

**President's Message**

*A new look  
for PEF*

Since 1995 the Princeton Education Foundation has worked hard to develop a public/private partnership to enhance the educational opportunities available to our public school students. We have provided more than \$300,000 to projects in music, math, science, athletics, art, social science, language arts and teacher training. As the years have passed, the Princeton Regional Schools have come to rely on PEF as a true partner in education. Today, we not only sponsor grants in the classroom, but also fundraise for choral shells, fitness centers and library enhancements. The past 12 years have seen our outlook change as we take on bigger challenges and expand. So we thought it was time for our look to change as well. This newsletter marks the debut of our new logo and our new website. Many thanks go to Barbara Prince and her web committee for all their work on our new website. Thanks also to webmaster Gregg Smith. We encourage you to visit us at [www.pefnj.org](http://www.pefnj.org). Information on all our fundraising efforts is available there. We believe you will find it interesting and easy to access. Thanks also to Anne Burns and her communications committee for the development of the new logo, web banner and newsletter masthead. And another thank you to graphic artist Karin Siciliano for her creativity.

And, finally, many thanks to you, our donors and supporters. As our public education system faces increasing financial challenges, with unfunded mandates and budget caps, your financial support and commitment are even more critical to the continued success of our schools. We are grateful for your support, because Education Matters!

*Holly Holcombe  
President, PEF*

# News

Spring 2008

## PHS fitness center opens

The Princeton High School Fitness Center's grand opening ceremony occurred on Friday, January 23 as PHS graduate and Olympic gold medal winner Lesley Bush cut the blue ribbon to the completely refurbished center.

Bush said the fitness center would encourage important exercise habits that just weren't around when she was in high school. "When I graduated from PHS, women didn't have the access to fitness training that they needed. Exercise training needs to be in all community programs and this will truly be great for the entire community."

The Fitness Center Campaign was undertaken by the Princeton Education Foundation and kicked off in April 2007 with a phase one goal of \$100,000. These funds aided in the conversion of the old gymnasium into a new fitness center, more than twice the size of the old garage-sized weight room. According to PRS Superintendent Judy Wilson, the

new facility is a win-win for Princeton students, faculty, staff and the community.

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**Princeton Regional Schools Superintendent Judy Wilson, Olympic gold medal winner and Fitness Center Campaign Honorary Chair, Lesley Bush and PHS Athletic Director John Miranda**



**Nathaniel Hyman, a third grade student at Community Park School and son of PEF board member Molly Chrein, delights in his chance to wear Olympic Gold, courtesy of Lesley Bush at the opening of the PHS fitness center.**

## PEF elects new board members

### Anne Skalka, CPA,

established her own accounting firm, Anne Skalka and Associates, Certified Public Accountants in 1991. Located



in Lawrenceville, the firm serves a wide variety of individual and business clients as well as not-for-profit organizations. In May of 2002, Anne was elected president of the Mercer Chapter of the New Jersey Society of Certified Public Accountants after serving as vice president, treasurer and director. She was recently appointed to the executive committee of the New Jersey Society of Certified Public Accountants. Anne is an active member of the Executive Women's Golf Association and the Central Jersey Orchid Society. She also serves as the treasurer for HiTOPs. In addition to her private practice Anne also has a book series titled "Tax Deductions A-Z" which is available on Amazon.com.

**Suzanne Carroll** is a former stockbroker with Morgan Stanley. She has been an active volunteer at PHS for the past six years in many capacities, such as chair of the Fall Teacher Luncheon, Senior Awards Night, Guidance Events and Post Prom Party fundraising. She was PHS PTO Co-President from 2004-2006. During that time, she co-chaired the brick plaza project in the front PHS courtyard, procuring a donation of \$8000 worth of stone from the premier landscape paving company, EP Henry. She has helped PEF in 2006 as co-chair of the Gala Reception for the opening of the PRS Performing Arts Center. Carroll and her hus-

band have four children, two of whom have graduated from PHS, one who is a freshman and a 7th grader at the Cranbury School.

### Barbara Prince

is a grant writer for Mercer County Community College, and has experience as a financial administrator in educational, profit and non-profit settings, and as a business manager for corporate educational training companies. She was a school board member for the Princeton Regional Schools from 1999 to 2002, and Director of Grant Development for the Principals' Center for the Garden State, TCNJ, Ewing, New Jersey from 2004 to 2005. She has volunteered as a grant writer for PEF for the Take-A Seat campaign, and for the Girl Scouts of Delaware-Raritan, Inc., Pathways to Politics Program and the Princeton Young Achievers. Barbara is a graduate of Rutgers University and Prescott College. She and her husband have a son who graduated from PHS in 2006.



### Molly Chrein

is an attorney who formerly practiced criminal law as a public defender in New York and Maryland. She recently relocated to Princeton from Alexandria, Virginia, where she was PTA president for her local elementary school and was active in fundraising and instituting a character building educational program



for their students. She has also been active in the community as a volunteer tutor and participant in Habitat for Humanity, and currently volunteers for the Princeton Public Library and Mercer County CASA. Molly and her husband have two children—one at Community Park School and the other at John Witherspoon Middle School.

### PEF officers and board members

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F. Holly Holcombe, M.D.

#### Vice President

Shari L. Powell

#### Recording Secretary

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Ann Mann

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Anne Skalka, CPA

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Anne Burns  
Suzanne Carroll  
Rita Chait  
Molly Chrein  
G. Sue Nemeth  
Chris Orcutt  
Barbara Prince  
Inkyung Yi



**Dorothy knew they were not in Kansas anymore! And student actors from across the Princeton district knew they weren't in the OLD auditorium anymore as *The Wizard of Oz* debuted on the new stage at Princeton High School.**

Photo courtesy of Ron Lessard

## Performing Arts Center opens to rave reviews

### *Still time for you to “Take a Seat”*

As we enter the second season of the Princeton Performing Arts Center at Princeton High School, it's clear that the efforts to upgrade this auditorium into a true arts center have paid off. For the first time, John Witherspoon parents enjoyed winter and spring concerts at PPAC, not only giving them the chance to savor the space's wonderful acoustics but to get a glimpse of what the high school holds for their children.

The *Wizard of Oz*, PHS's spring musical, was an extravaganza that could not have happened without

many of the new space's features. The body microphones, the lighting, the sound system and the pit and pit cover all had their inaugural uses. Dancers, musicians, actors have all delighted in the opportunities presented by PPAC.

Community organizations have benefited from the space as well. Westminster Choir College musical performances and the Princeton Public Library Christopher Reeve Lecture are just some of the community events that have been held at the center.

The Take A Seat campaign which has raised more than \$200,00 for

PPAC enhancements is truly one of the Princeton Education Foundation's great success story. The remainder of the campaign will support PEF's mission of enhancing educational excellence at all of the district's six schools. Seats are still available for purchase at each price level—\$250, \$500 and \$1,000. There are additional naming opportunities for classrooms, practice rooms and other spaces in the performing arts areas. Visit us at [www.pefnj.org](http://www.pefnj.org) for more information or to Take a Seat now online!

## PHS greenhouse dedicated to the memory of John Toscano

For 27 years, John Toscano shared his love and knowledge of flowers and plants with students at Princeton High School. As the founder of the horticulture program at PHS, he opened another field of science to many students. After his death last year, his daughters looked for a fitting memorial to their father and with the help of the Princeton Education Foundation, they found it - sponsoring the new rooftop greenhouse at Princeton High School.

On Friday, February 1st, the Princeton Education Foundation and the Toscano daughters, Sallie, Judith Bobletz and Nancie Saraceni hosted the dedication of the greenhouse in the memory of John Toscano. Almost 40 people attended the ceremony including retired PHS teachers and former students of Mr. Toscano as well as Holly Holcombe, PEF president and Shari Powell, PEF vice president for development.

"This is a wonderful way to remember our father and the work he loved as well as to provide support and encouragement to the next generation of horticulture students," said Sallie Toscano. "As a PHS graduate myself, it feels good to give back to my

alma mater in this way. I am grateful to the Princeton Education Foundation for providing this opportunity and to all those who have contributed to make this happen."

Business donors included: Hannah & Mason Restaurant, Kube Pak, Tony's Garden Market, and Sieck/Wright Roses.

Ms. Toscano now runs her father's farm in Cranbury and last summer had a PHS student intern there. She serves as an advisor to the Princeton High School horticulture club and is raising funds to offer a scholarship for a graduating senior in her father's name. For more information on the Mr. T. scholarship fund please visit [www.MrTHorticultureFund.com](http://www.MrTHorticultureFund.com)

"We are thrilled to be able to provide this kind of funding opportunity," said Shari Powell of PEF. "This is a situation where everyone wins —students, faculty, district and donors. This is the perfect partnership with donors who contribute time, talent and treasure."



Sallie Toscano (center) and Shari Powell of PEF (right) receive a donation from the PHS Class of 1977, presented by Linda Spencer McClellan (left), a former student of the late John Toscano, teacher and founder of the PHS horticulture program.

**Did you know that you can donate to PEF online?**

**Just go to [www.pefnj.org](http://www.pefnj.org) and check it out!**

*Continued from page 1*

### **Fitness Center . . .**

"The reality is that students and community members will have more access to a facility that will help develop lifelong health and fitness."

Thanks to the generosity of corporate sponsors, the PRS staff, sports teams and parents, PEF has raised

almost \$93,000 primarily to purchase new equipment to outfit the center. This includes a \$25,000 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation which will provide teacher training and allow the school to offer new

programs to educate students about healthy lifestyles.

The new facility was designed with input from Princeton physical education teachers, Athletic Director John Miranda and coaches.

# *Fall in love with the library*

This October marked another milestone in the renovations at Princeton High School as the library and media center officially opened. PEF was on hand as school supporters joined together to celebrate the culmination of the project that renovated the old auditorium into a state of the art facility for students.

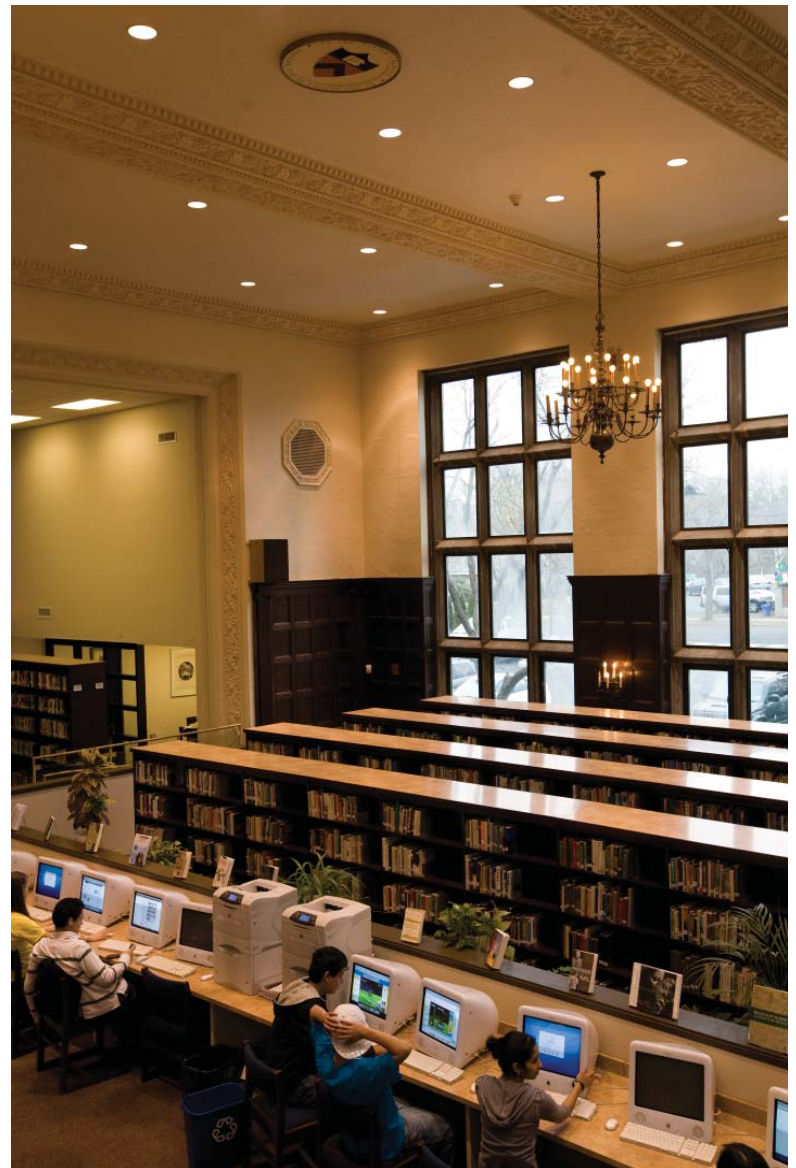
It was also a time to say thank you to Princeton University which, through the efforts of former school board member Frank Strasburger accepted the opportunity of contributing \$500,000 or more than 30 % of the total cost of the renovation to the district.

Robert Durkee, vice president and secretary of Princeton University and Kristin Appelget, director of community affairs, were present at the celebration. Durkee, whose three daughters attended PHS, commented on the long partnership between the University and the Princeton Regional Schools, describing the school system as a major attraction for bring faculty to Princeton.

Librarian Arlene Sinding gave special thanks to Princeton University for their generous donation, and commended the teachers, students, Princeton Education Foundation and the PTO for their time, energy and support.



**PHS librarian Arlene Sinding, Princeton University Secretary Bob Durkee, PEF President Holly Holcombe and PHS Superintendent Judy Wilson enjoy themselves at the opening of the PHS library and media center this past October.**



Photograph by Brian Wilson; courtesy of Princeton University

PEF has begun a Love Your Library campaign to help enhance the center's collection. The Princeton University Book Store has already donated a large number of volumes from their stock. More information on the library campaign is available at [www.pefnj.org](http://www.pefnj.org).

The Media Center features 23,000 books, 11 remote databases, 125 periodicals and eight daily news papers, as well as a seating for 100 students, a reading room, conference room and four individual or collaborative study rooms The wireless environment supports 25 desktop and 22 laptops computer stations for students.

# PRINCETON EDUCATION FOUNDATION

## *awards 2007-08 mini-grants*

*For much of our 12 year history, the Princeton Education Foundation has had as its main focus encouraging creativity in the classroom through its teacher mini-grant program. This year we are proud to announce our grant awards for the 2007-08 school year. This year's grants were chosen from a pool of 14 applications and total \$4,883.*

### *Inventions Across the Curriculum*

**Julie Fallas and Linda Gougoutas (4th) at Community Park School.** The purpose is to build on students' prior knowledge of inventions and provide the materials for them to create their own unique invention. This is a multi-discipline project that includes science/technology, language arts, social studies, economics and the arts. The inventions will be evaluated on originality, usefulness, how well it is constructed, brochure design to advertise the invention, and the presentation of it to others.

### *Everyone Eats Rice*

**Lois Bach, K-5 ESL Program at Johnson Park School.** The purpose is to "travel" to countries around the world through the use of authentic literature, art, music and dance to understand other countries. The students will also research the geography, ecology and environment of their chosen countries. The students will discover how these countries are unique and similar. The students will make presentations about the country they studied during a dinner featuring rice dishes from around the world.

### *Supporting Handwriting Grant in Grades K-1*

**Martha Friedman, Occupational Therapist at Riverside School.** This project is an adjunct to a school-wide handwriting initiative that will include general and special education students (including the autism program students at RS). The school has already purchased handwriting workbooks and teacher guides to implement the program school wide. This grant will provide supplemental non-consumable materials to help teachers adapt instruction for diverse learners, including: individual-sized chalkboards and wood piece letter sets.

### *Enhance Student Understanding of Area & Square Units*

**Jean Wernicki (6th) Math at John Witherspoon Middle School.** The purpose is to plan math lessons on the area of geometric solids and trigonometry using the educational game Blokus. This approach uses kinesthetic and tactile exploration and will enable students with different learning styles to "see" the concepts. The game has colorful, transparent pieces that allow the students to touch and trace these shapes as they explore both area and perimeter of convex and concave shapes. The game is an excellent educational tool which develops spatial reasoning power and has been lauded by MENSA.



### *We are the World*

**Cob Powlen (French), Regena Tardugno (Spanish), Bob Vivens (Social Studies), Paul Lynch (Social Studies) and John Cronin (Guidance Counselor) at John Witherspoon Middle School.** The purpose is to introduce students in 7th grade social studies classes to the United Nations as a world institution that promotes communication among nations of the world. They will also study the many agencies within the UN that assist people around the world. The students will then identify related needs in the Princeton community and participate in outreach projects. The grant funds will be used to help defray the costs of student transportation to NYC and tickets for admission to the UN.

### *Robotics as an Educational Tool for Programming Classes*

**Graciela Elia (PHS).** The purpose of this activity is to help students acquire robotics and computer programming skills by using kits that will show them what their logical decisions will do and how the electronic devices interpret their thought processes. The kits will allow the students to: problem solve, make connects with concepts, develop reasoning skills and transfer their understanding and knowledge into actual representations.

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*The Princeton Education Foundation gratefully acknowledges those who have made the new Princeton High School Fitness Center a reality. For more information about the Princeton Education Foundation and other funding opportunities, please visit our website ([www.pefnj.org](http://www.pefnj.org)). Supporting educational excellence in Princeton Regional Schools since 1995.*

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