



Toys for Tots - RBS wanted to say THANK YOU again to all the families who donated to the Toys for Tots drive before the Winter Break. We received so many great gifts that were donated to those in need and we are sure they were greatly appreciated by their recipients.

Another great thing happened with this donation drive that you might not be aware of. The students in Class 7 earn RBS money various ways in class each week. The earned money is then placed in their RBS banks. Two times a year the students can convert their RBS money into real money. Then the students and staff go shopping and the students can purchase a prize with their earned money.

In December when Class 7 went shopping each student contributed a dollar and (with some financial assistance from their teachers), they purchased toys for the Toys for Tots drive with their earned money. This was a genuine learning experience for the students. They knew how hard they had worked for their money and they were sacrificing towards their own reward. We are VERY proud of the Class 7 Students.

FOOD DRIVE - Last Call - Food will be collected through January 23, 2015.

Students from Class 6 and the Safety Patrol will box all donations up and deliver them to the Montgomery Food Bank. Listed are the items that are needed most. Thank you for your help. Rice, Spaghetti Sauce (jar), Canned Fruit, Canned Tuna and Chicken, Canned Chili, Dried Beans, Salad Dressing, Boxed Tissues, Liquid hand Soap, Cleaning Products, Dish Detergent, Deodorant and Toiletry Items.

A few things that happened with our students on January 15th



Class 7 at Art with Mr. Jon



Sharing something on my iPad with a friend



Using the Smart Board in Technology



Walking down the hall with my teacher, Miss Alyssa



Spending time with Miss Dorrie in OT



Opening my own yogurt during snack time.

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Rock Brook is live on facebook!!! Check it out and make sure you like our page.

Rock Brook Family News - January 2015

Important Upcoming Dates

February

Feb 3	Smart Lunches Begins
Feb 6	In-School Valentine's Day Dance & Activities
Feb 7	Parent's Night Out / Valentine's Dance 5:30-9:30pm
Feb 9-12	Book Fair
Feb 10-12	Parent Conferences & Early Dismissal 1:30 pm
Feb 13-16	RBS Closed - Presidents' Day Break

March

Mar 7	Parent's Night Out 5:30-9:30pm
Mar 10	RBS Board Meeting 6:00 pm
Mar 10	mixedbag Fundraiser Starts
Mar 13	RBS Closed for Students Staff Development
Mar 24	mixedbag Fundraiser Ends

From the Director

Mary Caterson

Weather Watching

It's that time of year when I am obsessed with the weather and monitor the forecast constantly. Climate change is real and 2014 was the warmest year on record... so far this year has been good with only a little snow. Though I may need a boat to get home today from RBS as the rain has been pouring down all day. I am glad school is closed tomorrow for MLK holiday as I think flooding would be an issue. And while computer models have improved the science of weather predicting, it still is not perfect. So please monitor your local forecasts as the weather can differ from county to county and make your own decisions accordingly. Be ready to say "Hello" whenever the RBS parentReach calls to activate the message. We shall see what the next month brings....

Interesting Research

Ears Long Neglected...

A recent article in the 1/10/15 issue of the NY Times highlighted the new focus by big pharmaceutical companies to pursue drugs that could improve the functioning of the ear. There is a huge need with about 48 million Americans with a hearing loss in one ear and 30 million in both ears. This number will only increase as baby boomers grow older. The inner ear contains 15,000 hair cells which convey signals to the auditory nerve leading to the brain. The hair cells can be damaged by aging, loud noise, disease or certain medicines. Once they are lost, they are gone and cannot regenerate.

Novartis is sponsoring a trial using gene therapy developed by GenVec, a Maryland biotech company. In one trial, viruses carrying a gene called Atoh1 were infused into a subject's inner ear. The cells in the inner ear may take up the gene and turn it into hair cells. A Swiss company, Auris Medical, has an experimental drug, AM-111 that they are injecting through the ear drum into the middle ear from which it can travel to the inner ear. The goal is to improve hearing and speech discrimination. Drugs are also being developed to treat vertigo as well as tinnitus.

This is very exciting as companies are reporting that animal and genetic studies are helping them to learn more about the ear and it's functioning. This knowledge can benefit people of all age ranges functioning with hearing loss and hearing disorders.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/10/business/ear-disorders-long-neglected-attract-drug-makers-attention-.html>

PNO - February 7 - 5:30 - 9:30 pm - RBS will host a Valentine's Dance for RBS Students, Siblings, Alumni & Community Members

Parent/Team Conferences/Early Dismissal ~ 2/10 - 2/12/15

Our conferences will be held during the week of **Feb 10th - 12th**. Conferences are scheduled for 30 minute time slots. This is your mid-year opportunity to meet and discuss progress with the teaching teams. You will be receiving your child's progress report prior to your scheduled conference.

As with the previous November conference, this parent conference will be an overview of your child's total performance and progress. The teams will not go through each one of the rated objectives on the report. If there is a specific area you would like to talk about please let the team know prior to the conference to ensure concerns and questions are addressed within your allotted conference time.

Also, please remember RBS will have Early Dismissal at 1:30 pm on these 3 days. And then RBS will be CLOSED on 2/13 & 2/16 for Presidents' Day.

RBS School News

parentReach

Just as a reminder, we have the **parentReach Emergency Notification Alert System** that will notify you with a phone call when we have a delayed opening or are closed due to inclement weather. On the caller ID it will say Rock Brook. You need to answer and say hello to hear the message. We will also put an updated voice message on the school's main office line and update the Rock Brook website. Miss the call?

parentReach Hotline - Call the Hotline if You Missed a Call or Want to Replay the Latest Message:

1-770-406-5581

RBS Site Identifier: 6896

Smart Lunches at RBS - We did get enough interest to start this great lunch program. We have sent the sign up details home and will begin on **February 3, 2015**. All students and staff will be welcome to participate, even if you weren't interested before. Visit: www.smartlunches.com to sign up.

Year End Annual Appeal - Thank you to all the RBS Families and Friends who have sent in contributions to our canopy bench appeal. We are excited to add these new benches to our Canopy walkway. Rock Brook School is a nonprofit 501c3 organization and donations are tax deductible in accordance with the IRS guidelines.



Box Tops for Education - RBS just received a check for almost \$100 for box tops. Thank you for sending them in with your student. And Thank You to parent volunteer Sara L. who tediously counted and submitted the box tops on behalf of RBS. We continue to earn cash for our school with these little pink rectangles. If your child wants to tape or glue them on to a collection sheet at home please check out:

www.boxtops4education.com/learn/flyers.aspx

RBS 2014-2015 YEAR BOOK

Rock Brook HS students will be working throughout the year to make a special RBS Yearbook. Using Shut-fly.com they will make a 60 page hard cover book. (Same style as last year) It was a huge success last year and we anticipate the same quality this school year!! The cost for the book will be around \$35. We will send out order forms in the Spring of 2015 but wanted to let you know the approximate cost now.



Used Printer Ink Cartridges

Donate your used Printer Ink Cartridges. Class 7 recycles them for cash. The money is then used to purchase food for local food pantries.



Target

If you have a Target charge card you can register it to have 1 % of your charges made at Target donated to Rock Brook. Go to the Target Red Card site and find the Benefits Tab. Then enroll in the Take Charge of Education program and select Rock Brook as the recipient. There is no fee to set this up.

Please contact Christy Tracey at Rock Brook with any questions. christy@rock-brook.org



RBS SCHOLASTIC BOOK FAIR

Monday 2/9- Thursday 2/12/15

Students will be filling out a "Wish List" and bringing it home. You may then elect to send in money for purchasing. Or you can send in money and let the student decide. New this year - you can order online and have your books sent to RBS for no charge. This will begin 2/1.

<http://bookfairs.scholastic.com/homepage/rockbrooksch>

Any Questions? Please contact Christy Tracey - christy@rock-brook.org

Speech Department News

"My Child has an Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) device...now What?"

You've got the communication boards, picture symbols and/or voice output device, but how do you put all of it into action? Here are some helpful strategies:

- Once your child has learned to communicate using a symbol, require that s/he continue to use that symbol during each communicative attempt for that particular idea.
- Sabotage situations through controlling and manipulating the environment so as to increase opportunities for communication (e.g., keep highly preferred items out of reach, give a fork to eat soup with, hide a broken toy with others and encourage your child to comment about it.).
- Teach, model, and encourage use of communication symbols during real-life, meaningful activities. Pick specific activities or times of the day to incorporate communication practice into your daily life (e.g., Involve your child in snack prep where s/he has to request items or tell you what ingredient goes in next and what action needs to take place (i.e., pour the milk, scoop the flour, stir the mix)).
- Prior to engaging in a new activity, review vocabulary that will be used on the communication board/device pointing to each symbol while you talk about its meaning.
- Create scripts for the communicative exchange. For example, when planning a bubble blowing activity, you may have a bubbles activity page where there are the pronouns (you, I, it), actions (blow, catch, pop, wipe), more again, all done, descriptive words (up, down, high, low, big, little) to direct and describe. You may say, "blow bubbles" while you point to the symbols for "blow" and "bubbles". Next you could say, "blow, bubbles, up" while pointing to those symbols.
- Notice what your child is trying to communicate, interpret his/her actions into words, and add to what s/he is saying both verbally and by using the AAC system.
- Most importantly, do not dismiss or ignore gestures and vocalizations. **ALL** communication is important. Children can still be re-directed to use their device after the initial communication is validated.

TECHNOLOGY NEWS

Update on the Hour of Code at the Rock Brook School:

Following the success of the Hour of Code program this past December, the students at RBS continue to learn and take part in the world of computer science. Code.org has developed an elementary school curriculum that allows even the youngest students to explore the limitless world of computing. The courses blend online, self-guided and self-paced tutorials with "unplugged" activities that require no computer at all. Each course consists of about 20 lessons that may be implemented as one unit or over the course of a semester. Students of all ages, even kindergarten-aged pre-readers can participate!

The students at Rock Brook are taking part in the "Code Studio" online courses. The students are learning the basics of computer programming through fun, engaging, and challenging activities.



Rock Brook now has a Twitter Account. You may follow us at: @RockBrookNJ