

The Press

PRAIRIELAND
Elementary
School

Press

Your Source for Cougar News

APRIL 2009

The Press
Prairieland Elementary
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309.888.6838
www.unit5.org/prairieland
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Principal's Message

Dear Prairieland Families,

Academic Excellence Award

Prairieland is one of 388 schools in Illinois to earn the **2008 Academic Excellence Award**. Undoubtedly, this is due to the commitment that our parents and staff have to the children, as well as the efforts of the children themselves.

Prairieland earned this recognition because at least 90% of our students have met or exceeded state standards in **both** reading and math for three consecutive years. Since this would include ISAT 2006, 2007, and 2008, it is important to recognize the efforts of all staff and students who contributed to this achievement, including those who are no longer at Prairieland. This would include our current 6th and 7th graders at PJHS, as well as Mr. Swearingen, who was our principal through the 2005-06 school year.

While we do not want to place too much emphasis on a state test, please know that I truly appreciate the creative and innovative approaches our teachers seek out so that all of our children may achieve personal excellence!

April is Autism Awareness Month

At Prairieland, we celebrate our history of being a school community that embraces the needs of all of our Cougars. Please check out these facts about Autism:

- People with autism are NOT all alike. They have different behaviors, personalities and needs.
- Children with autism need friends just like other kids.
- Some people with autism may get upset when things change in their environment or schedule. It is important to warn them ahead of time if changes will happen.
- People with autism need others to be patient with them.
- People with autism are able to learn, but may need a special classroom for certain subjects. They may also need to learn by having lots of pictures shown to them during classes and may need schedules shown to them during the day so they know what to expect.
- People who are born with autism will not outgrow it, although they might find ways to fit into the world around them as they grow up.
- Everyone is different, being different is not a bad thing, we are all different.

School Improvement Days

All Unit 5 staff will have a **School Improvement Day on Thursday, April 9th**. On that day, Prairieland staff will have grade level and department meetings with other teachers in the district in the morning. In the afternoon, we will be working on literacy and Response to Intervention, as well as planning for the next school year. We will have one more School Improvement Day this year, which will be the day before the last day of school. This is a "floating" date and has been bumped due to snow days. The board of education will set the official last day of school at their meeting in April.

Tim Arnold
Principal

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*Posted on School
website 3-17-09

*Sent home with
children 3-20-09

 **Calendar****April**

- 7 - PIECE Meeting – 6:30
- 6 - Family Fitness Night– 6:00 – 8:00
- 8 - Market Day Pick-up 4:30
- 9 - **No School** – School Improvement Day
- 10 - **No School** – Board Holiday
- 14 - Spring Pictures

 **Student Spotlight****IMC NEWS****Buy One Get One Free Book Fair**

Prairieland will again host a Scholastic BOGOF book fair on May 6th, 7th and 8th from 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. each day. Buy one book and get a book of equal or lesser value for free.

Donations Thank You!

We had several donations of books to the IMC recently. Thank you to Natalie Sterling and her family, as well as Alec McGinnis and his family for contributing books to the Prairieland Library. Donated books are evaluated for their relevance to our collection and many are added to the library. The remaining books are contributed to classroom libraries in the building.

Reading Tips

Have a family book club! Check out or buy multiple copies of a book everyone can read, or read with a parent. Read the book independently and then come together to discuss.

Set aside 30 minutes twice a week (or more!) to be family reading time. Have everyone sit in the living room and read. Then go around have each person share what they read about.

Birthday Books

Thank you to Marie Pulley for donating several books in honor of her February 5th birthday. Marie's family donated *A Little House Birthday*, *A Little Prairie House*, *Summertime in the Big Woods*, and *Mercy Watson: Princess in Disguise*.

Thank you to Maddox Pate for donating *Leprechaun's Don't Play Basketball* in honor of his March 1st birthday.

You can donate a "birthday book" to honor your special day. The order form and book list are available on the wall outside the IMC and on the IMC website.

Technology

Just as students benefit from guided reading, they also benefit from guided computer time. Take time to sit with your child as they play an educational game or type a story. Your guidance on proper computer use is very beneficial to your student's technology skills.

Try these websites:

www.pbskids.org – Educational and just-for-fun games based on PBS television shows.

www.learningplanet.com – A variety of activities for several subjects.

www.nypl.org – New York Public Library hosts Tumblebooks, which are online picture books.

BUSY STUDENT COUNCIL!

Winter months have been busy, full of activities and community service. On February 13th, we had over 300 people attend the “Cougars on Ice” Prairieland skate night at Pepsi Ice Rink. Lots of new skaters left with skating confidence and old skaters left with smiles and perhaps some new skating stories!

Bowling Day at Circle Lanes is our biggest fundraiser, and it supports our activities throughout the year. Thanks to Circle Lanes for their generosity! Many families attended this event raising enough money to fund all of the student council events for the coming year!

During Wacky Week in March, we collected money for The Baby Fold in Bloomington. Students enjoyed chewing gum, wearing silly hats, dressing alike, wearing pajamas, and bringing a stuffed animal friend to school during this week as they raised money to provide needed items for underprivileged infants in McLean County.

Cougar Council members also run the school store every Thursday and will continue to do so until May, and they are looking into how they can reduce any bullying that we might have here at Prairieland. As we wind down our Student Council activities, we would like to thank all

of the students, parents, and staff that have supported our efforts to introduce students to leadership and community service at Prairieland. Thanks!

Mrs. Elston, Mrs. Johnson, & Mrs. Harp

PRAIRIELAND GARDEN CLUB

Spring Garden Club is coming into full swing. We will be meeting every Wednesday starting April 8th until the end of school. It is not too late to join garden club if your child is interested and in grades 3-5. We meet 3:05-4 every Monday. Your child may come and pick up a Garden Club form from Mrs. Harp, Mrs. Kalina, or the office.

We will be busy clearing out the garden from winter residue in April, and planting the month of May. The students planted seeds in March to take home and care for.

Garden Club will not be making stepping stones this year. We decided to take a year off since Mrs. Jameson is not in the building. So save those stepping stone orders for next Christmas.

Mrs. Harp, Mrs. Jameson, Mrs. Kalina, and Mrs. Wawak

YOUNG AUTHORS

Prairieland is proud to announce the Young Author representatives for 2008-2009. We had so many quality books turned in, it was difficult to pick the top ones! We have four books that will represent our school during the final judging of the entire Unit 5 district. Eighth grade students from the three middle schools will

meet on March 19 to select the books that will go on to represent Unit Five at the Young Author Conference in May at Illinois State University.

2009 Young Authors Representatives

Amanda Breeden – (5F) *Peairs*

Alyssa Johnson – (1L) *Lily's Great Adventure*

Jessica Miller – (3S) *Ode to Animals*

Justin O'Brien – (2Ha) *The Little Leprechaun*

2009 Young Authors Best of the Rest!

Prairieland Caldecott for Art
Rebekah Nielsen (2Hu) *The Monkey Who Wanted to Hunt*

Prairieland Excellence in Non-Fiction
Brianna Hamel (4W) *I'll Take a Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich on White Bread, Hold the Peanut Butter!*

Brennan Mitchell (2L) *My Friend Slash*

Kylie Personette (5F) *A Wickedly Awesome Trip*

Prairieland Newbery for Story
Mitch Fairfield (5E) *Ducky Investigations: The Case Why School Lunches Are So Bad*

Kate Lorenz (5S) *I Gotta Be Me*

Nathan Miller (3S) *The Empty Well*

Prairieland Excellence in Poetry
Kailey Brandon (5E) *Poetry to Make You Howl and Growl*

Congratulations to everyone who participated in the Young Authors contest.

ART FAIR

Thanks to all of you who supported our first all-school art fair. I'm in the planning stages for next year and considering changes per the suggestions given to me on the returned surveys that were sent home after the art show. If you have any questions or suggestions, please email them to me at merediml@unit5.org. Again, thanks for your support.

Ms. Meredith



KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Kindergarten registration for Unit 5 Schools will be held on Thursday, May 7th at 9:00 am or 1:00 pm. Parents need to register at their home school. Students must be 5 years of age on or before September 1, 2009, to attend kindergarten this fall. If you have a child who will be entering kindergarten this fall, please plan to attend the pre-registration. If you are unable to attend either session on May 7th, you may call the school office at 888-6838. You will need a birth certificate, proof of residency, and a physical with immunizations. Please help us

spread the word by sharing with friends, family and neighbors.

NEWS FROM THE NURSE

NO SHOTS, NO PHYSICAL, NO SCHOOL!

This was the theme for Unit 5's booth at the 2009 Kid's Expo and the message that our Board of Education wants everyone to hear.

The reason for the change in Board Policy is because many students were missing multiple days of school when physicals and immunizations weren't completed by October 15th and it was difficult for them to recover, especially at the high school level, from the missed days in the middle of the year. It is all of our hope that this new policy will spark parents to complete the mandated physical and immunizations requirements for their child early, thus preventing any student from being excluded from school.

If you have a student who will be **entering kindergarten, 6th or 9th grade this Fall of 2009**, you must turn in the completed **physical and immunizations** mandated by the state of Illinois, by the 1st day of school in order for your child to attend on that first day. Your physician will have a listing of the mandated immunizations.

We are urging parents of incoming kindergarten students to turn in the physical and immunizations on May 7th at kindergarten pre-registration if at all possible. Otherwise, please

turn it in before this, 2008-2009, school year is over.

The last chance to turn it in this fall will be at Prairieland's registration day which is August 6th. If you wait until the 1st day of school to turn the physical and immunizations in, YOU AND YOUR CHILD will need to wait in line until the paperwork can be viewed BEFORE your child may attend class. Depending on the number of other student documents to review, this could take quite some time, and your child will be missing class. So, please avoid the last-minute rush and turn in the physical and immunizations ASAP! Here's a recap:

- **Must turn in BOTH the physical AND mandated immunizations before your child can attend on the 1st day of school**
- **NO exceptions will be made**
- **No appointments will be accepted**
- **1st day exclusion does not apply for the dental exam nor the vision exam (your child will not be excluded for not turning in the dental or vision exam)**

Please pass this important message on to any neighbors or friends who are affected.

And as always, please call me with any questions!

Susy Marcum, RN, BSN,
Certified School Nurse

FAMILY FITNESS NIGHT

Save the date! Monday, April 6th from 6-8 pm will be our 4th Annual Family Fitness Night. We will have great door prizes, including a Wii Fit and a Ripstick. There will be lots of information about how to keep your family healthy, interactive booths with exercise activities for everyone to try and yummy snacks to enjoy. We will also have information about the CATCH grant that Prairieland received this year and the many ways that we have incorporated healthy fitness habits into our daily schedule. Bring the whole family and join the fitness fun! More information will be going home after Spring Break.

COINS FOR KIDS

The kids and families of Easter Seals thank you!! Our total this year was - \$1252.18

Sincerely,
Suzie Schertz



FROM THE KITCHEN

The school lunch is a well balanced and portion controlled meal for your child. Each day the lunch we serve includes 5 components: meat or meat alternate, bread or bread alternate, fruit, vegetable and milk. Once in a while a student may tell us that they don't like or won't eat the entrée or the vegetable on the menu that day. School lunch regulations, requires that we practice the "offer versus serve" method, which means

that out of the 5 menu items offered a student may refuse 2 items but must select at least 3. It is our goal however that each child eat a balanced meal.

We also adhere to strict portion control techniques, which insure that each student is getting the right amount of nutrition. We never serve second helpings.

Please study our menu with your child to make sure that he or she will enjoy and benefit from eating a healthy lunch each and every school day.

If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Email: roszhac@unit5.org
(309)862-5062

The Cougars' cooks: *Mrs. Roszhart,*
Mrs. Sparrow and Mrs. Vines

P.E. NEWS

Thank you to everyone who encouraged their child to participate in the Physical Change Challenge. The K-2nd grade students raised \$113.00 to give to the Unity Community Center!

Our focus in March has been healthy nutrition. Your child should have brought home a nutrition calendar at the beginning of the month. If they have done at least four of the activities each week, please initial them and have your child return it to me by Friday, April 3rd. I will have a drawing with the calendars the following week.

We will be finishing up our jump rope unit in April. If you have a jump rope at home, break it out and have your child(ren) show you what they have learned. Maybe you can even show them a thing or two!

Last but not least, don't forget about Family Fitness Night! It is Monday, April 6th from 6-8pm. Don't miss out on the cool prizes, healthy information and fun activities. There are so many healthy activities for youth offered by our community! Be sure to stop by and check them out. Even small healthy changes to your child's lifestyle can benefit them in major ways for the rest of their lives.



Looking Ahead

May

- 7 - KDG Pre-Registration 9:00 and 1:00
- 13 - Market Day Pick-up 4:30
- 25 - **No School** – Memorial Day
- TBD 5th Grade Recognition
- TBD Playday



Reminders

5th Grade Parents

Mark Your Calendars - Parkside Junior High 6th grade Orientation/Open House will be held on Tuesday, April 21, 2009 at 6:30 p.m.

STAFF APPRECIATION WEEK
MAY 4-8, 2009

Our Prairieland Staff works hard throughout the year to provide our children with safety, education...and fun! Staff Appreciation week affords all of us the chance to say, "Thank you" to these dedicated people.

There are **2 ways** that you can sign up if you would like be a part of showing the Prairieland Staff your appreciation. Choose **one** of the options below:

1. Go to our online database and fill in what you'd like to do. It is **EASY** to do, and we'd prefer this ☺. Simply follow these steps! (This will be available on April 6th)
 - a. Go to www.google.com/accounts
 - b. Where it says "Email", type prairieland.piece@yahoo.com
 - c. Password: cougar123
 - d. Click on "Docs" then click either:
 - "Volunteer Opportunities for Staff Appreciation" (to sign up to come in and help)
 - "Donations for Staff Appreciation" (to send in items for the week).
 - e. Please click on the available spaces and fill in your information to donate and/or volunteer (when finished filling in a space, hit either the "enter" or "tab" key or use your mouse to click to the next space you need to fill in).
 - f. When finished, click "File" – then "Save and Close".
 - g. Click "Sign Out" at the top.
2. **OR~** Fill out the form below and return it to the school by Thursday, April 16th.

Thanks for all you do!

The Staff Appreciation Committee

Name: _____
 Phone: _____
 Email: _____

Check all that apply (and **specify days/times available** if offering to work that week):

- _____ I would like to donate food items that week
- _____ I would like to volunteer that week
- _____ prepare food on own or in a group
 - _____ decorate lounge and entry
 - _____ set up for meals and refreshments (some help needed each day)
 - _____ serve meals and refreshments (some help needed each day – traditional sit- down
lunch will be on Friday 5/8)
 - _____ clean up after meals and refreshments (some help needed each day)

I am available on _____

If you have any questions, please contact Lisa Miller-Rich at faithhopelove555@aol.com or 451-0052.