

WACKY WEDNESDAYS IN MARCH

Wednesday, March 2nd - Silly Sock Day



Wednesday, March 9th - Crazy Hat and Hair Day



Wednesday, March 16th - Stuffed Animal Day



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Rock Brook Family News - March 2016

Individualized Programs ~ Personal Success

Contributed by Mary Caterson

Important Upcoming Dates

March 2016

- Mar 23 Wacky Wednesday - PJ & Movie
- Mar 24 Plant Sale Pre-Order Form Sent Home
- Mar 25-31 RBS Closed - Spring Break

April 2016

- Apr 1 RBS Closed - Spring Break
- Apr 4 RBS Reopens - Regular Day
- Apr 9 PNO 5:30 - 9:30 pm
- Apr 12 Plant Sale Pre-Order Form Due
- Apr 13 Picture Day
- Apr 14 Grandparent Visiting Day
- Apr 22 RBS CLOSED for Students - Staff Development

So we have been hearing some fun stuff about new products that popular manufacturers are producing.

One item is the self-tying shoe by Nike which sounds like a great thing for people who have difficulty with this task. Some of us remember in Back to the Future II the self-tying shoe that was supposed to come out in the future....2015. Well, Marty Fly's self-tying shoes are now available...for a price of \$10,000! Not sure who is going to purchase them but we will have to wait awhile for that price to come down.

Tommy Hilfiger released a line of adaptive clothing on its website. The items look just like the clothing in the company's regular spring collection, but includes magnets, Velcro and other modifications to allow for easy on and off for kids with disabilities. All of the items are priced the same as those for typically-developing kids. There are about 22 items available and include t-shirts, jeans, and dresses.

Lastly, we read about a new backpack for kids on the spectrum. The Nesel Pack (a play on the word "nestle") has thick straps and weighted pouches like a compression vest and helps with body awareness. There are also clips on the front to attach sensory toys like chewies and a fidget. The backpack which has a traditional back pack look, was developed by a team of student entrepreneurs at the University of Minnesota.

Contributed by Katie Hardgrove

WELCOME, WELCOME! Over the past few months at Rock Brook, we have welcomed 8 new students to our school community and after the spring break, we will have 2 more students joining us. It is an exciting time and it also means more opportunities for our students to practice their social skills such as being flexible with schedule updates and how to make new friends.

In addition to the new students, we have also welcomed 6 new baby chicks. They will be going to live on the farm that the high school students work at next week. I am also beginning the planning process for our Extended School Year (ESY) program (7/5/16- 8/15/16) and as we have done in the past, students will most likely transition to new classes and groupings starting in July. This gives students a chance to acclimate to the new classroom before September. Unlike the public school system, the students do not automatically change to a new classroom every school year. Our teams here carefully consider each classroom grouping and make recommendations for changes as appropriate.

From the Director
Mary Caterson

Dear Parents,

We look forward to our end of year celebrations. On Friday, May 20th we will enjoy our Family Night/Community Open House from 5:30 – 9:00 pm. There will be fun for the whole family including class presentations, DJ, Arts & Crafts, free Kona Ice and a Rutgers "Grease Truck" with food available for purchase.

On June 5th we will have the 2nd Annual RBS Celebration from 4 – 8 pm at The Lodge on Rte 518 in Montgomery. We are looking for donations for raffle items and sponsors. Please contact me or Christy if you are interested. It will be an evening of creativity and fun while supporting our program.

Mary



Involvement & Support at Rock Brook School

PNO ~ Our next Parent's Night Out for 2015-2016 Saturday, April 9, 2016



[Click here for April Sign Up Form](#)



Save the Date for the 2nd annual
Rock Brook Celebration
An Evening of Creative Expression
Sunday, June 5, 2016
4:00 ~ 8:00 pm
The Lodge at Montgomery



Guest Feature Article by RBS Student Larry

Wacky Wednesdays in March

On March 2nd we had silly sock day. Some kids brought in silly socks & some didn't. There were socks such as donuts, spider, cakes, regular, mismatched and ladybugs. It was a fun day.

(See some more pictures on the back page of the newsletter.)

Save the Date ~ Sunday, April 24 in Skillman Park. Skillman Park is about 10 minutes from RBS. There is a 5K event and a 1 mile Walk/Ramble. Last year we had a team that participated in the Ramble and we will be having one again this year. You are welcome to check out their web site at: <http://runwithrotary.org/>



Box Tops for Education

Please continue to send in box tops.

We will be sending out information about other ways to easily help out RBS after the Spring Break. Thank you for all of your contributions.

NORDSTROM - Mismatched Shoes

We recently found out about a great service that Nordstrom's provides for children with special shoe needs. They will allow you to purchase shoes of 2 different sizes or widths to accommodate your child's feet. You can purchase online by calling their 800 number or in any Nordstrom store. This is great so you don't have to purchase two pairs of shoes just to get a set.

Empties4Cash

Class 7 would like to thank RBS staff, students, and families who participated in our Empties4Cash program, sending us empty ink cartridges. Our students worked really hard during this project all year, collecting, sorting, classifying, tallying in the computer with a spread sheet, packaging and shipping our recyclables to the company **Empties4Cash** located in California. In return we received a check for \$101.54.

As a class, we decided to donate the money earned to our local food pantry. Montgomery Food Pantry, was putting together "Spring Holiday Food Baskets" for a specific local family in need. We were allocated a Food Basket for family #10.

For this, Class 7 went on a mission to our local Shop Rite. Each student was responsible for purchasing part of the list of requested items and for monitoring his own money (\$25), making sure of not over spending. We practiced many skills that are taught in the classroom, such as rounding whole numbers and decimals, navigating the supermarket, budgeting, and even requesting help from some store employees.

After, we visited Montgomery Senior Citizen Center, where the Food Pantry is located, and we dropped off our "Spring Holiday Food Basket" for family #10.

Experiences like this reinforces each student's understanding of how the world works and applies specific tasks learned in the classroom. ***Please keep supporting our Empties4Cash program.***

Class 7



Speech Corner ~ By Sue Campos - Classroom 5

As speech therapists we are often asked, "Why doesn't my child speak like other children their age?" Here at Rock Brook School, many of the students develop speech and communication skills differently from children who are chronologically their peers. Some students demonstrate severe difficulty producing speech sounds and words due to muscle weakness, motor planning, or coordination of muscles in the tongue, lips and jaw. Some other students communicate using less well-developed speech and language skills with errors in grammar, form, and usage. Yet, some children speak articulately, but have trouble with social communication and pragmatic language skills (how they use language to interact, express desires, refuse, or gain information); essential for satisfactory social and emotional interactions with other people. Communication is vital to developing healthy relationships, growing in self-esteem, learning and expressing oneself. When various factors interfere with successful development of speech and communication skills, there is an impact on one's personal life and academic success.

At Rock Brook School, we have a speech-language therapist available on every classroom team to facilitate and set up an environment that is conducive to fostering a student's communication skills throughout the school day. It is helpful to continue encouraging the student's expressive language development and use at home, so that in every aspect of a child's life, they are expected to use their very best communication efforts.

These are a few ways families can encourage the child to expand their speech and language skills:

- ◆ Encourage the child to speak in complete sentences, if possible.
- ◆ Repeat a complete version of what the child is saying after they are finished to provide a correct model and to clarify the meaning of what they said.
- ◆ Wait for the child to repeat your model or improve their version of what they said.
- ◆ Praise all efforts at verbal expression.
- ◆ When a child speaks too quietly and quickly, speech may be more difficult to understand; encourage the child to use a louder voice; this will slow down productions and the child usually will improve articulation efforts as well.
- ◆ Encourage the child to speak about favorite people, pets, interests, food, etc. If necessary have a simple picture book of students with these items for others to look at so that they can talk with your students about favorite things!
- ◆ Target speech sounds: Model correct productions of target speech sounds in words. If your child is working on a specific speech sound, model frequently used words and names to reinforce correct productions of that speech sound in those words.
- ◆ When a child cannot communicate their needs using speech, encourage them to use another way to get their message across. Even though many families understand basic communications that their child makes, the child may be able to expand thoughts and ideas using sign or AAC – encourage them to clarify or expand expressive efforts.
- ◆ Students with social/pragmatic language needs often benefit from social stories. These are deliberate efforts to teach what happens in specific social situations. A basic example could be: Greetings. Most people say "Hi," or "Hello," to their teacher and friends when they come into class each morning. It is good to say "Hello," and the person's name. When I say "Hello," my friends are happy. When I say "Hello," my teachers are happy. When friends or teachers say "Hello," to me, I need to say, "Hello."

Young children can improve speech/communication productions by practicing songs/rhymes with gestures or sign language. Signing Time videos are used at Rock Brook School to help students and adults learn basic sign language and support the development of verbal language. Repetition of frequently used language, names for family members, songs, rhymes, stories, etc. help children to generate frequently used words and communications.

Older students can benefit by pairing speech with sign language, or by pairing speech with an augmentative communication device (AAC). The child can use his own speech efforts and sign simultaneously or speak, then use AAC to repeat or clarify the message. Empower students to use communication that is just a little bit more than what they say on their own so they can enjoy the response from familiar listeners.

Use of sign language or AAC does not suggest that efforts at encouraging verbal speech are not being developed. These are pathways that enable a child to supplement his or her speech abilities and often help to facilitate growth and confidence in the child's ability to communicate.

Technology ~ By Miss Maggie



Meet Brooks! The Rock Brook School has a new friend named "Brooks". Brooks, the plush lion, is our new Bluebee Pal. He has been hanging out in the Technology room and the kids and staff have been having great fun meeting him. Bluebee Pals are a plush talking educational learning tool that sings, reads and answers phone calls. Their innovative technology includes lip synchronization that allows the animal's "mouth" to move while reading storybooks, engaging in learning apps or singing songs. The built in Bluetooth Wireless feature allows easy connection to "all" APPS by pairing to any Apple or Android Devices, Smart Phone, Tablet or Laptop. If you want to learn more about the product please check out: <http://bluebeepals.com/>

The students have enjoyed talking to Brooks, asking and answering questions. They have also had the chance to listen to a book read aloud by Brooks. Brooks will be a part of various fun learning experiences here at the Rock Brook School.