

The third grade team had an educational and amazing day at the Philadelphia zoo. In April we will go to Children's Festival at Penn. We will celebrate Earth Day on April 24th. We will be learning about global warming and how to take care the planet; Tr. Kelly's room is going on a class trip to "The Kids Grow Expo" on that day. After our Spring Beak we will start our Kenya unit for social studies. We are learning division and we will learn more about fractions, decimals and probabilities. We are also writing different and fun projects in each class, like autobiographies, Babayagas and some poetry.



Grade 3



Our 4th graders continue the in-depth study of Ghana, they have been learning about its history, culture and some traditions. Now that PSSAs have passed, we will resume our curriculum of Math, enjoying multiplication, and learning long division. In English the students will be engaged with their biography projects. They are having so much fun, dressing up to present them. Later on they will start realistic fiction.

Grade 4

In Language Arts, the fifth graders are writing various forms of poetry. They're doing a wonderful job. For Social Studies, two guest speakers shared photographs and stories about Afghanistan, our current country study. The students are working on fractions in math. Be on the look out for information regarding the camping trip to Camp Onas! It will be here before we know it!



Grade 5

In 6th Grade Language Arts we just finished units on poetry and on a fantasy. They are beginning their research papers for their "Need in Deed" service learning programs. We are finishing a math unit on angles and polygons, and we will be starting a unit on two-dimensional measurement. Two exciting Science trips are planned for April. On April 1st, we will be going to the Museum of Natural Sciences. On April 24, we will be going to the Wagner Clay Studio. Lastly, In Social Studies students just finished a unit on the ancient Hebrews and are excited to start our new unit on Ancient India



Grade 6



Right now the 7th graders are gearing up for some of their upcoming units. In Social Studies they are preparing to dive into West African cultural and practice, focusing on dances, ceremonies and the like. In Math 3-Dimensional measurements is on the horizon now that probability is out of the way. In science, student's have finished the Reptiles and Amphibians unit and are ready to move on the Mammal family. In Language Arts, they are focusing on Non-fiction literature and The Great Depression. We're excited for the Wetlands trip that's been scheduled...and even more excited for Spring Break! Hooray for SPRING!

Grade 7

In social studies, 8th grade students presented their National History Day projects. All of the groups created projects about an individual that made an impact in history and did a wonderful job presenting their research in the form of documentaries, websites and exhibits. We have begun a unit on slavery in the United States before the Civil War and will continue this until Spring Break. In Spanish, we will be studying bilingual poetry and then making our own poems in two languages. In Language Arts, we will be writing persuasive essays on The Giver by Lois Lowry, and we continue to work on our Young Playwright Projects.



Grade 8

The ICS PTA

News & Announcements

The PTA's 7th Annual Silent Auction and Social is Saturday, May 2, 2009, from 6-10 PM

Featuring...

- TJ the DJ – ICS parent and mix master TJ Gobreski
 - LH Catering - ICS parent Lynn Hunt and her family have been delighting Silent Auction guests since this tradition began 7 years ago! Her son is graduating from ICS this spring so come out and relish her down-home, mouth-watering culinary creations for what could be her ICS Silent Auction swan song
 - Children's awe-inspiring artwork & class projects (silent auction items)
 - Family-friendly and fun classroom raffle baskets
 - Coveted "Time with Teachers" (silent auction items)
- Live music: Impacto Vallenato, traditional Columbian Musicians

The PTA's Silent Auction and Social is a school tradition among the ICS community. It's a great night of fun that brings together ICS parents & guardians, friends, teachers & staff, and the community at large in mutual support of the PTA's Fine Arts Fund.

Come and have uninterrupted conversations with other adults, enjoy delicious home-cooked food, listen to some toe-tapping music, and check out the beautiful works of art created by the students. You'll be inspired to bid! If you are willing to put in an hour of volunteer time that night, you can get in for free! Otherwise, the entrance fee is \$5 per person (and that comes with either a drinks ticket or a dress down day pass – your choice).

Bid on a Special Teacher Outing for your Child-

- museum with nurse tamara & nurse leslie
- ice cream for you and a friend with tr. megan
- bowl & binge @northbowl with tr. natalie & tr. Tracey
- lunch & ice cream with maestra marcela
- ice cream & manicure with tr. Alison
- ice cream in the park with teacher rosemary
- ice cream @ scoop deville
- with maestra andrea & maestra Adrienne
- franklin institute with teacher kerry
- "student's choice" take-out lunch with Pr. Stephanie
- "Cupcakes and Canines" with Tr. Janet and her 3 dogs

Thank you to the following volunteers that helped in a variety of ways during the month of March:

Mint Counters (for testing week):

Anika Stevenson & Maureen Eagen

Box Top Counters: Crystal Simmons & Courtney Chobert

Playground parent patrol: Robin Kohles, Tina Klutmeier, Kathryn Snyder, Fran Melmed, Frauke Schnell

Corbi Pizza Distributors: Cristina Vea, Nikki Butler, Adriane Polan, Susan Burrows

Corbi 8th grade muscle: Torri Speller, Brittany Pemberton, Sergio Ortiz, and Alexis Howard

Parent Survey

Don't forget to visit the computer lab either before or after your parent teacher conference appointment (on April 2nd) and fill out the parent survey online. If you fill out the survey on Report Card Day, in school and online, you get one dress down day pass for your children.



April PTA Meeting will be a family fun night at JAMZ Roller Skating Rink in the Northeast on Wednesday April 1st. The fun begins at 6:30 pm and runs until 9pm. Be sure and send in your \$4 (per person) entrance fee to Tr. Tracey before 3/27. Otherwise, entrance fee at the door is \$5 per person. Skate rentals are extra (about \$3 or \$4). Your tickets will be sent to you through your child's folder before Wednesday, April 1st.

****There will be no PTA meeting at the school that evening.****



Parent-Teacher Association, 1600 Lombard Street, Philadelphia, PA 19146

On Saturday, May 2, 2009 Independence Charter School (ICS) and the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) are hosting their 7th annual Silent Auction & Social to benefit the PTA's Fine Arts Fund. The event will be held at ICS which is located at 1600 Lombard Street, from 6:00-10:00 PM. Independence Charter School requests your organization's support as an auction donor so that we may continue to enrich the education of Philadelphia's children through the fine arts.

ICS first opened its doors in 2001, emphasizing a community-oriented public education for elementary school-aged children hailing from nearly every zip code within the city. ICS provides a rich and challenging curriculum focusing on world culture, geography, foreign language instruction and an optional Spanish immersion program. The fine arts program, which was started in 2003 with funding from the first silent auction, provides unique arts & humanities experiences for the students of ICS, which might not otherwise be available to them. Over the years, the Fine Arts Fund has enabled all ICS students to attend a theatrical or dance production; has provided the music teacher with an electric keyboard; has contributed towards elementary and middle-school art teacher salaries; and has provided ceramics instruction for students through the Clay Studio's Claymobile program.

Your tax deductible donation will help us to expand this worthwhile and popular program. Donations may be made in the form of items or gift certificates for auction and/or monetary sponsorships. Our tax-deductible identification number is 01-0609748. Please submit donations and sponsorships by April 26, 2009.

Contact Tracey Hill at 215-238-8000, ext. 2222, or Susan Burrows at 215-805-2621 with any questions. This form can also be faxed to ICS at 215-238-1998.

Please keep top portion for your records

7th Annual Silent Auction & Social Donation Form

Business or Organization _____

Contact Person _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Email _____

Donation(s): _____ Value _____

_____ Value _____

Please make checks payable to "ICS PTA Fine Arts Fund"

The PTA's 7th Annual Silent Auction and Social

There are many ways to get involved and show your support:

Make a donation of food or beverages

Donate twinkle lights and paper goods

Volunteer to help with set-up or clean-up

Volunteer to help out at the event

Donate an item (minimum \$25), service, or certificate for auction

Solicit donations from restaurants, movie theatres, bookstores, coffee shops, beauty salons, etc., and other places you frequent that may like to support your child's school

Help your child's class create a work of art and/or a themed gift basket

Contribute to your class' themed basket to be raffled

Attached please find a "Call for Donations" form, plus a solicitation document should you decide to call upon frequently used merchants for a donation.

Thank you for your help and see you Saturday May 2nd!

Questions? Contact anyone of the following: Susan Burrows (215-805-2621), or sjeburrows@earthlink.net, Nikki Butler, niks_space@yahoo.com, Cristina Vea, cristinamvea@gmail.com or Tracey Hill, traceyh@independencecharter.org

This is an adult-oriented event with beer and wine. This parent/teacher/alumni/friend event is not intended for those under the legal drinking age.

"Call for Donations" Silent Auction, May 2, 2009

Please complete and return this form to the front office

Name _____ Phone or email (best way to contact you): _____

I/we would like to contribute to the 7th annual silent auction by:

Sponsoring monetarily in the amount of \$ _____

(Checks payable to "PTA fine arts fund")

Donating paper goods (plates cups cutlery napkins) Colors: yellow, navy, white

Donating twinkle lights

Donating Auction Item(s) _____ value _____

Donating Auction Item(s) _____ value _____

Donating food or beverage (Appetizers Dessert Vegetarian Dish Beer Wine Soft drink)

Volunteering ___ Set-up Friday night, May 1st from 6-9

___ Set-up Saturday, May 2nd from 12-5

___ Help out Auction night (circle what you'd like to do: Bartend, sell drink tickets, sell raffle tickets, registration, close-out, runner, floater)

___ Clean-up immediately following the event

Work with my child's classroom to create a work of art and/or themed basket

I want to help but am unsure how to start the process and I'd like some ideas. Would a committee member please contact me for further information.

___ other (please describe) _____

Donations may be brought to the front office at any time.

National History Day City-Wide Winners

Please help us congratulate our 7th & 8th graders who placed in the city-wide National History Day competition at the Constitution Center on Thursday, March 12th. Students who placed in 1st or 2nd place will represent ICS at the state-wide competition on May 6th & 7th.

Performance--2nd Place Title: Shirley Chisholm

Kaitlyn Wilkins, Shakera Simpson, Naya Roberts, Jasmine Smith

Group Documentary--3rd Place Title: Clara Barton and the American Red Cross

Alaisha Evans & Brianna Perrin

Websites 1st Place Title: Leondardo da Vinci: Renaissance Man

Anya Gilroy, James Prell, Camilla Barcan, Darby Bascome-Keenan

Website 2nd Place Title: Jackie Robinson

Olivia Wiesner, Kaniyyah Bailey-Smith, Arin Dyer, Kelli Miller, Anieka Miller

Website 3rd Place Title: Erin Gruwell

Catherine Mendel



Middle School Students Meet Author Erin Gruwell

Independence Charter School's Junior Freedom Writers, comprised of ten 7th & 8th graders, traveled to Atlantic City, NJ on Wednesday, March 18th. Students were invited by the Freedom Writer Foundation to meet author Erin Gruwell and hear her speak at the National Camp Conference. Students met with Gruwell and received personal signed copies of *The Freedom Writer Diary*.



Join the Greening Committee!

Exercise your thumb, green or otherwise, join us for a spring clean up of the ICS school yard.
Date to be announced.

For more information contact
Teacher Suzanne,
suzannec@independencecharter.org or ICS
parent Julie Snell jjsnell@pennhort.org.

Handy tip: lock bikes to bike racks not trees!

International Festival Parent Committee

The International Festival (June 2 to 4, 2009,) is being expanded this year and we are looking for parents to participate in planning the event. If you have ties to anything international (performing group, service organization, restaurant, store, community, etc.) please consider spending a few hours to help develop and organize this year's festival. The first meeting of the parent committee will be Wednesday, April 1, 2:00pm at ICS. If you can not attend, but are interested in helping, please contact Monika Kreidie at mmkreidie@gmail.com or 215.833.2884.



Library Activities



Scrabble with Leah (for beginners and winners)

Wednesdays, May 6, 13, 20, and 27th @ 4 p.m.

Lil' Filmmakers Workshop: KIDZ R STARZ!!

Janine Spruill teaches tweens how to make a short film, act, direct, and operate cameras and sound equipment.

Sponsored by the Friends of the Independence Branch and the Philadelphia Activities Fund, Inc.
Monday, May 11th @ 4 p.m.

Celebrate Asian-American Heritage Month with MUTYA PHILIPPINE DANCE CO.

MUTYA , the premier Delaware Valley Filipino-American dance troupe, performs indigenous cultural and traditional folk dances, songs and music. Funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and sponsored by the Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

Wednesday, May 13th @ 6:30 p.m.

Marcus the Magician

Performs awesome magic and spectacular card tricks!!

Sponsored by the Friends of the Independence Branch and the Philadelphia Activities Fund, Inc.
Friday, May 15th @ 4 p.m.

Book Arts Workshops with artist and publisher, Maria G. Pisano

"A Book of Poetry and Art": For elementary school-age children

Create an accordion book, a versatile structure with historical Oriental origins.

Add your very own poem, alongside collage designs and popups.

Saturday, May 16th @ 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

"Flexigon Book Workshop": For Adults and Teens

Saturday, May 16th @ 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Sponsored by the Friends of the Independence Branch Library and the Philadelphia Activities Fund, Inc.;
In partnership with The Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

Quick & Easy Cookbooks

Once again from the 5th grade...

New...and in time for Mother's Day and Father's Day

Twelve cookbooks to choose from ... only \$6.50 each. Perfect gifts or use them yourself. All orders due in by Monday, April 20. Orders may be turned in to Tr. Tracey (office) or Tr. Barbara (213).



Almost Homemade



Christmas Cookie Exchange



Convenient One Pot Meals



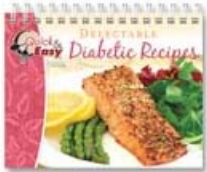
Mom's Best in Minutes



Scrumptious Salads



Sensational 5-Ingredient Recipes



Delectable Diabetic Recipes



Easy Slow Cooker Cuisine



The Kid Chef



Simple Pizza & Pasta



Super Sandwiches



The Thrill of the Grill

Quick & Easy Cookbooks Order Form

Student Name _____ Homeroom _____

Home Phone Number _____

_____ Almost Homemade	_____ Scrumptious Salads
_____ Christmas Cookie Exchange	_____ Sensational 5-Ingredient Recipes
_____ Convenient One Pot Meals	_____ Simple Pizza & Pasta
_____ Delectable Diabetic Recipes	_____ Super Sandwiches
_____ Easy Slow Cooker Cuisine	_____ The Kid Chef
_____ Mom's Best in Minutes	_____ The Thrill of the Grill

Total # of Cookbooks _____ X 6.50 = _____ (Total Amount Enclosed)

Orders may be turned in to T. Tracey (office) or T. Barbara (213).