

# GT Review



Millville Public Schools

December 2008

*Gifted & Talented Program*

## Meet Mrs. Blithe

The GT Program is very pleased to have Mrs. Colleen Blithe join our team as PEP (Primary Enrichment Program) teacher, grades K-2. Mrs. Blithe brings lots of primary education experience to her new position. Prior to PEP, Mrs. Blithe taught grade 2 at Rieck Avenue School for 8 years. She is a graduate of Sacred Heart High School, Kean University, and Virginia Wesleyan. Mrs. Blithe recently completed graduate work at Rowan University earning her M.A. in counseling.

Mrs. Blithe lives in Franklinville with her husband Ron, their two daughters, Madison and Ella, and Mack, a boxer. Mrs. Blithe enjoys boating, camping, and traveling with her family.

## Lights, Camera, Action!

Miss Kathy, interactive storyteller, was fabulous during our first PEP Family Night in October. She told Character Education related stories and some of the students were chosen to act them out. We have now completed our *Character Education* theme and have moved on to *Weather* for second grade and *Literacy* for first grade. As I reflect on the activities and conversations of the children throughout the Character Education theme, I realize that our PEP students

really do have excellent character. It is my hope that the students will continue to travel on the positive path even though it is not always the one most followed.

In conclusion, it has been a pleasure working with your child thus far. I look forward to the remainder of the school year. We will be completing many challenging and exciting activities. We hope to invite Miss Kathy back to Holly Heights for another evening program in April during our "Inventions and Famous Inventors" theme for second grade and math and science theme for first grade.

Mrs. Blithe

## United Nations 2008

Millville High School participated in United Nations Day for the first time. UN Day is held at various locations throughout the country as partial preparation for the annual United Nations Students Conference on Human Rights (UNSCHR) that will be held on December 5<sup>th</sup> at the United Nations in NYC. We attended the preliminary program at St. Joseph's High School in Hammonton, NJ. While there, the students developed a declaration by working in groups based on sub themes: Global Climate Change and Equality, Global Climate Change and the

Right to Life, Global Climate Change and Slavery, Global Climate Change and Economic and Social Rights; Global Climate Change and the Right to Education; and Global Climate Change and Cultural rights. In the discussion groups students brainstormed on what they can do locally, while thinking globally, on the effect of climate change on human rights. The preliminary statement is forwarded to the UN for inclusion in the international draft of the Student's Plan of Action that will be debated and ratified on December 5<sup>th</sup>. While participating in this very worthwhile program, various students were chosen to apply for a student international leadership position for the actual UNSCHR Conference at the UN on December 5. MSHS was extremely fortunate to have Katherine Aronoff chosen as a participant. She will be attending the conference for three days, December 3-5 at the United Nations in NYC.

## Millville/Vineland Academic Bowl

The 10<sup>th</sup> annual Millville vs. Vineland Academic Bowl was held on Saturday, November 22 with a final score of 89-69. **MILLVILLE WON!!!!** This narrows the overall margin to 5 wins for Vineland, 4 wins for Millville. There has only been one tie. The academic

competition was developed as a friendly prelude to the longtime football rivalry between Millville and Vineland. The students are asked various questions based on an advanced high school curriculum, as well as several questions pertaining to local government and current events. This year's participants included: Erin Murowany, Jason Junghans, Vince Discepola, Patrick Godbey, Sarah Mortenson (seniors) and Matt Riggins, Katie Aronoff, Ben Davidson, Mike Riggins and Elisabeth Cabbage (juniors).

**Congratulations** to the MSHS Academic Team and all of their teachers. Our students are fortunate to have such outstanding teachers who have prepared them for successful participation in rigorous academic events throughout their high school years and as they continue their education at college and university levels.

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**What the Holidays Mean to Me**  
**By Jerome File, Gr. 8,**  
**Lakeside Middle School**  
**A Poem....**

Holidays mean spending time  
 with my family  
 Spending time around our  
 glorious Christmas tree  
 The room is always filled with  
 love  
 It is as beautiful as a dove  
 To me the holidays mean more  
 than getting a present  
 Love is what the holidays  
 represent

**Medieval Madness**  
**By Erica Coslop, Gr. 6,**  
**Lakeside Middle School**

Wow! What a big transition for the 6<sup>th</sup> grade GT students this year! We went from six small elementary schools to one big middle school. It took a few weeks to get everyone acquainted to their new surrounding and now it feels like home.

Our theme for the 6<sup>th</sup> grade GT Program at Lakeside is "Life in the Past Lane", a study of the Middle Ages. We started out the year learning how sayings that we still use today originated from the Middle Ages. For example, "It's raining cats and dogs" stems from when the peasant hut housed all of the family members in including the animals. When it rained the animals often slid off the muddy roof of the hut, hence the saying.

On October 15<sup>th</sup>, we took a field trip to the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire in Manheim, Pa. It was a blast! We got a chance to see archers and the royal falcons. I entered a heraldry contest and got a special merit badge for my entry!

One of my favorite projects so far this year was the medieval diary. It gave us a chance to see inside the life of a medieval woman. I can't wait to learn more about this fascinating time period.



**We Salute our Veterans**  
**By Meghan Williams, Gr. 8,**  
**Lakeside Middle School**

What better way to show how much you care and appreciate someone than to make a card for that person! That's exactly what we did this past Veteran's Day in the GT Program at Lakeside. All classes expressed their gratitude through letters, notes, jokes and riddles-anything to put a smile on a face that defended our country in war.

How do you thank someone properly for risking their lives so that we may remain a free country? We really aren't sure that there is anyway to repay them but we hope that the veterans enjoyed our care package. It was just our little way of showing them how special they are to us.

We also wanted to keep in touch with the veterans, so Mrs. Gaudio suggested that we "adopt" a floor at the New Jersey Veteran's Home in Vineland. They quickly responded to our request. As we are going to press we are starting our second project with them - Thanksgiving greetings! We plan on keeping in touch with them throughout the school year. This is a win-win situation for all. The veterans residing at the home realize that there are young people out there in the world that appreciate the sacrifices that they have made and the GT students feel that they have completed a worthwhile service project.

**Mock Election**  
**By Sam Pettit, Gr. 7,**  
**Lakeside Middle School**

How many people can actually say that they had the opportunity to run for President of the United States? Well, it was my good fortune to assume the role of Barack Obama in our mock election at Lakeside Middle School. I was so excited when I heard the news that I had been selected to play the part of Senator Obama.

Mrs. Gaudio spent many hours teaching our class the procedures for an election. We learned many interesting facts about the election process such as the electoral vote vs. the popular vote. As the mock election approached, I became a bit nervous but was confident about my speech. I had spent many hours writing it and felt that it really matched the views of Senator Obama.

November 4, 2008 was the day of our mock election.... the same day as the "real" election. As each candidate and their spouse presented their speeches from the podium at the Lakeside Fine & Performing Arts Theatre, I realized that we had all done a fantastic job. Of course, I was elated when Senator Obama won... both in Lakeside's election and the actual U.S. Presidential Election. It was sure a memorable occasion for me and I want to thank everyone who helped make the day a special one.

**Lakeside Mock Candidates were...**

Mitchell Thomas - John McCain  
Nina Scott - Cindy McCain

Sam Pettit - Barack Obama  
Kellie Narbut - Michele Obama  
Shane Huff - Joe Biden  
Natalie Page - Jill Biden  
Darrian Springsteadah - Sarah Palin  
Zachary Brown - Todd Palin

**My Eco-Adventure**  
**By Taylor Pompper, Gr. 5,**  
**Wood School**

In GT class we have been studying something called "Eco-Adventure". In our studies, we have learned about global warming, deforestation, climate change and how to take care of our earth. As we learned more each week, I have found that myself, as well as my GT classmates, are becoming more aware and more interested in our environment.

One of the most interesting things we have learned so far is about how animals are suffering because humans are causing global warming. In Antarctica, polar bears are drowning due to the melting ice caps and are in danger of becoming extinct someday if man cannot find an answer to this problem. Deforestation in the rainforest is also putting many animals in risk of extinction due to the loss of their habitats. I hope I continue to learn more about our environment this year as we continue our "Eco-Adventure" in our Wood School GT class.



**Things We Learned About**  
**the Rainforest**  
**By Bacon School Gifted and**  
**Talented Class**

During the month of November, students in grades three through five across the school district have been learning about the rainforest. At Bacon School, students shared their thoughts about what they thought was important about this special biome of the world.

**Ashley Huertas-** I learned that people are cutting down the rainforest. We all should care because animals are losing their homes.

**Devon Cooper-** I learned that hundreds of species of insects are disappearing every day in the rainforest. Insects are very important to keeping a balanced ecosystem.

**Aaron Brown-** Cutting down the rainforest takes away animal's homes. The trees of the rainforest are important sources of oxygen for our atmosphere. Without them the whole world could be in danger.

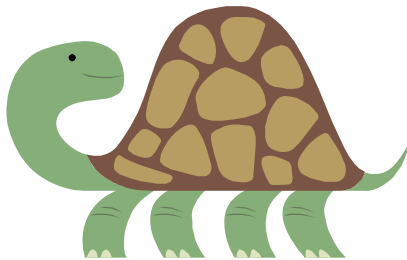
**Garrett O'Donnell-** Many medicines we need in our country every day come from the rainforest. Without the rainforest, people may not have the medications they need.

**Chris Perez-** We need to protect the rainforest so that some of the big cats, like the jaguar, have a home for years to come and don't become endangered.

**Peter Schneider-** Millions of types of animals, insects, and plants live in the rainforest, more types than anywhere else on earth. We need their homes protected.

**Herchelle Hoover-** I learned that animals lose their habitats when trees are cut down. Even though people need the wood that comes from the rainforest, we have to be careful not to cut down too many trees.

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### **"Zoo to You" At Back to School Night**

On Wednesday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, over two hundred students and their family members filled the AVA room at Holly Heights School to attend our first elementary GT evening program of the year. Also filling the AVA room were a variety of reptiles, amphibians, birds, and even a chinchilla. The animals were courtesy of the Cohanzick Zoo in Bridgeton and their educational outreach specialist, Dianna Schemel.

Ms. Schemel began by reviewing with the students the major biomes of the world (their current area of study in our "Eco-Adventure" theme), and then walked around with each animal explaining its habitat and characteristics. Students and parents alike were eager to see each animal and ask questions about it. One surprising animal that Ms. Schemel brought was

an atypical city pigeon. Even though this animal is very common, another variety of pigeon, the passenger pigeon, became extinct in the early 1900's. She explained that people saw them as a very common pigeon too, so they used them for targets when sport shooting, killing hundreds of thousands each weekend for sport. Today they are no longer around, a reminder that we have to take care of each species, even the most common types, to guarantee they will still be common in years to come.

The evening concluded with the only mammal Ms. Schemel brought, a Chinchilla, and the sad story about how they were killed for fur in the wild for years, almost to the point of total extinction. Today the only chinchillas left are raised on chinchilla farms; they are no longer found in the wild.

Our GT students and families went home with lots of knowledge about a variety of animals and hopefully with an appreciation of why we are all part of this "Eco-Adventure," with each of us having a responsibility to take care of the environment and all forms of life that make up our world.

***We look forward to seeing our students and their families at our next GT Family Night, Tuesday March 10, 2009, at Holly Heights, 7:00 pm. "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle," will be the topic of our program as we continue our "Eco-Adventure."***

### **Dear Mr. Mayor**

If you're Chelsea Smith, a fifth grade GT student at Rieck Avenue School, and you see what you think is an excellent, environmentally friendly idea on the news, what do you do? You write a letter to the mayor. And that is exactly what Chelsea did a little over a month ago. While watching the news, Chelsea saw a story about park benches that were made from recycled plastic bags instead of wood. Chelsea thought this would be a great idea for Millville, so, with the help of her mother, she wrote a letter to Mayor James Quinn. Here is an excerpt of the response she received:

"Thank you very much for writing to me about the benches made of recycled plastic bags. It is an excellent idea which I shared with our Planning Director, Dr. Kim Warker-Ayres as well as Liz Nicke of the Parks, /Recreation and Public Buildings Department. Both of them complimented your letter and your interest in the environment.

We recently completed an electrical use survey to find ways to conserve energy in all city departments. We are also working with the Cumberland County Improvement Authority to recycle bottles and cans collected at city events. The improvement authority picks up the sorted bottles and cans which they take to recycling instead of the landfill.

The City of Millville is also involved in a state-wide project called "Cool Cities". Under this

project, 1,100 trees are being planted in the center city and third ward neighborhoods. These trees will provide shade for homes during the warm weather months thus helping to cool the homes and reduce the amount of energy necessary to cool the homes mechanically.

These are just a few of the projects underway in Millville. We are looking at purchasing many items which are now being constructed of recycled materials, not only benches but trash containers, fencing and many other items required by our city department.

Again, I sincerely thank you for sharing your thoughts and ideas on this environmental issue. The future of our world will soon be in your hands. I just wish everyone would care as much as you do."

Yours truly,  
James F. Quinn, Mayor

As the third, fourth, and fifth graders in our elementary Gifted and Talented Program learn about our theme, "Eco-Adventure" this school year, it is inspiring to see our students, like Chelsea, reach out to our community leaders, as it is to have such wonderful responses from our mayor and city leaders.

Thank you Mayor Quinn, Dr. Warker-Ayres, and Ms. Nicki for your support of our students by inviting more exchanges of ideas and for your offer to speak to our students or visit you at City Hall.

## Meet "PAT"

Recently, GT Staff and parent volunteers held their first "PAT" meeting. PAT is the Parent Advisory Team - a group of GT parents and educators dedicated to the support of the Millville Public Schools GT Program. Parent Advisory Team goals were discussed and include fund raisers and family-night assistance. PAT executive Committee members are: Co-Chairs- Jessica Maddocks and Caren Heger; Recording Secretary - Shelly Shannon; Treasurer - Judy Jurick; Historian - Tammy Langsdorf; Corresponding Secretary (Co-Chairs)- Lisa Santoro and Joan Thomas and Fundraising - Yvonne Bruman.

PAT members Shelly Shannon and Caren Heger will be attending the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual NJAGC (New Jersey Association for Gifted Children) Conference on February 28, 2009. They will be responsible for presenting a detailed review of the conference/session contents back to the team. The next PAT meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 13, 2009, Culver Center 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Conference Room at 6:30 - 7:30 pm. If you would like to attend please contact Babs Bennett, 327-6032 or one of the PAT executive committee members.

## SAVE THE DATES

### GT Fundraisers

At

### Pizza Hut

301 S. Main Rd. Vineland

### **\*\*Buffet Fundraisers**

5:00pm - 8:00pm

### **\*\*Lakeside Middle School**

### **GT Program**

Gr. 6-8

**Wednesday,**

**February 11, 2009**

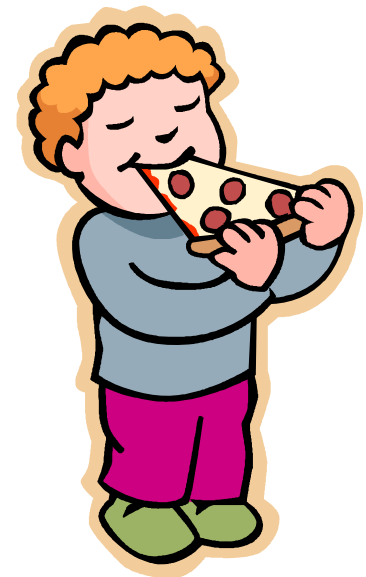
### **\*\*Elementary GT Program**

Gr. 3-5

(Holly, Silver, Rieck, Bacon, Wood, Mt. Pleasant)

**Wednesday,**

**March 18, 2009**



**See you at  
Pizza Hut!**

# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



## Lieutenant JG, Dan Stone

Taxi-ing down the runway and preparing for take-off is routine for U.S. Navy pilot, Lieutenant JG Dan Stone. Dan is a 2002 graduate of Millville Senior High School. He attended Rieck Avenue, Memorial High School, and participated in the GT Program, grades 7-12. As an active GT participant, Dan was involved in Model Congress, Odyssey of the Minds, Academic Bowl, and Congressional Award. Dan successfully completed all three Congressional levels earning bronze, silver and gold medals. As a Congressional Award candidate, he completed 400+ hours of community service throughout his high school years. As a MSHS junior, Dan attended Boy's State.

Upon graduation from MSHS, Dan attended the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. He received the prestigious nomination(s) to Annapolis from Senator Corzine, now Governor of N.J. and Congressman LoBiondo. As a 2<sup>nd</sup> class midshipman (junior year) at The Naval Academy, Dan was accepted into the pilot training program. During graduation

ceremonies in Annapolis 2006, Dan was commissioned as an Ensign. Following graduation, Ensign Stone reported to Pensacola, Florida. Where he continued further pilot training and began flying single prop planes.

In 2008, while stationed in Corpus Christi, Texas, Dan officially received his "Navy Wings" and was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant JG. Currently, Dan is stationed in Jacksonville, Florida where he flies EP3's for our country and continues further simulator and flight training. When Dan's training is completed, he will be transferred to the state of Washington where he will continue his career as a U.S. Navy pilot.

Dan married his "high school sweetheart," Lisa Bertulis Stone in July 2007. Lisa is also a MSHS grad.



## What is NJAGC?

NJAGC is the New Jersey Association for Gifted Children, our state chapter of the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC). NJAGC promotes excellence and leadership in gifted education through appropriate programs, resource networks, and community advocacy. Parents were introduced to NJAGC at our annual GT Back to School Night on October 6, 2008. This event was held at the Lakeside Performing Arts Theater.

Mrs. Elaine Mendelow, Immediate Past President of NJAGC was guest speaker for the evening. She spoke to parents regarding current state regulations, QSAC, the importance of curriculum differentiation, skills needed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and the role of advocacy and educational opportunities for gifted students.

Parents received helpful information and handouts regarding NJAGC and how it is working to support Gifted Education throughout our state. Parents also had the opportunity to meet in small groups with their student's GT teacher following Mrs. Mendelow's presentation.

Thanks for visiting us, Mrs. Mendelow!

*For more information regarding NJAGC please contact the GT Program office, 327-6032*

# PARENT'S CORNER

**Mr. and Mrs. Timothy  
Cubbage, Parents of  
Elizabeth, Gr. 11, MSHS**

Our children have been involved in the Gifted and Talented Program over the past ten years. They have had the opportunity to take part in Medieval studies, Model Congress, Performance Plus, Rogate, Academic Bowl and the Congressional Award. These programs act as an extension of the classroom and have provided our children with hands on activities. For example, the Congressional Award develops the student in four areas: personal development, improving physical fitness, planning and implementing an expedition and volunteering.

All these activities have assisted in developing our children in becoming well rounded, confident, organized and focused young adults. Whether your child will further their education after high school, join the armed services or enter the work force, these are key assets that will put your child ahead of the others in today's competing society.

If your child has the opportunity to become involved in the Gifted and Talented Program, we would strongly urge you to take part in order to further your child's educational experiences.



**Maureen Sanders, Mother  
of Colleen, Gr. 6,  
Lakeside Middle School**

On October 15, 2008 I was lucky enough to be asked by Mrs. Gaudio to chaperone a trip to the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire. My daughter, Colleen, a sixth grade student in the Gifted and Talented Program and I were very excited about going on this trip. Colleen was chosen to be "The Lady" of Lakeside Middle School. This was a very big honor for her. Mrs. Gaudio helped us with a costume and Colleen looked beautiful.

It was a lovely autumn day. As soon as we arrived at the Renaissance Faire we were greeted by a "settler." There were dancing gypsies all around. Queen Elizabeth knighted Colleen for her academic accomplishments. I was very proud of Colleen. Some of the activities were a magic show and a human chess game, which was amazing. We ended the day

watching the reenactment of a jousting tournament.

Thank you, Mrs. Gaudio, for giving me the opportunity to enjoy this memorable day with my daughter.

**Melissa Sooy, Mother of  
Megan, Gr. 2, Holly  
Heights**

"Hey Mom, I've been picked for PEP!" my son Andrew yelled when he got home from school three years ago. By the time my daughter Megan come home from school last year announcing she'd been selected for PEP, I was an old pro. When Andrew started PEP it was a once a week after school program for about eight weeks, but when Megan began it was a once a week program during the school day for the whole year. I much prefer it being during school as it gives the students a little extra something to look forward to during the week where they will be challenged with new and exciting information. Megan's favorite part of PEP is the "Wow Word." She pours over our kid-friendly dictionary as she searches for a new, cool word for the week. One week she even wrote three words because my daughter is excited about using the dictionary and learning new words all the while thinking it is fun. As a mom and English teacher, I love it because my daughter is excited about using the dictionary and learning new

words all while thinking it is fun. PEP is also a great way to build confidence in young children as it creates a love of learning. Megan feels very proud of herself when she gets to attend PEP or when she is "Star of the Week" because of the good work she has done. Because of that confidence, Megan is becoming a better reader and wanting to read more as she is always looking for new words for PEP. So here's my "Wow Word" -Fabulous: of an incredible nature; wonderful; marvelous. Students who participate in PEP think it is fabulous and their parents do, too.



**Mr. Wally Maines, Father  
of Ana, Gr. 2, Holly  
Heights**

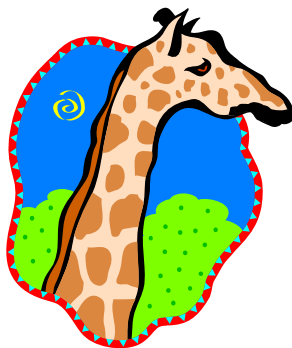
This year, I was a guest at Parent Visitation Day hosted by Holly Heights. This unique day offers parents a first hand look at your child's school day. I was especially excited about this visitation day because it would include a view of my 2<sup>nd</sup> grader's PEP class.

PEP is Millville's Primary Enrichment Program. Mrs. Blithe is the teacher and she ran her PEP class with

enthusiasm and dedication. From the moment the students entered the room, they seemed both excited and eager to participate in the PEP lesson of the day. Mrs. Blithe was able to collect this energy and move the students into the lesson.

PEP class focused on Character Education, but much to my surprise, Mrs. Blithe integrated many academic areas of the curriculum. She was able to make an easy transition from concept to concept. Mrs. Blithe was able to use class time to her advantage and draw the excitement and energy of the students. In total, the PEP class covered many topics with student interaction and writing activities.

I want to applaud PEP at Holly Heights School. Mrs. Blithe does a fantastic job. It is evident by the feedback I get from my 2<sup>nd</sup> grader and her excitement about being in the program. Also, I would like to compliment Holly Heights School for hosting Parent Visitation Day. I was able to view all my daughter's classes, including PEP. I am sincerely glad that I was able to sit in the class and really get a feel for what PEP is all about.



## Newsletter Editors:

Dr. Babs Bennett  
Colleen Blithe  
Donna Cedermark  
Rosemary Lambert  
Lisa Gaudio  
Joyce Hardy



**Best Wishes  
For a  
Wonderful  
Holiday  
Season  
And  
A Happy  
New Year  
2009 !**



