

Electronic Update #11

Arlington High School
869 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington, MA 02476



Electronic Update# 11 April 3, 2008

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I fully support the student-centeredness of modern teaching, but I have always had my reservations about the child-centeredness of the modern family. Don't get me wrong. That is exactly how I raised my own children, with the focus squarely on their needs, but that was so different from my own upbringing, that I always wondered if I was doing the right thing.

My parents were firm believers in the "children should be seen (and not really even seen that much!) and not heard" philosophy of child-rearing. If my brothers' and my needs were considered at all, those needs came in well behind the needs of "common sense," economics, and the greater family need. I was never instructed to do well or behave because it might benefit me, but rather, because any misdeed would reflect badly on my parents. My sense of what was "done" and "not done" was intertwined with a sense of duty in protecting my parent's reputation and fear of the consequences of what would happen if I didn't.

These ideas of filial duty and fear are completely foreign concepts to my own children. Their behavior is based primarily on the values that they learned at home, but without what I would have to call the fear of shaming or angering me when they make a choice that is different from what I would clearly want them to do.

I bring this up because my wife and I went to visit my son in California over the Easter weekend. We hadn't seen him for a year, and it was a wonderful visit. We stayed at a hotel, but we did spend some time at his apartment as well. I know it sounds petty, but when we went into his house the first thing I noticed was that he hadn't swept the kitchen floor. I said nothing, but it absolutely astounded me. When my in-laws visited my wife and me for the first time in our 1970s shabby rent-controlled apartment, I stayed up all night to wallpaper the room they would sleep in! Cleaning up for company was just something that one did.

As I reflected on the weekend, what I realized was that my son might not have cleaned the way he was taught to (when both of our kids were quite young they would always say "Who's coming?" when they saw me doing any heavy cleaning) but he did something very different. He planned a weekend that he knew my wife and I would like – visiting a museum, golf, one fancy dinner, one trendy *tapas* restaurant, and he spent all of his time with us. He didn't plead work or school to get away from us, and genuinely seemed to enjoy our time together. I contrast that to my own relationship with my mother and my in-laws, and I realize that, although I always clean for them, I don't set aside the time I should, and don't have the more "real" relationship I have with my own children. We don't seem to be an inconvenience to one another, but rather a pleasure.

So, I guess I'd have to say that child-centeredness has its rewards. The pay-off doesn't come in swept floors or lock-step obedience, but rather in the joy of real communication that comes from a sense of trust and not of duty.

Electronic Update #11

Arlington High School
869 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington, MA 02476



Goings-On At AHS

End of Term

The third term ends on Friday April, 4. Teachers have the next week to prepare grades, then the Main Office works on grade verifications and printing over the next few days. We hope to have report cards sent out by mail starting on April 16.

Self Defense Course

The Arlington Police Department is offering the RAD Program, a self- defense program for high school senior girls during the April vacation. For more information call Ms. Cindy Bouvier 781 316 3570 or Lt. Kenneth Hughes 781 316 3905 or visit the web site @ www.rad-systems.com.

Blood Drive

Congratulations to Sue Briggs and the Student Council for their very successful Blood Drive on March 12 in the Blue Gym. More than 100 people volunteered to donate and as a result 72 pints of blood were collected. Nice Job!

Community Service Opportunities

The national Down Syndrome Congress is recruiting volunteers 18 and older for its Annual Convention which will be held in Boston at the Seaport World Trade Center July 11 – 13, 2008. Volunteers are extremely important to the successful running of this convention, and training is provided. I am attaching the flyer, application, and other information for this most worthy cause. If you fill out the application, please make sure to say that you are part of a group and fill in Arlington as the group name.

Housing Corporation of Arlington

Please join HCA friends and supporters at our 7th Annual Walk for Affordable Housing Sunday, April 13, 2008 from 1-3 PM at the Jason Russell House (Corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Jason Street) Free Raffle Prizes! For more information, contact Joanna at walk@housingcorporation.org or 781-316-3606. www.housingcorporation.org

Save the Date! HCA's 2008 Spring Clean Up Saturday May 10, 2008. Join HCA in cleaning up our Arlington properties for the spring! Same contact information as above.

Women's Empowerment Bracelets

In honor of Women's Month, the students in Leia Richardson's Women and Literature class sold The Women's Empowerment Bracelet, throughout the school. According to Ms. Richardson, "Bracelet proceeds will be used to create a new Avon Empowerment Fund. The first \$500,000 from bracelets sales will be matched by the Avon Foundation for a total donation of \$1 million to UNIFEM, the United Nations Development Fund for Women. **UNIFEM** is the women's fund at the United Nations. It provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programs and strategies to foster women's empowerment and gender equality." The class sold 225 bracelets.

Spring Musical

You can tell spring is here when the banner for the annual musical is draped from the high school balcony. This year's musical, Hello, Dolly, is sure to be spectacular with a huge, energetic cast of high school

Electronic Update #11

Arlington High School
869 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington, MA 02476



actors, singers, and dancers accompanied by a live orchestra. The performances are scheduled for Friday April 4 and Saturday April 5 at 8:00 PM. Tickets are \$12.00 in advance and \$14.00 at the door. Don't miss this wonderful show.

Upcoming Performing Arts Field Trip

Approximately 75 members of the band, chorus, and orchestra will travel to New York after school on Thursday April 10. They will have a whirlwind two-day tour that will include performing at a Newburgh, NY middle school then touring Hyde Park, the Roosevelt family home, the US Military Academy, the Vanderbilt Mansion, and finally seeing a Saturday matinee performance of The Phantom of the Opera.

Pops Concert

Saturday and Sunday May 3 and 4 are the dates for the Pops Concert. You can call the school at 781 316 3589 for more information about these performances.

Athletics

I inadvertently left out the swim team in my recapitulation of winter sports in my last update. Congratulations to the 32 students (the largest number that I can recall in a while) and their coaches for the number of GBL medals they received throughout the season.

Our spring season is just getting underway; we will keep you updated as game results become available.

AHS will host an Athletes Wellness Night on May 1 in the school auditorium. Mr. Dever will be sending out more information via students in the upcoming days.

Congratulations to senior Richard Gallagher who received the Boston Bruins Ice Hockey Sportsmanship Award on March 27 during the intermission of the Bruins game. Richard was the only player in the GBL to receive this recognition.

The following student athletes will be receiving the Citizenship Awards at Northeastern University on April 8: Brian Emerson, John Fahey, Erin Bessette-Kirton, and Morgan King.

AHS Dances

Both the Freshman / Sophomore Semiformal and the Sadie Hawkins dances were great successes. Profits from the Freshman / Sophomore dance are deposited in the class of 2010 and 2011 accounts to help defray senior year expenses. Profits from the Sadie Hawkins Dance, sponsored by our Interact Club in concert with the Arlington Rotary Club, are donated to the Rotoplast Program. This Rotoplast Program sends medical teams to countries in the developing world to provide free surgeries for children with facial deformities. Congratulations and many thanks to Club Advisers Mary Villano and Jeff Minear for organizing such a wonderful fundraiser. Many thanks to Carolyn and Ken Simmons and other Rotary Club members who helped chaperone the dance.

Our next big dances are the Junior Prom on May 31 and the Senior Prom on June 6.

Electronic Update #11

Arlington High School
869 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington, MA 02476



College Fair

The AHS College Fair will take place Monday April 7 in the Toz Gym from 7:00 – 8:30. Well over 100 colleges will be in attendance. Students and parents should come ready to ask the representatives specific questions about programs and scholarships that the various colleges offer. This is our chance to interview these institutions.

NAEP Testing

AHS has been selected as a site for NAEP testing. NAEP is sometimes called the nation's report card. Random students are selected across the country to take the NAEP test, and the results are used to show student achievement nationally. Students who have been selected will be informed next week. The test will take place on May 1.

Teacher Send Their Appreciation

Many thanks to Amy Cohen and the parents who donated wonderful chocolate desserts on Friday March 28! I don't know whether we were so hungry after a long week of MCAS administration or just restless from such a long dreary month of March. I have never seen food disappear so quickly! There wasn't so much as a strawberry left within a half hour of the desserts being sent out. Teachers said over and over how much they appreciated parents thinking of them in this way. It means a lot to all of us.

Sincerely,

Charlie

--

Charles Skidmore, Principal
Arlington High School
869 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington, MA 02476
t. 781.316.3591 || f. 781.316.3504
e. cskidmore@arlington.k12.ma.us