

Sterling goes green



Students produce award-winning environment video

BY JESSICA BENSON

It took a few minutes for the news to sink in. But when it did, the Sterling Middle School students who had worked on the video shouted out in joy when they learned their piece had received an award from cable network C-SPAN.

"We won! We won!" they shouted.

"Some of them were shaking," said their teacher, Gina Joyce. "They were so excited."

A group of 14 students from Sterling had labored for months to produce the video about environmental issues, titled "Sterling Environmental Eagles Take Flight." Last year, it received an honorable

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The Sterling Environmental Eagles were recognized by C-SPAN for a video they produced. PHOTO: REBA SALDANHA

Giving back(packs)



Juliette Shoneye of Snug Harbor Community School shows off a snack bag that was in a backpack she received from the Quincy School-Community Partnership at the start of the school year. **Story, Page 4.**

Special teacher, special students

Debbie Brown is dedicated to advocating for students with autism

BY BILL ABRAMSON

Debbie Brown has experienced Quincy Public Schools as a student, graduating from Quincy High School, and a teacher, with a classroom of 10 autistic students in grades K-2 at Squantum Elementary School.

Despite her love for this population, she hopes to someday be out of a job.

"It's frightening," Brown said, noting that 1 in 100 children are diagnosed with autism. "That statistic puts it pretty much just above an epidemic. It is encouraging that there's a lot of research, but no idea of the cause of autism, so prevention is tough. I just pray that someday I don't have a job. That would be a wonderful thing."



Debbie Brown teaches autistic children at Squantum Elementary School.

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Staying focused on our mission



Dr. Richard DeCristofaro

Thank you for taking your valuable time to enjoy another edition of *The Quincy Educator*. The Quincy Public Schools continues to serve our students and staff in excellent fashion.

As we progress in this school year, Quincy Public Schools congratulates our successful graduates, appreciates their legacy and wishes them the very best in life. Our mission continues as we engage our 9,000 students.

In these extremely difficult economic times, Mayor Koch and the Quincy School Committee worked tirelessly April through June to provide excellence for our educational settings.

The School Committee focused upon academic classroom and class size as their priority, with the understanding that it is most important to student achievement. In their budget deliberations, Mayor Koch and the Committee decided to sustain many of the extraordinary program opportunities that Quincy Public Schools is proud to offer.

Our full-day kindergarten, servicing 700 children, the literacy, health, music, physical

education, art, and technology education programs remain strong. Special Education and Title I programs serve the school system and have additional support from American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding. Our 85 Quincy business community partnerships serve all of our schools in meaningful ways. Gillette continues to be supportive of our award-winning robotics program, and we welcome Stop & Shop as a new partner and member of the board of directors.

The Quincy School Committee budget, as well as grant funding opportunities, provides many consistent programs at every grade level before and after school and weekends. These programs offer enrichment, athletic, tutorial and academic activities for hundreds of our students.

As we initiate and implement educational opportunities this school year, our vision for improved educational facilities continues. The new Quincy High School opened its first academy (Mathematics, Science and Technology) in February of this year. As construction continues and excitement builds, three other academies will be featured (Fine Arts, Humanities, and Freshman) as well as the cafeteria with seating for 500, a 750-seat auditorium and the three-station gymnasium that offers a walking track, fitness

center and multiple purpose room. As we keep an eye on this magnificent building, we are working with the Massachusetts School Building Authority to plan a new Central Middle School and keep Sterling Middle School in the forefront in regard to MSBA funding.

Quincy Public Schools prides itself on providing communications to parents of our children in effective ways. The QPS Web site — www.quincypublicschools.com — the Instant Alert system, monthly curriculum, teacher team, and principal updates from all sites as well as cable channel 22 offer up-to-date educational community information.

As you read this edition of *The Quincy Educator*, please be reminded that we remain proud, in every way, of all QPS staff and administrators and the dedication and diligence of Mayor Koch and the Quincy School Committee — Vice Chair Dave McCarthy, Elaine Dwyer, Anne Mahoney, Jo-Ann Bragg, Nick Puleo and State Rep./School Committeeman Ron Mariano. Each brings excellence in leadership that benefit our most valuable clients, the students of Quincy Public Schools.

Dr. Richard DeCristofaro is superintendent of schools.



Lucia Buzzell was nominated for a Youth Hero Award for leadership in various community initiatives last year.

Helping hands

Lincoln-Hancock teaches students to make a difference

By RICH FAHEY

Education isn't always about English, math and science.

Sometimes it's about giving some pajamas or a winter coat you no longer use to someone who needs them, or collecting soda cans that will become turkey dinners. Sometimes it's just about doing something that can help make a difference in the life of someone you know — maybe even your next-door neighbor.

That's what's behind the Helping Hands program at the Lincoln-Hancock School, part of the after-school extended day program.

Teacher Jen Kiley started the program with grade 4 students last year, and this year grade 3 students are participating under the guidance of teacher Alison Moreau.

"Helping Hands was devised as a community service learning program," said Kiley. "We teach kids that anything you do to help others — no matter how small — makes you a better citizen, and that what they do can make a huge difference in others' lives."

Students were involved in several projects in the last school year. They collected nearly 200 pairs of pajamas as part of Boston Bruins forward P.J. Axelsson's PJ's Pajama Drive, which collected 12,000 pairs of pajamas, beating the goal by more than 5,000 pairs. The pajamas were donated to Cradles to Crayons, the Quincy-based nonprofit organization that helps homeless and in-need children, and distributed to children throughout the Greater Boston area.

They also participated in the Coats for Kids program, which is sponsored by Anton's Cleaners. Students picked up used winter coats, bagged them and delivered them to an Anton's

outlet. Since the program began in 1994, Anton's has collected, cleaned free of charge and distributed more than 562,000 gently worn winter coats to those who would otherwise be without.

Students collected soda cans and redeemed them, with proceeds going to the Quincy Community Action Program's Southwest Community Center, located near the school on Copeland Street. The center used those proceeds to buy turkeys for needy families at Thanksgiving.

"That one really hit home for us because it benefited area families, many of them with students at the school," said Kiley.

Kiley said that it seems in a program such as Helping Hands, one student really picks up the idea of community service and runs with it. Last year, it was Lucia Buzzell, who was nominated for a Youth Hero Award for leadership in the various community initiatives. Buzzell is now a student at Sterling Middle School.

"Lucia showed excellent leadership qualities and worked well with students, teachers and members of the community," said Kiley. "Whatever we did, she went above and beyond the call of duty."

Grade 4 students last year, under Kiley's direction, also participated in the state Department of Environmental Protection's Green Team initiative. Students helped the school expand its recycling program and got involved in such projects as reusing or recycling old house keys.

The class was one of 108 classes from 94 schools recognized by the state for their "outstanding" environmental efforts. In all, The Green Team program involved nearly 122,000 students from 475 Massachusetts schools during the 2008-09 school year.

FACULTY PROFILE

Central figure

Cordero is dedicated teacher and coach

BY JESSICA BENSON

When Ricardo Cordero is the track coach, more than 100 students sign up to join his team. Students at Central Middle School love Cordero, said Jennifer Fay Beers, principal of the school.

“He embodies all the qualities of what kids want to learn,” she said. “He’s just so wonderful to be around.”

The feeling is mutual. Cordero, who is in his 13th year as a Spanish language teacher at the school, and his 11th as a coach, says he couldn’t imagine life without his students: “I really enjoy being involved with the kids.”

Cordero is already off to a great start this year. Over the summer, he and his wife,

Rebecca, a first-grade teacher at Squantum Elementary School, welcomed a new baby girl, Elizabeth. She is now three months old.

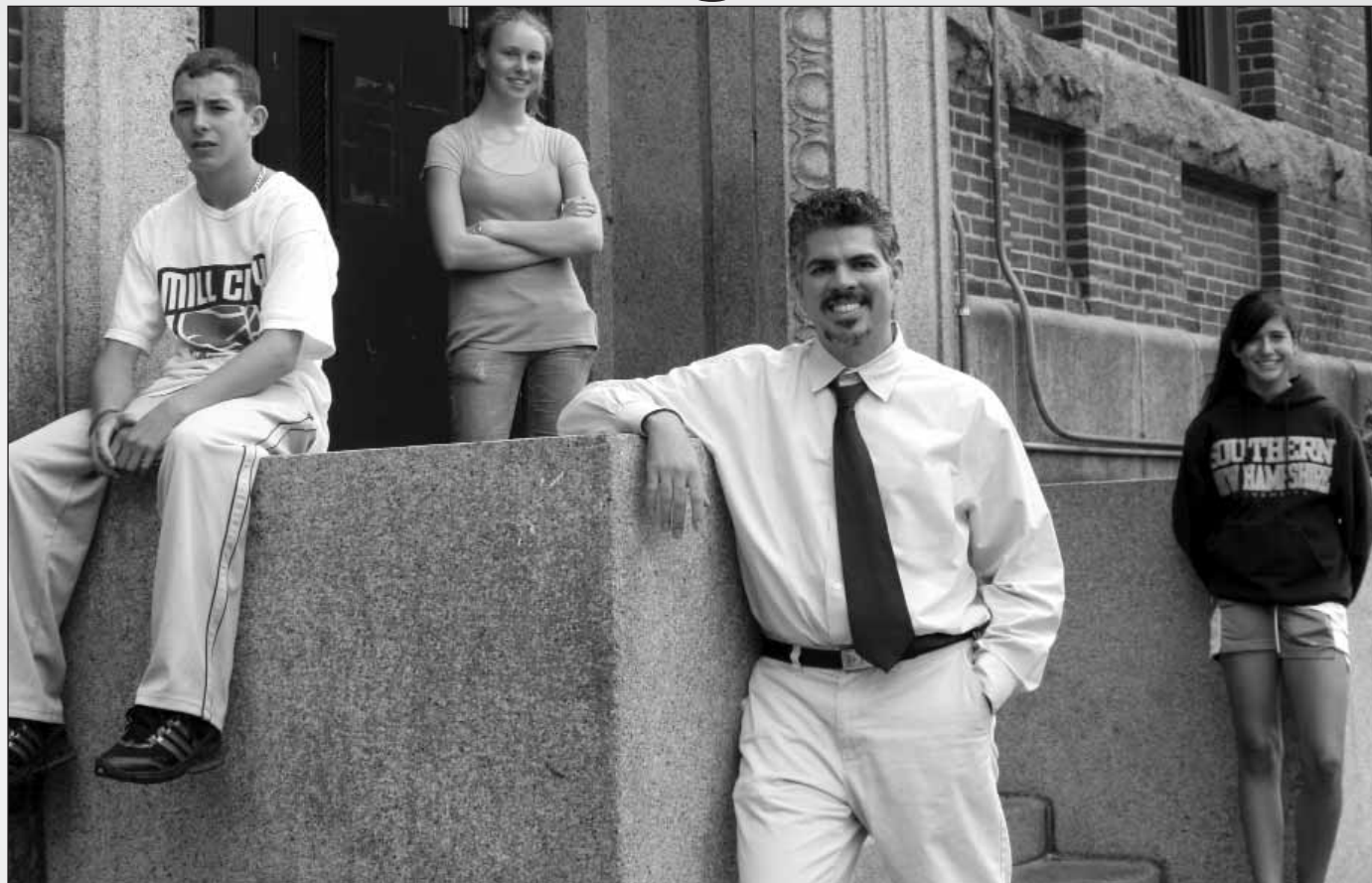
At school, Cordero is

thrilled with the numbers of students who are signing up for his athletic programs. The cross country program boasts 120 participants this fall.

Beers credits Cordero with the making the track team so popular. “He just makes kids feel excited about being part of a sport.”

He just makes kids feel excited about being part of a sport.

Jennifer Fay Beers
Principal, Central Middle



Central Middle School coach and teacher Ricardo Cordero with eighth-grade track stars, from left, Mattie Donovan, Carolyn Schwartz, and Stephanie DiPietro.

His success has not gone unnoticed. According to Beers, the high schools have tried to woo Cordero away. But he refuses to leave Central, where he has spent his entire career.

Cordero says he enjoys middle-school-aged children. They’re just finding out who they are, yet still enjoy talking to the adults in their lives. “I love middle school. It’s an important age,” he says. “You can still make an impact.”

Cordero also loves the positive atmosphere at Central.

“It feels like a family,” he says. “You can’t do this alone. I can do my job better knowing that I have my friends, my colleagues with me.”

Cordero was born and raised in Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico, just outside of San Juan. His track coach in high school there was an inspiration to him. When it came time for college, Cordero applied to several schools. Boston University offered him a good opportunity to earn a bachelor’s degree in education, so he found himself in Boston, and loving it.

He still enjoys the sports culture and history of the city. “I don’t get tired of it,” he says.

Cordero also spent time in Spain, where he earned his master’s degree in Spanish language arts.

Right out of college, Cordero began teaching Spanish at Central. A couple of years later, a coaching position opened up, and he eagerly went after the opportunity.

“I was lucky enough to get the position,” he recalls.

North Quincy High science stars hit international stage

BY RICH FAHEY

There is no magic formula. Students in the sciences at North Quincy High School have excelled for years because they work hard at the subjects. But 2008-09 was especially noteworthy. Three NQHS students were selected to participate in the annual Intel International Science and Engineering Fair, held in May in Reno, Nev.

The fair is the world’s largest international pre-college science competition, allowing 1,500 high school students from more than 50 countries to showcase their independent research. The Intel ISEF, organizers say, is the premiere science competition in the world exclusively for students in grades 9–12.

Millions of students worldwide compete in local and school-sponsored science fairs; the winners of these events go on to participate in Intel ISEF-affiliated regional and state fairs, from

which the best win the opportunity to attend the Intel ISEF.

At the Intel ISEF, the students’ work is judged by doctoral level scientists, and students compete for nearly \$4 million in prizes and scholarships.

Kelly Stukenborg, science department chairman at North Quincy High, said 15 projects were selected from the 200 submitted at the school’s annual science fair to compete at a South Shore regional fair at Bridgewater State College.

At that competition, NQHS student Yao Sing Wong, with his project on “The Remediation of Eutrophication with Potassium Salt Targeting *Microcystis* spp.,” placed second overall, qualifying him for the Intel fair. Yao, a senior, had been researching his topic for the past two years, changing his variables each year to research a different aspect of the problem of eutrophication.

Juniors Witney Chen and Diane Chen received a first-place team

award for their “Mitochondria2” project. This is the first year that team projects were allowed to represent the region at the Intel fair. “It’s a huge honor to have three students from one school,” said Stukenborg. “We’ve never had more than one before.”

There were 25 students selected to represent Massachusetts. Stukenborg said that of the 15 NQHS projects submitted for consideration for the regional fair, 10 were also accepted for presentation at the state science fair.

The success is no fluke. In the most recent MCAS test, 94 percent of NQHS students passed the biology exam.

North Quincy students can study biology, chemistry, physics, earth science, marine science, environmental sciences, anatomy and physiology. Advanced Placement courses offering college credit are offered in biology, chemistry and environmental sciences.



Students received backpacks filled with school supplies on their first day.

Positive Partnership

Students benefit from business community

By **BILL ABRAMSON**

The business community and Quincy Public Schools have a unique partnership that helps make every student's learning experience positive.

The Quincy School-Community Partnership's Backpack Initiative has grown in four years and, in September, joined with the school department to distribute 1,525 backpacks, filled with school supplies, for students who might otherwise not have had one.

"Children want to fit in and feel like everyone else," said Keith

Segalla, Director of Career and Technical Education for Quincy Public Schools.

"Making sure everyone has a backpack gets them excited to learn. It's a combination of preparing them with educational materials and supplies for new challenges ahead and making sure they fit in with the other kids. With this economic climate, this helps support parents as well. A lot of parents can't afford backpacks and supplies.

"Every student at Snug Harbor, Clifford Marshall and Lincoln Hancock elementary schools received backpacks, and numerous backpacks were delivered to other elementary schools and given to students in need."

"Our expertise isn't in needs-assessment of the child," said Jen White

of Cradles to Crayons, a group that donates school supplies, clothing, and toys to children age 12 and younger. "Agencies do due diligence in identifying the needs of a family and child. We have over 400 partners across the state, but the largest is Quincy Public Schools."

The Cradles to Crayons warehouse is located on Newport Avenue.

"We had a partnership with the schools and the backpack program for four years," White explained. "With the help of many generous supporters, we were able to supply the Quincy Public Schools with these backpacks so local kids can start school and can fit in with their peers. Self-esteem is so attached at this age."

Of the 82 businesses that help the school system during the year, from major corporations to local pizza shops, some took a lead role in the backpack program. Harvard Pilgrim Health Care had a supply drive with their employees. As employees bought supplies for their own children, they bought extra supplies for the Quincy kids.

The Quincy Credit Union sponsored backpacks at the Clifford Marshall School and for the fifth grade at Point Webster. Stonehill College purchased 100 backpacks for English Language Learners.

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Making sure everyone has a backpack gets them excited to learn. It's a combination of preparing them with educational materials and supplies for new challenges ahead and making sure they fit in with the other kids.

Keith Segalla
Director of Career and Technical Education

STAFF PROFILE

Four score for Merrymount

Dryer has been at Quincy school's service for 80 years

By **RICH FAHEY**

There are relationships, and then there are relationships.

Nellie Dryer, 88, has been part of the Merrymount School community for 80 years, ever since she attended the school — which was dedicated in 1928 — as a child in 1929.

Her four children all attended the school. Dryer was 58 when she began working at the school as a lunchroom and playground monitor. That led to a job as a cafeteria assistant and then manager.

Today, she is still the cafeteria manager, and she dispenses grandmotherly wisdom and love along with the food.

"Being around the students and teachers helps keep me young," said Dryer, who turns 89 in December.

Teachers at the school have described the way Dryer runs the lunchroom as "part showplace, part classroom, part home, and full-time place of caring with children, as they should be, at the center of things."

Dryer is believed to be the district's oldest employee, something she is justifiably proud of. She lives in the same house on Sea Street her father built and she grew up in.

"She knows virtually every family in the district," said Merrymount Principal Ann Pegg.

Sometimes, Dryer still walks to school, just as she did 80 years ago when she was a child and had to cross a marsh where houses now stand.

Dryer was looking for something to do after her children were grown and left home, when she decided to take up a friend's offer to work part-time at the school. She has never looked back.

Dryer was honored when the school celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2004, with school officials noting that she was one of the first to attend the school and her long relationship with it.

Dryer has four children — son William and daughters Kathleen Tuffi, Mary Johnson and Nancy Dryer — and six grandchildren.

Dryer said the Merrymount she and her children grew up in was a close-knit neighborhood, and it's still a great neighborhood. And the Merrymount School remains at the very heart of it.

Dryer stays active with aerobics and line dancing to keep up with the physical demands of the job. Work-wise, she plays it year to year at this point.



Nellie Dryer has been working in the cafeteria at Merrymount for more than 30 years.

STUDENT PROFILES

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

McCarthy does not let blindness slow him down

Gerald McCarthy is a junior at Quincy High School.



BY RICH FAHEY

Under any circumstances, Gerald McCarthy's resume would be impressive. But when you consider that he has been blind from birth, it is all the more remarkable.

The 17-year-old Quincy High School junior is an accomplished student, musician, actor, and school leader. He plays in an adapted sports league and serves as a mentor to other students with disabilities.

McCarthy, one of eight children of David and Rosemary McCarthy, has a series of obstacles he has to overcome in the course of a school day, not the least of which is getting from class to class.

He meticulously measures the number of steps it takes, creating an image of his journeys in his mind. Complicating his efforts, this is a time of great transition at Quincy High, as old buildings are taken down and new ones built. Last year, the school's former Careers and Technical Education building was demolished and a new building added in the middle of the school year.

"It takes me about three weeks to memorize the routes to my classes and then I know them by heart," he said.

"We're in three different buildings and they're all pretty well spread out," said Quincy High Principal Frank Santoro. "But Gerald is a remarkable young man and he wants to be as independent as possible."

McCarthy took it upon himself to meet with all of his teachers before this

school year began to find out what was expected of him. He is in an Advanced Placement course in U.S. history and honors courses in his other subjects and is a member of the National Honor Society.

McCarthy has two aides who assist him, and while he is grateful for the help, he also projects an air of fierce independence. He has a laptop computer adapted for the blind that allows him to take notes, but he can also record classes. He also has a computer program that turns text into speech.

While Massachusetts boasts some of the finest schools in the world for students with disabilities — including the world-famous Perkins School for the Blind — McCarthy wanted the broad range of experiences that a school such as Quincy High could offer.

That would include the Drama Club.

Last March, McCarthy played a leading role — Mr. Bumble, who runs the orphanage where Oliver Twist lives — in the Quincy High Drama Club's production of the musical "Oliver!"

McCarthy had the script and music transferred to his Braille machine to make learning his lines and the music easier. Before one of the shows, he met with a group of blind students from a nearby collaborative.

"They wanted to feel my costume and they asked me questions about being in the show," said McCarthy.

McCarthy plays the guitar, piano, clarinet, drums and other percussion instruments, and is in the process of learning the bagpipes. He is part of the school band and plays at football games and marches in parades.

"I'd like to have a career someday in the music industry, possibly in the area of music and technology," he said.

Citizen of the world

Quincy High's Peterson has traveled internationally to further AP studies

BY RICH FAHEY

Quincy High junior Meghan Peterson hopes to both see the world and help save it. She's off to a strong start.

Peterson made two international trips this past summer and used her experiences to help further her studies in Advanced Placement Environmental Sciences at the school, which has emerged in recent years as a hotbed of environmental activism. That activism has only intensified as the school has been making the gradual transition to its new buildings along Coddington Avenue.

Quincy High Science Department head Peter Swanson, who had Peterson as a student in Advanced Biology in her sophomore year and is now her instructor in AP environmental sciences, assigned his students a series of 10 papers to be done over the summer on environmental issues, as well as reading the Rachel Carson classic "The Silent Spring."

"I asked them to document their research and put facts behind their personal observations," said Swanson.

He was worried when he hadn't heard much from Peterson

about what she was doing for the first few weeks of the summer. That's because she was engaged in a two-week bicycle trip around the Canadian province of Nova Scotia, involved in ecological and environmental issues, an offshoot of a camp program she attends each summer.

Swanson received a flurry of papers, then didn't hear from Peterson again for a time.

She had embarked on a two-week trip to Seoul, Korea, after winning a scholarship from the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE).

"All of a sudden, I had four papers based on her experiences in Seoul," Swanson said.

Peterson said the South Koreans — and the city of Seoul, with its 10 million residents — had much to teach this country about creating a sustainable environment.

"Even though the development of South Korea is relatively newer than the U.S., in many ways they are ahead of us," she



McCarthy Peterson

said.

She pointed to Seoul's subway system, one of the most heavily used rapid transit systems in the world, with well over 8 million trips daily on the system's 11 lines. "The public transportation is a big deal, but there are a lot of smaller things they do to reduce their carbon footprint, such as putting most of their lighting on motion activation technology," said Peterson.

Peterson spent several nights with a Korean family and got a sense of how important recycling is in a very crowded country.

When Peterson isn't traveling to foreign countries, she is involved in the school's cross country and sailing teams, is a member of the Student Council and the National Honor Society, writes for the Pony Express, the QHS newspaper, and is a member of the Interact Club, a club dedicated to community service and international understanding. She hopes to work in the environmental area or perhaps international relations.

A learning environment

Beechwood Knoll goes green with outdoor classroom

BY RICH FAHEY

The Beechwood Knoll School in Wollaston is located on Fenno Street, adjacent to Black's Creek Marsh, which stretches along Quincy Shore Drive between Fenno Street and Furnace Brook Parkway.

The marsh — the school's de facto back yard — is an environmentalist's delight, hosting a variety of woodland plants, birds and animals.

When the Beechwood Knoll School re-opened in September 1995, then-principal Kathy Morris and faculty members saw the potential for an outdoor nature classroom, but it wasn't until 2007 that Cheri Dewar, a parent and conservation activist, put into motion the plan to create an environmental area adjacent to the marsh.

With the approval of Superintendent of Schools Dr. Richard DeCristofaro and current Principal Diane O'Keeffe, a plan evolved that included creating an outdoor environmental area that would be used by the school and community for recreation, education and cultural events.

The project included building a 16x30-foot deck with shade

protection on the upland area of the marsh. Trails through the wooded area are being refurbished and concrete debris that has been there since the 1960s is being removed.

The naturally landscaped area around the platform will be a Peaceable Garden for students to enjoy nature demonstrations and cultural activities. The Quincy Conservation Committee approved the project in April 2008 and it will be completed next spring, although the platform for the outdoor classroom will be in use this fall.

"Everyone along the way said yes," said grade 2 teacher Tom Natola, who described himself as "the project manager and support person — the straw that stirs the drink."

Natola said the project is just what the school needed. "We wanted a way to reconnect the children to the environment, and we think we've found it."

The funding is being provided by a \$20,000 grant from the Quincy Community Preservation Act (CPA) Committee.

Natola said the project was made possible by many people who donated their time, including, on the planning end, parents Magdalena Lofstedt, an environmental scientist, and Visarut Satasook, an architect; Ward 5 City Councilor Doug Gutro; and Guy Shepard of Norchip Environmental Control.

On the construction side, heroes have included Quincy High carpentry instructor John Campbell, whose students dug the foundation holes; Robert Burke, a North Quincy High carpentry

instructor; Dennis Thibault, a Quincy High metal fabrication instructor, whose students will fabricate the metal arches to support the sun screen and decorative metal bird cutouts; and parents Mike Smith and Mark Napolitano.

The Beechwood Knoll community has also embraced the environment in other ways. The school received a National Grid Green Action Award for reducing the number of drink containers used at the school by an astounding 87 percent.

Part of the strategy involved having the students use reusable cups instead of plastic or paper ones. Grade 2 students even designed a "green vehicle" that traveled to classrooms around the school to pick up recyclable containers.

A recycling program encouraged students to buy and sell used books. "We just wanted to show the students what they could accomplish if they really tried," said O'Keeffe.

All of the environmental initiatives combined earned the school yet another honor for the 2008-09 school year — the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's Green Team award. The Green Team program involved nearly 122,000 students from 475 Massachusetts schools, who participated in statewide educational programs with the shared goal of reducing pollution and protecting the environment.

Statewide, 108 classes from 94 schools were recognized, and Beechwood Knoll students earned a free concert by the musical group Earthtunes.





Front row, from left, teacher Amanda Harris, Kevin Toler, Colby Simone, Courtney Dondero, Lukas Schaaf, Kaylie Sullivan, Iris Kattori, Ryleigh Smith and school nurse Christine Flynn. Back row is teacher Mike Connor and parent Christine Toler.

Sea of adventures

Students explore marine life at summer enrichment program

By RICH FAHEY

The Atherton Hough School is located in the Hough's Neck neighborhood of Quincy, a one-square-mile peninsula where in almost any direction you go, you'll eventually encounter the Atlantic Ocean.

Many considered it the "flounder capital of the world," since the neighborhood once hosted six boat rental businesses where buses of anglers arrived from far and wide to chase the flat, bottom-dwelling fish.

So when the school received a grant from the state Mass. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for a month-long summer enrichment program, it seemed appropriate to make the ocean the theme.

Atherton Adventures involved 60 students in grades 1-5 who spent the weeks between June 29-July 23 exploring the tidal pools at nearby Edgewater Beach, riding on the Quincy Police boat and learning about the Boston Harbor Islands and how the police protect the shoreline.

"Students had a great time improving their reading, writing, and mathematics skills while learning about the ocean," said Atherton Hough assistant principal Margaret MacNeil, the program facilitator.

Each of the teachers involved in the program tied subject matter to the ocean in some way.



Atherton Hough student Kevin Toler enjoys a boat ride.

Jennifer Diauto's grade 1-2 class read many stories about ocean creatures and their environment and investigated whales, dolphins, turtles, jellyfish, and crabs.

They read and wrote about the book "The Rainbow Fish" and even made blue Jell-o that looked like the ocean with fish swimming in it.

Colleen Carlson's grade 1-2 class created an ocean mural, completing a mini-lesson on the ocean each day and then adding the topic to the mural. "The children had a blast on our trip to Edgewater Beach," said Carlson. "Students found new and exciting adventures."

Kate Walpole's grade 3-5 Ocean Explorers class replicated the size of the eye of the giant squid, which has the

largest eye in the animal kingdom, explored the mysteries of the octopus and, as an offshoot of the octopus, became experts on numbers that are multiples of eight.

Writing was a focal point as students created various poems such as an octopus acrostic and a lobster haiku. Students wrote detailed descriptions on how to build a sand castle and then tried them out on their field trip to the beach.

Laura McCarthy's grade 2-3 class read poems about ocean creatures, added them to poetry notebooks and then illustrated the poems in their notebooks. The students read ocean stories and created an "Ocean ABC Book."

"We brainstormed an ocean letter for each letter of the alphabet," said McCarthy. "The students then researched, wrote descriptions and created illustrations."

Researcher Amanda Harris helped students learn about tidal schedules, tidal pools, sea shells and sand castles, as well as the five oceans of the world, crustaceans, coral reefs, and many other creatures. They also replicated the "squeaks" that dolphins make that allow them to communicate underwater.

Erin Croke incorporated oceanic themes into art and gym classes.

The program was made possible by an After School and Out of School Time Quality Grant, a state program that seeks to provide students in grades K-12 with high quality out-of-school programs.

Anti-bullying program takes preventative approach

By RICH FAHEY

The schoolyard bully has long been a staple of pop culture in books, movies and TV shows. In such shows and books, the hero often stands up to the bully and sends him scurrying.

But the reality is that it doesn't always happen that way, and the truth is that the bully can inflict real mental as well as physical damage, and the bully doesn't necessarily have to be a male.

In April 2008, the Quincy School Committee adopted a formal anti-bullying policy and established a citywide anti-bullying curriculum aimed at grade 4 students. The Steps to Respect program is now in its second year at the Charles A. Bernazzani Elementary School.

Bernazzani guidance counselor Maura Shaughnessy said that while bullying may encompass a wide range of behaviors, at its core the definition is simple: aggressive behavior that is intentional and involves an imbalance of power or strength. The child being bullied usually has a hard time defending himself or herself.

Bullying is usually repeated over time, and it can take many forms: physical bullying such as hitting and punching; verbal bullying via teasing or name-calling; nonverbal or emotional bullying, such as spreading rumors that can result in the social exclusion of a student; and insulting phone messages or cyber-bullying via e-mails or online social networking sites.

"Mental anguish is just as real as physical contact," Shaughnessy said.

Bullying, which cuts across both socioeconomic and gender lines, can have serious effects. Children who are bullied are more likely than other children to have low self-esteem, be depressed, lonely, and anxious, feel sick and be absent from school.

Shaughnessy said there are several reasons why grade 4 students were chosen for the program.

"We wanted to get the intervention program at a time before there is a significant problem, but when children are mature enough to understand the concepts," she said.

The subject is discussed once a week for about 30 minutes and involves role-playing and helping students by teaching them strategies to combat bullying.

At the key are the three Rs: recognizing, refusing and reporting the behavior. The program coaches students to recognize when they are being bullied, steps they can take to "refuse" or rebut the behavior, and then reporting the behavior to responsible adults.

"We practice what kids can say when they feel they are being bullied," Shaughnessy said. "If they don't feel comfortable standing up to the behavior or trying to handle the situation on their own, they can just report it."

There is no formal curriculum in the lower grades, but the subject is discussed in various ways, such as a picture book about the behavior. In grade 5, lessons learned about bullying in grade 4 are reinforced.

Shaughnessy said it is also important to empower adult bystanders who may know that bullying is going on, to urge them to get involved in stopping the behavior. "Bystanders can help the bully by doing nothing or help the target by being a friend to the student being bullied," she said.

Winning attitude

In the face of obstacles,
Cai shows resilience

BY JESSICA BENSON

Jordan Cai knows something about overcoming challenges.

As a Chinese immigrant, he's had to grapple with a foreign language and a learning disability. He has also had to grow up without his parents, who are still living in China while his aunt in Quincy takes care of him.

Then, there's one of the biggest obstacles of all: he has cerebral palsy. But Cai hasn't let any of that stop him from having a winning attitude.

"He's just the nicest, most uplifting kid I've ever been around," said Daniel Gilbert, principal of the Snug Harbor School, where Cai attended fifth grade last year. "He's the kind of kid you look at, and when you feel like you're not having a great day, you just laugh."

Gilbert was so fond of Cai, he continues to keep tabs on him as he progresses in the sixth grade at Point Webster Middle School.

"He's got a number of things going against him," Gilbert said, "but it never slows him down."

Gilbert has known Cai since he emigrated to this country five years ago. His parents sent him to the U.S. so he could receive proper medical care for his cerebral palsy, a birth defect which impacts the motor skills.

Despite his disability, Cai is very active. He plays soccer, floor hockey and basketball — and was even the captain of the basketball team. Last year, he was a pirate in a school production of "Peter Pan."

Adults have been quick to recognize how special Cai is. Last spring, he was honored by the Kiwanis Club for making an impact on his school and his community. He was one of 15 students in Quincy to receive the Junior Hero Award. "People are just inspired by him," Gilbert said.

Cai's positive attitude doesn't go unnoticed by his peers, either. Throughout elementary school, Cai had plenty of friends, since people just naturally gravitate toward him.

"Everyone likes him so much," Gilbert said. "He's just the best."



Learning continues after the bell at Montclair

BY BILL ABRAMSON

At the close of each day, Montclair School will become an artists' colony.

Students will become sculptors, photographers, authors, craftsmen, painters, illustrators, and dancers in clubs such as "Dance Troup" and "Books, Books, Books."

Montclair students will also create their own after-school snacks and then challenge their peers to games from the past, such as hopscotch, hula hoop and Chinese jump rope. In "Edible English," students will serve up the recipes found in texts, play chess, write and illustrate their own books, design and create crafts and jewelry, and solve the mystery of the missing money in our own "CSI Montclair."

They will plot strategic moves in math games, learn scrapbooking techniques to record their own memories through photography, explore the lives of great artists and



Cooking is one of the after-school activities at Montclair School.

create masterpieces of their own.

Some will explore the new and unknown in the world of science in "Crazy Concoctions" while others will develop an understanding of the importance of regular exercise through participation in "Oh, What an Afternoon."

All of this is available through

programs at Montclair's 21st Century Community Learning Center, made possible by a 21st century grant obtained for the school by Janice Eler, Coordinator of the Extended Education program, who writes the grant application each year in conjunction with assessment specialist Mary Fredrickson. The grant covers

all of the middle schools and several elementary schools in Quincy.

"Nancy Joyce, a fifth-grade teacher, and Mary Hurley, a fourth-grade teacher, are the co-facilitators of the program," Montclair Principal Renee Lalumiere-Malvesti explained. "They ask for teachers that will run programs and turn in proposals of programs they want to run and the kids sign up."

"Throughout the year, we will run over 25 programs for students in grades 2-5 to provide them with the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of academic enrichment activities and projects that complement their daily curriculums."

While it's all voluntary, teachers and paraprofessionals who run the activities are compensated through the grant.

"We try and make sure there is an academic math or writing component," Lalumiere-Malvesti said.

"That's thinking outside the box. To keep little kids here two additional hours, you have to keep them occupied."

"Part of the beauty of the programs is that the teachers have expertise in them and get excited, so the kids get excited, too. Each program runs 6-8 weeks. Then, the students can go to another program."

Montclair School's grades 2-5 have 12 classes of about 20 students each and, over the course of the school year, students signed up for more than 300 available spots.

"Most of the programs had waiting lists and students are excited about staying at school," Lalumiere-Malvesti said.

Students also have a quiet, supervised homework time to get started on their nightly work with instructional resources and a teacher available to assist with questions about assignments.

Marshall plan: O'Neill keeps school spotless

BY RICH FAHEY

By Phil Connolly's reckoning, Michael O'Neill is worth about \$2.76 million.

Connolly, principal of the Clifford H. Marshall Elementary School, said that a good school custodian or secretary is "worth his or her weight in gold," and O'Neill's 173 pounds, with gold running about \$1,000 an ounce, make him that valuable.

And while Connolly can't afford to pay O'Neill like a million-dollar man, that doesn't mean he doesn't appreciate the work the custodian has done since he arrived at the school in 2006.

"This is a huge school and our grounds and corridors wouldn't look the way they do without him taking a tremendous amount of pride in what he does," Connolly said. "A good custodian sets the tone for the entire school."

O'Neill, 57, a native of Quincy who now lives in Weymouth, opens up the school each morning on his 6 a.m.-2 p.m. shift and has

everything shipshape before teachers and students arrive.

Connolly said O'Neill takes care of special requests from teachers, and knows all the students' names. "He always goes above and beyond what the job calls for, and he does it with a smile." He also takes it upon himself to be an enthusiastic partner in the school's recycling efforts.

O'Neill ran his own business along with his father, the late William O'Neill, for years, a snack stand on the Boston waterfront adjacent to the New England Aquarium, until they were forced out by an eminent-domain land taking for the Big Dig.

When he isn't working, O'Neill loves to golf and plays to a 4 handicap.

O'Neill said he appreciates the compliments from the teachers and staff.

"I try to make the school a welcoming place," he said. "I think when the children get here, the first impression they get is important. When it's clean and shiny, it makes them feel like they're in a good place."



Marshall custodian Mike O'Neill is a friend to all at the school, including student Sam Lamarr.

AROUND QUINCY SCHOOLS

Elementary schools

Lincoln-Hancock

Parent Diane Hill wrote a grant to improve the grounds at the school. To commemorate the 200th anniversary of Lincoln's birth, Hill worked to get a Lincoln Lilac donated to the school. A planting ceremony was held in the spring.

Merrymount

Kindergarten teacher Mary Beth Kurttila participated in the Pan Mass Challenge and raised more than \$6,000 for the Jimmy Fund.

The PTO received a \$5,000 grant from Lowe's and a \$1,000 grant from Home Depot to create an outdoor classroom.

Squantum

More than \$10,000 has been raised by the Squantum PTO for the Adopt a Locker project. The money will be used to replace existing locker/bins in the media center. The first phase of the project has been completed and the PTO will be raising money throughout the school year for the remaining lockers. The parents and all donors have created a strong sense of pride for the school community.

Special teacher, special students

BROWN: from Page 1

Among Brown's many fans is Squantum Principal Stephen Sylvia. "She's unbelievable. I think the world of her," he said. "She's awesome; she's such a great resource."

Brown has been teaching special-education students for eight years and wouldn't want to do anything else.

"This was the population I wanted to work with, and it has been amazing to watch over the last decade," she said. "As our program — CARES (Children Achieve Real Educational Success) — grows, there is a need for folks who have some time in the program to be vocal about their experience. When teachers talk about the 5-year rate (of those who leave the profession), those who work with severe disabilities leave in three years. As the program develops, those here the longest should take on mentoring outside of classrooms, advocating for autism issues."

Brown has been outspoken in her support of the autism insurance reform initiative, seeking coverage for therapies that have proven effective, but not covered by traditional insurance plans.

"All children will achieve as long as the instruction is appropriate," she said. "All children can learn. I've had students academically achieve the same as in a general education setting. They just learn in very specific ways."

"Autism is a neurologically based disorder with three components — communication, socialization and sensory-based needs. Along the spectrum, you find these things to greater and lesser levels. Students may function at very different levels within those categories."

Having been in the school for as long as she has, Brown has seen the fruits of her labors.

"I am amazed, looking at former students who are now 12 to 15 years old," she said. "They were the 5- and 6-year-olds I first saw. It's amazing to see what they can do. They can participate and be productive and appreciated members in the community. They have friendships and build relationships with friends and family."

"There is nothing like the parent whose child has gone from pointing to things with one word recognition who can now go with three words," Brown added. "That far outweighs saying, 'My kid scored perfect on the SAT.'"

Sterling student produce award-winning video

STERLING: from Page 1

mention in C-SPAN's annual student cam contest.

The 6-minute video was one of 25 honored out of more than 1,000 submissions to the contest.

"They realized it was pretty big," Joyce said. "It was like they won an Emmy award."

But instead of keeping the \$250 reward for themselves, the students decided to buy a television for the school, so future video projects could be viewed by the entire school. The 40-inch screen now sits in the foyer.

"They gave back," Joyce said. "That's what they wanted to do."

The project had actually started the year before, when Joyce found out about the contest and presented the idea to her students in the Youth Council, an after-school program that meets once a week. They jumped at the chance to participate.

According to contest rules, videos must be 5-8 minutes long, with credits at the end, and a complete exploration of the chosen topic. The video must also include at least one C-SPAN clip.

To go along with their theme of the environment, the Sterling students chose a clip of Al Gore talking about global warming. The students went on to talk about some of the issues they are concerned about, such as banning idling

cars from in front of the school to getting rid of Styrofoam lunch trays in the cafeteria.

A couple of teachers also made guest appearances in the videos, one to show off a composting project, and the other to discuss how she was using robotics to teach her students about the environment.

Students made the decisions about what clips to film, according to Joyce. "It was truly, truly theirs," she said.

Joyce said her students continue to be concerned about the environment. The students still feel passionately about the need to ban Styrofoam trays from schools, because the trays are made up of chemicals that can be dangerous and can take hundreds of years to decompose. Students have even appeared before the School Committee, giving a presentation and showing their video, in the hopes of having the trays banned.

"They were the first kids to draw public attention to it," Joyce said. "They are truly children who are worried about this issue."

This year, the group will focus on some other environmental issues, including checking the air quality inside their school. However, Joyce doesn't think the council will be making another video this year. She hopes to have the students do a video and enter the C-SPAN contest every other year, due to the amount of effort each video takes.



Director of Safety and Security for Quincy Public Schools Mike Draicchio is doing everything he can to keep students safe.

Safety first

Security a priority in Quincy

BY BILL ABRAMSON

Mike Draicchio and his safety and security team have been given the responsibility for being prepared for any potential incident that could involve Quincy Public Schools.

In the wake of the Columbine tragedy in Colorado and the Sept. 11 attacks, school administrators have been forced to think outside the box when it comes to all the things that could possibly happen during the school day and beyond.

“We’re doing everything we can to make sure these kids are safe,” Draicchio said. “We value safety as much as everything else. We try to find out what other school systems are doing – emergency situations, handbooks – and everyone in the area has the same stuff.”

The day-to-day procedures are the ones that affect all students and are seen by parents and the public. Once students are in school, the doors are locked and there is only one door people may use to enter the building at the elementary and middle schools. That door is equipped with a buzzer and camera so that office personnel can view who is coming to the door and determine who it is and the purpose of the visit. If they need to check an ID, they can do that as well. Those who are buzzed into the school proceed to the office to sign in and get a visitors’ badge.

“The high schools have a security staff so people can check in with them right at the entrance,” Draicchio said.

“All the school principals and staff take safety seriously. We do routine checks to make

sure the doors are locked during the day. We do a physical security check of all of the buildings and go over every aspect of the school itself. Then, we make a final report to the head of maintenance and fix any problem we have.”

Before school started, Draicchio met with the city’s DPW and the Quincy Police traffic bureau. He wanted to have the crosswalks painted and review where traffic supervisors, provided by the police department, would be stationed.

“
All the school principals and staff take safety seriously.
”
Mike Draicchio
Security, QPS

The security team is responsible for two high schools, five middle schools, 11 elementary schools and other buildings the school department may use, such as the alternative high school, which is housed behind North Quincy High.

The preparation for the unexpected and safety drills are done at each school at least twice a year. “One is a lockdown as if there was something in the vicinity of the school or there was an intruder at the school,” Draicchio explained. “The lockdown is basically to clear the hallway, lock the doors and windows so nobody can see in and make sure the students not leave the classroom for any reason. The No. 1 priority is to take attendance to make sure all students are there.”

Another drill is an evacuation of the building, such as a fire drill, and there’s a reverse evacuation to get the students into the school as quickly as possible. Attendance is taken at all drills to account for every student. Students with physical handicaps are assisted by staff assigned to them.

SCHOOL QUINCY DIRECTORY

Elementary Schools

Amelio Della Chiesa (ADC) Early Childhood Center
Carol Shiffer, Assistant Principal
100 Brooks Ave., Quincy 02169
617-984-8777

Atherton Hough
Dorothy Greene, Principal
1084 Sea St., Quincy 02169
617-984-8797

Beechwood Knoll
Diane O’Keeffe, Principal
225 Fenno St., Quincy 02170
617-984-8781

Charles Bernazzani
Peter Dionne, Principal
701 Furnace Brook Pkwy., Quincy 02169
617-984-8713

Lincoln-Hancock Community School
Ruth Witmer, Principal
300 Granite St., Quincy 02169
617-984-8714

Clifford Marshall
Philip Connolly, Principal
200 Moody St. Ext., Quincy 02169
617-984-8721

Merrymount
Ann Pegg, Principal
4 Agawam Road, Quincy 02169
617-984-8762

Montclair
Renee Lalumiere-Malvesti, Principal
8 Belmont St., Quincy 02171
617-984-8708

F.W. Parker
Maryanne Palmer, Principal
148 Billings Road, Quincy 02171
617-984-8710

Snug Harbor Community School
Daniel Gilbert, Principal
333 Palmer St., Quincy 02169
617-984-8763
617-984-8951 (Pre-School)

Squantum
Stephen Sylvia, Principal
50 Huckins Ave., Quincy 02171
617-984-8706

Wollaston
James Hennessy, Principal
205 Beale St., Quincy 02170
617-984-8791

Middle Schools

Atlantic
Maureen MacNeil, Principal
86 Hollis Ave., Quincy 02171
617-984-8727

Broad Meadows
Lawrence Taglieri, Principal
Anne Marie Zukauskas Way
50 Calvin Road, Quincy 02169
617-984-8722

Central
Jennifer Fay Beers, Principal
1012 Hancock St., Quincy 02169
617-984-8725

Point Webster
James McGuire, Principal
62 Lancaster St., Quincy 02169
617-984-6600

Sterling

Christine Barrett, Principal
444 Granite St., Quincy 02169
617-984-8728

High Schools

North Quincy High
Earl Metzler, Principal
316 Hancock St., Quincy 02171
617-984-8745
617-984-8747 (Guidance office)

Quincy High
Frank Santoro, Principal
52 Coddington St., Quincy 02169
617-984-8754
617-984-8757 (Guidance office)

SPORTS

THE QUINCY EDUCATOR

Sweet success

Mullaney takes 10th at Hershey Games

BY RICH FAHEY

Central Middle School student Mike Mullaney can't decide what was the sweetest part of representing New England at the 32nd annual Hershey Track & Field Games on Aug. 1 in Hershey, Pa.

Mullaney, 12, finished 10th in the country in the 800-meter run for boys 11-12 at the meet. The Hershey competition started with 400,000 young athletes from the United States and Canada — the largest youth sports program of its kind in the two countries, according to the company.

Mullaney enjoyed an all-expenses-paid trip to Hershey, a Willy Wonka-like tour of the famed chocolate factory, and a visit to Hershey Park amusement park. The athletes were housed at Elizabethtown College.

"Everywhere we went, there were special ceremonies for us," said Mullaney, who was accompanied by his parents, Caroline and James.

Mullaney was one of five athletes from the Bay State who represented Region 6 at the competition; the Region 6 team was made up of state champions selected from the New England states, as well as the Canadian provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Prince Edward Island. Times of the champions were compared in deciding who to send to the North American championships, but a minimum of five finalists were selected from each state or province.

"I was a little nervous before the Massachusetts final," Mullaney said. "Near the end, I knew I had it won, but I still had to sprint because they would be comparing my time with the others."

He completed the 800 meters in the state final in 2:36.81 to become one of 560 athletes from around the country and Canada invited to participate in the finals.

"This was my third time trying to make it to Hershey," said Mullaney, who has been a member of the Quincy Track Club since age 7. He is on the cross-country team at Central and has a personal best of 5:59 for the mile. He also enjoys soccer, tennis, and swimming.

The first step on the road to Hershey for Mullaney was winning at the Quincy qualifying meet, in existence since 1978. It attracted 114 competitors this year, according to Barry Welch, Quincy recreation director. The most famous alumna of the Quincy Hershey meet is Karen Cashman, the Olympic short-track speed skater who won a bronze medal in the 3,000-meter short track relay at the 1994 Lillehammer Winter Olympics and qualified for the Hershey finals five times.

The most famous graduate of the Hershey Games is Joanna Hayes, the gold medalist in the 100-meter hurdles in the 2004 Olympic Games. Olympic decathlon champion Rafer Johnson was the games' honorary chairman.

Annmarie Sargent, Leominster recreation program coordinator and coordinator of the Massachusetts Hershey's competition, said that as many as 5,000 children participated at the 17 state qualifying meets, including Quincy, with 632 advancing to the state meet that was held at Nashoba Regional in Bolton on June 27.

Mullaney said that even though he didn't win the final, he intends to stick with running and hopes to make it back to Hershey again.



Mike Mullaney