



Rainbow Review

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The Newsletter of
Orchard Ridge Elementary School

Late March 2006

From our Principal



Dear Families,

Happy Spring! I sure am ready for winter to be over even though with spring comes rain showers and lots of mud. It would be very helpful if you could continue to send your child to school with boots for recess and shoes for the classroom. An extra pair of shoes would work, too. It is hard for kids to sit in school all day with wet and muddy shoes and it really messes up the inside of our school. Thank you for helping us with this.

The ORE Carnival was a great success. Everything was well organized and families had a wonderful time. Thank you to the PTO and all of the volunteers that worked to create a Saturday of fun.

We will begin working on our ORE Tile Mosaic Story Wall immediately. We hope you will see this as a wonderful way to build student, family and staff ownership along with a sense of community school wide. Together we will create a work of art that will serve as a reminder of what we can accomplish by

working together. More information will be coming home via backpack mail.

Planning for next year is underway. The District will let schools know during the first week of April what they can expect for next year based on the Administration's proposed budget to the School Board which must cut about 8 million dollars from the overall budget. We will use this information to begin creating our "Instructional Design" or our plan for how we will use our human resources to best meet the needs of the children at ORE.

We will also refine our process and create a timeline for placing students into classrooms for next year. Our charge is to place each student where we believe he or she will be most successful looking at peer relationships, academic needs and social/emotional concerns. We will work very hard to create balanced classrooms which will ultimately provide a supportive learning environment for all students. Please remember that we cannot honor parent

requests for specific teachers but we do value your input into the best learning environment for your child. Please fill out the Family Input Form that will be coming home via backpack mail very soon.

Please remember that you are always welcome at ORE. We value and understand how critical family participation is in a child's education. Thank you for working with us!

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- American Airlines Scrip Easier to Use
- Crafters Needed
- Spring Carnival Update
- PTO President Update
- Tile Mosaic Project at ORE Moves Forward
- Parent Volunteers Needed Now and for Next Year
- Cub Foods, Target and Box Tops Fund Raising

American Airlines Scrip Easier to Use



American Airlines has switched from a \$50 paper gift certificate to \$50 and \$100 gift cards. The discount remains unchanged

at 16%. The new gift cards are easier to redeem than the old paper certificates, because you can make your reservation online, and redeem your gift cards without a separate trip to the airport ticket counter. The new American Airlines gift cards can ONLY be redeemed only at www.aa.com, or by calling American Airlines toll-free reservations lines. The new cards cannot be redeemed at American Airlines ticket counters, and cannot be redeemed with travel agents.

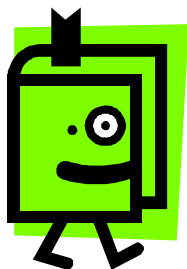
American Airlines Gift Cards are easy to redeem on AA.com. After you've made your reservation, scratch off the four digit PIN # on the back of the card. On the payment screen, enter both the Card # and PIN # exactly as they appear on the back of the gift card. You may use up to eight gift cards at one time. (Thus, there would be a limit of \$400 if you used the

\$50 gift cards, or \$800 if you used the \$100 gift cards.) If the total price of the ticket exceeds the value of your gift card's), you may use a credit card for any remaining balance.

Gift cards can only be used to purchase air travel originating from the United States, US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. In addition, if a credit card is used in conjunction with gift card(s), the credit card must have a United States, US Virgin Islands or Puerto Rico billing address. Gift Cards may not be used for upgrades, Admirals Club memberships enrollments, Admirals Club One-Day passes, AAdvantage Award Travel or other non-flight products and/or services sold on AA.com.

For more information, you can go to American Airlines' frequently asked questions website at: http://www.aa.com/content/utility/FAQs/reservations_FAQ.jhtml#Gift%20Card.

If you still have questions about ordering AA gift cards, you can contact the scrip program coordinator, Michele Hughes at 271-5324.



Scholastic Book Fair

ORE held the Scholastic Book Fair in conjunction with our Spring PTO Carnival. There were many interesting books available for kids and adults. Thank you for your purchases and support of our library!

A special thank you to the following parents who volunteered at the Book Fair: Sharon Gartland, Lisa and Mark Schneider, Dan and Jennifer Weigel, Lisa Stec, Lisa Veldran, Debra Brunette, Svetha Hetzler, Michele Hughes, Martha Howell, Valerie Jackson, and Lori Henry our Book Fair Coordinator

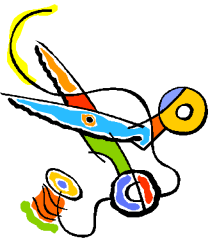
Thank you also to the six students who helped set up the Book Fair: Alex and Brett Weigel, AJ and Will Larson, and Emmett and Colin Jackson.

- Mr. Crary

Calling All Crafters!

Teacher Appreciation week is around the corner in early May. We are hoping to fill our teacher and staff door prize bags with many wonderful homemade gifts.

Last year, the PTO gave door prize bags to the sixty teachers and staff at Orchard Ridge Elementary. Each staff member is given a bag with homemade and purchased items from parents, and PTO purchases.



Everyone really loved the door prize bags! Truly, it makes the staff so grateful. Past gifts included handmade cards and soaps, hand-embroidered towels,

hand-painted ceramics, handmade jewelry, bath soaks, cloth tissue covers, and mugs. Quilted, embroidered, and knitted items are appreciated all year round.

We also would appreciate purchased items for the door prize bags. In the past, people have donated wind chimes, beautiful coffee mugs, lotions and potions, gum, gel pens, candles, and vases. Some other ideas include soaps, colorful socks, kitchen towels, home and garden décor, stationary and jewelry. We usually have about 50 – 55 females and 3-5 males working at the school. Also, smaller items such as pens, gum, and post-it notes would be appreciated.

Thanks in advance for making teacher appreciation week a resounding success for the hardworking staff at ORE!

Please contact Michele Hughes at 271-5324 if you would like to make a donation.

Spring Carnival Update

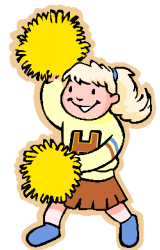
From the cake walk to the moon walk kids at the Carnival were bouncing, throwing, fishing and wondering just what mystery gift they should pick. I would like to extend my thanks to all parents, students, and friends who made our carnival a huge success.



Thank you to the parents who made phone calls looking for volunteers and bake sale items. Thank you to the parents and kids who set up the Carnival Friday night. Thank you to the families who ran the games during the carnival and cleaned up at the end. Thank you to the middle school and high school students who came back to volunteer at the Carnival. Thank you to Heidi Meixner for once again running the food booth. Where would we be without hotdogs and popcorn??? Thank you to the custodians who were willing to help whenever we needed it.

Finally, I would like to thank the area businesses that donated items for our raffle.

If you were unable to attend or volunteer at the Carnival this year, don't worry---there is always next year!!!!



Ann O'Rourke, Spring Carnival Chair

Next PTO Meeting:

Tuesday April 11

6:00 to 8:00 pm

Everyone is welcome!

From our PTO President



What a great way to wrap up winter! ORE's carnival was great fun, and a successful

fundraiser, as was the accompanying bake sale. Thanks so much to Ann O'Rourke for spearheading this terrific event, and to the dozens of parents who lent a hand that afternoon. And applause, please, for librarian Don Crary, who did a stellar job once again of hosting the Book Fair. Next year, he's handing the reins over to the PTO, and we'll move the Book Fair down near the carnival.

As always, a humongous thanks to Michelle Hughes and the other parents who help with Scrip. This past month, we earned enough to help supplement the DVD fundraiser, allowing us to buy six new combination DVD/VCRs for teachers to use. Those parents who donated extra for the cause are much appreciated.

Get ready for a bigger crowd of students at ORE next year. We registered a whopping 37 kids for next year's kindergarten – nearly twice the K

enrollment we have now. It just means more wonderful kids and parents to join our fabulous ORE community. We'll be hosting a Round-Up/Open House for the kindergarteners later this school year, so if you or your child have any neat ideas for introducing these new kids and parents to ORE, just let us know. That event is still in the planning stages.

If you have any questions or concerns about the PTO for this year or next, please feel free to contact me at DianeBH@sbcglobal.net or 271-7603.

See you in the hallways and on the playground!

-Diane Harrington

Do You Use a Target Credit Card?

Did you know that, if you sign up for or currently use a Target credit card, you can stipulate that 1 percent of what you spend goes directly to ORE?

We receive a check twice a year from Target for this, and the most recent check was **\$256**.

Thanks to those parents, teachers and friends who designated ORE as the recipient of this money! Ask at Target's customer service desk if you'd like to participate.



Cub Foods Receipts Bring in Money

ORE gets a percentage of the money you spend at Cub Foods – as long as you turn in your receipts to the school. Children can drop them in folders outside their classrooms, or bring them to the office. Good news: Cub will now accept receipts from ANY Cub Foods store, not just the Verona Road store near Home Depot! First quarter receipts are due soon. **Please turn in your Cub Foods receipts dated between January 2006 and March 2006 as soon as possible. Thank you!**

A Prettier ORE: Tile Mosaic Project Gets OK



At the March 7th meeting, the PTO voted on the Tile Mosaic Project that was spelled out in detail in the last Rainbow Review and on our Web site. First, however, we held more than an hour's worth of discussion. While few parents attended the meeting, a handful did offer their opinions/votes either in writing or via this e-mail list, and those votes were taken into account. A few more staff than usual showed up at the meeting, and we welcomed their input. Here's what figured into the decision:

* The cost of the project was substantially lowered, and that fed mightily into the PTO's decision.

* Kate Olsen, the part-time art teacher who has offered to handle the installation with the kids in her off-hours, substantially lowered her fee for what it would cost, cutting about \$700 off the

total, and she's donating additional material and use of her tools to the process. Ms. Olsen agreed to accept her fee payment in installments, if the PTO deems it necessary, so we needn't pay it all in one lump sum.

* Principal Barb Dorn rediscovered an until-now mostly unused grant that is still viable and that will apply toward this project, cutting another \$1,300 off the project.

* The school was given a check for more than \$250 from Target, and Ms. Dorn designated that amount toward this project.

* The PTO just got a check for \$1,200 for our work parking cars at one of the UW football games this year, and that was earmarked for the project.

All that brought the total cost down to about \$1,900 - which those at the meeting felt was far more within our means than the original \$5,600 that was requested.

In addition:

* We agreed that we would ask parents to donate a set amount of money per

tile (such as \$5 - a price that will be determined later) and ask for any additional donations parents or the community might be willing to offer to help offset the PTO cost.

* The staff members present at the meeting felt quite strongly that the project would be beneficial to the students, that it would help create a much-needed sense of community and improve the interior aesthetics of the building. They all agreed that it would be just as beneficial, if not more, as the t-shirts the PTO provides the students every year.

* The PTO discussed the possibility of using next year's t-shirt money, which typically tops \$2,000, toward this project instead (buying only t-shirts for new students or students who need a larger size).

The staff and parents present were asked about previous large-ticket expenditures the PTO has made (such as the playground shed and the soccer nets), and no one was able to come up with

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Tile Mosaic Project continued...

anything else they think will be a substantial cost for the PTO in the next couple of years. (One exception was new surfacing or more mulch for the playground - but there is a dispute as to whether the school district should be responsible for that instead of the PTO. And costs have not been investigated for various option, even if the PTO were to undertake that plan. The staff also expressed a long-term wish for TVs/DVDs/VCRs in every classroom, but we suggested that with the upcoming federal requirement for HDTV, we might be able to get several old TVs donated for this purpose a year or two down the road; the school would only need the TVs for viewing videos and DVDs, so the HDTV issue wouldn't apply at ORE.)

Finally, we stipulated that we'd triple check our budget to ensure that any PTO cost for this project would still allow us to meet our typical yearly obligations and would not force us to hold another Club Choice-style fundraiser next year just to pay for the Tile Mosaic.

Matt Silvern, our treasurer, confirmed that our budget can easily withstand the \$2,000 this potentially could cost us.

Given all project-cost changes, the possible budget juggling, and the lack of other anticipated high-cost items in the next couple of years, the PTO voted in favor of the project. The vote included two hand-written "no" votes, two e-mailed "no" votes, 1 in-person "no" vote, 2 "yes" votes from people who had to leave the meeting early, and 9 "yes" in-person votes. Thank you to all who gave this subject some of your time and attention.

We're looking forward to seeing some amazing artwork inside ORE in the coming months!



Need PTO Money?

If you know of a great project the PTO should tackle next year, let us know at the April meeting. We'll be working in April and May to prepare next year's budget, as per our bylaws.

So parents, teachers, and friends: If you want us to spend money on something you think ORE or a classroom needs, please let us know at the next PTO meeting Tues. April 11th from 6-8 p.m.

Box Tops Earn \$465 for ORE

Thank you to the families and staff at ORE who cut out and turn in Box Tops. We collect 4,650 Box Tops this year which earned our school \$465!! Way to go!

Keep saving Box Tops! Just because we've turned them in for this year, we will continue to collect them for next year.





Parent, Teacher Volunteers Needed This Year and Next

Wishing you could do something to help ORE? You can! The PTO needs a variety of volunteers who can help either for just one event or for a couple hours a month. Those of us who are already involved are nice people, and we don't bite. It's not a clique-ish group; we're very welcoming and appreciative of anyone who's willing to lend a hand. We're looking now for:

- **Vice Presidents.** One or two people to serve as co-vice-presidents for the PTO next school year, just helping to take up the slack for the (co)presidents.
- **Yearbook Coordinator.** Call the shots and set whatever meeting times/days work best for you as you help the older kids put together the school's yearbook. This year's coordinator has even put together a how-to handbook to make the job a breeze.
- **Playground Committee.** We need a couple of parents who are interested in creating a master plan for ORE's playground area. Is it fine as it is? Does it need more mulch? Different surfacing altogether? Different play equipment? Adjustments to current play equipment? Physical Education teacher Sally Erck, 4/5 teacher Kathy Statz and parent Ann O'Rourke will be on the committee, as well as two or three other parents and teachers. Ms. Erck can work around everyone's schedules to conduct meetings, or you can perhaps meet via e-mail. Interested? Contact Ms. Erck at Serck@madison.k12.wi.us or 204-2335.
- **Fundraising Committee.** Did we like this year's Club Choice fundraiser? Do we want to try something different next time – whether going with a different type of product or with a no-fundraiser fundraiser? Should we attempt a fundraiser every year or stick with every other year? If you'd like to help decide what to do next, contact Diane Harrington at DianeBH@sbcglobal.net or 271-7603.
- **Carnival & Bake Sale Committee.** Ann O'Rourke and Heidi Meixner have committed to chairing these events next year – but they could use a hand from people who'd like to take over as chairs the following year. You can reach Ann at Anno6261@yahoo.com or 271-8254.



*Thank you for considering to lend a hand
to make ORE a great place for our kids!*

Next PTO Meeting: Tuesday April 11, 6:00 to 8:00 pm

We would love to see you there!

Great cities have great school districts

by Superintendent Art Rainwater

I focused on the roots of public education in my first column this year. Just as public education is the cornerstone of our country, it is likewise the foundation for our community.

I remember the day that I received the job offer to join the Madison Metropolitan School District. I was excited and honored to join one of the best school districts in the country. The obvious pride that both the staff and community had in their school system shone through every interview and discussion that I had during the hiring process.

Since that day in 1994, I have experienced first hand the reasons for that pride. First of all, we have great kids and great families! They are supported by a great staff. Many of our staff not only spend their entire careers here but continue to volunteer in our schools and in our community after retirement. Everyone I come in contact with in the district is committed to our children and to making the district and community better.

Just as importantly, the commitment to the schools goes beyond the staff. There are over a thousand people of all ages who volunteer through the Schools of Hope project and individually at each of our schools. Civic and business leaders annually volunteer to serve as "Principal for a Day" in our schools. A recent example is the boundary change task forces. Community members devoted countless hours to tackle a difficult and controversial issue so that our children can be better served.

All of these volunteers add value to the lives of children and continue to generate the sense of pride that has characterized the relationship between the district and the cities, towns and villages that are our stakeholders.

The support of everyone has enabled the district to increase the performance of all of our students on almost every measure, despite declining financial resources and a rapidly changing population. I just received our dropout data for this past year. It shows dramatic improvement over the past

10 years for all of our students. Our African American students dropped out of school at a rate of 55% in 1995. In 2005 that had decreased to 23%. That type of decrease is mirrored by all of our ethnic groups.

The dropout rate is only an example of the positive changes for students that have happened in almost all of the measures of performance that we use. Although we have made wonderful progress, the work is not finished. Much remains to be done to ensure that every child becomes a successful adult.

The health of cities, towns and villages is interdependent with their school districts. Great cities have great school districts. For 167 years the residents of the Madison Metropolitan School District have enjoyed that reality. I am honored and proud to work here. All of our citizens have every reason to feel that pride in what they have created and supported - a great place for kids to grow and learn.