

The ICS Link

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

November 2008 Issue

Just a few weeks ago, our citizens exercised their voices and participated in an historic election. According to *The Associated Press*, *The Chicago Tribune*, and *Newsday*, on the surface, we know the following is true:

1. Barack Obama is the first African-American ever to be elected president of the United States.
2. Joe Biden is the first Roman Catholic ever to serve as vice president.
3. It is estimated that 136.6 million Americans voted for president this election, up from 122.3 million in 2004. This represents a 64.1 percent voter turnout rate, the highest since 1908.
4. States achieved record voter turnout numbers of African-Americans and Hispanics
5. Obama raised more money in this election than any candidate in history.

At ICS, teachers and their students examined the election and its candidates, discussed the issues and questions, even stood out on Broad Street encouraging Philadelphians to vote. It all culminated in a mock election, where we, too, experienced record voter turnout! I've never seen students of all ages engaged in a presidential election as our students were in this one. Clearly, what happened on November 4th has the potential to significantly alter the course of our nation, and our students were aware of the history of which they were a part.

But what happens now? After students were asked to voice their opinions about the future of their democracy, they had to also stand by and watch as the adults made the ultimate decision. Middle school students in particular, who often have the largest and loudest opinions of all, want to continue to be heard. Enter the ICS Student Council, run by Teachers Rich Taggart, Chris White, and Elaine Gildein. While the adults went out to vote for a new president and other representatives, the students of ICS held their own election for Student Council representatives. Our election was historic as well, as for the very first time, we elected Student Council officers (from grade 8) in addition to classroom representatives (from grades 6 and 7). The Student Council is charged with representing the needs and interests of their constituents – the students of ICS – and speaking and acting on behalf of those they represent. In order to qualify to run for Student Council, one had to meet minimum citizenship and academic grade requirements, as well as earn the sponsorship of three of his or her teachers. Representatives took an oath where they agreed to respond to the needs of the community, provide positive leadership and service, and conduct themselves with integrity and honor. Finally, they each vowed to "give back to this school more than I seek to receive."

For middle school students, Student Council provides students with their first glimpse of community leadership, and helps prepare students to accept such roles as they move into high school and beyond. For lower school students, Student Council representatives and the work of the council as a representative body can serve as role models from which they can learn as they grow. Please take a moment to discuss the new ICS Student Council with your child and support our efforts to create community and global leaders.

I wish all of you a wonderful holiday.

Thank You,
Principal Stephanie

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I.C.S. Bulletin Board

UPCOMING EVENTS

11/27 & 11/28– Thanksgiving Holiday

12/10– December Board Mtg. 7PM

12/17-Middle School Science Fair, 7PM

**12/22- Report Card Day,
No School for Students**

**12/23– Professional Development Day,
No School for Students**

12/24-1/2– Winter Break

Student interim reports were sent out during the week of November 17th. They were sent home with students in kindergarten through 4th grade and were mailed home for 5th-8th graders. If you did not receive your child's interim report, please contact Teacher Megan at megans@independencecharter.org or 215-238-8000 extension 2292 to request a copy.

It is COLD outside!

Since our students are outside at recess at least one time each day, please make sure your child comes to school with a hat and gloves, as well as an appropriate winter coat.



If he/she is in need of any of these items, please contact Principal Stephanie at principal@independencecharter.org or at 215 238 8000 x5050.



ICS is looking for parent volunteers who would be interested in training to teach Scrabble and Chess to younger kids. The training would be offered ASAP.

Mid-December for Chess training at Masterman High School, after school. And training for Scrabble would take place on Dr. MLK day during the day at Temple's Liacouras Center.

Interested parties should contact the Principal. The chess and Scrabble clubs would be co-coordinated by an ICS teacher too.



A special thanks to the Erkut and Graff families for their generous book donation and Michelle Coats for a large National Geographic magazine donations. We encourage any parent to donate very gently used books either directly to the classroom teacher or to the "reading room" library.

The ICS Link's Next Publication:

December 19, 2008

Suggestions and/or comments about ICS Monthly's publication please contact Tr. Michael Farrell- michaelf@independencecharter.org Ext. 2305

A Message from the Board of Trustees

Dear Parents,

At its November meeting, the Board of Trustees approved the use of the remaining construction funds to complete some additional projects, including replacing the fencing around the school yard. The Board is also in the process of starting a Board Development committee, whose focus will be identifying potential Board members. The Curriculum Committee reported the formation of a World Cultures Task Force. Principal Stephanie will be leading that Task Force, which will explore how ICS is currently complying with its mission and vision in regard to our world cultures curriculum. Contact Principal Stephanie at principal@independencecharter.org if you are interested in participating on the task force.

The December Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 10th at 7p.m. at the school. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Sincerely,

Nicole Perkins Kilcullen
Co-President

Pamela Prell
Co-President

WINGS UPDATE

As our ICS Parents know, we had been determined to continue the WINGS afterschool program at ICS for one more year. We began the process of applying “from scratch” as is the DPW requirement when moving from one building to another. We did not expect the resistance in some aspects of the paperwork. Consequently, realizing that many parents had committed to other afterschool programs, we conducted a whole school parent survey to gauge interest. We found that approximately 40 plus families had continued interest in WINGS for this year—not enough to maintain a program financially. Therefore, we will not be restarting the WINGS program this year and there are no plans to do so next year. Parents are urged to review the list of after school clubs available.

Our Kindergarten classes had a lot of fun during Mix It Up Day, in which students had a chance to sit with students they didn't know. When we talked about it, and our students shared their thoughts, they realized it had been a good experience to meet new people. We have also spoken about the fall, the leaves and their changing colors. Now that we have seen some flurries, our students are looking forward to the winter time, with snow, of course. We are doing some other interesting stuff. We are working on the sounds of letters. We are making good progress in this pre-reading stage. While we learn so many things, we are also excited about Thanksgiving. We will talk about different food we eat, and why this holiday is so meaningful.



Kindergarten



First graders have been working on knowing different ways to add and subtract with one digit numbers, and improving their reading and writing skills. Please make sure to practice at home! The more practice the better! We are very proud of the neighborhood murals children have created; they look very nice! The first grade team would like the children to know about different celebrations that happen around the world. Please talk to your child's teacher about sharing with the class some of the traditions your family has for this time of the year. First graders are very excited about the theater trip to see "A Christmas Carol". Make sure to send the permission slip with the money.

Grade 1

In 2nd Grade we have been very busy! In Social Studies, we are preparing for a 2nd Grade Parade that will celebrate all of our unique cultures-stay tuned for that! In math we have been skip-counting, working with money amounts and estimating. Room 113 (M. Adrienne and 112 (Tr. Karen/Ericka) enjoyed a very special performance by Ballet X, organized by Tr. Shavon. We learned so much about Ballet and Modern Dance, and even met 2 choreographers. We loved writing about it! M. Andrea and Tr. Suzanne's classes have been busy making the school and the city beautiful by planting tree's along Lombard Street; don't forget to take a look! The scholars in Room 112 have been learning many things about college, and how what we learn as early as 2nd grade will help us along the road to college. Thanks Tr.'s Shavon, Mike C., Megan, Andres, Janet J. and Miguel for sharing about college with us! We continue to enjoy blended specials, and are learning more about each other every day! We ALL look forward to Tr. Karen's return, which we hope will be very soon! We miss her!



Grade 2

During this December third graders are going to the Franklin Institute. In math we will be working on addition and subtraction. We will be studying and learning about the holidays around the world. Each class has an advertising agency and are going to make posters about Pennsylvania. If you have time, you can stop by and see our work.



Grade 3



As we end this month reviewing addition and subtraction of whole numbers and working with money in math, we will continue practicing these basic skills to go into multiplication. In Social Studies students have been immersed in the study of the U.S. Constitution and they are enjoying writing persuasive essays about “The Bill of Rights”. Our next step is the westward expansion and children will discover the fantastic richness of the west at that time. They will become pioneers and will have the opportunity to take a virtual trip through the Oregon Trail and discover the way of living, happiness and suffering of the people. They will learn to keep journals and will have the chance to plan for their trip and tell stories about it. After all that they will see and learn, they will enjoy writing personal narratives.

Grade 4

The fifth graders are learning about the causes of the Civil War. We recently hosted a special guest from the Civil War Museum who spoke about life during the Civil War. The students tried hardtack and one student dressed up as a Union soldier. In language arts the students are writing five paragraph essays. Students should be working on their science fair projects; please help your child keep up with the due dates so they're ready for December 17th. In math we're working on division skills and getting ready for division of decimals. Keep a look out for the Civil War math project!



Grade 5

In 6th grade Language Arts, we are finishing up Tangerine by Edward Bloor and writing newspaper articles on the important and unusual events that occur in this novel. In Math, sixth graders are continuing their work with fractions and will soon be finding different ways to represent parts of a whole. They will be learning strategies to represent fractions as decimals and as percents (and vice versa). The unit will end with a project in which the students will have to shoot baskets (or the equivalent of) and show their results as fractions, decimals, and percents. In Social Studies, we are learning about the ancient civilization of Sumer and we will soon find out who ruled Mesopotamia after them. In Science, we have continued to work with the Clay Mobile Initiative, and we are moving full speed into the Science Fair.



Grade 6



With the Science Fair fast approaching, seventh graders (along with others) are working diligently towards completing their Science Fair projects. With the help of Tr. Suzanne's 2nd graders, we were able to successfully plant five trees out front of our beautiful new building. With an early winter looming, seventh graders are gearing up for the cold months ahead.

Grade 7

Eighth graders recently took a field trip to the Art Museum to see the Bee's Gees Bend Quilting exhibit. In math, students are having a grand time looking for Pythagoras in the City of Euclid! Students have just finished learning about the causes of the American Revolution and have begun learning about the the events that took place during the war. Science fair project preparations are already underway. Eighth graders have continued their exploration of realistic fiction, reading Slam by Walter Dean Myers, and Gentlehands by M.E. Kerr.



Grade 8

ICS Student Council Elected & Sworn In

On November 19, 2008 Independence Charter School's 2008-2009 Student Council was sworn into office by Pr. Stephanie. Middle School students watched their newly elected officials sworn into office during a special middle school assembly outside. One of the first tasks of the Student Council is planning and implementing the recycling program. Council will tie in recycling efforts to the number of trees saved and to the 7th grade math curriculum of Variables and Patterns by making tables and graphing the results (lbs of paper collected saves X number of trees) by floor. Council has been VERY proactive and is meeting virtually every day (beyond the required bi-monthly meetings).

8th Grade

President: Brianna Perrin

Vice President: William "Alex" Johnson

7th Grade

Tr. Rich: Nora Reed Tr. Lynn: Anya Gilroy

Tr. Amoreena: Cartier Aikens Tr. David: Tatiana Greer

6th Grade

Maestro Chris: Sam Devine Maestra Lindsay: Jerome Henry

Tr. Chris: Mikayla Williams Tr. Janet: Gisela Hernandez



Have you noticed the new additions outside our school? The City of Philadelphia installed U shaped bike racks and flashing School Zone lights last week. In addition some students worked with the Horticultural Society to plant trees outside our school. The trees were funded by the TreeVitalize program in conjunction with the State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

The ICS PTA

December 3rd

PTA is Family Fun Night

The fun starts at 6:15 with a potluck dinner followed by crafts for kids and socializing. Bring a favorite dish or dessert to share with ICS families. Middle school parents committee will meet briefly after the meeting.



For those families that submitted their meal applications before the October 1st deadline, your (2) dress-down day passes will be available to pick up that night. Those that submitted applications after October 1st can also pick up their (1) dress down day pass that night. (You can also pick up your passes during Parent/Teacher Conference on Monday December 22nd).

Cherrydale Results

ICS students, families, co-workers, teachers & staff helped to raise over \$13,000 during the October Cherrydale Catalog Sales promotion! This is truly remarkable and a testament to the support and dedication of the ICS community.

Congratulations to top selling student, 5th grader Tahira Boone-Branch, selling over 65 items!

Congratulations to Tr. Kelly's 3rd grade Spanish Enhanced class and M. Amaya's 4th grade Spanish Immersion class for selling the most items at 192 each.

Thank you to the following volunteers who helped sort and distribute orders this past Monday November 24th: Barbara & Kevin Kilmartin, Becky Wiesner, Cristina Vea, Susan Burrows, Luciana Boone and Ingrid Schafroth.



Middle School Events

The American Red Cross will be offering a babysitting Certification class (for students aged 11-14), at school in mid-December. A flyer will be sent out via "Backpack Express" shortly with more details.

2008/09 ICS PTA Officers:

Co-presidents: Susan Burrows, sjeburrows@earthlink.net 215-805-2621

Nikki Butler, niks_space@yahoo.com 267-456-3603

Secretary: Nanette Johnson, philnannette@comcast.net

Treasurer: Liz Reed, earead@yahoo.com

Membership: Consuelia McCourt, mccourt@consuelia.com

Board Liaison: Cristina Vea, cristinamvea@gmail.com, 267-992-3450

Fall Friend Raiser Carnival Wrap-Up



The first annual ICS Fall Friend Raiser Carnival was a big hit with not only ICS families, but our new neighbors as well. While not intended as a fundraiser, the event did make approximately \$1200. The committee agreed to donate the majority of funds to the 8th graders as they work towards raising money for an international trip. The remaining \$200 will be set aside as a nest egg towards next year's Carnival.

The day could not have been more beautiful and we have so many people to thank for making it such a memorable event. The list of volunteers is plentiful (as you can see) and we'd like to extend a sweet note of thanks to all the cake bakers for the Cake Walk. We've misplaced your names but we know that your delicious contributions helped make the Cake Walk one of the most popular activities!

Palm Reading. Korinna Shaw & Teja Bailey

Story Telling- Alima Saffel, Kenya Thomas, Elsie Stern, Danial Grindin

Set up/Clean up- Kellianne McCarthy , Jeanne Adamson , Alicia Colter , Kristin Nocco , Saretta Rowland , Steve Binasiwicz , Laveta Meaux , Brittany Steelman-Peterson , Evan Kaplan , Becky Wiesner, Zuri Garvey-Stanford , Menia Bing , Corlissa Bass Sherry, Sandra Donover, Conswelia McCourt, Ann Farnsworth , Fabio Fernandez, AnnForesman, George Petropoulos, Kitty Scott , Fairly Hopkins , Atiya Williams

Entertainment- Fitzpatrick School of Dance, Salsita Dance Studio, Knife & Fork Band, Zuri Garvey-Stanford, "Paula"

Monetary donations- Jacqueline Morris, Carolyn Baugh, Frauke Schnell, Donna Sharer, Ercument Erkut, Esperanza Jeronimo, Jessica Frederica, Jennifer and Jeffrey Friedman, Candice Floyd

Cakewalk- Wendy Caplin, Barbara Kilmartin, Kevin Kilmartin, Denise Kulp, Maura Hanlon, Maria Palladino

Face Painters- Jeff Bradbury, Mary Catharine, Michelle Burton, Sabrina Fetcher Cucpcake Decorating, Kelly Altrichter, Karla Williams, Mayra Diaz, Martha Grace

Tattoo Table- Gabriela Alfaro, Jean Miller, Todd Nesbit

Prize Table- Jarrell Adams (ICS student graduate)

Game Tables- Nirva LaFortune, Dianna LaMastra, Jamie Petroski, Janet Pinkerton, Rita Roberson, Lattia Rolling, Carol Simpson, Joseph Williams, Kia Williams, Tommika Williamston, Arnold Scott, Adelaida Medlock, Deatra Butler, Maura Hanlon, Kristine Simmons, Angela Tyler, Lauren Ayala, Horrace Ryans, Steven Johns, M. Andrea Yanez, Tr. LeVeta, Tr. Ramzy, Tr. David, Tr. Matt, Tr. Jose

Committee- Susan Burrows, Courtney Flanagan- Chobert, Maureen Eagen, Annette Earling, Tracey Hill, Laura Hutton, Barbara Kilmartin, Robin Kohles, Conswelia McCourt, Janean Williams-McKnight, Maurice Rowland, Tara Ryans, "Chef Gabe" Sosa, Katy Sosa, Becky Wiesner

ICS Hosts Japanese Businessmen

ICS has a beautiful relationship with its No.1 community partner: The International Visitors Council (IVC). In the past five years, ICS has hosted special international guests from over 35 nations: 14 Latin and South American countries, 15 African countries, Belarus, Poland, France, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, China, and Russia. And now, we can add Japan to the list! Twenty-two Japanese businessmen visiting the U.S. in a special program through the U.S. government to learn about “giving back” to communities stopped by ICS on Friday, November 21st. Twenty-three fourth graders from Tr. Adrienne Keene’s classroom and several Student Council representatives hosted the guests and worked on a project to make multilingual signs. The fourth graders were perfect hosts and will now have more background knowledge when they study about Japan this spring. Thank you IVC—our partners in learning—you help to bring the world to our classrooms!



Over 700 Canned Goods Collected in Food Drive

Middle School students organized ICS’ Fall Food Drive. Over 700 canned goods were collected during the months of October and November. All donations were collected and given to Project Home (www.projecthome.org).

On November 21st Lindsey Giblin, Development Associate from Project Home, thanked our students for their efforts at an all school assembly.



2009 Independence Charter School Calendars Unveiled at Tienes Una Cita/Make it a Date Fundraiser !

The 2009 Independence Charter School Calendar/Calendario which features artwork created by ICS students was unveiled at the annual Tienes Una Cita/Make it a Date fundraiser on Friday November 21 at the Center for Architecture. The event featured a live auction of the artwork from the twelve artists featured in the Calendar and a silent auction of the artwork from the eleven finalists. The event which was attended by over 125 ICS families and friends is expected to raise in excess of \$25K.

Looking for a unique holiday gift? The 2009 ICS Calendars are on sale for \$10. You can purchase three for \$25 (15% savings) or ten for \$70 (30% savings).

Please see the order form on the back page of The ICS Link. You can also purchase the calendars at the school. Please contact Leonora Cravotta at 215-238-8000, ext. 2430 or leonorac@independencecharter.org. or just stop by the Front Desk.

All proceeds from the ICS Calendar Sales and the Tienes Una Cita/Make it a Date fundraiser go directly to the school's operating budget which covers facilities costs, teacher salaries, student field trips, school supplies and much more! Purchasing a calendar is a wonderful way to support Independence Charter School and our student artists.

A big congratulations to all our featured artists in the 2009 Calendar/Calendario!

| | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Ashley Rojas, January | Visal Biegalski, February | Asjah Brown, March |
| Payton Werts, April | Olive Garst, May | Kaylah Baylor, June |
| Alhaji Koita, July | Janae Mollett, August | Chace McCall, September |
| Amani Koonce, October | Max Gombiner, November | James Distefano, December |



Order your 2009 Independence Charter School Calendar/Calendario

The 2009 Independence Charter School Calendar/Calendario which features artwork created by Independence Charter School students is available for sale for \$10.

You can purchase three for \$25 (15% savings) or ten for \$70 (30% savings).

The calendars are perfect for your home, workplace or a holiday gift.

All proceeds directly benefit Independence Charter School.

I wish to purchase _____ calendars **Amount Enclosed** \$ _____

Name _____ Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Make checks payable to Independence Charter School.

Return order form to:

Leonora Cravotta, Independence Charter School, 1600 Lombard Street, Philadelphia, PA 19146

For more information contact Leonora Cravotta at 215-238-8000, ext 2430 or leonorac@independencecharter.org



An ICS 2008 Geography Challenge!

*In honor of International Education Week (November 17-21) and to celebrate the beautiful map murals that we have installed on the first, second, and third floors, **Direktore Jurate** calls ICS students to a **Geography Challenge!** All students in grades K-8 are eligible to participate. The challenge requires independent study at home to prepare answers to questions that you will find on this page. If you are willing to take on your grade-appropriate challenge please submit intent to participate slip signed by your parent/s (it will be posted by the maps, available in the December newsletter, and on this sheet). You will be called on the week of December 15-19th to come to **Direktore Jurate's** office to meet the challenge. Hot cocoa, homemade bread and special certificates will reward the knowledge hungry.*

This is a great way to begin preparing for the official National Geographic Bee which will take place January 13th (gr.4-8). For gr.K-3 the unofficial Bee will take place the following week. Utilize these websites to help you prepare for the Bee and the Challenge.

www.eduplace.com/geonet/geonet.html

A fun geography game

www.kids.nationalgeographic.com

Everything from creatures to places

www.sheppardsoftware.com/web_games.htm

Tutorials and games by level (beginner, intermediate, expert)

www.sheppardsoftware.com/USA_Geography/USA_G1_double2.html

Basic US knowledge

www.sheppardsoftware.com/World_Continents.htm

World Continents and Countries

www.maps.com/funfacts.aspx?nav=FF

Map Games

www.quia.com/jg/42004.html

Geography games

Keep this sheet as a resource. Parents can help to study. Look for more geography morsels in the coming weeks at the map locations on each floor.

An ICS 2008 Geography Challenge (continued)

Look for your grade grouping to find the challenges. If you are interested in taking additional challenges, you may move up to the next group but must be ready to show that you can master your own grade group as well.

Grades K-1:

1. Name all of the continents.
 2. Name all of the oceans
 3. Locate Canada, the United States and Mexico.
- List one animal that lives in each of these: a river, an ocean, a desert.

Grades 2-3:

1. All of the above for gr.K-1 , and
 2. Name and point to one river in the United States
 3. Name and point to one mountain range in the United States.
 4. Locate Chile, India, Russia, and Kenya.
- List an animal that is native to each of the countries listed in no.4, but each must be different than the other. No pets may be named such as cats, dogs, etc.

Grade 4:

1. All of the above for gr. 2-3, and
2. Locate Ghana and Japan.
3. Name the capital cities of Ghana and Japan.
4. Name 25 states of the United States (you will be able to look at a blank map of the US)
Name five countries located along the Equator.

Grade 5:

1. All of the above for gr.4, and
 2. Name three countries from each of the continents, naming the continent first followed by the three countries within.
- Compare the country of India to the country of Spain in these categories: overall population, official language/s, predominant religion/s.

Grades 6-8:

1. All of the above for gr.5, and
2. Be prepared to say five sentence in Spanish **and three sentences** in either Japanese or Arabic.
3. You must know all 50 US states give or take 2. You will be allowed to look at a blank US map.

Please cut along this line and send in the signed slip to Direktore Jurate through your homeroom teacher.

My child _____ in gr. _____ will participate in the 2008 Geography Challenge.

Parent Signature _____

Celebrate teaching and learning at ICS!



November 16-22 is officially American Education Week, a time to highlight the importance of parental involvement in educating children. According to experts, parents need to take an active role in their children's education for optimal success at school. Ongoing research shows that parental involvement in schools improves student achievement, reduces absenteeism, and restores confidence among parents in their children's education.

Parental involvement means reading to your child, checking homework every night, limiting television viewing on school nights, developing a relationship with your child's teacher, and simply asking your child about his or her school day. Whatever the level of involvement, it is important to be consistent in order to make a difference in your child's life.

Then, cap it off by joining us on *Invite Parents to School Day* on Thursday, December 4th.

Come to observe your child in action!
See your child's learning environment.
Learn about the challenges and triumphs your child meets with every day.

After your observation, please join Principal Stephanie for tea and cookies in the cafeteria

Classroom observations from 9:30 to 11:00
Tea with the Principal from 10:00 to 11:30

Please RSVP to Tracey Hill at 215-238-8000 ext.2222 or traceyh@independencecharter.org AND return the tear-off below to your child's teacher (one for each child, please).

Student Name _____
Grade/ Tr. _____

_____ *I will gladly participate in the observation and tea.*
_____ *Sorry, I will be not participate this time.*

Parent Signature _____
Phone _____