

**BLIND BROOK MIDDLE SCHOOL  
RYE BROOK, NEW YORK**

**April 13, 2009**

**Dear BBMS Parents,**

**Spring is about all things new: new green buds on the trees, new little birds' nests appearing between the branches, and everyone wanting new shoes!**

**At school, spring is a great time for teachers to do new things that will engage and motivate students as we begin the final quarter of our school year that will bring us to June and the ceremonies and exams that come with it before breathing a sigh of relief to welcome summer. This is the time of year when students feel both more stress about those end of year events and more distraction as they (like us) just want to stare out of the windows and run around on the fields. And, because they are middle schoolers, of course they are most interested in one another, so keeping instruction and subject area content fresh and relevant becomes even more challenging than usual!**

**Right before the break, I visited all of the sixth grade ELA classes and observed the kind of activity that hits just the right note instructionally and developmentally for these energetic and creative young adolescents. After reading and studying Greek myths, students had created their own original gods, goddesses and myths to incorporate into presentations to their classmates. The presentations, whether they were Power Points, puppet shows, or books read aloud, demonstrated extended and careful creative writing as well as incorporation of art and technology. The students presented with confidence and assurance, which evidenced the ongoing emphasis on the importance of sharing and presenting writing within the classroom. Across the board, the students were excited and eager to share and listen to classmates' presentations, and the goal of capturing the energy which is so palpable among our students at this time of year had been met.**

**Here is a quick run-down of some other events and activities at the middle school which we think will keep things interesting as we move toward June:**

- **POETRY! April is National Poetry Month! We are celebrating it in BBMS by having students sign up to read original poetry over the PA each morning as part of the morning announcements. We are also having two "Poetry Slam" lunches for interested 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students on Tuesday April 28. Students can bring their lunch to the LGI and listen to one another read**

- some favorite poems. Encourage your child to check out the selection of poetry books in the library or the Poetry 180 website ([www.loc.gov/poetry/180/](http://www.loc.gov/poetry/180/)) for some choices he or she might like to share!
- **LEADERSHIP!** On Friday, April 17, Ty Sells will speak to our seventh graders about the importance of acceptance of others and to our Peer Leaders and Allies at all grade levels about the qualities of leadership. His presentation supports our Character Education goals and we are grateful to Project Prevention for giving our students this opportunity.
  - **EARTH DAY!** On April 21, the Veggie Van will visit our school to share its green message with students who did not attend earlier in the year. Also, check out the LoHud supplement in the Journal News which will be out soon which highlights our BBMS Green Project elective!
  - **DRAMA!** Middle school always has plenty of that, but on April 24 and 25 don't miss the production of "Lockers" which captures real life in a middle school and displays the talent of our young cast and crew under the able direction of Allie Kaye!
  - **DESTINATION IMAGINATION!** Best of luck to our winning DI teams as they rise to the next level of competition in Binghamton on Saturday April 25!
  - **SPELLING!** Encourage your child to sign up for the annual PTA Spelling Bee which will be coming up on April 30. Great prizes and spirited competition G-U-A-R-A-N-T-E-E fun for all.
  - **TRIPS!** Good luck to our choral and music students as they compete at Festival in the Parks in Agawam, Mass. on May 1. The next week, May 6-8, the seventh grade and their intrepid chaperones venture to Gettysburg for what is always a memorable and excellent experience.
  - **BOOKS!** The PTA Book Fair will be held on June 2 and 3 to provide lots of great reading for summer. Information about times, titles available and summer reading lists will be coming out!

All of these upcoming events should provide plenty of freshness to energize our final quarter of the school year. However, as vital as they are, the most important thing is the instruction that takes place in our classrooms in every subject area day in and day out. The planning and preparation our teachers do to assure that their lessons maximize instruction and engage their students is what matters most. As I visit classrooms and see the evidence of this high quality instruction, I feel very proud of our school and its students and staff.

Of course, the safety and well being of our students is always our highest priority. Two important things will be happening on April 23:

- In line with our safety protocols, a middle and high school evacuation drill will be held during the school day. Students will be instructed to leave the building and assemble on the fields with designated teachers and staff members. Attendance will be taken to assure that all students are present and accounted for so that in the event of a real emergency which required us to leave the building we would have a procedure in place that students and

staff are familiar with. The entire drill shouldn't take long and disruption to the day should be minimal, but it is vitally important that we practice these procedures. Let's hope for nice weather!

- At 7pm on April 23, we will hold a combined middle and high school Parent Coffee and Conversation to present the results of the drug and alcohol survey conducted earlier in the year. Awareness and understanding of our students' attitudes about these substances is another way to ensure that we are addressing their overall well being. We hope you can attend this important evening!

Enjoy the coming of spring and those new shoes. I hope to see you soon!

Karen Bronson