



Gray Charter School

55 Liberty St., Newark, NJ 07102

(973) 824-6661

Newsletter

April 2009

Our Mission

Miss Gray
Executive Director



At the Gray Charter School we believe that all children can achieve. We believe in an uncommon school devoid of the negative thoughts that certain children cannot master certain skills. The Gray Charter School's Mission is to provide its diverse student body the best possible education by focusing on the fundamental academic disciplines in an atmosphere that affirms academic achievement, and in so doing, to offer the community true choice in public education. In Kindergarten through eighth grade a solid foundation must be built for a lifetime of learning.

We believe that committed and dedicated teachers can make every child an achiever. We believe in making the poor student good and the good student superior. We will be molding students for the future by making today different. The classroom is a workshop where all children find the opportunity to give might to their brains. Children will be encouraged to never let the bad conquer the good, thus enabling them with the power to go through life with clear and uncluttered channels.

Parents are an intricate part of the Gray Charter School. They are parent volunteers, they donate items to the school, they make sure that their children are fully prepared for school every day and they support the Parent Academy. The Parent Academy is a volunteer Organization at the Gray Charter School that works for the betterment of the school.

The Gray Charter School students are reading the classic books. Many of life's lessons can be learned by reading the classics, such as morals, determination, endurance, strength, character, and leadership. Many students are now becoming thinkers, and developing life problem solving skills because of reading the classics and being taught by their teachers to think critically.

At the Gray Charter School kindergarten and first grade children are being taught how to read through music and rhymes. Phonics lessons are taught this way. This is an extremely effective tool in educating students to read well and spell well. Music is very powerful and children love music. All students read entire books on their own such as biographies, auto-biographies, non-fiction, as well as the classic books. Then they do two book reports a month in their class, one is oral and one is written. The children are always encouraged to strive for excellence every day. These and other programs at the Gray Charter School have enabled one hundred thirty five (135) students to make the honor roll and high honor roll last cycle.

The Gray Charter School is a positive environment where a learning atmosphere exists at all times and where children love to come.

Creativity and Independence in Kindergarten!!!

Miss Johnson and Miss Soliman

At the Gray Charter School we are teaching our Kindergarten students to strive for excellence and independence. Daily the students are learning new life skills to help them become independent and successful adults. We encourage our students to do their best work and to take responsibility for their own success. We work on our students showing respect to one another, helping out in the school community, and always putting their best foot forward. If the students are able to develop those skills inside the classroom, they will be able to use those skills throughout their lives.

In the past month, we have worked on topics such as: Staying Fit and Landforms. Through those subjects the students have become aware of how to take better care of their bodies. They have learned about the earth and the features that exist on it. The students have been able to express their creativity! They made a 3-Dimensional Human Body of themselves and created a diorama of their favorite landform. They presented each of those items to their classmates as well. In April, the students will learn about the oceans and continents that cover our planet. They will also learn about how the sun creates day and night around the world.

The Fantastic First Grade

Mrs. Groome, Miss Barnicle, Miss Brodie

North, South, East, West; First Grade is the Best! Our fantastic first graders have mastered their cardinal directions on the compass rose. Now the scholars have moved on to learning map symbols and reading an atlas. From picture books to now chapter books, the students love to read about their favorite character Little Bill. The Arctic and its friendly furry animals seem so far away from Newark, New Jersey but we have learned that our reading can take us anywhere. Our imaginations help us too, as we write in complete sentences in our journals. We look forward to learning to write in paragraph form because we know it's a skill we need for second grade. Excellence is not an act in our classrooms but a good habit to practice daily so we can achieve our goals and one day travel the world instead of reading about it in our atlas.

Tap-Tap-Tap

Mrs. Rutkowski & Mrs. Shin

The third graders at the Gray Charter School are participating in the NJPAC Arts Academy Dance Residency – a unique dance education program, which offers students an opportunity to study with professional dance artists – in

“Dance is the drama of life, portrayed through movement, accompanies by music, driven by song.”

residence in our school. Through participation in this program, students are discovering tap dance as an artistic form and as a means of self-expression. This psychomotor learning relates to creative problem-solving skills and other learning activities.

In addition to tap dancing, we have launched intensive courses in Language Arts, (Persuasive expository, descriptive writing, grammar), Math (Measurement – Liquid, Linear, perimeter, volume; area, fractions, decimals, polygons), and Reading (main idea, details, context clues, informational and everyday texts), to further prepare for the NJASK 3. Every student in the third grade!



Fourth Graders Explore the World of Geometry!

The fourth graders here at the Gray Charter School are jumping into the world of Geometry! This has been a great adventure thus far. We have learned all about Lines, Rays, and Angles. We have even taken an extra step to become these figures ourselves by using our own bodies!! The entire class has formed different types of these Geometric figures with our legs, arms and even fingers!!!! We were so excited to embark on this new adventure in Math! As a class we have learned the different types of lines, such as intersecting lines, parallel lines and even perpendicular lines!!!! As we further explore the world of Geometry, we will glide into symmetric figures, and who knows, we may even try to become human symmetric figures!! In April, we plan to discover the different types of Triangles and Quadrilaterals! Stay tuned and experience the world of Geometry with us!!!!!!



Write On! 5th Grade

Ms. Michel and Ms. Anderson

Currently the fifth grade is putting their true writing, reading, mathematical, and even artistic skills to use. Here's how: In preparation for the NJASK, we've been busy composing a number of expository, persuasive, and speculative essays. You'd be amazed at how articulate our writing has become. After reading Lorraine Hansberry's play, *A Raisin in the Sun*, we've recently moved on to *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck, a novella teaching us not only how to load our own essay with tantalizing detail, but also the value of family support and hold on to our dreams come what may.

Now a word about our recent interest in art: After learning about the Pop Artist, Keith Haring, we decided to try our own hand at this amusing genre and create our own Pop Art expressions.

In our latest "Read Between the Lines" exhibit, we utilized the contrast between black and white to explore the relation between language and visual arts. Pretty Cool, right?

In April, we plan to aim for mastery of our compositions and tackle math word problems with success. In science we'll be studying about various life cycles. In social studies we'll gain a basic understanding of the Civil War and then write our own story books retelling the main events. Finally, we'll write and illustrate some awesome poetry for fun. Stay tuned!

Hear Yee- Hear Yee!

Mrs. Vattelana & Ms. Silvestre

Court will be in session once again this year in April when the Seventh Grade will be participating in the Annual Celebration of Law Day where they learn about the processes of a Mock Trial from beginning to end. All students have a chance to assume a role in the mock trial where the Plaintiff and Defendant meet in the Court House to take the stand and try their case before Judge Cody. After the Jury has deliberated and handed down their verdict to the Judge, we are treated to a wonderful walking tour of the Newark Court House where we find out all about its rich history.

Their future is so bright...

Ms. Orlando, Mrs. Hobday, and Mrs. Ribble

The 8th grade at the Gray Charter School has been incredibly busy applying to and getting accepted to some excellent high schools. Also, the students are learning and doing so many different activities that it is hard to keep up with them. They are ready and more than able to compete academically at some of the top high private schools in New Jersey.

Recently, we have been doing a parenting simulation in which they are given a computerized doll that enables them to learn how hard parenting really is and the consequences of their actions. The dolls cry, whine, coo, need to be fed and changed, rocked and loved. The students learned the invaluable lesson of how tough it is to be a teen parent. Many students agreed with this statement by one of the students, *"This was a good experience because it*



shows all the stages, hard work, effort, and patience that you need to have a baby."

In April, we will be focusing on getting ready for the state test, graduation, and continuing the rigorous academic standard set forth at the Gray Charter School.

Dates to Remember

April 3, 2009

Parent Meeting (Gray Charter School Parents only) 5:30pm

April 7, 2009

Report Cards Distributed

April 13-17, 2009

Spring Recess

April 28-May 14, 2009

NJ ASK Assessment Test Grades 3-8

Sixth Grade Studies

Miss Terrell and Mrs. Williams

The sixth graders are hard at work mastering many new and challenging concepts. We are strengthening our math skills and embracing new challenges. The sixth graders have been working on algebraic expressions and equations. They have also studied geometric and plane figures. The sixth graders are reading *Anne of Green Gables* and *Harriet Tubman* for Women's History Month. We are shaping our futures by reading about the past. In April we will study North Africa. We will focus on the temperature, economic activity, and the life and culture of its people. Every day we strive to be students of character. We know that the largest room in the world is room for improvement and each day we are striving for *excellence*.

Mystery Rocks

Mrs. Vattelana & Ms. Silvestre

This year the Seventh Graders have had the opportunity to explore rocks that they have collected in and around the neighborhood. Working to classify them according to their color, texture, mineral composition, and origin.



General Music

Mr. Herskowitz

For the Month of March, we have been celebrating "Music in our Schools Month." During this fantastic month, grades Kindergarten through Second have been studying the different section of musical selections. We have been continuing to work on their pitch matching, tone quality in their singing, rhythm through songs, games, and activities. For the Month of April, we plan on continuing this with the theme of spring.

Grades Three through Five are currently in a unit about Broadway. In April we plan to continue this unit where we will view more Broadway selections so that we can compare and contrast the different shows and their composer.

Sixth through Eighth grade students have been studying the life of Mozart. In April, we plan on talking about Beethoven and then comparing the life styles of these classical composers to the life of the modern day musician.

In the meanwhile, grades three through Eighth have been working on playing the recorder and will continue through the month of April.

Physical Education

This month at the Gray Charter School, should see a busy time in the Physical Education program. As the seasons change and weather warms, the vast majority of our grades will be moving outside for their weekly P.E. classes.

Our youngest grades, **Kindergarten** and **1st Grade** will be learning how to strengthen their bodies and become stronger. Fitness exercises and activities such as Push-Ups, Sit-Ups, Jumping Jacks and more will be taught, as over the course of the month they begin fun circuits and station work.

The **2nd** and **3rd Grade** will begin their path towards the ½ mile run, as they discover distance running and overall cardiovascular fitness. They will begin with short fun activities that will gradually build towards the task of running the full ½ mile, while still being fun and enjoyable for all.

Our older students in grades **4th through 8th** will also start their journey towards the 1 mile run and the chance to compete for the Annual Gray Charter School Championship. This is held every year and our female and male champion will proudly have their name engraved on the school trophy, displayed in the School lobby.

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