



# Morris School Newsletter

December 2009

## Calendar Highlights

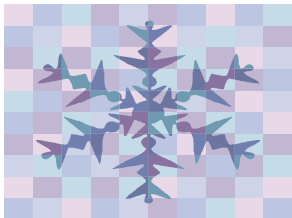
12/24—1/3 Holiday Break

1/13—Winter Concert

1/18—Martin Luther King Day—NO School

1/20 District Wide Chorus Concert in Duffin Theater

1/25&26—Professional Development: 1/2 Days



## Winter Recess

### Reminder

Parents are reminded that we go out for recess everyday as long as the temperature is 15 degrees or above. Students should dress appropriately and are encouraged to wear snow pants and boots for play in the snow.



## From the Principal's Office:

The first term has come and gone and it is a real challenge to keep up with all the good things happening during this rapidly passing school year.

Since the last writing of this newsletter our PTO has been busy supporting the school through several events and activities. The Thanksgiving Feast was a huge success thanks to all those who chipped in to help out. Parent Jamie Puntin led a group of volunteers too numerous to list who helped with the serving and preparation of the feast area. Mike Steuerwald and the custodial crew did a great job prepping and cleaning up the gym. Food Service Director John Tranfaglia and kitchen staff Sandy Roosa, Helen Coty-Curtin and Laurie Goodfellow, made an extra special meal for students and staff. This year the feast concluded with an all-school recess-

perhaps the best part of the day according to some second graders. The controlled chaos stayed fun and safe thanks to the help of the Morris paraprofessionals and staff who helped me to supervise our first 300+ student recess. During Parent Conferences our PTO (led by Anne Ubertini) also sponsored the fall Scholastic Book Fair. The Fair put some great books into the hands of our students but also generated a little fundraising revenue for school programs. PTO support also raised money for a new piano and made the recent Liam Geddes concert a little more pleasurable with a bake sale. I also want to thank the PTO volunteers that have been helping us to level books in the library. Book leveling activities are currently on hold until after the holidays.

Morris teachers have been

active in professional development activities over the past month. Three second grade teachers and one first grade teacher attended a day-long conference in Albany focused on providing teachers with strategies to help struggling readers to move ahead. The first of our half-day in-service days this year (November 9 and 10) was spent getting acquainted with ways to level books. This instruction was provided by computer teacher Denise Jezak. At the same time, kindergarten staff was learning about a new phonics program called Foundations that they will be piloting throughout the spring and into next year. All teachers grades K-3 had their third day of training with Carol Kosnitsky using the AimsWEB reading assessment system. AimsWEB is known as a "universal formative assessment"-meaning that everyone takes it and the results are used to guide instructional (continued)

## Health News/Healthy Snacks

Whether you have a toddler or a teen, here are two web sites with some strategies to improve nutrition and eating habits:

[Kidshealth.org](http://Kidshealth.org) and [healthgeneration.org](http://healthgeneration.org).

Poor nutrition during childhood can have lasting

effects and impair cognitive development and school performance. Young people are eating quite a bit more than they were 30 years ago and students tend to consume almost 50% of their daily calories at school.

Take time to pack healthy

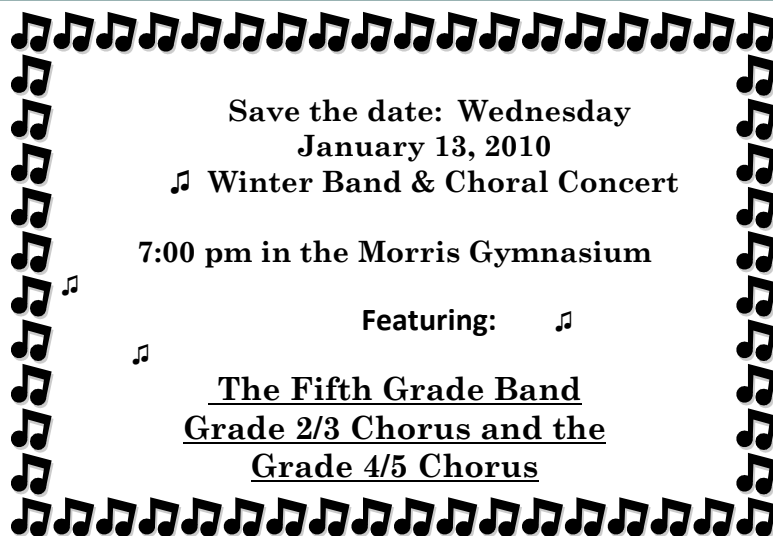
snacks in your student's backpack for school.

For more information visit the websites: [Kidshealth.org](http://Kidshealth.org) and [Healthgeneration.org](http://Healthgeneration.org).



2010  
KID  
FUND  
RAISER  
FOR  
MORRIS  
PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS

The Lenox Public Schools Music Department has been working to raise funds for two new pianos. The pianos at the high school and at Morris are in terrible condition. The goal is \$8,000.00. With the help of the PTO, hard working students and generous parents we have raised over \$6,000.00 so far. We are almost there! Thank you! If you would like to make a donation of any amount, please make checks payable to Lenox Public Schools Music Department. Donations can be left at the Morris front office.



Save the date: Wednesday  
January 13, 2010  
♪ Winter Band & Choral Concert

7:00 pm in the Morris Gymnasium

Featuring: ♪

♪  
The Fifth Grade Band  
Grade 2/3 Chorus and the  
Grade 4/5 Chorus



### Going on a trip? Have your children help you plan the route.

A trip to grandma's over the holidays can be a great learning experience when your child is part of the trip planning. Start with a good road map or atlas that includes your starting point and your destination. Identify those places on the map and then explore all the different ways you can get from where you are to where you want to go. Students as young as first grade can have rudimentary map skills that will allow them to plot a line from start to end. As you do your

map work, ask your child to read to you (or read to them) the roads and the towns you will pass through. Write down this information. Depending on the age of the child, they may be familiar with directions (north, south, etc.) and may be able to add that to your plan as well. Parents can guide the children to the preferred route with questions about direction of the route and the types of roads. Be patient. For many kids

(and some grown-ups) road maps can be confusing new media, with lots of colored lines and written language. On the day of the trip, have your child be the navigator with the map and the list of directions you've created together. Even if you've driven the route a dozen times, your child will feel empowered as s/he gets the "lay of the land" and understands how direction, distance and speed are related.

### From Principal's office....

decisions. We are currently in the planning phases for our January professional development in the area of math instruction for teachers in the older grades. I'm hoping that part of this teacher-in-residence series will include a family math night event for grades 3,4,and 5 sometime at the end of January.

For several reasons, we try to keep the holidays very low-key at Morris. The level of student excitement has

already begun to grow to a degree that some students are having trouble focusing on their studies. The only "official" recognition of the season takes place at our December Morning Meeting, Wednesday December 23, when we will gather to sing songs of different celebration traditions and the winter season. Gift exchanges between students and teachers are discouraged and all families are asked to observe the school policies on foods

and classroom snacks. We encourage students to share holiday wishes if they choose, but we also respect the choice of many to keep the holidays primarily for family celebration.

I would like to extend warm holiday greetings to all in our school community and wish you all a safe, healthy, and happy New Year. See you in 2010!  
TL

