

# **BIRCHWOOD ELEMENTARY**

**Weekly Bulletin**

**September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

*The weekly bulletin will be sent by email starting next week!*

**From Principal Berndt's desk...** We had a smooth first week of school. Students have made new friends and rekindled old friendships while starting the new year. We have all enjoyed seeing everyone return to school and we welcome our new families. Thank you to all our parents for supporting us as we welcome our students back. We look forward to seeing everyone at our Back to School BBQ on the 19th.

Just a reminder: please remember to return your student information card and be sure to include your email address. Thank you!

## **A Message from the Co-Presidents:**

It seems we've all settled in for another great year at Birchwood. We love going in to school and seeing all of the bright, smiling faces. It's been an exciting few weeks for Birchwood and for Niskayuna with the start of school and some major statewide and national recognition. The NYS Education Department recognized Birchwood as a Reward School. Our framed certificate will be on display at school. Congratulations to all of our teachers and staff for all of their hard work. In the news this week, Niskayuna School District was ranked #26 in Newsweek Magazine's 2014 list of the country's top high schools. With so much to be proud of, it will be difficult to choose what Birchwood Spirit items we might purchase when the sale kicks off next week. Thanks to Nicole Ladopoulos and Nicole Chenevert who have been working all summer on this fundraiser. We can't wait to preview the many new and different items available at the BBQ. We are so excited for the debut of the Story Walk on our nature trail (see article below from our Nature Park Co-Chairs Mike and Katie Cooper) during the BBQ. As always, great things are happening at Birchwood!

We look forward to seeing everyone at the Back to School BBQ tomorrow. If you aren't sure who we are, please ask around. We'd love to meet all of our new families and get to know everyone a little better. The BBQ is a fun event and a great opportunity for students and parents to make new friends. See you soon!

JoMarie Ethier & Deb Foley

## **OPT-IN NOW!!**

Congratulations and Thank You Birchwood!

We are up at 80% enrollment in this year's directory. Now for the remaining 20% - can we do it? Yes we can!

We have a short time frame before we hit Print, so sign up soon - <http://www.niskypto.org/>

For questions, contact Shilpa Garde or Millie Gnatek at [shilpa.garde@gmail.com](mailto:shilpa.garde@gmail.com) or Millie Gnatek at [bradleycleo@gmail.com](mailto:bradleycleo@gmail.com)

## **Birchwood Nature Park Debuts Storywalk®**

In between enjoying burgers and hot dogs at the Back to School Barbecue, be sure to take a moment to visit the Nature Park and enjoy our debut StoryWalk®! Discover Lois Ehler's "Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf" as you stroll along the path and enjoy the beauty of our Park. (The StoryWalk® Project was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, VT and developed in collaboration with the Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition and the Kellogg Hubbard Library.)

## What's Happening at Birchwood?

**Cool Assembly:** Chris Poulos, a world champion athlete, will be presenting a Character Education assembly at Birchwood on Tuesday, Sept. 23rd. The assembly will take place in the gym for all grades K-5 starting at 9am.

**Birchwood's After School Enrichment Program (ASEP)** schedule is out! Really! There was a slight snag at the very busy Print Shop – but, no worries! There is still plenty of time to sign up!

Lost it? A copy can be downloaded and printed from <http://birchwood.niskypto.org/>.

**We have extended the registration deadline to Friday, September 26.** Yay!

### Support Birchwood with Your Target RedCard!

If you have a Target RedCard, one percent of all of your purchases at Target and Target.com can be donated to Birchwood! Log-on to [Target's Take Charge of Education](#) and designate Birchwood Elementary as your school of choice. Don't have a RedCard? Apply online or in-store. **Last year 55 RedCard holders earned Birchwood an incredible \$1,314.77!** It makes shopping a little more enjoyable when you know Birchwood benefits too!

Questions? Contact Amy Jasiewicz at [amyjasiewicz@gmail.com](mailto:amyjasiewicz@gmail.com)



### Look for These Shelf Tags at Hannaford!

The Hannaford Helps Schools program will donate 3 school dollars to Birchwood when you buy 4 of their specially-marked products. Look for **these shelf tags** to find the items that will earn us extra dollars! At the register, you will be given three school dollars that you place in the tower by the store's exit. Look for the Birchwood Elementary slot! Last year, we earned \$129 for Birchwood – thank you shoppers! Questions? Contact Amy Jasiewicz: [amyjasiewicz@gmail.com](mailto:amyjasiewicz@gmail.com)

**VOLUNTEER NEEDED:** The Communications Committee is in need of someone to take the role of **Grant Writer**. We need someone with the skill set to research grant opportunities, organize an application and submit the necessary paperwork. We have a lead on a grant that we'd like to pursue for *Nature Park* that has a deadline of **October**. Please see Kim McClive-Reed, Deb Foley, or JoMarie Ethier if you are interested.

## Mark Your Calendars!

- ▶ **Curriculum Night is Tonight!** Families with K-2<sup>nd</sup> graders will be at the school from 6-7:30pm. Those with children in the 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grades will come from 7-8:30pm.
- ▶ **The Birchwood BBQ** will be Friday, September 19th, from 5-7pm. We can't wait to see you!
- ▶ **Fall picture day is coming!** It will be on Thursday, October 9<sup>th</sup> with LifeTouch Pictures. Order forms will be sent home soon. Please fill them out, make sure payment is included, and return both the form and payment with your child to school. If you have any questions about picture day or if you would like to volunteer to help out on picture day, please email Tiffanie Wood at [woodiesroundup@hotmail.com](mailto:woodiesroundup@hotmail.com). We need volunteers for 1-2 hour blocks between 8am and noon.
- ▶ **Save the Date: Monday, October 13<sup>th</sup>** -- Yes, it's Columbus Day!!! What better way to celebrate Columbus Day than to have lunch or dinner at *Pizzeria Uno*!!! This restaurant fundraiser gives back a nice portion of the proceeds to Birchwood. Please mark your calendars.
- ▶ **Get Ready for Monster Mash 2014 -- Carnival Craziess!!!** This super fun extravaganza will run from 6-8pm on Friday, October 24<sup>th</sup>. The Monster Mash committee is looking for families to plan and run a carnival-style game booth at the Monster Mash. Contact Tara if you can help! [taralmckenna@gmail.com](mailto:taralmckenna@gmail.com)



### **Bike Riders for Missing Children of the Greater Capital District to visit Birchwood!**

On **Friday, Sept 19th**, one of our 4th grade teachers, **Lisa Luyckx**, is participating in the **7th Annual Ride for Missing Children of the Greater Capital District**. This 100-mile ride honors the memory of missing children and raises funds to support poster distribution and other necessary services. This year, the riders will include Birchwood School as one of their rest stops. The riders will arrive with a police escort, dismount their bikes, interact with the students, and enjoy breakfast prepared by PTO volunteers. During the week prior to the event, our children will attend an assembly and pep rally where they will be educated on keeping safe in an age-appropriate fashion. You can find out more about this event at Birchwood's PTO Website. For more information about this amazing ride, or to make a donation, please visit <http://rideformissingchildrengcd.com>.

### **You Ought to be in Pictures**

A video starring Birchwood students and staff is featured on the [NY State School Board Association's website](#). A crew from NYSSBA arrived on the first day of school to film and interview teachers, students, and our beloved principal Mrs. Berndt to highlight the excitement of the start of a new school year. Be sure to watch at least the first 2 1/2 minutes of the video, when the speaker begins you may be tempted to stop, but keep watching, our children continue to be the backdrop.

### **Birchwood Library Media Minute**

The Media Center needs kindergarten parents to volunteer during the kindergarten class time. KA meets in the library on Fridays from 9:00 to 9:30am and KB is there on Wednesdays from 9 to 9:30am. Please contact [Francesca Hill](#) at [francesca.hill@yahoo.com](mailto:francesca.hill@yahoo.com) or use signup genius.

What a great welcome I have had at Birchwood! My name is Kate Kirkpatrick, and I am excited to be the new Library Media Specialist! I have enjoyed meeting all of your children, and look forward to seeing you at Back to School night! We've been talking about how to take care of our library materials: please help your child find a safe place at home for library materials and remind them to keep books away from food, water, and other things that can damage them. I'm looking forward to all the poster entries, as we continue with our annual poster contest! Please contact me if you have any questions about the library program at Birchwood: [kkirkpatrick@niskyschools.org](mailto:kkirkpatrick@niskyschools.org). A big thank you to all the library volunteers, who keep the shelves stocked for our amazing readers! Wishing you lots of great reading!



**Bulletin information is online at:**

**<http://birchwood.niskypto.org/>**

To submit information for the weekly bulletin, please email [Birchwood@niskyPTO.org](mailto:Birchwood@niskyPTO.org) by Sunday night of the week you want it to appear (write "bulletin item" in the subject line). The Birchwood Bulletin is produced by the PTO Communications Committee in cooperation with the Birchwood principal and staff.



**ANNOUNCING BIRCHWOOD'S 21st ANNUAL  
FAMILY POSTER CONTEST  
IN CELEBRATION OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE  
2014**



**HOW TO ENTER**

Design and create a "poster" on a piece of paper no smaller than a bookmark and no larger than a 22 x 28 sheet of poster board. Please use paper or poster board that can be easily hung. (Thick cardboard or foam board posters are difficult to hang and display.) You may use any type of material you wish on the poster such as paints, markers, crayons, pencils, or cut-outs. The poster must have something to do with reading in general or a specific book or author and must have a clearly readable theme or slogan written on the front of the poster.

**WHO MAY ENTER**

Anyone in the Birchwood School community may submit a poster. Students may work alone, with a friend, with brothers and sisters, parents, or any family member. The only requirement is that anyone who helps with the poster must put his/her full name on the front bottom right corner of the poster. Students must include grade and teacher. Parents or other family members should include a telephone number.

**WHEN TO ENTER**

Posters may be submitted to Lisa Newsome or Katie Kirkpatrick in the Media Center anytime up to and including Friday, November 7. Due to storage limitations, we would appreciate it if you would wait until the 7th to submit any 3D posters that cannot be stacked.

**PRIZES**

All student participants will be invited to an ice cream sundae party on Wednesday, November 19. Parent helpers of primary grade student participants will also be invited.

Entries will be laminated (if possible) and displayed in the Media Center during the year. Some participants will have their posters displayed on the Birchwood PTO web site\*.

\* <http://birchwood.niskypto.org>

