

The ICS Link

A monthly newsletter for families at Independence Charter School
"Opening WORLDS of OPPORTUNITY"

May 2010

Dear Parents:

A little more than one year ago, the ICS Board of Trustees adopted the *Oxfam Curriculum for Global Citizenship* as "a foundational and guiding philosophy ...for the school." This adoption came after more than eight years of growth and development of our world cultures curriculum and just weeks before we were awarded the *Goldman Sachs Foundation Prize for Excellence in International Education*. In the spring, the Board adopted the *Global Education Task Force Proposal* as a model for growth over the next 15 months. The proposal outlines a plan for integrating global education into our curriculum, as well as charges ICS to consider global education principles when making decisions regarding policies and practices at ICS.

So what does it mean to be a Global Education school? What does it mean to raise a Global Citizen? Why is this so important?

Global Citizens are people who...

- respect and value diversity
- explore, develop and express their values and opinions while also respecting the values and opinions of others
- make informed choices as to how they exercise rights and responsibilities
- are outraged by social injustice and willing to act to help end it
- participate in improving the community, from the local to the global
- are committed to making the world a more equitable and sustainable place
- take responsibility for the consequences of their actions

In school, we are focusing on teaching students the knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes which are key elements for responsible Global Citizenship. We firmly believe it is our responsibility to teach our students to meet the challenges they face now as well as are likely to face in the future. As our children's lives are increasingly shaped by what happens in other parts of the world, we are working to help our students develop the skills needed to navigate the complexities of our modern, inter-connected society. At home, we ask that you support this effort by discussing the responsibilities of Global Citizenship, and working with your children to further develop these 21st Century skills.

If you have any questions or ideas to share about Global Education and Global Citizenship at ICS, please feel free to contact me at principal@independencecharter.org.

Thank You,
Principal Stephanie

Saturday's PTA Silent Auction & Social Teacher Items Preview:

"Time with Teachers" donations include:
Breakfast with a friend at Morning Glory with Tr. Emily
Rita's Water Ice with a friend and Tr. Ericka
Trip to the library followed by ice cream in Rittenhouse Square Park with a friend and M. Andrea
Phillies game with a friend with Tr. Kristen and Tr. Amy
Jewelry making session with Tr. Janet J.
Ride the train with Tr. Michelle and get ice cream
Trip to the Art Museum with Pr. Stephanie
Walk Tr. Dana's dog Quincy with Tr. Dana and Tr. Adrienne K.
Ukulele lesson with Tr. Ryan
Sushi lunch with Tr. Ramzy (2 kids)
Walking trip to Rittenhouse Square and enjoy gelato at Capogio Gelateria with M. Maricarmen and M. Luz Angela (2 kids)
Ice cream outing with Tr. Karen
Zoo balloon with Tr. Tracey and Tr. Natalie
and so much more....



I.C.S. Bulletin Board

Independence Charter Double Anniversary Committee Next Meeting- May 14, 2-4 p.m.

On **November 16-17, 2011**, Independence Charter School will celebrate our 10 year anniversary and the 100 year anniversary of our home - the former Thomas Durham Elementary School. Volunteers are needed to help plan and publicize the celebration. We also need assistance with locating Durham School alumni and former staff members. **Volunteer commitments are very flexible.** To learn more about how you can participate, please attend our next meeting scheduled for **Friday, May 14 from 2-4 p.m.** If you can't attend the meeting but are still interested in participating, please contact Leonora Cravotta at ext. 2430 or via email at leonorac@independencecharter.org.

Marbles and Games from other countries are needed for this year's International Festival Game room on Friday June 4th. Please contact Monika Kreidie at mmkreidie@gmail.com if you have marbles or a game with instructions to donate. Also needed are parent volunteers to help during the International Festival Thursday, June 3rd for school tours and Friday, June 4th for various activities, contact Monika at mmkreidie@gmail.com.

Hello to all our ICS Parents,

I would like to remind you that any time during school hours you are welcome to call me at ext.2228 or e-mail me at foodservices@independencecharter.org regarding your child's meal account. I have been trying to send automated messages when your child has a negative balance; if you want to make a change on your telephone number to where you want this message to go, please let me know.

Finally I would also like to extend an open invitation to our ICS parents to participate in our Food Services Committee as a parent-representative. We meet on the second Thursday of each month at 9a.m.; please contact me for more information or also give me any feedback you might have about the program. Thank you!

Tr. Neyza Cabrera

STEP UP!

A neighborhood youth development initiative, providing services for adolescents. The Step-Up program works to provide youth with the skills and motivation to fulfill their educational and career goals. Through the West Philadelphia Youth Development Initiative youth are offered opportunities in civic engagement, mentoring, employability and life skills, skill development, academic enrichment, and last recreation and art.

PROMOTING POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT— SERVICING YOUTH AGES 10-16—EMPLOYABILITY AND LIFE SKILLS & ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT

THERE'S ALSO A SUMMER CAREER EXPLORATION PROGRAM FOR TEENS AGES 14-24 FOR EMPLOYMENT DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS.

Please call 215-879-7740 or check out the website at www.tocfwh.org Mr. Dameon Mack, Director of Youth Development Programs. Phone: 215-380-9901 Email: dmack@tocfwh.org

Hello to all ICS Families, Friends and Staff:

It is hard to believe there are only 1 ½ months left in this school year. It has really gone by quickly and I feel that the food service program has been very successful this year. Many of you have had lots of great suggestions, and we have tried our best to meet our goal of satisfying everyone.

For the month of May we have more fun theme meals planned. The celebration of Cinco de Mayo will encompass our international meal with chicken and cheese enchiladas, rice, southwest style corn, fruit and milk. The students will also be happy to hear that May is National Hamburger Month. We are celebrating this on May 13th by serving hamburgers, potato fries, fruit and milk. Please check the menu for our weekly vegetarian options. Our student's choice contest will resume during the 2010 – 2011 school year.

To follow up on what I wrote about in my last article, I would like to ask you to speak with your children about getting everything they need for their lunch when they go through the line. As I mentioned before, the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) has very strict guidelines to follow pertaining to child nutrition, and we need to make sure that these requirements are enforced each day as your child goes through the serving line for either breakfast or lunch. If your child ever has a question regarding the meals being served, please let them know that I am available to answer them.

Lastly, I would like to remind everyone that we are offering party packages for classroom celebrations. If you are interested in ordering or need more information, please contact Teacher Neyza at extension 2228.

Thank you and have a great month.

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Chef Gabe
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As I mentioned last month, the Board of Trustees will wait to pass our final 2011-12 budget until we have more concrete funding numbers from federal, state, and city sources, as well as healthcare costs for the upcoming year. We will pass that budget at our June meeting, which has been **rescheduled to June 21st at 7pm** for this very reason. In the meantime, we passed a new staff payscale at our April meeting and have made room in our budget for those increases, thanks to the efforts of the CEO, business manager, and board finance committee.

As difficult as this budget climate might be for us, when I read the news from across the river in New Jersey, I am grateful for where we are. As you may have heard, NJ's Governor Christie has dramatically cut funding for schools (to the tune of \$820 million for public education plus another \$175 million for colleges and universities) and left it to individual municipalities to vote on local tax increases to fund school budgets. So I feel quite thankful this week that Governor Rendell has fought so hard to not only maintain but actually increase state education funding -- not an easy battle in Harrisburg. As gubernatorial candidates begin to make noise in coming months, be sure to ask about their positions on education funding.

In Board Development, we are delighted to have four really terrific candidates for the Parent Representative Seat this year: David Engel, Mary Fitzpatrick, Jeff Friedman, and Maurice Rowland (in alphabetical order!). Keep an eye out for more details and your ballot, and don't forget to vote for one of these amazing parents before the May 20th deadline.

We are also considering a number of equally fantastic candidates for Community and Founder seats that are opening, so if you know of someone who you think would be a terrific addition to the ICS board, please let us know.

Until next month-
Rona Buchalter
President, ICS Board of Trustees

Life is like a landscape in the distance coming into focus as the mist rises and the sun peeks through the clouds...

Isn't life like a far off landscape that you view in the distance? Maybe you are traveling down the road and you think you see purple mountains far off...as you approach you begin to see the stately trees, the occasional plowed field, a wisp of smoke from a chimney...so as in life, you see a distant goal, and along the way, the beautiful details challenge your perceptions and enrich your travel...

The ICS community will be able to "travel together" as we watch the ICS Mural go up in the playground. This project is beginning May 1st and is funded by the Violette de Mazia Foundation and Mural Arts. The mural is graced by the artistic talent of Anne Northrup and her helpers at Mural Arts, selected artists at Graterford Prison, and the students of ICS. It will begin to take form like those purple mountains in the distance and will be completed in late August or early September. Be sure to follow this beautiful undertaking, as we will be asking you to write your impressions.

-Direktore Jurate

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Summer Reading Update

We have shifted our focus for the Summer Reading Program this year. We still want everyone to READ, READ, READ over the summer vacation.

However, instead of reading specific, required books, we will be giving students lists of lots of recommended books and asking them to keep track of the time spent reading in a very special reading log. We want you to read LOTS of books and try out LOTS of different genres, in Spanish and in English. The point is to have fun reading all summer long!



In the fall, we will be sharing our book logs and talking about all the fun we had reading over the summer. Each class will be having Book Talks so everyone will get to hear about each other's favorite books. We also have some very special summer reading celebrations planned. Keep your eyes and ears peeled for details about a fun Principal's Summer Reading Challenge!

Stay tuned for more details about the Summer Reading Program...

We have recently started our country study of Mexico. The children are developing their map skills and replicating the Mexican flag with various materials. Children are learning about the flag, Monarch butterflies and volcanoes. In math, children are studying the coins and time. In addition, our classes are working on our Silent Auction projects.



Kindergarten



We are very busy this month, with lots of good things happening in first grade. We are going to experience the arts with a field trip to the Children's festival, which is always fun!!! Our first graders are learning about Japan, and are getting ready to present this wonderful country during the International Festival. In math, we are learning about money and using play money to buy things that we made in our class a "mini market". We are happy to help the PTA during this year Silent Auction; our first grader are making a French basket to participate in the raffle, and we hope to have more donations for this cause!!! Thank you everyone for your help and support. We wish you a shiny spring!!

Grade 1

The 2nd graders are excited to start learning about our second country study, India! We learned a lot about Chile and because of the earthquakes in Haiti and Chile, our 2nd graders have learned some life lessons about humanitarianism. We are proud to announce that thus far, we have raised \$508 to help the people of Chile by donating fruit market & pretzel sale funds and selling copihues. In Math we are busy working with geometric shapes and time-telling, then moving on to interpreting graph information and Venn diagrams. Our writing focus this month is on identifying main and supporting ideas, and spicing up our writing pieces with juicy adjectives. We're going to the International Children's Festival on April 30th! Please keep your eye out for more information about fundraisers & permission slips! Tr. Karen is back and we would like to wish her a happy return. Best wishes to Tr. Suzanne who is going out on maternity leave ... very soon! Finally, a huge welcome to Tr. Natalie Zeppa who will be working with room #108 for the rest of the school year. Please continue to send in supplies for our themed baskets for the Silent Auction on Sat., May 1st! We hope to see you there!



Grade 2

Our third grade team participated in the Kids Grow Expo with art projects. We had a lot of fun and we got a lot of prizes; you will be able to see some of our art work in the hallway of the second floor. We are improving our knowledge in math by learning fractions, decimals, division and more multiplication. For Language Arts we are learning about folktales from Russia. We are also starting our trip around the world learning about Russia for our Social Studies unit. We are getting ready to share all about this country at the ICS International Festival.



Grade 3



The fourth grade is ecstatic to have finished the Science PSSAs. In Social Studies, we are wrapping up Ghana and have now moved southeast to Australia. We look forward to displaying what we learn about Australia in our booth during the International Festival. Our trip to *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* is planned for Friday April 30th. Please work with your son or daughter to create an organizational system for completing and returning homework regularly. Also, all fourth graders should be able to recite all their times tables up to twelve. Next year is middle-school and we want our fourth graders to shine!

Grade 4

5th grade is gearing up for International Day! We have been learning about South Africa and received a wonderful visit by Godfrey Sithole, a native of the country. Thankfully, PSSAs are over, and classrooms are returning to their more normal routines. That said, this week, students began two weeks of sex education. They also received a visit from Safe Routes Philly, and learned about bike safety. Important: ALL CAMPING TRIP MONEY and PERMISSION SLIPS are due on Monday, May 3rd. Packing lists have been sent home with all children who have signed up for the trip.



Grade 5

Students in 6th grade have begun an exciting physics unit in Science class. Students are studying gravity, friction, and density. Students are creating their very own roller coasters for an upcoming project. In Math Problem Solving students are working with data to learn about probability. 6th grade students continue to work on their year long service-learning projects in their advisory groups. Next week Sarah Trachtenberg, from Thomas Jefferson Narcotic Addiction Rehab Program, will be coming to ICS to speak to 6th graders about the causes and effects of drug use.



Grade 6



7th grade MPS is in the middle of a unit on linear equations ($y = mx + b$), which is an important step before they tackle exponential equations and quadratic equations in 8th grade. The science classes have been eagerly embracing Earth Day celebrations: reading, watching, experimenting, and discussing environmental issues. If your child is overly eager to cut back their shower time or recycle, go ahead and blame the science teachers.

Grade 7

Eighth graders are busy as they wrap up PSSA testing and prepare for their end of the year trip to New York! Students participated in a successful walk-a-thon to raise money for their trip. In English Language Arts, students are preparing their presentations on their memoirs they have been reading in book clubs. In Science, students are finishing up their study of heredity and inheritance with a unit project where they are designing their own animal family. In Spanish, 8th graders are doing a unit on the preterite so they will be geared up for high school. In Social Studies, 8th graders just finished their unit on Reconstruction and are beginning to discuss Immigration in the United States. In math, 8th graders are studying a unit about quadratics and parabolas.



Grade 8

PTA Information

“Take Me Out to the Ball Game” on Sunday May 23rd.

ICS Day at Camden Ballpark returns with the Riversharks vs. Southern Maryland Blue Crabs. Tickets are \$7.50 each.



Please send payment by May 6th (check & money orders should be made out to “ICS PTA”) in with your child, or drop off at the front desk if the amount exceeds \$40.

Please mark envelopes. Be sure and include the quantity, your name and contact information, and your child’s name. Tickets will be sent home with your child. If you would prefer to pick them up when they are ready, please include that information with your payment. “...so it’s 1-2-3 strikes your out at the ole ball game!”

ICS has the opportunity to make some money that day by working one of the concession stands. Approximately \$500 was made during last year’s game. If you are interested in working the concession stand that day, please contact Jamie Petroski at jsa4673@gmail.com.

Family Literacy Night & Book Swap at the next PTA Meeting, Thursday May 6th at 5:30 p.m.

Activities include:

- Book Swap where families bring in books that they’re done with and can trade with others (both English & Spanish books welcome)
- Make-a-book station
- Word/vocabulary/spelling game station (Scrabble, Boggle, Apples to Apples, etc)
- Sharing ideas for making reading with your kids fun and helpful

This is a PTA family fun night. There will be no babysitting but there will be pizza dinner (hopefully served earlier this time). You can RSVP via Tr. Tracey at the front desk either in person or via email: traceyh@independencecharter.org.

2009/2010 PTA Officers

President: Consuelia McCourt, president@icspta.org

VP: Luci Boone, luciboone@aol.com

Treasurer: Liz Reed, earead@yahoo.com

Secretary: Nannette Johnson, philnannette@comcast.net

Membership: Stephanie Kindt, Stephanie.kindt@verizon.net

Board Liaison: Cristina Veal, cristinamvea@gmail.com

Frequently Asked Questions about the upcoming Silent Auction & Social

- **When is the event?** Good question. It’s this coming Saturday, May 1st, from 6p.p. until 10ish.
- **Do I have to RSVP to attend?** You don’t have to, but it helps the caterer know how much to prepare. And believe, we don’t want to run out of food! You can still come even if you forget to RSVP, or don’t know until the last minute if you can make it.
- **Can I bring my children?** No one under the age of 21 can attend the event Saturday night. Period! If your sitter stands you up and you show up with your child, you will be turned away. In other words, in absolutely no circumstances can anyone attend under the age of 21!
- **Do I have to buy or bid on anything?** No and no. Our main objective is for the adult portion of the ICS community to come out for some fun and laughs. Bidding on items can add to the fun, but is certainly not a requirement. There will be music, great food and even a fortuneteller!
- **My spouse or significant other can’t make it, should I still attend?** Absolutely! There are loads of “singles” mingling about.
- **What should I wear?** Anything and everything goes. If you wear a suit and tie all week, wear jeans. If you wear flats and capris all week, put on the stilettos.
- **When do the tables close?** Silent auction tables will close around 9:00pm. Raffle basket drawings and live auction items will immediately follow.
- **Do you take personal checks?** Cash, checks and credit cards are gladly accepted.

I want to come, but I’m a bit shy and not sure if I’ll know anyone. Then come and volunteer for an hour. All volunteers that night get free entrance and having a task to do is a great way to meet others and keep occupied. If you’d like to volunteer, contact Susan at sjeburrows@earthlink.net, or call her at 215-805-2621, or leave a note at the front desk.

It’s never too late to volunteer!

The ICS Link

Help send an ICS teacher to Responsive Classroom training!

Independence Charter School has fully adopted the student support systems: the *Responsive Classroom* approach (lower school) and the *Developmental Designs* approach (middle school). These programs provide teachers with resources to help them understand their students' social and developmental needs and facilitate a communal classroom environment which enables students and teachers to become mutually respectful and empowered partners in learning.

Thanks to the generosity of Independence Charter families and friends, in the summer of 2009, twenty-eight (28) teachers and administrators participated in the week-long training course necessary to implement *Responsive Classroom* and *Developmental Designs* this year.

For the 2010-2011 school year it is our goal to have 100% of Independence Charter School's teachers fully trained in *Responsive Classroom* and *Developmental Designs* methodology. To make this goal a reality, we need your help!

We are asking families or groups of families to contribute half the funds necessary to enable a teacher to participate in this invaluable workshop. For every \$350 raised, ICS will match that contribution and deliver this training to one teacher this summer. Our goal is to raise \$18,000 in order to train 26 additional teachers/teaching assistants (to the ones already budgeted) this summer.

The *Responsive Classroom* and *Developmental Designs for Middle School* programs are based on seven guiding principles:

- The social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum.
- How children learn is as important as what they learn: Process and content go hand in hand.
- The greatest cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.
- To be successful academically and socially, children need a set of social skills: cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control.
- Knowing the children we teach—individually, culturally, and developmentally—is as important as knowing the content we teach.
- Knowing the families of the children we teach and working with them as partners is essential to children's education.
- How the adults at school work together is as important as their individual competence: Lasting change begins with the adult community.

Visit the programs' websites to learn more about these exciting approaches to student learning and development!!

www.responsiveclassroom.org www.originonline.org

I wish to send an Independence Charter School teacher to the *Responsive Classroom/Developmental Designs* summer institute!

Please group my gift with the gifts of the following families: _____

Enclosed is my gift in the amount of (check one):

\$175 \$350 \$525 \$700 \$1400

\$10 \$25 \$50 \$100 Other: _____

This gift qualifies for a corporate matching gift (forms enclosed).

Please make check payable to Independence Charter School and fill out the form below. Then mail both back to Independence Charter School, attention Development Office.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

To make a gift by credit card, visit www.independencecharter.org and click on 'DONATE NOW' on our homepage.

Independence Charter School is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Your contribution is tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

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