



THE ETHICAL COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL

OCTOBER 2009 NEWSLETTER

EDUCATE

The Ethical Community Charter School:
(201) 984-4156
fax (201) 200-9931

95 Broadway
Jersey City, NJ 07306
www.teccsjc.org

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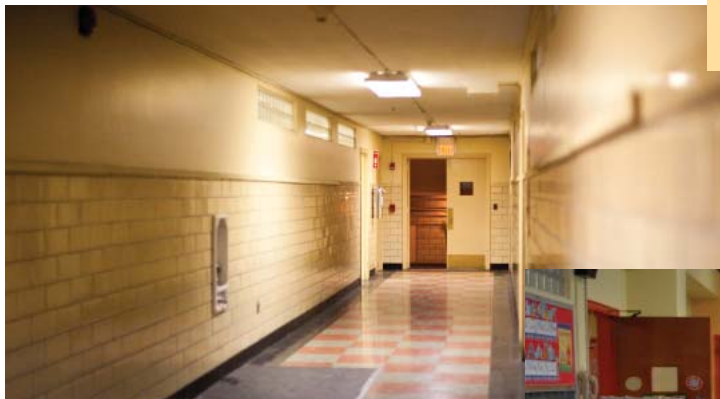
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EXPLORE

ENRICH



Some photos provided by: Kenneth Chen
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School Contact Information:

Please take note of the school's new phone numbers:

Main: 201-984-4156

Miriam Oyola (Executive Secretary):
201-984-4151
email: miriam.oyola@teccsjc.org

Margaret Weiss (Nurse):
201-984-4152
margaret.weiss@teccsjc.org

Kathy Mone (Business Administrator):
201-984-4154
kathy.mone@teccsjc.org

All other faculty email addresses are:
firstname.lastname@teccsjc.org

School Web site:
www.teccsjc.org

FSA Committee Chair Contact Information:

Fundraising Committee

Cassandra Richards
201-993-9785
cssndrrchrds@yahoo.com

Lunch Committee

Keely Richardson
keely333@mac.com

Outreach and Public Relations:

Daphney Civil-Acosta
timaffi@yahoo.com

Print and Publications

Donna LaStella
grsactr@yahoo.com

Programs and Assemblies

Wilton Fontenette
whfontenette@mac.com

Technology

Edward Secades - Co-Chair
edward.secades@teccsjc.org

Heather Johnson - Co-Chair
heather.johnson@teccsjc.org

Class Parents/Hospitality: TBA

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

What a difference a week makes! I cannot believe that is all it has been since Back-to-School Night! First, I want to thank everyone who spoke to me and volunteered for committees and events. The outpouring of help was overwhelming. Forget "Build it and they will come"—For me it was "Ask and they will volunteer to build it!!! (And if you are the mystery lawyer who volunteered to help with the By-Laws Committee, please identify yourself to someone!)

So let me fill you in on what has happened in the last week. We have a full slate of officers for the FSA: Vice President: Betsey Barnum; Treasurer: Sophia Brooks; Asst. Treasurer: Liza Arcayena; Recording Sec'y: Sara Sweeney. We have gotten chairpeople for almost every committee, and with the help of Sophia and Kathy Mone, our school Business Manager, we have started the process to officially become a Charitable Organization in the State of NJ. Our lunch volunteers have been at school everyday, and things couldn't have gone more smoothly; our technical committee has begun work on an interactive on-line lunch schedule for our many volunteers. Our fundraising committee has scheduled its first event, which you can read more about in the committee report. Our Outreach/Publications Committee is poised to organize our official Opening Ceremony, and to help with our upcoming Open Houses for future enrollment. We still need one more committee chairperson for the Class Parents/Hospitality Committee, and we will be all set.

We held our first official FSA meeting on Tuesday evening, and the parents who were there were enthusiastic, and full of great ideas. I feel so lucky to be working with such a wonderful group of people, and so relieved as well! I am looking forward to meeting those of you I have not yet met, and getting to know all of you. As we slowly shift from a large group of nervous parents into a supportive, united community, I am excited about the future we will share, and the journey we have all decided to take together.

Sincerely,

Bess Morrison
bess.morrison@teccsjc.org

The next FSA meeting will be held on November 10th.

FSA

Education is a cooperation between parents, teachers and the children that are being taught. Our children are successful when we work together as a community. The more involved you are, the more you help plan and join in school events, the more your children can reach important goals for learning and success. We hope you will help us reach our goals for your child's success. FSA is a community of parents working together to help reach those goals. Without volunteers in the FSA there would be no one to help host the Open Houses, nor would there be anyone to put together brochures for special events. TECCS wouldn't have a great parent running an amazing FUNdraiser either. That's capital FUN because our wonderful Fundraising chair has a really great first fundraiser planned that not only benefits the school, but it also gives parents a break and most important the benefit to the kids will have a great time. Lunchtime at TECCS would be complete chaos without your help. We only have 120 students and we need a lot of help, so if you have some spare time and would like to volunteer for a committee or an event please contact the chairs for the following committees.

FUNDRAISING Committee - Cassandra Richards, committee chair

The Fundraising Committee is comprised of TECCS parents who dedicate their time and talent to seek out programs and/or host a soiree of events in an effort to generate a positive cashflow for TECCS.

This year, as well as years to come, is going to be a pretty exciting one for TECCS. The Fundraising Committee is actively involved in a wide range of activities. Recently, Erika Avila enrolled TECCS in French Toast's school program and Kellogg's box tops program, wherein the school earns a percentage for every purchase and/or free educational products for the school. In addition to those programs, I am excited to announce the launching of TECCS' 1st Monthly **Kids Night Out** schedule to be determined, so keep an eye out in your child's folder. The goal of these outings is to provide our children with a fun-filled environment while allowing parents a few hours of "me" time. There will be a fee for your child's participation and it is on a "first come, first serve basis". Please look out for the flyer in your child's folder within the next few days.

Other small fundraisers in the works are collection and recycling of juice pouches, empty Bear Naked granola packages, MaltOMeal cereal bags, Kashi packaging, inkjet cartridges, and old cell phones. More information on these activities is forth coming. We are always exploring new ideas with quite a few projects underway and would welcome any suggestions. Should you be interested in joining our committee or have time/talent to dedicate, please contact the Fundraiser Chairperson.

LUNCH Committee - Keely Richardson, committee chair

As of Monday, October 5, 2009, the lunch program at TECCS began! These first few days have been a time for the staff and volunteers to figure out a smooth and timely routine so that the children receive their meals and have adequate time to eat.

Thank you everyone who has already volunteered and for those who are signed up for the next few weeks. If you haven't signed up yet please do! Our lunch volunteer program not only helps the school but will give you a chance to see your children interacting during the day and I cannot describe to you how excited and proud they are to see you there! FYI: Calls will be made to remind you of the day(s) you signed up for and to make any changes.

*Reminder, a lunch schedule (one side vegetarian and one side regular) for the month will be sent out and parents are asked to mark which lunches/days their child will be getting lunch from the program. Return it with payment to school ASAP; this is important so that Margaret Colantonio, our Food Service Manager, will know how many meals and what type (regular or vegetarian) to order. You may also order milk, chocolate milk or a juice for \$.40 or a peanut-butter and jelly, cheese sandwich or whole wheat bean burrito for \$2.00.

Outreach and Public Relations - Daphney Civil-Acosta

The Outreach and Public Relations Committee—soon to become our hardest working group—communicates and works with our community. We will be helping staff our upcoming Open Houses for Enrollment, staffing registration desks, giving tours, going to Head Start programs, and getting the word out about our wonderful school.

We will also be working on invitations for the Opening Ceremony, and publicity for it, as well as assisting on that day. More information on the Opening Ceremony to come. Anyone wishing to volunteer for the committee should please contact Daphney Civil-Acosta at timaffi@yahoo.com.

Print and Publications - Donna LaStella

The Print and Publications Committee handles the newsletter for FSA and any other type of printable item for which the FSA committees might need a creative design, layout and/or editing.

If you are a wonder with words or you can proof and edit documents we can use you. If you are great at designing and laying out documents we want you too. It's an easy committee for which you can do the work on your own time and in the comfort of your own home.

Programs and Assemblies - Wilton Fontenette

The Program and Assemblies Committee is responsible for finding and locating educational programs that reinforce what the students are learning at school. The committee works closely with the Principal to determine which programs work best for the students.

Upcoming activities planned by the Programs and Assemblies Committee include an in-school presentation on weather patterns by the Tenafly Nature Center (October 30) and field trips to the Jersey City Museum (November 5 and 12). The Committee welcomes suggestions for future activities. If you are interested in joining the Programs and Assemblies Committee, please contact Wilton Fontenette.

Technology - Edward Secades and Heather Johnson Co-Chairs

The Technology Committee began meeting in the month of April and as of the beginning of school in September we now meet monthly. Outside of the scheduled meetings the individual committee members have dedicated in excess of 500 hours to implement business class technology services with a minimum investment. The Committee has established a strategy of leveraging open source and open service technologies which are equivalent to commercial-level technologies. This approach is consistent with the overall goal of the Open Source community providing cutting-edge technologies and services to the general population with little or no cost.

The Technology committee consists of the following individuals aligned to two internal departments:

Web Services	Infrastructure Services
Heather Johnson – Co-Chair	Edward Secades – Co-Chair
Peter Jaffe	Leon Green
Nedim Cholich	Tetsuya Sato
	Yssa Bobrow

I cannot say enough positive things about the level of dedication and professionalism these individuals have demonstrated in the execution of committee objectives. We/TECCS have been quite fortunate to have these individuals focused on the success of the school.

In the next 2-3 months, the TECCS website will be enhanced with the goal of providing teachers and families with a robust set of tools for facilitating communication, organizing volunteer opportunities, and enhancing the school community. Some of the features planned for the website include classroom-specific pages (featuring photo galleries, teacher-driven blogs, and classroom schedules), interactive calendars, volunteer sign-up and scheduling functions, and lunch program tools (including online meal ordering and payment). If you would like to volunteer to help with implementation or testing of these new and exciting features, please contact Heather Johnson at: heather.johnson@teccsjc.org.

Class Parents/Hospitality - TBA

The Class Parents/Hospitality committee works closely with the class parents from each class. It establishes a phone chain for emergency purposes. The committee works with staff on classroom events as well as other FSA committee events. The committee will also coordinate with the Principal and the Executive Secretary on certain school events. This committee still has an open chair position. If you are interested in either chairing the committee or serving on it, please contact Bess Morrison, FSA President.

REMINDERS:

Future FSA Newsletters:

The Newsletter will be distributed monthly, the first week of every month.

If you would like to submit an article or notice for the newsletter, the deadline to do so is the 25th of the prior month.

Important Dates:

Tuesday, November 10th 7:15pm
FSA meeting, school cafeteria

Friday, November 13th 6pm-9pm
First KIDS NIGHT OUT FUNdraiser
school auditorium/gym

Future Enrollment:

If you happen to know of any families interested in applying to TECCS, please inform them that we are still accepting applications for this year's waiting list. We will also hold our annual lottery for 2010-2011 enrollment in January. Open houses will be held November through January for new families who are interested in applying.

SPOTLIGHT

This month our special spotlight is on Lead Teacher, Mary Gohar. Thank you Mary for giving us your time and input.
Submitted by Miriam Pollock

What first drew you to teaching?

I can't remember a time when I didn't want to be a teacher. As a little girl, my best friend and I created our own little school using our stuffed animals as students. We would model our classroom after our favorite elementary school teacher. One of our mothers even took "class pictures" for us. I still have the pictures stored in a memory box.

When you were a child, what was your favorite subject in school?

My favorite subject in school has always been Social Studies and it has become my favorite subject to teach. As an adult, Social Studies has turned into International Relations, and I draw upon this passion when teaching.

What do you love doing out of school?

I love to read, travel, and cook. I also love meeting new people from different parts of the world and learning about their cultures. Fortunately, my husband works for the United Nations so it makes meeting diverse people very easy.

What drew you to work at TECCS-JC, in particular?

I was always interested in working at a charter school because I believe that integrating a mission/philosophy into the overall school curriculum is especially important. In traditional public schools we often find that a particular teacher may bring forth his/her philosophy in a way that positively affects students. In a charter school, the philosophy is a cohesive whole that affects all students and the community as well.

I first found out about TECCS from a website called Idealist.org. This website lists career opportunities for people who are looking to make a difference in the world – hence the name. When I reviewed the employment listing, I realized that every part of the TECCS philosophy was in alignment with my educational goals.

How do you see the work of lead teacher? (For parents who don't know what a lead teacher does, could you explain the role of lead teacher and what you bring to it?)

As Lead Teacher, I work with Marta regarding school matters, procedures, schedules, curriculum, and programs. When she is out of the building, I handle any urgent situations that may arise. I also head up the School Leadership Team (SLT) that includes both a Teacher and Teacher Assistant representative from each grade.

The experience I bring to the position encompasses over 20 years in education, the private sector, international non-profit organizations, and governmental campaigns.

Of the many people who've written and thought about ethics/ethical culture, who is your inspiration?

Even though he has never written a book, my father is my first inspiration. Ever since I can remember, conversations at our dinner table always revolved around current events and what was happening in the world. Both of my parents emigrated from Italy after World War II and discussions always included alternative viewpoints about the world. Both my parents taught me that judging others was wrong and to always look at situations from someone else's position.

A book that has significant meaning to me was written by Deepak Chopra called, "Peace Is the Way – Bringing War and Violence to an End". Other prominent figures that have also inspired me are Mohandas K. Gandhi, Robert F. Kennedy, Mother Theresa, and most recently, President Obama.

What's your personal vision of "ethical culture"?

My personal vision of "ethical culture" is a world where we are all global citizens acting in ways that enhance and enrich our lives. Being a first generation American has taught me to appreciate and learn from different cultures. My dream is to one day successfully spread this idea throughout the world.

Since this is all new to most of us, could you share with parents what ethical culture look like in the elementary classroom?

The elementary classroom is a safe place to share ideas free from judgment from the world around us. Honesty is strongly encouraged so that students can share and learn together even when they have made mistakes. It is in a place where conflict can be resolved peacefully through respect and learning that positive outcomes are possible.

TECCS-JC is still brand new. What's on your wish list for the school--something you'd like to see at the school that may or may not be possible right away?

The biggest item on my wish list is for the students to encounter as many real-life experiences as possible through the use of hands-on manipulatives for the classroom, community service, field trips, and technology (particularly Smart Boards for every classroom because they can simulate the best virtual field trip).

A final word on volunteering, from Ann Wallace, Vice Chair of the Board (TECCS) and Founding Parent

Our classrooms have been alive with children for not even two months, yet it is already time to begin recruiting next year's incoming kindergarten class! The Enrollment Committee is busy putting together a new school brochure and enrollment materials, along with an online application form. And planning for various admissions activities--open houses, preschool visits, newspaper advertisements, just to name a few--to draw Jersey City families to Ethical Community is well underway.

We will be admitting 40 new kindergarten students for the 2010-11 school year (all kindergarten applicants must be five years old by October 1, 2010). But we will also be accepting applications for first and second grades, to fill any spaces that might open up in those grades next year. Application forms will be available on the school website by the end of October and may be submitted by postal mail, email, fax, or via the website. The submission deadline is set for Monday, January 11, 2010 and the public enrollment lottery will be held Friday, January 15, 2010.

If you have a younger child who will be entering kindergarten next year, be sure to submit an application by the enrollment deadline. Your younger child will be assured a place under our sibling policy only if we have your application. So don't forget to hand one in by the January 10, 2010 due date. No other admission preferences are given, and all other applicants are accepted by random lottery.

Please help us spread the word among your friends and neighbors that it is enrollment season. And consider helping out with our student recruitment events--we need your help! To volunteer for student recruitment events, please contact Ann Wallace at wallaceann@earthlink.net. To volunteer for the Outreach and Public Relations committee, please contact Daphney Acosta.