

# the Pulse of Plattsburgh City Schools

December 2008



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## Oak Street Role Models

Fifth grade students at Oak Street who are recognized by their teachers and Child Advocate Mrs. Pike for their reputation for getting their work done and having no discipline referrals are invited to become Peacemakers.

These students, who serve as role models for younger students, participate in a community service project for the Adirondack Humane Society. They have a "Top Dog" bulletin board in school where students are invited to post pictures of their pets (all pets are welcome, not just dogs!), and bring in a can of pet food. Students vote on their favorite pet and the lucky student who posted that photo wins

movie tickets.

The Peacemakers also make fleece dog and cat blankets and bake homemade dog biscuits which they sell during the holiday season, donating the proceeds, along with the collected pet food, to the Adirondack Humane Society.



### What's New?

Plattsburgh City School employees donated more than \$14,000 towards this year's United Way campaign and have consistently contributed more than any other public school in the North Country.



# Helping fill Empty Bowls



Mrs. LaVigne's fifth grade class at Oak Street and Mrs. McGee's fifth graders at Momot participated in SUNY Plattsburgh's Empty Bowls project which benefits the Interfaith Food Shelf. The students, aided by a PHS senior, learned to make bowls in pottery class and the resulting vessels were used at the Empty Bowls event. Diners pay for a simple meal consisting of soup and bread, and get to keep the empty soup bowl when they leave.

As an integral part of this project, students researched hunger around the world and here in the North Country. They also played the

## Giving Back ...

“Communities are defined by the schools they choose to support: giving to the United Way of Clinton and Essex Counties Campaign has been an annual opportunity for the Plattsburgh City School employees to support our community in return.”

*James Short  
Superintendent*

“minimum wage game.” They received a paycheck in play money, then paid utility bills, rent, taxes, Social Security, car insurance, gas, etc. to see how little was left each week to buy food. This was followed by a field trip to the Interfaith Food Shelf so students could see the results of their efforts.



## Turkey Trot

Every year as part of the Presidential Fitness Testing, Annmarie Curle's Physical Education classes at Oak Street participate in the "Turkey Trot" which benefits the Interfaith Food Shelf.

The students train during September and October and complete a one-mile run or walk in November, as required for the testing program. Students also bring in a canned food item (healthy items only!) to recognize the spirit of giving.

As an added incentive, in the past, Mrs. Zales has matched each student's donation, which can reach as many as 200 items!



# The Gift of Music

## *PHS and Oak Street on the Air*

As we approach the holiday season, the Plattsburgh High School Music Department is preparing to share the gift of music with members of the community.

The Select Vocal Ensemble recently had a recording session at the channel 57 studios taping the PHS portion of the "Holiday Spectacular!" program. Look for this program on Mountain Lake PBS on Sunday, Dec. 14 at 8 p.m., Monday, Dec. 15 at 9 p.m., Sunday, December 21 at 4 p.m., Thursday, December 25 at 8 p.m. and Friday, Dec. 26 at 12 p.m.

Members of the band recently



performed at the American Legion Post 20 Annual Veteran's Day Ceremony. The students performed "The Star Spangled Banner," "O'Canada,"

and a medley of familiar patriotic selections. The students were treated to a living history lesson through the speech of Phillip McKinney, a retired WWII and Korean War veteran with four Purple Hearts.

On November 23, members of the orchestra celebrated the "Night of Giving" at the Champlain Centers Mall, playing holiday selections for mall visitors to enjoy.

The annual December Concert will be on December 15 at 7:30 p.m. in the PHS auditorium featuring the band, orchestra, select vocal ensemble and the mixed chorus.

The gift of music continues on December 17 with members of the band and select vocal ensemble going "on tour" through the city.

Plattsburgh High School is proud of the talented and hard working students that are willing to share their gift of music.



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## *... Setting the Pace*

“As a United Way Pacesetter, Plattsburgh City School employees have consistently been one of the top groups making an early pledge, donating more than \$58,000 over the past 4 years.”

*James Short  
Superintendent*

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The Oak Street chorus, consisting of 88 students in grades 3-5, sang Tom Chapin's "This Pretty Planet" For Mountain Lake's Holiday Spectacular concert. Please see The Gift of Music PHS article for broadcast times.

# Leadership is the Key



**By Simone Arvais-Anhalt**  
*Key Club President*

The Key Club is the oldest and largest service program for high school students. What makes the PHS Key Club so successful is that it is a student-led organization that teaches leadership through serving others. As members of the Kiwanis International family, Key Club members build themselves as they build their schools and communities.

Students who join Key Club develop initiative and leadership while serving the school and community, and can cite this valuable community service when applying to college, for a job or for a leadership position.

Key Clubbers must complete four hours of community service per quarter and a total of 20 hours by the end of the year. In addition, Key Clubbers must attend at least two meetings per month.

This year, the PHS Key Club has participated in a long list of events including: the PHS open house, Buddy Walk, Heart Walk, Crop Walk, Animal Shelter Bake Sale, Alzheimer's Walk, Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF and the CVPH/CVES Coat Drive.

In December, the Key Club plans to collect items for senior citizens which will be distributed among the various nursing homes of the community.

## Holiday Club

"This is our time of year," says Holiday Club advisor Jean Seeber.

"This club is really student-driven and inclusive. Any student may join, and the focus is on providing books, toys, etc. to families who are in need."

Now in its 16th year of operation, Holiday Club students organize the effort, donate items,

and pick out gifts, as well as clean/repair/quality-control any "gently-worn" donations. Some students canvass the city in search of business and private donations of toys, school supplies and money.

The end result for the students is community service and appreciation for what

we all have, as well as the acquisition of valuable skills such as the ability to focus amid controlled chaos, the development of organizational skills and the ability to work quickly and efficiently. The club typically provides gift bags for about 80 families which include between 150 and 200 children.

## PHS Social Studies Food Drive

Every December, Kathy Stark's Participation in Government class holds a food drive to benefit the Interfaith Food Shelf. It is run as a friendly competition between the eight PHS Social Studies teachers to see which class can bring in the most food items. Last year, they collected more than 600 food items.

The PHS National Honor Society

contacted Mrs. Stark and offered to make a \$20 contribution for every 100 items collected.

This exercise is part of Mrs. Stark's unit on poverty and, besides collecting food items, the students researched local, national and worldwide income levels and poverty statistics.

# Pennies for Patients

Students in first grade classes at Bailey Avenue Elementary participate in the Pennies for Patients project, which collects spare change for donation to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Last year, they raised \$582.33, far beyond their original goal of \$300.

"We had many people from our school community and from outside our school who donated to the

project. The first grade students made thank you notes for all donors to the project," said first grade teacher Erin McGill.

Many students brought in their own saved change to support this worthy cause. Student donations "bought" raffle tickets for a huge St. Patrick's Day teddy bear, with the drawing coming at the end of the project.



# Smokehouse Visits Bailey!!!

The Clinton County Smokehouse, an instructional trailer that reproduces a home environment, visited Bailey Avenue Elementary during Fire Safety week. A Plattsburgh City firefighter provided students with "hands-on" instruction in home fire safety. At the end of their safety lesson, smoke from a fog machine served as a safe simulation of an emergency situation, and the students were shown what to do and how to escape in case of a fire. Students also had the opportunity to visit

two fire engines and an ambulance that were also on-site. Thanks to the Plattsburgh City firefighters for providing this valuable experience!



# Giving Thanksgiving



Mrs. Kim Bouissey's fifth grade class at Momot has put together Thanksgiving baskets for local families and seniors. Local businesses helped out with this project, providing much of the contents of the baskets. Yando's Big M super-market donated turkeys and baked goods, Pray's

Market gave potatoes, squash and carrots, Hannaford's provided desserts, Stewart's sent gift certificates, milk and coffee coupons, and Alix's Home Hardware contributed laundry baskets to deliver the meals.

The students raised money through a "Healthy Heart" snack sale, funding

a shopping trip for items to complete the baskets. They also wrote letters full of holiday wishes to the recipients and included a stamped post card for a return message from the families, which the students really enjoy reading.

For the past 10 years, Mrs. Bouissey's classes have been able to create 10 baskets per year. This year, despite a slow economy, donations were even higher, allowing them to distribute 14 baskets – seven to local families chosen by JCEO, six to seniors and one to a family at Momot. The \$231 collected by the students was augmented this year by seniors at Beekman Towers, who contributed \$170 through the efforts of Mrs. Jock, a monitor at Momot.

## Positive Energy ...

“There is a culture among Plattsburgh City School District administration and employees that is one of enthusiasm and positive energy as well as generosity.”

*John Bernardi  
Executive Director  
United Way of Clinton  
and Essex Counties*

## Cupcakes for a Cure

Two years ago, Michelle Gottschall's fourth graders came to her with a plan: they wanted to raise money for the Susan B. Komen Race for the Cure, which supports breast cancer research. The students did the math (integrated into this project) and set a school-wide goal of \$125, based on 25 cents per student.

In partnership with Nichole Lattour's second graders, they challenged every class at Momot to collect \$5 in change, and the successful classes would be treated to a cupcake party, with parents supplying the treats. They were amazed to raise \$680 for the Race for the Cure, and a cupcake party was celebrated by the entire school.

Last year, students

chose to fund Shannon's Hope, a foundation seeking a cure for cystic fibrosis, raising more than \$1,000 in four days – all in change. Rolling and counting all that change was another math project for the students! This May, they will be fund-raising for Hannah's Hope, an organization fighting GAN disease (giant axonal neuropathy) a genetic disorder affecting children.



# Wreaths for Veterans

Mrs. Bouissey's class worked with Pray's Farmers Market to make wreaths for veterans and the families of soldiers currently in Iraq. Each student is given a veteran or family for whom they make a wreath at Pray's where they also hold a ceremony for the veterans and families to present the wreaths and sing Christmas carols.



## Turkeys and Truffles

As part of their Learn and Serve project entitled Turkeys and Truffles, Judy Wurster's kindergarten class at Momot painted pictures of turkeys to sell to an assigned staff member.

This was a true exercise in giving, because it was difficult for them to give up their works since they enjoy painting them so much. However, they also painted pictures for their families, so they were able to keep one.

Parents could also contribute to this fund-raiser, and the kindergartners collected a total of \$130. Stu-

dents practiced counting money, and discussed the importance of helping others and being good citizens.

The students went to Price Chopper and purchased three hams, a turkey and 18 pies! They also had a tour of the grocery store, examining the produce aisle where they named all the fruits and vegetables, the bakery where each student received a free cookie, and even visited the lobsters! They then delivered the Thanksgiving food to the Salvation Army and each student proudly carried in a pie.



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## ... In the Spirit

“The Plattsburgh City School District is a tremendous supporter of the United Way. It epitomizes the spirit of community and compassion for friends and neighbors.”

*John Bernardi  
Executive Director  
United Way of Clinton  
and Essex Counties*

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# Service to the Community

This October, as part of the 21st Century Learning Center, Stafford students planned, cooked and served a meal at the Trinity Soup Kitchen. They also cleaned up after having a chance to eat the dinner themselves. This is one of the most popular events and they hope to do it again this year.

At the Adirondack Humane Society, students received a tour of the shelter, played with the cats and walked the dogs. This year, they also baked dog biscuits and donated them to the shelter. This is another community service project that the students want to repeat.

An anti-bullying unit was conducted in partnership with SUNY



Plattsburgh's Human Development program majors. The SUNY students planned and provided three sessions of programming with Momot students. This group session focused on bullying and ways to identify and prevent it.

Students also visit the Lake Forest Retirement community where they play games, do arts and crafts activities and have refreshments with the residents. In years past, they have participated in an intergenerational pen pal program and are working on getting it up and running again.



## Pulse Plattsburgh City Schools

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