

# Our Schools

A REPORT TO THE CITIZENS OF NEW PROVIDENCE - WINTER 2009

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## “How High Can You Climb?”

*“Our character is what we do when we think no one is looking.”*

This quote by Jackson Brown Jr. exemplifies the beliefs of the Allen W. Roberts Character Education Program. The goal of the Allen W. Roberts Character Education program is to further foster kindness and respect among our students and teach them about the effects of being kind to each other and their community, without expecting anything in return. This would not be possible without dedicated staff, parents, and students. The initiatives have grown over the years and character education has now become an integral part of the school day at Allen W. Roberts. Each year students at the elementary level are excited to be introduced to the yearly character education theme. This is done through a school-wide assembly.

On Monday, October 20<sup>th</sup> students participated in the Character Education Kickoff Assembly. Here students were given an opportunity to listen to a trained mountain climbing instructor who spoke to them about what it takes to climb a mountain. He shared with them his experiences climbing mountains and everything necessary to accomplish

such a great endeavor. He stressed teamwork, trust, responsibility, and hard work, all ideals of our character education program. His presentation was followed by Principal Michael Barcadepone and Assistant Principal Justin Fiory asking the students, “**How High Can You Climb?**” the theme for this year’s character education program.

Each month the school will focus on one specific goal of the character education program. Working with their classmates or as individuals, students will complete activities demonstrating an understanding of the month’s goal. As students complete these activities and share with their class and teacher their understanding of the theme, they will “climb” up their classroom mountain. When each

student has climbed to their checkpoint, the entire class will climb up one checkpoint on “Pride Mountain,” which is located outside the main office. Through these daily activities, students will demonstrate how they have met the principles of character education and will work to reach their goal of making it to the top of the “Pride Mountain.”

There are a number of reminders throughout the building for the students to be encouraged to do the right thing and make it to the top of the mountain. The Wall of Pride outside the main office recognizes those students that go above and beyond to show what it means to be a good person. Each morning there is a caring message over the announcements, as well

as the Principal’s ‘Principle of the Week’ message. All of this is reinforced in the classroom as teachers incorporate a number of the ideals of the program into their daily lessons. Talking about the benefit of these good actions increases the probability that they will occur.

Developing good character and making positive decisions can be as simple as picking up a piece of garbage on the floor, helping to clean the dinner table, and cleaning up your room.

Showing good character is being nice to a child at school who may be new, standing up for a child who

is shy, and saying no to a friend who asks you to participate in an activity that you know is wrong. As the students move through the school year the staff will be addressing each of these issues with the students as well as many more topics that children face in today’s society.

To show an understanding of the ideals of the character education program, students will take place in activities throughout the year. From working with the New Providence PBA and the Junior League of Summit to collect goods and non-perishable food items to assist needy families, to reaching out to meet a new friend during Mix It Up Day, students at Allen W. Roberts are showing what it takes to “climb high.” The students at Allen W. Roberts truly have what it takes to make it to the top.



*Mrs. Testa's class wearing and donating pajamas on AWR pajama day. PRIDE Mountain is in the background as the class climbs the community service checkpoint.*

## NPHS celebrates 50 years

On September, 8, 1958, New Providence High School opened its doors for the first time. When the first students arrived that day, Dr. Walter McCarthy, the first principal of New Providence High, greeted students with the following speech:

*“New Providence High School provides you with the finest facilities to study and get ready for the future. The building, the program, and the staff have as their prime objective your happiness and success through a sound education. You are the most important part of New Providence High School. Live up to the attendant responsibilities of that position, and take pride in everything about your school and yourself. Every decision and action centers around your welfare. Never forget that fact and let us all work together to help one another. I ask three things of every student: Be Courteous, Be Respectful and Do Your Best.”*

Fifty years later, his words still hold true as we, as a school, continue to live up to the Pioneer standards of excellence.

To commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of New Providence High School, students have been learning about the school's proud history through different activities. Last spring, Mrs. Hornstein's Advanced Placement (AP) US II



*High School principal Paul Casarico explains to Milton Anderson exhibits created by Stephanie Hornstein's AP US History students to commemorate the High School's 50th year anniversary. Milton Anderson was the Board of Education president when the high school opened in 1958.*

classes researched key moments and events over the past 50 years. They created displays that trace the history of the school and town over this time. This year students are presented every day with a Pioneer Fact of the Day, which describes a historical fact (high school students attended Summit High School before the high school was built), an excerpt from the original Student Handbook (students had to take showers after Physical Education classes which did not become co-ed until 1977), or a description of some of the curricular clubs and activities students were involved in (the Future Homemakers of America Club, the Audio Visual Crew, and that Bye Bye Birdie was the first musical), to help give students a better understanding and appreciation of the school's evolution.

Mr. Milton Anderson, the president of the Board of Education when the school was built, came to the school to take a tour and discuss with students the early problems they faced after Summit High School informed the Board of Education that it would no longer be able to take students from New Providence. Mr. Anderson and Mr. Allen W. Roberts are recognized as the men most responsible for making the high school a reality. As Mr. Anderson recalled, the town had to overcome a push from the county and state to join the regional high school system, and when the school finally received approval to be built, there were difficulties getting enough steel to complete the structure. This delayed the opening of the school by a year which kept juniors and seniors attending Summit High School while sophomores and freshmen spent the 1957-58 school year at Chatham Borough High School. However, when Mr. Anderson was finally given the keys to the school, he remembers that day with great pride. When asked what he thought about the high school five decades later, Mr. Anderson said, "It is simply marvelous. I could never have imagined that our school would grow into the great educational institution it is today."



*Freshman students view the displays commemorating the High School's 50th year anniversary.*

Over the past 50 years there have been five additions and three alterations to the high school. The high school opened with 351 students in grades 7-11 with enrollment peaking in 1973 at 1278 students and hitting a low mark of 352 students in 1993. Some of the original 58 course offerings students could choose from consisted of Personal Typing, Stenography, Latin, Plane Geometry and Junior Business Training. Today, students can choose from over 140 courses, and while Latin is still an option, we offer instruction in five World Languages and 17 AP courses.

When the school first opened there were three sports offered: boy's soccer, boy's basketball and baseball. The boy's basketball team registered the first varsity win in the school's history, a 76-27 drubbing of Piscataway and the first State Championship when they beat Wildwood in the winter of 1965. For the first fifteen years women participated in intramurals under the Girls Athletic Association (GAA). It was not until the fall of 1973, after several protests by the women student population, that a tennis team was created for women athletes. (See 'Girls Tennis Wins State Championship Again!' Below) Today New Providence offers 23 varsity sports and is known around the state for its athletic prowess.

In the spring of 1969, New Providence High School received an IBM 1130 Computer from IBM to be part of their educational program. The configuration of a disk, printer, card reader and keypunch filled the entire front of one room. Viewed as cutting edge for the time, New Providence High School has continued to adapt its programs and resources to best educate students. The school has advanced from filmstrips, Dictaphones, and overhead transparencies to ceiling mounted projectors and SMART boards. Language Labs and floppy disks have been replaced with pod casts and hand-held computers. Adding machines have given way to graphing calculators while microscopes have evolved into video producing Proscopes. New Providence High School has and will continue to be on the forefront of providing students with the best possible educational environment.

It is with great pride that we reflect on the past 50 years of New Providence High School, and it is with confidence that we move forward. Mr. McCarthy's statement at the end of the first year, "Let us continue in the Pioneer spirit to build upon the good foundation we have established," is still timely today as we embark on the next 50 years at New Providence High School.

## Girls Tennis Wins State Championship Again!

The Girls Tennis team, under the guidance of *Star Ledger* Union County Coach of the year Nancy Scarola, successfully defended their Group 1 State Tennis Championship with a thrilling victory over Haddonfield. The team compiled a record of 17-5, and was led by senior captains Jolie Chan, Julie King, and Karen Knauff

## Teachers Training Teachers

*"Learning comes more from giving than from receiving. By reflecting on what we do, by giving and articulating our craft knowledge, we make meaning, we learn" (Roland Barth)*

The 2008-2009 New Providence Professional Development Program includes over 40 possible workshops. The most impressive fact however, is not the number of workshops, but the fact that a vast majority are being conducted by New Providence School district teachers. The newly designed Professional Development program is focused on increasing student achievement by providing teachers with cutting edge skills and strategies that enable them to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. Who better to provide the training than respected teachers who are practicing the skills and strategies in their own classrooms?



*Foreign Language Department head, Alma Reyes, works with Language Arts teacher Kate Eckes, to fine tune a performance task. Performance tasks are now being used by the state as a measure of student achievement.*

The workshops provide a variety of opportunities for teachers, including Writing Effective Rubrics, Websites to Enhance and Enrich Student Learning, Reading Assessments, Information and Technology Literacy, Literacy Centers for the K-2 classrooms, Special Education Strategies for Differentiation and Getting Started with Professional Learning Communities. Many of the workshops are offered for different grade levels in an effort to specialize the training to suit teachers' needs. For example, the SMART Board and Understanding by Design training is provided for K-4, 5-8 and 9-12 teachers.

In addition, 20 staff members entered Phase 3 training this fall. The teachers designed and shared unit plans, discussed instructional strategies to support student achievement and continued to work on technology implementation. Last year's 'Phase teachers' also met to work with new technologies, collaborate with peers and spend time developing new curriculum units. Overall the new Professional Development program has been warmly received by teachers who value the emphasis put on 'teachers training teachers.'

## It's a Wonderful Life: The Radio Play

In November, the NPHS Drama Department presented a marvelous production of *It's a Wonderful Life: The Radio Play*.

This classic holiday story of George Bailey and the folks from Bedford Falls was performed as a radio play being broadcast during the 1940's. All the music, sound effects, and character voices were provided by a small, but extremely talented ensemble of young performers, taking the audience back to a pre-internet, pre-television era of *It's a Wonderful Life*. Featuring exceptional performances from Garrett Gallinot as George Bailey, Maggie Baker as Mary Bailey, Neil Forgiione as Mr. Potter, Eric Boyer as Clarence, and an outstanding acting ensemble



Melissa Loria, Kristen Moir and Stephanie Morantz sing a commercial for the Prestige Diner during *It's a Wonderful Life: The Radio Play*

that played well over 50 roles throughout the evening, the show received a rousing ovation for both of its packed performances.

With live music composed and arranged by students Tim Lacio and Miles Black and performed by a student orchestra, live sound effects created by a trio of versatile performers, led by Caitlyn Roper, and a number of live commercials written specifically for local merchants such as Zita's, Dr. Robinson, and the Prestige Diner, the show had plenty of surprises and a real feel of the era.

Next February the Drama Department will be revisiting the 'Coffee Talk', an open mic night when a variety of new performers will be able to show off their talents. This will be followed by the annual music extravaganza of the Spring Musical, which this year

will be a lively, humorous production of 'Kiss Me Kate' based on Shakespeare's 'Taming of the Shrew.'



## Our Schools - "Dedicated to Excellence"

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