

RIVER OAKS ELEMENTARY

“Where Discovery is Elementary”

September 15, 2009

LET US HEAR FROM YOU

School Phone: (713) 942-1460
After School Program: (713) 524-8430
Office Hours: 7:15 am – 4:15 pm
Web Site: <http://es.houstonisd.org/riveroakses>
E-mail: sgolden@houstonisd.org
PTO website: <http://www.riveroakspto.org>

CALENDAR ITEMS

September 18	Picture Day
September 21	Sally Foster/Entertainment Book/Otis Spunkmeyer orders due
October 10	ROE Fun Run
November 6	Fall Frenzy

FROM THE DESK OF MRS. SHENKER

We have an amazing staff at River Oaks Elementary School. As I continue to visit classrooms, I am impressed with the quality of instruction by each and every teacher. River Oaks is the school that all children deserve!

I am forwarding a chart that shows members of the administrative team and their respective functions. I am very thankful to work with such a talented staff. Please feel free to contact us as needed.

Remember that if you are planning to volunteer with our school in any capacity, you must register with the district. Please check with the front desk if you are unsure whether your registration is current.

HISD recently conducted a traffic survey for our school. Once the results are in, we will use this information to guide our long-range plans for traffic flow. I appreciate the assistance of Robert Mock in this effort.

Please help us during dismissal by preventing the return of your child to the building once they are in your care. Also, children may only be picked up by car in the circular drive and the Avalon loading areas. If you have parked your car and wish to meet your child on foot, please meet your child at the walkers' area. I appreciate your continued efforts in creating a safe dismissal process. Have a great week!

ROE FUN RUN

Calling all Runners! The FUN RUN is soon approaching! In 4 Saturdays we will be lining up and taking off. Please register today! Have you lost your registration form? You can go to www.ROEFUNRUN.com and pay by credit card by clicking on the ROE store page or download the form to pay by check or cash and turn it into the FUN RUN locker at the end of the Kindergarten hall. Registration includes a t-shirt. Mom, Dad, and siblings this is your chance to have a shirt for yourself and cheer on ROE!

We are still looking for volunteers! We need at least 30-40 people to make this a great event. From set up, to clean up crew to handing out water, we need you. Please contact me at Natalie.cordova@earthlink.net or on my cell at 714.444.7120. Thanks! -Natalie Cordova

SALLY FOSTER

This is the last week to sell Sally Foster, Entertainment books, and cookie dough. All orders are due next Monday, September 21st. Please return to the Sally Foster locker at the end of the Kindergarten hallway. There is a link on the ROE PTO website for Sally Foster under Activities, <http://roeppto.org/sally-foster-fundraiser/>. Hopefully, this can answer most of your questions. If not, please contact me, murphtak@comcast.net.

Also, you do not need to collect tax on any of the items. Make checks payable to ROE PTO. Payment is due at the time you turn the order in. -Laura Fertak

FALL FRENZY - AUCTION DONATIONS NEEDED

The Fall Frenzy is back and right around the corner. This fundraiser makes it possible for ROE PTO to purchase supplies and services to benefit your children. We need your help with donations of all kinds for the silent and live auctions.

-Do you know a business that would like to make tax-deductible donations of items, gift certificates, or services? You'd be surprised how many say yes.

-Do you have a connection to someone that would offer a unique experience for a family or child? It can be **geeky**...geologists, artists, marine biologists. Or, **sporty**...first pitch, sailing race, meet an NFL player. Maybe, even **daring**...skydiving, rock climbing.

-Do you have connections to stay away camps that offer off-season activities? How about a **vacation home** or cabin? Or fun **day trip activities**?

-Do you have terrific tickets to theatre or sporting events/ Access to cooking, language or exercise classes? Holiday gifts for kids or adults? A great piece of art? Decorative items for the home or garden?

If you can think of it, we need it! Use the donor form coming home this week for your submissions. Please contact Frances Moore-Jones with any questions: fmj@TranslatedPhrase.com.

FLU UPDATE FROM NURSE PETNER

We are all coughing into our elbows and washing our hands every chance we get. We have had two presumed cases of flu that were not confirmed by culture.

If your child has flu-like symptoms (fever of 100 or above, body aches, sore throat, lack of appetite, weakness, headache, coughing or chills), we are asking you to keep them home. They may return to school when they are fever free for 24 hours without the aid of a fever-reducing medication. Student's temperatures will be checked upon return to school.

The HISD Health Department is tracking cases in the district, so if your child is out with the flu (either seasonal or H1N1), please call or email me with the following info:

- Date of flu onset
- Was the child in school at the time of onset?
- Child's name and DOB
- Parent's name, Address, Zip, Phone
- Name and address of doctor
- Was case confirmed by a physician?

My email address is jpetner@houstonisd.org or you can reach me by calling the school.

ROE ART NEWS

Thanks to all parents/caregivers who have brought so many talented students into our Art classes this year. I am hearing more and more about art that they are involved in before and after school, and their summer activities and travels have really enriched them. We are all full of energy and making as many connections through visual art as we can with the IB POI (unit planners). Watch for: portrait photography from 5th grade students, self-portrait ceramic masks from 4th graders, 3rd grade: original board games, including themes of Rights and Responsibilities; 2nd grade: illuminated lettering and profile (positive attribute words) on handmade sketch journals; 1st grade: Don't Judge a Book by it's Cover (handmade "book"), of course; and our very "hands outstretched" and open minded Kindergarten with drawings about Community Helpers and visions of peace in the world.

Calling all summertime ROE artists:

HISD Central District needs finished artwork ASAP!! If any of our incredibly talented ROE students have finished (matted and framed in black or silver frames: up to 24" x 30"), flat artwork completed over the summer, I would appreciate your bringing it to me (Ms. Lieber) in the Art room one morning this week, by Sept. 24th. I must select the artwork and give it to our principal, Mrs. Shenker, who will view the work and deliver it to the new Central Region Visual Arts Gallery. The artworks will hang in the gallery there for the entire semester so they will be viewed by hundreds of people. Additionally, I will need a signed (by a parent) photo release that I will provide for you for the artwork that is selected and will be on view through early January, 2010. That artwork will be returned to ROE and a second exhibit will be from mid January through May. Any work that is not selected for Central District will be displayed at ROE for the following months.

Calling all 5th Grade Artists:

In order to honor the great talent that will be leaving ROE at the end of this school year, plans are in the works for a showcase of artwork in December at Ms. Lieber's home gallery. Each 5th grade student who submits a hangable (framed) drawing, painting, photograph, etc. of their own work will be invited to a holiday time show and sale (with refreshments, certainly!). Students who sell their work at the gallery will keep the money from the sale as an incentive to produce more art! Special invitations to those students who are participating (and their families) will be

sent out in November. The show will be photographed so that we can share the exhibit with our ROE families.

Don't forget about International Day of Peace, Monday, September 21st. Weather permitting, we will have some Pinwheels for Peace on display on Circle Drive!! Thanks and keep your eyes on ART!! - Ms. Lieber

R.O.E ODYSSEY NEWS

The Odyssey of the Mind (OotM) engine is revved up and ready to go at ROE for 2009-2010. Last year, nine of our teams made it to State Finals, and five teams advanced to World Finals in Ames, Iowa last May. (See below for the results!)

These next few days Michele Dahlquist will visit 2nd to 5th grade classrooms, describing the kind of fun the children can expect by joining OotM. Look for information and a sign-up sheet in the green folder. And if you are new to the Odyssey program, please plan to attend one of the two Parent Awareness Meetings on Friday, Sept. 18th, from 8:00-9:00 a.m. or 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. Questions? Feel free to ask any coach from last year, but also talk to Michele Dahlquist (mdahlquist@hisd.org) or OotM volunteer coordinator, Sarah Slemmons (sslemmons@yahoo.com). You may enjoy looking at the official OotM international website at www.odysseyofthemind.org. If you already know your child wants to join OotM, just email the specifics to Michele.

Calling all Parents to Coach!!! Odyssey of the Mind can't operate without coaches. Each year there are more children interested in joining a team, and not enough parents that coach. Sadly, some children don't get the chance to join. The only way to guarantee your child is on a team is to coach! See below for ways to find out more!

Coach Awareness: An Introduction to OotM:
Tuesday, September 22, 6:30-7:30

New This Year: Coach Workshop!!! Saturday, October 3rd at ROE 9:00-12:00

ODYSSEY OF THE MIND WORLD NEWS

All Five ROE Teams Placed in Top 12!!!!

Congratulations to all five River Oaks Elementary teams who advanced to Odyssey of the Mind World Finals in Ames, Iowa this past May. We have much to be proud of as all teams placed in the top 12 after competing against about 60 teams in their own division and problem. It was an astounding year of success!

Problem #2: "Teach Yer Creature" - Fifth Grade Team - 9th Place at World! Will Foreman, Patrick Long-Quian, Patrick Revilla, Lillian Evans, Meredith

Rasmussen, Isabelle Draper(Cathy Foreman and Jane Long, Coaches)

Problem #3: “Lost Labors of Heracles” - Fifth Grade Team - 2nd Place at World! Sabrina Blum, Elizabeth Broaddus, Chelsie Degner, Madeline Graham, Sofie Hernandez-Simeonidis, Savannah Larsson, (Nancy Broaddus, Coach)

Problem #4: “Shock Waves” - Fourth Grade Team - 8th Place at World! Mason Cole, Henry Rose, Charlie Wannall, Jacqueline Ma, Lauren Bennett, Sabyle Merched, Julian Peavy, (Laurel Agris and David Rose, Coaches)

Problem #5: “Superstition” - Fourth Grade Team - 4th Place at World! Andrew Awad, Katy Belcher, Bob Corpening, Zada Boyce-Quentin, Diana Paulsen, Garrett Shaw, Vishal Gupta, (George Belcher, Coach)

Problem #5: Superstition - Third Grade Team - 12th Place at World! Sam Donovan, Meagan Hefley, Trip George, Alexandra Kakadiaris, Caroline Lee, Elena Margolin, Stuart Whiteside, (Sarah Slemmons, Coach)

BIRTHDAY PARTY POLICY

As our students’ birthdays approach, we know many of you want to provide a way for the children to celebrate at school with their classmates. In keeping with the state’s continuing efforts to provide guidance on school nutrition, we would like to ask that birthday treats for sharing please be non-edible choices. Please send in pencils, party favors, etc. rather than food. We have many students with severe food allergies and edible treats can present complications. If you do send food items, they MUST be individually wrapped and they will be sent home with the students for parent approval, not consumed in school. We love to celebrate this special day with our students, so please help us follow our state guidelines by limiting foods of minimal nutritional value.

WORDS THEIR WAY

I’m sure you have looked at your child’s spelling when he/she is writing and lamented at the invented spelling that you see being used. These errors, however, contain much information that can be used as diagnostic tools to determine exactly what your child understands about spelling words in the English language. The research on spelling instruction indicates that these attempts are not random, but follow distinct patterns of using and confusing the conventions of our language. Over the past couple of weeks, our teachers have been administering spelling inventories, analyzing their students’ spelling patterns, and carefully observing each child’s writing to determine the stage of spelling instruction in which they are functioning. We are currently in the process of forming instructional groups based on these tools.

Words Their Way, or Word Study, as this method of spelling instruction is called, is based on three decades of research on orthographic development. According to this research, there are distinct developmental stages students and adults go through to move from recognition of letter/sound correspondence, to elements of alphabetic patterns, to word meaning. They explore and examine their words to discover the patterns, regularities, and

conventions of our language. Examining the patterns in sounds and single syllable words provides the necessary foundation for analyzing larger words as we go along, just as studying math facts builds the foundation for higher level mathematics studies.

This is how it will work: Each week, every group will be given a different set of words, based on the needs of the group and designed to follow a scope and sequence that allows them to systematically include every pattern of spelling in the English language as they move through the stages across their years in our school. The students will have their own sets of words to sort during the week. Sorting allows the students to engage in the active process of comparing, contrasting, and analyzing –all higher order thinking skills. Rather than simply memorizing the week’s words for the spelling test, which they often promptly forget, they have the opportunity to construct meaning for themselves that can be applied to both reading and writing.

Finally, for this program to be truly meaningful, students will use these words to link spelling instruction to phonics and vocabulary in the actual texts they are reading in school and at home. This provides the best possible connections in order to develop accurate recognition of words in reading and production of words in writing. Becoming fully literate is dependent upon the quick, accurate recall of words in texts and quick, accurate production of words in writing so that readers can focus their full attention on making meaning.

Our teachers are working hard to put this program into place. As with any new endeavor, we will be working together as grade level teams and across the grades as well to develop our routines. Students will be asked to do sorting at home to practice. I want to reiterate that this is not just about memorizing words and bypassing the sorting. That is where the connections are made. Our kindergarten teachers are exploring the beginnings of the program and are determining how it will fit into their curriculum. Spelling instruction, per se, has not typically started at the kindergarten level at our school, but this program has such a strong literacy base that it dovetails beautifully with what kindergarten already does. Our fifth grade is piloting the Spelling for Writers kits. This program is also research based and differentiated. They have received focused direction on the implementation of this program from the Great Source company representative who will continue to engage in ongoing communication as they have questions and comments about the kits. Our continuing action research on the needs of our students will help drive their use of this program. Thank you for your support as we organize ourselves for developmentally appropriate spelling instruction.