

Currents

Thomas Edison High School Newsletter Fall 2012

Welcome to the 2012-13 School Year at Thomas Edison High School!



Photo by Dorian Studio Photography

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Help Where It's Needed

A Message From Patrick J. Maguire, Director

One thing I love about Edison is that our small classes and advisory groups help teachers recognize students' needs. Along with our commitment to strong communication, this allows us to attend to our students' needs as quickly and effectively as possible. Two areas of need have come to our attention over the last year: reading skills and executive processing skills. I'm very happy to be able to tell you about how we're addressing those needs this year.

Reading is one of the most fundamental skills for any student. Dyslexia is incredibly common among Edison students, and for many of them, this has affected their reading for their entire academic careers. When they come to Edison, it's time to play catch-up as quickly as possible. They need strong reading skills, not only to succeed academically, but to be literate citizens after high school.

Assistant Director Mr. Pontious and I realized that we needed a more comprehensive course to give students the reading booster shot they might need when starting at Edison. Luckily, we knew just the person for the job.

Elizabeth Johnson, mother of two past Edison students, is an experienced tutor, trained

in the Orton-Gillingham and Slingerland approaches. I wholeheartedly believe in the value of the Orton-Gillingham approach—it changed my younger daughter's life, academically and otherwise.

This fall, we are offering a new Reading/English course taught by Mrs. Johnson and Miss Halpin Robinson. Each teacher works with the class on alternating days. Mrs. Johnson teaches reading skills, while Miss Halpin Robinson teaches 9th grade English. Next year, the reading portion of the course will continue during part of the students' elective periods, so that they will complete a full two year program.

As well as our new Reading/English course, Edison is focusing on our students' executive functioning skills with a new addition to our Advisory curriculum. Our counselors, Mr. Dexter and Ms. Cannon-Fleming, have been wanting to add an executive functioning aspect to our Advisory curriculum, and this year we have partnered with Marydee Sklar, an expert in time management.

Ms. Sklar says, "To help struggling individuals and families, I created a program and workbook to teach executive functioning skills. It is called



the Sklar Process. It has become my mission to educate and support individuals so that they have the tools to finally manage their time consciously and successfully." After a three-hour training session with Mr. Dexter and Ms. Cannon-Fleming, our counselors knew that her program was the right fit for our students.

Ms. Sklar will be offering parent training this fall. She strongly believes that parents and teachers provide the foundation to reinforce skills that students are learning at school. She held a training session for our teachers, and then worked with all the students during the first week of classes.

We have been incorporating elements of the Sklar Process into the Edison curriculum. We are thrilled to add her executive functioning materials to our Advisory curriculum so that we can help our students focus on their executive functioning skills. Just like reading, these skills will positively impact their academics and reach far beyond to help them in day-to-day life. ♦

Congratulations to the Class of 2012



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Photo by Andie Petkus

THOMAS EDISON HIGH SCHOOL

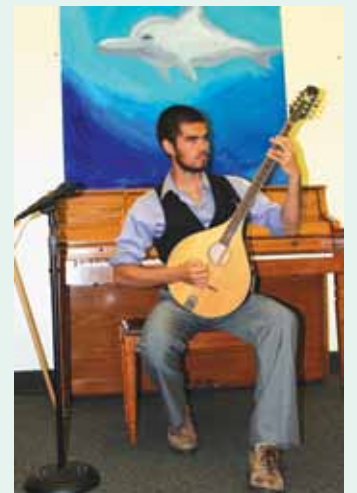


ART & SCIENCE EXPO 2012

Logo design by Noel Brevig. Photos by Mai-Lill Mägi.



Student art on display in the Big Room. Note the student-made kayak, high above!



Gabe Reyes '12 on the bouzouki.



Edison parents Anne Stein-Gray and Charles Gray with son Chris Gray '15.



From left: Edison parent Chris Warren with daughter Haley; Edison parent Kim Weyler with parents-in-law Nancy Weyler and Walt Weyler, Sr.

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Edison Teacher and Son Attend Kids' State Dinner in D.C.

Robbie Robinson, a 4th grade student at Minter Bridge Elementary, and his mother, Kassie Halpin Robinson, a teacher at Thomas Edison High School, got to visit the White House and have lunch at a State Dinner with First Lady Michelle Obama and child and parent teams representing each state on August 20. The honor was part of a two-day event in DC for the parent and child winners of a healthy lunch recipe contest sponsored by the first lady, the Healthy Child Initiative, and Epicurious magazine.

Robbie and his mother entered the contest with a recipe for a cold veggie pizza that is perfect for a hot summer day. Robbie, his sister Rionagh, 7, Kassie, and their grandparents and cousins enjoy strolling through Hillsboro's farmers' markets. Kassie says empowering the children to choose their own ingredients from locally sourced, organic, small farms is a pure joy.

"The kids love the fruit and veggies they pick out from the farmers' market and Nana and Papa's garden, and the recipe can be adapted based on the time of year and what is in season," says Kassie. "I believe the work Michelle Obama has done to inspire



The First Lady welcomes the President, who surprised guests by stopping by the dinner to say hello.



Robbie Robinson with mom Kassie Halpin Robinson at the Kids' State dinner in the White House on August 20.

families to make healthy eating and enjoying exercise priorities has had a positive impact on young people."

Kassie sees the impact healthy choices make on her own children as well as her school students every day. "Nutrition and exercise have a huge impact on how our children perceive the world, their ability to develop both mentally and physically, and certainly their academic and personal success."

"It was an amazing experience and an honor to represent all the healthy kids in Oregon," said Robbie. "Kids in Oregon love nature and playing outside, and lots of them love sports and farmers' markets like my sister and I do."

When asked about meeting the first lady and the president, Robbie says, "Michelle Obama was smart and kind, and a mom just like mine. She wants kids to be healthy, and she said she

loves Oregon. President Obama was really nice and funny. I hugged the First Lady with this hand," he says of his right hand. "The President shook this hand! The White House chef, Sam Kass, even shook this hand!" says Robbie with passion. "I am never washing this hand again!"

Robbie and the other winners, one parent and child from each of 54 states and commonwealths, got to visit the Smithsonian, meet the First Lady and hear her speak, enjoy a party and "State Dinner" lunch at the White House made up entirely of recipes submitted by the winning children, and a surprise impromptu visit from the President. He shook hands and spoke with each of the children. The band Big Time Rush also played some songs for the group. Following lunch, the attendees visited Mrs. Obama's garden and the White House honey bees. ♦

Edison Student, Parent, Staff in Hood to Coast Relay

The Hood to Coast Relay is the largest relay in the world. On August 24 and 25, over 12,600 runners and walkers made the 199-mile journey from Timberline Lodge at Mt. Hood to Seaside on Oregon's coast. We're proud that three Edison community members participated.

This was counselor Andrée Cannon-Fleming's first year in the Hood to Coast. She ran with her women's soccer team, the Mighty Aphrodites. Her total distance was a little more than 15 miles, and her favorite part was a seven-mile stretch at 3:30 a.m. under the stars.

"I wanted to do it because the women friends on my team are awesome, and I wanted to have a fitness goal for the summer," says Ms. Cannon-Fleming. "Having this as a goal helped me to organize my time each week to include muscle strengthening and runs as part of my summer days—even when we were away on vacation. If we have the chance, I plan to do it again next year!"

Sophomore Aaron Ozwoeld and his mom, Monica, participated in the relay for the second time this year. Their team is called the Transplant Trotters, one of many teams which walks the 130-mile portion of the course from Portland to Seaside. All members of the Transplant Trotters have donated or received an organ, or are honoring a donor or recipient.

Aaron participates in the Relay because his dad, Bob Ozwoeld, received a liver transplant in 2003. His mom Monica says, "My husband isn't able to do the walk, so we do it in his honor. It's a great way to raise awareness about organ donation and connect with other donors and recipients."

As the youngest member of the Transplant Trotters, Aaron showed his dedication to the cause. He made great time during his legs of the relay as well as supporting his teammates throughout the day and night. Aaron says, "The relay was the highlight of my summer. I'm definitely doing it again next year." ♦



Aaron Ozwoeld '15 (upper right) and mom Monica (lower left) after crossing the finish line with their relay team.



Andrée Cannon-Fleming hands the baton off to one of her teammates during the relay.

Welcome to the Edison Family!



Having worked for a number of non-profit organizations and as the mother of a son with learning differences, **Chris Cooper** has seen first-hand the positive impact that a dedicated team can have on a student. She is pleased to join Edison in 2012 as our Business Manager. Although Chris loves to travel and is always planning her next trip, closer to home she enjoys cooking for friends and family, learning the tango, designing jewelry, and hiking.



Elizabeth Johnson started teaching reading at Edison in 2011. She is trained in the Orton-Gillingham approach and the Slingerland approach for teaching groups. Elizabeth has raised three children with learning differences. Two of her daughters attended Edison, giving Elizabeth additional insight into how to teach our students. When she isn't in the classroom, you can find her knitting, walking, practicing yoga, reading, gardening, and taking care of the environment.



On the first weekend after school let out in June, **Nathaniel Beard** (7 lbs. 6 oz.) arrived! Mr. Beard and his wife Shelly had a wonderful summer with Nathaniel. Mr. Beard says, "This is an exciting adventure. This little guy is a bundle of joy and newness. I look forward to introducing our son to the amazing Edison family." In the photo above, Nathaniel is about three months old. He has obviously inherited his dad's talent for awesome hair. Congratulations to the Beard family!



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Parents: if this issue is addressed to your child and they no longer maintain a permanent address at your home, please update their mailing information by contacting our Development Associate, Rachel Tobie, at rachel@taemail.org. Thank you!

Please be our guest at the Partner with Thomas Edison Breakfast Thursday, November 8, 2012 • 7:30-8:30 a.m. at the Oregon Zoo



Join other supporters of our school as we celebrate the progress we have made and share a hopeful vision for the future. The breakfast is free; the experience is priceless.

Please contact Rachel Tobie at 503-297-2336 or rachel@taemail.org by October 26 to reserve a seat for yourself and any guests you would like to bring.

If you are unable to join us, please consider using the enclosed envelope to make a gift. Any and all support is deeply appreciated. Thank you!

“Everyone deserves the chance to learn and succeed.”