

The ICS Link

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

October 2008 Issue

Families and Friends-

Last Sunday, I took a walk down Lombard Street just to admire the work of the volunteers who created our newest addition - a beautiful playground and yard at ICS. As a new principal, I hope to have many years of rewarding experiences at ICS ahead of me. However, I doubt there will ever be one quite like October 23rd, when the proverb, "Many hands make light work" came to life right in the ICS school-yard. Hundreds of volunteers from IBM, SAP, City Year, The Hun School, and of course the ICS family joined with representatives from *Kaboom!* to create a yard that includes a beautiful playground, an outdoor classroom/stage, basketball and hopscotch courts, chess/checkers tables, picnic tables and planters.

As you know, the ICS curriculum examines the ideas of cultures around the globe. Such global awareness becomes truly valuable when accompanied by local awareness and action. The work completed here on October 23rd demonstrated for our students the amazing results that can be realized when of a group of committed people organize around a mission and work together to ensure that goal is achieved.

One only needed to see the children's faces as they entered the yard the day after "the build" to see their new play space to understand the impact of the work completed here. One Kindergartener, when encouraged to enter the building at arrival, kept his feet planted in front of the playground, and, staring at it, protested quietly, "but Principal Stephanie, I just **need** to look at it." The students are clearly in love with their new space, and the staff is overwhelmed with gratitude for the work the community provided.

It is clear we are excited about this latest development in our new home. Our first weeks at 1600 Lombard Street have been full of (sometimes unexpected) challenges which have only been outweighed by the rewards of our successes, such as a beautiful building and yard, improved technology, a delicious lunch program, and, most importantly, a reflective and devoted staff. We look forward to the future completion of our yard with further "greening," paving and other amenities.

With an historic election looming, it is important that our students understand that in a productive community, each voice, each hand, and each opinion is crucial when trying to effect change - whether that be choosing a president or affecting the positive development of an innovative school. The *Kaboom!* playground build and ensuing activities embody the ideals we at ICS hold in highest regard. We appreciate and are humbled by the dedication of the volunteers who work to make ICS the wonderful school it is.

-Pr. Stephanie

ICS Students Choose OBAMA!

On October 28th students participated in a mock Presidential election. The results below will be sent to Harrisburg to be added to the state wide kid vote.

Obama 94.5 % (614 votes)

McCain 5.4% (25 votes)

Nader 0.1% (1 vote)

I.C.S. Bulletin Board

UPCOMING EVENTS

11/1– Fall Friendraiser 12:00-4:00PM

11/7– Ribbon Cutting 11:00AM

11/11– No School, Veterans Day

11/13– Mix it Up Day

11/16– American Education Week

11/21– Calendar Event 6:00PM-9:00PM

11/27-11-28– Thanksgiving Holiday

HOODS and HOODIES- As the weather turns cooler, please remember that students are NOT allowed to wear hooded sweatshirts, sweaters or shirts. Students may wear collared long-sleeved shirts, turtlenecks, crew neck sweaters and sweatshirts, button up sweaters and blazers. These items may not have hoods.

Students should dress in dress-code layers so that they may take a layer off if they become hot or add a layer if they become cold. Students will not be able to wear undershirts during school. Please dress your child appropriately.

ELECTRONICS- Students are allowed to have cell phones and electronic games on school grounds. However, these items MUST BE TURNED OFF AND "OUT OF SIGHT" at all times. Any electronic item or cell phone that is turned on (ringing) or used will be confiscated and parents will need to pick the item up from the Dean of Students.

MEDICATION- Students may not bring medicine to school for their personal use. All medicine must be brought in by an adult and administered by the school nurse. Please call the school nurse at 215-238-8000 x2232 to discuss all medication issues. All medication will be confiscated and a parent meeting will be held.

WEAPONS- Please speak with your child about appropriate and inappropriate items to bring to school. Exacto-knives, pocket knives, BB guns, guns, etc. are NOT ALLOWED for any reason. Students who bring these items to school will immediately be suspended and possibly expelled. Replicas or toys replicating these objects are also not allowed and will be confiscated. Consequences will be given.

Please speak with your child about appropriate and inappropriate items to bring to school. Exacto-knives, pocket knives, BB guns, guns, etc. are NOT ALLOWED for any reason. Students who bring these items to school will immediately be suspended and possibly expelled.



The ICS Knitting Club would greatly appreciate needles and yarn donations.

Please send to Tr. Lynn
(lynne@independencecharter.org)

The 2009-2010 ICS student lottery applications will be available starting Monday, September 29th. In order for your child to receive sibling preference (if applicable) and/or to be included in the lottery process, the complete application packet must be submitted by the lottery deadline (which will be in November; the specific date will be printed on the application). You can print out the application from the ICS website (www.independencecharter.org) or pick up a copy at the front office .

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE!

November 4th Polls are open from 7:00AM to 8:00PM

Don't Leave Without Voting- If you are in line when polls close, stay in line! You have the right to vote.

Bring Proper Identification- First-time voters need to bring a photo ID or a non-photo ID with the address where you are registered such a paycheck, utility bill, or bank statement.

The ICS Link's Next Publication:

Wednesday, November 26th

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

What's New in 2008!?!

Independence Charter School will be using the "Responsive Classroom" and "Developmental Designs" approach to inform both our social and academic curriculum. The Responsive Classroom approach was developed by classroom teachers. It emphasizes teaching children to take care of themselves, each other, and the school environment so that everyone can learn at his/her best.

Guiding Principles- The *Responsive Classroom* approach is based on theories of how children learn and on the experiences of classroom teachers. There are seven basic principles behind this approach

Learning social skills is as important as learning academic skills

How children learn is as important as what they learn: Process and content go hand in hand

Children gain knowledge most effectively through social interaction.

To be successful academically and socially, children need to learn cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy and self-control (CARES).

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 inviting their participation is essential to children's education.

How the adults at school work together is as important as how skillful each individual teacher is: Lasting change begins with the adult community.

Teaching practices-The *Responsive Classroom* approach includes the following main parts. As a school, we will be focusing on "**Morning Meeting**" and "**Rules and Logical Consequences**".

Morning Meeting- Children gather for fifteen to twenty minutes every day to greet each other, share news, do a group activity, and look forward to the day ahead. This daily routine builds community, creates a positive climate for learning, and gives children practice in a wide range of academic and social skills.

Rules and Logical Consequences- The teacher and children together create rules for the classroom that will allow everyone to do his/her best learning. When children break the rules, there are clear consequences that help them learn from the mistake. The approach teaches responsibility and self-control.

Guided Discovery- A structured way of introducing materials so that children become interested and motivated to explore different ways to use the materials.

Academic Choice- An approach to giving children some choices in their learning to help them become invested, self-motivated learners. Academic choice can be used to teach any subject.

Classroom Organization- Arranging materials, furniture, and displays in ways that encourage learning, care, positive social-interaction, and independence in children.

Working Together with Parent- Ideas for involving parents as true partners in their children's education.

You can learn more about *Responsive Classroom* at www.responsiveclassroom.org. You can learn more about *Developmental Designs* at www.originsonline.org.

TAKE A BREAK and the BUDDY ROOM

Independence Charter School is implementing a variety of logical consequences. Two of these are **Take a Break** and the **Buddy Room**.

Take a Break gives students the chance to calm down, focus and reflect on "what is going on" in a low stress setting. Each class room has a break spot (although it may be called the "chill spot", "take 5", etc). Students have been taught and have modeled to correct way to **Take a Break** a number of times. Students who are disruptive or disrespectful on the way to **Take a Break** will be asked to go to the **Buddy Room**.

Buddy Room (another classroom that is within eyesight of the student's original classroom) is a "second chance" to calm down, focus and reflect on "what has happened". Each student in the **buddy room** is also asked to think about what they need to "fix" in order to avoid having to leave the classroom next time. If a student continues to be disruptive in the **buddy room** they will be brought to the Dean's office. The Dean of Students will then call the student's parent and the parent will be asked to pick their child up from school.

Independence Charter School's 1st Annual Constitutional Convention



On October 3rd, Independence Charter School held their first Annual Constitutional Convention. The Convention was an energetic celebration where we adopted our new School Wide Rules. These rules are:

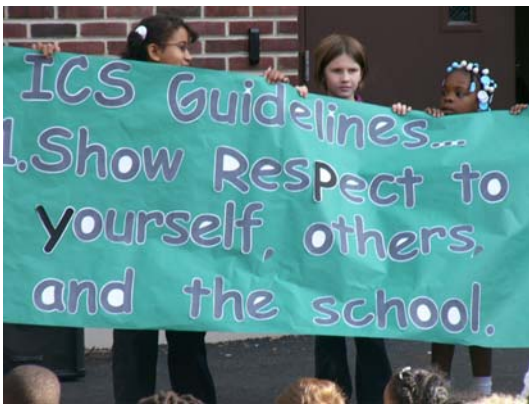
An ICS Citizen will:

- 1. Show respect to yourself, others and the school.*
- 2. Pay attention and Follow Directions.*
- 3. Be an active participant, make an effort to be open-minded and stay positive.*

Un Cuidandano de ICS:

- 1. Mostrar respeto a sí mismo, a los demás y a la escuela.*
- 2. Prestar atención y seguir instrucciones.*
- 3. Ser un participante activo, hacer el esfuerzo para tener una mente abierta y mantenerse positivo.*

This process began on the September 15th!! Students spent a week talking about and creating their Hopes and Dreams (K - 4th grade) and Goals and Declarations (5th - 8th grade)!! Students shared these with their classmates and from these the entire class created, agreed upon and posted their classroom guidelines. Classrooms then picked students to represent them in school-wide meetings. The Lower School representatives met in grade groups that shared and combined classroom guidelines to create 3 - 5 school-wide guidelines. Two fourth grade representatives then took these 3 guidelines and met with the Upper School grade representatives. The students spent hours combining and agreeing upon the perfecting the final 3 school-wide guidelines.



In Kindergarten, we are now feeling at home here at school. Actually, we think ICS is (stomp, stomp) AWESOME and want to thank the middle school kids for teaching us our favorite chant. We are learning to follow directions, identify letters, distinguish between living and non-living things, and to recognize the feelings of others. We're very excited about our trip to an organic farm in early November. It's not every day that we get to plant wheat. In Social Studies this month, we'll be designing and creating our own make-believe parks. We can't wait to play in our new, amazing real-life playground!



Kindergarten



The entire first grade village would like to congratulate Maestra Begona on her new baby boy Samuel! The first grade village will be going to Linvilla Orchards on Friday, October 31st, where we will enjoy a hayride and a lesson on the Lenape Indians. In math we are working on addition and subtraction. In language arts we are reading and writing and in social studies we have begun our unit on neighborhoods and families. We look forward to a great year of learning!

Grade 1

We are feeling more at home now with our new on-site playground and green spaces! Some 2nd grade classes will be visiting the free library at Rittenhouse Square and the Liberty Museum; check for details in your Monday Memos. In Math, we will begin working with money soon, so feel free to help your child identify coins, combine coins in different ways to show amounts of money, and give change.



Grade 2

The third grade got a visit from a local ad agency. The students learned all about advertising and even wrote some pretty cool slogans. Many of the students came to the KaBoom build day and participated in encouraging the 300 volunteers. We can't wait to play on this awesome play space. On October 31st, the third grade will be celebrating the season with a Fall Festival. This festival will include face painting, crafts and games.



Grade 3



Fourth Grade continues to enthusiastically explore this year's curriculum, as we move into the month of November. Having finished our first math unit on reading and making graphs, we will be focusing on place value and money in accordance with addition and subtraction. In Social Studies we will be taking advantage of the rich historical resources that our city has to offer by taking a field trip to the National Constitution Center. We enjoyed reading Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing by Judy Blume, and will be diving into our guided reading books. Furthermore, we are thrilled to have our new playground thanks to the Kaboom grant and the many volunteers!

Grade 4

Students are reading books about slavery and the Civil War in language arts, and are beginning their study of the 5-paragraph essay. In math, students are working with decimal multiplication and are looking forward to their chapter test! In Social Studies, the fifth graders are completing their study of slavery with an exciting study of African American spirituals and code songs. We are excited to announce we'll be launching our Civil War studies with the visit of an actor and educator from the Philadelphia Civil War Museum in November. He'll be telling Civil War stories and dressing our students up in the uniform of a Union soldier!



Grade 5

6th grade science students began a partnership with the Clay Studio's Mobile Clay Initiative. This initiative promotes the education of science through art and hands on learning. The six week program kicked off with a dig where students dug for their own clay in the ICS schoolyard! The students became geologists as they learned first hand how to find clay in the soil, how to sieve, and how to add water to the powdered clay to make moldable clay. We're really looking forward to the projects to come!



Grade 6



We just finished our integers unit in problem solving and now are venturing deeper into the world of algebra with our next unit entitled "Variables and Patterns." In math procedures we're continuing our exploration of geometry and measurement. In science we're studying plants and fungi and the 3rd Annual ICS Science Fair (coming in December) has been announced to the students. Spanish Language classes are continuing to read *Al capone me lava la ropa* and acting out strategic dialogues written by the students. In social studies, students have been learning about medieval Europe. They have also begun topic selection for this year's National History Day theme "The Individual in History."

Grade 7

The eighth graders have been very busy writing essays for high school, graphing mathematical models, and sharing their understanding of character development while reading the Outsiders. They are involved in a school-wide mock election which will hopefully enhance their appreciation of the democratic process. The eighth graders are excited about National History Day and have begun choosing their topics for this year's theme, "The Individual in History: Actions and Legacies."



Grade 8

A Reminder from the Deans

ATTENTION PARENTS

We are so excited about our new school yard and playground. Please remember that students will go outside almost EVERY day!! Students will go out in light rain and in snow. Please make sure that your student has the appropriate clothing needed everyday including hats and gloves. Please be sure to label all items so they can be returned should they be lost.



ICS 2nd Annual Mix It Up Day!

On Thursday, November 13th ICS will participate in its 2nd Annual Mix It Up at Lunch Day.

Mix It Up Day is a simple call to action: take a new seat in the cafeteria. By making the move, students can cross the lines of division, meet new people and make new friends. Millions of students at over 10,000 schools nationwide will participate in Mix It Up at Lunch Day. Students will be encouraged to sign a pledge and participate in this special event.



CANNED GOODS DRIVE

Our Goal: One-thousand canned good items donated by Friday, November 21, 2008

Our Mission: To help feed those in need in the Philadelphia area

Students from the 7th & 8th grade will be organizing and managing this school-wide initiative.

Suggest items— Beans, tuna/canned fish, Vegetables, Juice/milk, Chef Boyardee products, Spaghetti sauce, Tomato products

Drop-off bins are located on each floor in the building as well as the main office.

If you have any questions contact Dean Yerodin at 215.238.8000

The ICS PTA

Cherrydale Update

The orders (all 230 of them) have been shipped to Cherrydale in Texas and as soon as we have a delivery date, a notice will be sent home, and families will have the option of picking up orders from school to minimize lost or damaged items. In the meantime, the PTA would like to thank the following parents who spent many hours collecting envelopes from teachers, separating orders, counting & depositing and following up with ICS families: Luciana Boone, Pam Kearney, Liz Reed, Cristina Veal, Tracey Hill and Susan Burrows.

November PTA meeting:

Wednesday, November 5th at 6:30

(dinner at 6:15)

-Navigating test scores & testing:
Tr. Kristen Long, Curriculum Specialist

-Meet ICS's new retail neighbors

-Middle School Task Force meeting immediately following PTA meeting

A Big KaBoom Thanks to the following for helping in the KaBoom Kafe:

Joy Forte, Dawn Ang, Nannette Johnson, Becky Wiesner, Debi Phillpotts, Cristina Veal, "Chef Gabe", Katy Sosa, Susan Burrows, Tracey Hill, Arline Roberts (and new baby), Cindy Cassel, Stephanie Bankole, Denise Watkins, Adelaide Medlock

And equal thanks to the following ICS parents who donated paper goods, desserts and home-baked goodies, food and fruit: Maureen DiStephano, Jonathan Burrows, Anika Stevenson, Kristin Walker, Tomika Boyer, Michelle Coats, Ebru Erhan-Erkut, Anfreda Lewis, Joy Forte, Cristina Veal, Cindy Cassel, Sabrina Fecher-Davis, David Cleghorn, Laura Hutton, and Anne Foresman. If anyone is mistakenly not listed, please let the PTA know so that we can properly thank you!

Cherrydale Dance Party for those students who sold 10 or more items will take place in the Spring time, in the back play yard. Date and time to be announced after the first of the year.

Tracey Hill and Leslie Burton thank all the parent volunteers who helped during the Scholastic Book Fair and School Photos. You kept your good humor throughout!

2008/09 ICS PTA Officers:

Co-presidents: Susan Burrows, sjburrows@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 Veal, cristinamvea@gmail.com, 267-992-3450

AIDS Walk Team ICS



Teachers Amy Leigh, Barbara Kay, and Ericka Morris represented Independence Charter School staff on Sunday October 19th in the 22nd annual AIDS Walk Philly. They raised a total of \$270 dollars for AIDS Fund which supports HIV/AIDS education, prevention, and services in the Delaware Valley Region by raising dollars and increasing public awareness about the impact of HIV on our communities. Currently 30 regional agencies are receiving funding from AIDS

Fund to provide direct services and AIDS prevention initiatives. Thanks also Tienne Martin and Lindsay Allen who could not attend the walk but helped with fundraising and support.

If you'd like to contribute to the team's fundraising goal, please visit www.aidswalkphilly.org (click on "Donate") and support team #2298. It's not too late to donate! Thanks!



to

Italian Club @ ICS



Fall-Winter Semester Classes
November 4, 2008– January 31, 2009

\$25 per semester– includes materials and registration.
Space is limited and priority will be given to students that attended in 2007/2008.

2nd & 3rd grades– Tuesday (3:15-5:00)
4th & 5th grades– Wednesday (2:15-4:00)
6th, 7th, & 8th– Thursdays(3:15-5:00)

For further information, please contact Cristina Vea:
cristinamvea@gmail.com

Dear Parents and Students:

I am bringing an exciting idea to you: let us tell our neighbors, the city, the state, the nation and the world what we are all about! Just like our own family names tell a bit of history about who we are, the name of our school should also be illustrative of the wonderful and important things that we do here. When you think of Independence Charter—what is the one word that would best describe what we do uniquely?

International comes to my mind immediately! We believe in second language learning to help our kids access the world, we study about other countries, artists and music from around the world! That is why I have asked the Board of Trustees to include International in our title. This way everyone will know the focus of our school. What sounds better: Independence International Charter School or Independence Charter School International...let me know. I would like to hear from you.

Best wishes, Direktore Jurate Krokys

Village Update

A village is a group of families living, working, and collaborating to improve their lives. Independence Charter School (ICS) has a rich history of families uniting to improve the education of their children. ICS is now in the second year of a pilot program called The Village. As you know we have two programs (enhanced and immersion), these programs use different curriculums and speak predominately different languages, but are united in a quest to create life-long learners with a unique global perspective. The Village as a pilot unifies programs, blending enhanced and immersion students in Kindergarten through third grade for specials, trips, recess, and special events. Additionally, as a Spanish immersion/enhanced school we are making every effort to translate signs, notes home and make announcements in Spanish.

Congratulations go out to two ICS graduates (2007-2008) who have earned second and third place recognition for their original plays written while eighth graders at Independence Charter:

2nd place Middle School: Surya Watkins for *This is for Me!*

3rd place Middle School: Joshua Martin-Corrales for *A Higher Hand*

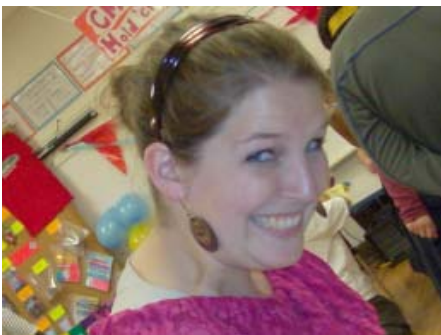
All ICS eighth graders enjoy the opportunity to work with a real playwright as part of their eighth grade experience. This is the

Middle School Math Carnival

We had a great turnout for our First Annual Middle School Math Carnival and it was terrific. Middle schoolers and teachers ran games such as Plinko, Four in A Row, The Factor Game, Making Purple, Roller Derby, CMP Hold 'Em and the Place Value Game.



Parents and students had a chance to experience some of the games used in our Middle School Problem Solving Curriculum. Everyone had a chance to test out strategies, theories on probability and general math know-how. It felt a little bit like Las Vegas (without the gambling) and fun was had by everyone. Thanks to everyone who came out and joined us.



Facilities Committee

Facilities Committee is looking for new members! Although we are wonderfully settled in the new building, there are many important additional projects that need attention. If you are interested in sitting on this committee, please contact Robin Kohles at robink@independencecharter.org.

KaBOOM! Build Puts the PLAY Back in Playground!



"I expect to pass through this world but once; any good thing therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now; let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again." --Stephen Grellet

On Thursday, October 23rd, over 300 volunteers from all over the Philadelphia region joined together in the spirit of kindness to build our students a spectacular playground in just one day. The inspirational event represented the culmination of months of cooperation on the part of countless parent and community volunteers, and at last gave to our students a beautiful, safe, creative play space that will be enjoyed for generations to come.



Thank you to former ICS parent Sandra Aidar, whose dream of a safe space for our children to play set this amazing chain of events in motion through painstaking grant writing!

Thank you to the dedicated chairs of the many KaBOOM! committees--Food: Susan Burrows and Nannette Johnson; Recruitment and Registration: Maureen Long and Caren Seltzer-Devine; Construction: Robin Kohles and Sylvester Burton; Logistics: Eugene Haynes; Youth Involvement: Joanna Davis-Diaz and Kathryn Snyder; Safety and Maintenance: Leslie Burton; and Public Relations: Tina Kluetmeier and Lisa Nelson-Haynes. Their tireless behind-the-scenes organization and preparation brought the playground from dream to reality.



Thank you to the build-captains who cheerfully donated to the project not just one day, but three full days of their sweat and hard work: Stephanie Kindt, Ernie Coats, Kevin Kilmartin, Sam Garst, Robin Kohles, Rob Ecker, Tina Kluetmeier, and Julie Snell.. Also, thank you to our additional prep-day volunteers: Brian Leighton, Liz Reed, Ken Roscioli, John Dini, and Michael Bach. Thank you also to Matt Drexler and Ramzy Andrawos from the ICS staff who set aside technical work to wield shovels and jackhammers.

Thank you to Julie Snell for organizing beautification efforts with landscaping and lovely new planters. Thank you to George Petropoulos for fearlessly commanding the bobcat! Thank you to Teacher David Scott for providing the perfect soundtrack to keep us moving while we built.



Thank you to the 80 ICS students who joined in the big day and encouraged the adult volunteers with their artwork and enthusiasm and to parent Jen Childs and 1812 Productions for helping their voices to be heard!

Finally, a HUGE thank you to the 300+ volunteers from the ICS community, SAP America, IBM, City-Year, and the football team from the Hun School of Princeton whose hard work helped turn our play yard from just another patch of asphalt to a unique space for fun and adventure in one remarkable day!



A Message from the Board of Trustees

Dear Parents,

At our October meeting, the Board of Trustees heard a report on the status of our finances from Jerry Santilli, who serves as our business manager. He assured us that our current funds have not been affected by the volatility of the stock market. While we can anticipate that the current economic crisis will have an impact on our budget, we don't expect to see the consequences in the short term. In the coming year, the Board will work with our CEO to establish our institutional priorities to help guide us for future budget adjustments.

A few other items of note: 1) The Community Relations Committee of the Board, chaired by Kristin Nocco, was transitioned from the Board to the CEO. As the work of this group of parents and community members supports the role of the CEO in connecting to the larger community. 2) The April board meeting was moved to the third Wednesday of the month to avoid any conflict with Spring Break and Passover. 3) The CEO and some of the founding board members brought to the table the long-standing idea that we should add "International" to the school name to better identify the focus of our program. The Board is looking forward to hearing more from the CEO on that issue and will put the question to a vote in the near future

This next month brings lots of opportunities to celebrate our school and the ICS community. The month begins with the Friend Raiser Festival on Nov. 1—a fun gathering for all ages. Then we hope to see lots of parents at the official ICS ribbon-cutting ceremony for our new building on Friday, November 7th. The festivities will begin at 9:30a.m.; the ribbon-cutting takes place at 11a.m. Please check your mail for your invitation to the annual Calendar Event, 'Tienes Una Cita' which will take place on November 21st.

As you know, the students at ICS learn Spanish and are exposed to other world languages in Middle School. When they study the history and culture of countries around the world they grow up with an awareness of themselves as global citizens. To better identify the ICS student experience, we are looking into the possibility of adding the word "International" to our name (i.e., Independence International Charter School). Simultaneously, we are working on a new logo for the school to help better "brand" ICS. So in the coming weeks you or your children may be asked for feedback about some of these ideas. Don't worry, there won't be a need to throw away any of your children's current ICS logo wear; they will be allowed to wear that until they grow out of it!

All of these events, as well as the phenomenal playground build are possible because of the enormous amount of time and energy of parent volunteers at ICS. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I want to thank each of the parents who have been able to plan and support these events. You enhance our community and round out the amazing work that is done each day by our staff and administration.

As always, the Board encourages you to stay updated on Board activities by either attending the monthly Board meetings (the second Wednesday or each month at 7p.m., unless otherwise posted) or reading the meeting minutes, which are posted on the ICS website (www.independencecharter.org).

Sincerely,

Nicole Perkins Kilcullen
Co-President

Pamela Prell
Co-President

Special Education Annual Notice

The Philadelphia Public Schools and the Philadelphia Intermediate Unit (IU26) provide special education and related service to resident children with disabilities who are ages three through twenty-one. The purpose of this notice is to describe (1) the types of disabilities that might qualify the child for such programs and services, (2) the special education program and related services that are available, (3) the process by which the public schools screen and evaluate such students to determine eligibility, and (4) the special rights that pertain to such children and their parents or legal guardians.

Children Served in Special Education Programs

Special education services are available to children who have one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities:

- autism
- deaf/blindness
- emotional disturbance
- hearing impairment including deafness
- mental retardation
- multiple disabilities
- orthopedic impairment
- other health impairment
- specific learning dis.
- speech or language impairment
- traumatic brain injury
- visual impairment including blindness

Special education is designed to meet the needs of each eligible student, including specifically designed instruction conducted in the classroom, home, community settings, hospitals, institutions and other settings.

Related services are available to students include transportation, corrective and other supportive services that help an eligible student benefit from special education. Examples include: speech pathology and audiology, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, social work services, school health services, medical services for diagnosis or evaluation, parent counseling and education, recreation counseling services, rehabilitation counseling services and assistive technology services.

Referral of Children for Screening and Evaluation

The Public Schools/IU26 has procedures to identify children needing special education. Those procedures are “screening” and “evaluation.” If a disability is suspected, teachers, other school personnel or parents may refer a child for screening and/or evaluation. Parents suspecting that a child may have a disability and need special education can request a screening or evaluation at any time by contacting their school principal. Screening of children, using immediately available data sources such as health records, parent interview and history, functional vision and hearing evaluations, and speech and language screenings are completed on request. If the screening leads to a recommendation for evaluation, the evaluation team will conduct the evaluations. No evaluations may be conducted without written parental permission. Consult your school counselor for further information.

State and federal law affords many rights and protections to children with disabilities and their parents. A summary of this rights and protections follows. Interested persons may obtain a complete written summary of the rights and protections afforded by the law, together with information about free of low cost legal services and advice, by contacting the special education coordinator or principle of the local public school.

Rights and Protections

Prior Written Notice: The public school must notify you in writing whenever it proposes to initiate or to change the identification, evaluation, educational program or placement of a child or whenever it refuses to initiate or make a change in identification, evaluation, educational program, or placement requested by a parent. Such notice must be accompanied by a written description of the reasons for the proposal or refusal, the options considered, if any, and the reason why such options were rejected.

Consent: The public school cannot proceed with an evaluation or reevaluation or with the initial provision of special education and related services with out the written consent of the parent. A public school may override the lack of consent for an initial evaluation by requesting the approval of an impartial hearing officer of judge following a hearing. If the parent fails to respond to a written request for permission to reevaluate, however, the public school may proceed with the proposed reevaluation with consent. A public school may not seek a hearing to override the refusal of a parent consent to an initial placement in special education.

Protection in evaluation Procedure: Evaluations to determine eligibility and current need for special education and related services must be administered in a manner that is free of racial, cultural, or linguistic bias. Evaluations cannot consist of a single test or assessment and testing must be a valid measure of the psychological, social, emotional or other learning characteristic or behavior that the school is using it to measure. Testing and assessment must be administered in accordance with professional standards and the criteria established by the publisher. It must be administered in the native language of the child.

For more information Contact Barbara Zisk, Special Education Coordinator
barbaraz@independencecharter.org

“¡Tienes Una Cita! Make it a Date!”

Enjoy an evening celebrating the launch of Independence Charter's 2009 World Holiday Calendar featuring our students' artwork. This year's event will be held November 21 from 6-9 p.m. at the Center for Architecture.

We will have great food, music, and an auction.

**Tickets: \$75 per person or \$100 per couple
\$25 for ICS teachers**

Ticket price includes 2009 Calendar, hors d'oeuvres & liquid refreshments

**The event is made possible by generous donations from:
La Locanda Del Ghiottone, Birch Tree Catering, Betty's Speakeasy-Betty's
Tasty Buttons & Other Artisans Confections, Standard Tap, Bridgid's,
Pumpkin, Transfinite Communications, Lennon Video and Jody Graff.**

**To purchase a ticket or make a donation, please contact Leonora Cravotta
at 215-238-8000, ext. 2430 or leonorac@independencecharter.org**

Independence Charter's Grand Opening Ceremony – November 7

On Friday November 7, 2008 we will celebrate the grand opening of our new location at 1600 Lombard. At **11:00 am** we will hold an opening ceremony, **ribbon cutting** and light reception. Civic officials and friends of the school will be in attendance. If you are in the neighborhood, please drop in for the festivities.

**Please note:
November 7 is a regular school day.**

For more information on the November 7 Grand Opening Ceremony, please contact Leonora Cravotta at (215) 238-8000, ext. 2430 or leonorac@independencecharter.org.



Special Thanks to Anyabwile Banko'le, board member, who generously donated a commercial refrigerator/freezer for the school kitchen.