

The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

Remember that Staples commercial with the parents singing about their children going back to school; a total classic! All joking aside, I do believe it is the most wonderful time of the year. A new school year comes with such promise of the miracles and joy that learning brings. Will there be trials and tribulations? Absolutely, but that will only bring more opportunity to learn important lessons.

Just think - this is the year some of our students will read their first chapter book, write their first research paper, and discover the genius of Shakespeare, the creativity of Ben Franklin and the prescience of our founding fathers. I can still remember what classes inspired me and what classes challenged and frustrated me and I am excited for all of our students who will have similar experiences this year. But this is only part of the school experience. There will also be first friendships, first dates as well as first failures, first breakups and other social challenges. As adults, we know that this is also necessary to learn important lessons. I urge everyone in the RSD13 community to support our students as they navigate the next academic year.

Please also pay attention to the myriad of activities outside of the classroom that take place at our schools. There are countless cultural and philanthropic events that take place in our schools by our staff and students. I am pleased to announce some of their 2009-2010 accomplishments that epitomize the core ethical values that are taught at all levels at RSD13; Respect, Responsibility, Honesty, Kindness and Courage.

Students at Memorial School donated canned goods to Amazing Grace Food Pantry and 25 coats to a local charity; donated over \$700.00 for polio eradication which was recognized by the Meriden Rotary Club; donated close to \$200.00 to Doctors without Borders; raised \$2,449.52 to the LeClerc Children's Scholarship Fund and the Leukemia/Lymphoma Society. Brewster and Korn schools raised money and provided gifts for students at Riverview Hospital. Also, Korn School collected pet food, winter coats and collected items for the troops. Students at Lyman School ran a "Healthy Snacks for Haiti" program and raised over \$2,000 that was distributed to three different agencies. Strong School and CRHS participated in another successful Community Round-Up that generated food and monetary donations to many families of Durham and Middlefield and Amazing Grace Food Pantry.

Students also spent their free time in other community building activities. The EDGE and Teens in the Driver's Seat groups planned and implemented a mock crash and assembly which lead to safe prom weekend for all. Strong School students participated in a community read program that involved adult members of the community. Many kids volunteered at the Durham Fair in-between the rides at the midway benefiting many local charities. Some of our students competed in the Wordmaster's Competition, Spelling Bees, Invention Convention, and Math Olympiad while others spent their recess time in the Go Far program that promotes running for health.

I am grateful for and proud of all of your accomplishments. Good luck to our students, faculty, staff and administrators and best wishes for a successful year. Please contact me or any members of the Town Hall staff if you need our assistance.