



Published for the friends of
the Brookline Education Foundation

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Supporting Excellence in Teaching
& Love of Learning in Our Schools

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Winners will be announced during the Foundation's Annual
Spelling Bee on Sunday, March 8th.

The Brookline Education Foundation @ Brookline High School

Aiming for Smoother Transitions in the Honors Math Sequence

A sharp attrition rate in the four-year Brookline High School honors math sequence has motivated BHS teachers Danielle Rabina, Betty Strong, Josh Paris, Craig Friedland, Meghan Kennedy-Justice, Shoshana Kostant, and Mark Veader to join forces to ensure that all students have the skills necessary to keep up with the rigorous honors curriculum. With a Collaborative Grant from the Brookline Education Foundation, this team is working to help students gain the analytical skills they need in class and to build bridges between courses to help students transition to increasingly harder material each year.

In addition to emphasizing study skills and addressing retention of math concepts, honors math teachers now give short, frequent assessments to identify students who need extra support before they fall far behind. Students who need help may be referred to the two high school math centers, which are staffed by BHS math teachers.

These modifications aim to help more BHS students remain in the honors curriculum and develop the proficiency to become more successful mathematicians.

SAVE THE DATE Mark Your Calendars!

It's Time for THE BEE!



ANNUAL SPELLING BEES

Sunday, March 8, 2009
5th Grade Bee
12:00 pm
Adult Bee
2:00 pm
Brookline High School

BROOKLINE SCIENCEFEST

Saturday,
March 28, 2009
10 am-2 pm
Runkle School

A day for kids and families to play, discover, and mess with science
Sponsored by the Brookline Education Foundation

**WIN A MINI
RAFFLE TICKETS
ON SALE NOW!**

The Brookline Education Foundation @ the PreK - Grade 8 Schools

Educators Study the Effects of Geography on Hopi Life

This summer, the 2008 Charlie Baker Legacy Award recipients explored the question: How does geography affect how people live? Driscoll School teachers Marcy Prager, Jen Doubilet, and Amy Neale and Heath School's Jennifer Thompson went to Hopi Land in Arizona to study the people, their culture, and how they have survived in such a harsh and unforgiving climate.

Their Hopi guide explained that the god Masau directed his people to the arid land, where they could appreciate their religion and forge their identity. Their all-pervading religion teaches them how to survive in the stark climate. They use dry farming techniques to successfully raise corn and their exquisite sun-baked pottery, sought after all over the world, also provides for them.

"This grant allows us to teach to a deeper meaning," says Prager, explaining that, without personal experience, one can oversimplify to the point of stereotyping a culture. The two veteran and two second-year teachers note that this grant allowed them to exchange knowledge and enthusiasm and bring both back to their classrooms to benefit Brookline's children.



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Pierce third graders wrapped and tagged toiletries as holiday gifts for the hopeFound shelter.

Learning Through Community Service

A Brookline Education Foundation Collaborative Grant is funding exciting work by ten Pierce and Heath School educators who are studying the elements of quality Community Service Learning (CSL) and designing and implementing practical applications for the classroom. Participants will collaborate on best practices and evaluate CSL's impact on student achievement and teaching throughout the year. While attending a 2008 summer conference, this team of Brookline educators so impressed conference sponsors that they were awarded an additional grant for a year of free consultation services by KIDS Consortium, a nationally recognized leader in the service-learning movement!

CSL projects have already begun to take shape at both schools. Pierce third graders set up a center to collect toiletry donations for hopeFound, a Boston shelter for the homeless. Students advertised, collected, wrapped, tagged, and delivered donations to the shelter in December.

Heath School sixth grade CSL activities have focused on improving conditions at the Animal Rescue League and educating pet caretakers. The group's first bake sale raised \$300 for the League and students have been busily creating bookmarks, a YouTube video, and school presentations containing tips about caring for pets.

For their first CSL project, Pierce sixth graders chose to participate in the October 25 Walk for Literacy Education to raise money for Barakat, a program to improve education for girls in

Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. Pierce students raised nearly \$4500 through Walk sponsorships, bake sales, raffles, and by soliciting donations. This money will be used to send more than 100 girls to school in Afghanistan.

In an unanticipated offshoot of the Pierce sixth grade CSL effort, Barakat is now documenting the project to use in its own grant proposal to the Harvard Business School to fund a school outreach program. Barakat hopes to use the Pierce experience as a model for future work with schools.



"Bee" Part of the Excitement

The Annual Brookline Education Foundation Spelling Bees will take place this year on March 8th in the Brookline High School Auditorium. The Children's Bee will begin at 12:00 pm and the Adult Bee will follow at 2:00 pm.

The Adult Bee is a major fundraiser for the Foundation. Spellers participate in teams of three—sponsored by individuals, local businesses, PTOs, and other community groups—competing in "swarms" of up to eight teams. The winners of each swarm advance to the Championship Round. Prizes are awarded to the first and second place teams and to the team wearing the most creative costumes.

The registration deadline for the Adult Bee is February 20th. The tax-deductible entry fee is \$300 per team. To participate in or to sponsor a team for the Bee, please visit www.BrooklineEducation.org or call the Foundation at (617) 232-3846.

The Children's Bee, an old-fashioned spell-off for individuals, is open to 5th grade students in Brookline Public Schools. Bee details are mailed to students' homes at the end of January.

We hope that you will join us on March 8th for an afternoon of fun and friendly competition. Thanks to Brookline Access TV (Comcast Channel 23 / RCN Channel 15), you can relive every exciting minute! A schedule of BATV broadcast times can be found at www.BrooklineEducation.org.



The Wonder Years—Science Education in Grades K to 2

A small microscope will reveal wonders a thousand times more thrilling than anything which Alice saw behind the looking-glass.

—David Fairchild, Botanist



A Heath School parent tries out one of the stereo microscopes that the Brookline Education Foundation has donated to all second grade classrooms in Brookline.

Brookline students can now view natural phenomena beyond Alice's dreams with stereo microscopes donated to every second grade classroom and a microscope camera donated to each elementary school by the Brookline Education Foundation. Stereo microscopes provide magnified, three-dimensional views of visible objects while microscope cameras can display magnified images to an entire class at once via a computer or TV monitor. This equipment compliments Brookline's focus on hands-on learning and inquiry in science education for all grades.

Through a series of Foundation-sponsored, school-based breakfasts with Townwide Science Curriculum Coordinator Janet

MacNeil, parents can learn about science education in Brookline's kindergarten, first, and second grades. Attendees also may see and try their school's new stereo microscopes and microscope cameras. A link to Ms. MacNeil's PowerPoint presentation and the dates of the science breakfasts can be found on our homepage at www.BrooklineEducation.org.

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The Brookline Education Foundation is a private, non-profit organization supporting excellence in the Brookline Public Schools.



Among the buildings in Barcelona visited by Lawrence teacher Sharon Kiernan was Casa Batlló, by Antoni Gaudí, who was known for his irregular and fantastically intricate designs.

Through an Educator's Eye: Journey to Spain Will Inspire Teaching

Child's play evolves into scientific discovery in Brookline's third grade classrooms when students learn about the physics, math, and art of structures by building towers, bridges, and other edifices that can support weight and withstand wind. Wishing to "bring first-hand knowledge and excitement" to her teaching of structures, Sharon Kiernan, 2008 Adam Russell Gelfand Fellowship recipient, visited Barcelona, Spain, this summer to study that city's diverse architecture.

Thanks to a Brookline Education Foundation grant, which funded the trip, Kiernan will take future third grade classes on a virtual tour of Barcelona to illustrate the role of imagination, form, function, and design in the building process. Reports Kiernan, "I saw and learned so much. The Antoni Gaudí buildings inspired me especially as I think about our third grade unit on structures. He is a unique architect who used whimsy, intellect, and practicality in many of the 'houses' he built."

This newsletter is published by the Brookline Education Foundation

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