Acts Of Kindness at Fishkill Plains Elementary School
by Steve Schwartz

The third, fourth and fifth grade students at Fishkill Plains Elementary School were invited to participate in the Math-A-Thon program to raise money for St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital. Each child who participated was required to get a sponsor to pledge a certain amount of money for each math problem they could answer correctly.

Our school raised a grand total of $7,658. Mrs. Dean’s class raised the most which was $1,677. The following 2 students raised over $500: Christian Cole and Victoria Pacacha.

In the last 7 years our school raised $53,273 for Saint Jude’s. Mr. Steve Schwartz, a teacher at the school, was the coordinator for the event.

This was indeed another shining example of how the students at Fishkill Plains dedicate themselves to showing “acts of kindness”, specifically for the benefit of other children.
More than 220 positions may be on the chopping block in Rockland County's East Ramapo schools.

Weeks after declaring it would not seek layoffs, the Vestal school district in Broome County announced it would eliminate the jobs of 44 educators.

In Yonkers, the number is 436; in North Syracuse it's 125. Northville, in Fulton County, which has 55 teachers, would lose one-fifth of its staff.

Some districts are closing schools. Many others are eliminating after-school programs and summer school, pre-kindergarten, programs in the arts and music, driver education, GED classes, field trips and other extra-curricular activities, and many sports.

In district after district, worst-case scenarios are becoming school budget proposals as deadlines to submit final spending plans before the May 18 statewide school budget votes get closer.

As New York Teacher went to press, lawmakers had not yet reached an agreement on a new state spending plan.

The April 1 start of the state fiscal year has come and gone and school officials are using figures from the governor's budget proposal to rule their decisions.

The governor called for cuts of $1.4 billion in pre-K through 12 school operating aid — with cuts ranging from 3.6 to 13.9 percent per district.

In its initial one-house bill, the state Senate endorsed Paterson's damaging cuts to education.

The Assembly plan calls for restoring $600 million in school aid — a start, but not enough, union leaders say.

NYSUT, through its television and radio ad campaign, is sending lawmakers the message that devastating cuts to education are not the answer.

cont’d on next page.
"Even in these difficult times, the state cannot go back on its commitment to students," said NYSUT Executive Vice President Andy Pallotta. "Their very future is at stake."

Any loss of teachers and programs "is a devastation on education," said Irene Bielski, president of the East Ramapo Teachers Association.

East Ramapo school officials have not released an exact figure on potential layoffs, Bielski said, but local reports put the figure at more than 220. The district is already underfunded.

Bielski says the schools have received no state or federal help to deal with an influx of more than 100 new students as a result of the earthquakes in Haiti.

Check's not in the mail
Lack of a state budget is but one setback schools face this month.

For the second time in less than six months, schools' bank accounts are lighter as the state failed to meet its deadline for delivering promised education aid.

One day before payments were due, Gov. Paterson announced a delay in paying $2.1 billion due districts on March 31.

NYSUT is continuing a lawsuit it filed after Paterson delayed school aid payments in December.

Paterson has said the payments will be made by the June 1 statutory deadline — if the state has the cash to cover the payments.

The governor recently said the state would consider rewarding schools with additional state aid if their unions accept salary concessions.

That ransom-like scenario was recently announced in New Jersey by Gov. Christopher Christie.
Early Retirement Option Signed into Law

Governor Paterson has signed the 55/25 bill for NYSUT members; less than 24 hours after it landed on his desk. Under the one-year plan, NYSUT members in both the New York State Teachers Retirement System and the New York State and Local Employees Retirement System who are 55 or older and have at least 25 years will have an opportunity to retire without incurring a penalty.

This is a win-win for educators looking to retire and schools crafting budget plans. This bill will help schools better address their local budget needs and avert staff layoffs.

The window for NYSUT members in K-12 positions to retire is June 1 through August 31. A timeframe for members in higher education positions at SUNY operated campuses and its community colleges will be set by the SUNY Board of Trustees but must end no later than December 31, 2010.

Statewide, more than 6,000 educators and staff will qualify for the early retirement option; more than 20,000 educators could face layoffs under proposed budget cuts. Unlike previous early-retirement incentives, this option is available entirely at the employees choice and does not require the district to opt in.

I would like to thank you all for your hard work contacting elected officials to help get this passed. Now, on to increasing the pressure for restorations.
From the Welfare Trust Fund ......

The attorney will be in the WCT offices to meet with members on the following dates:

May 19, & June 16 from 2-6PM
Please call 227-5065 to schedule an appointment.

from the... WCT Welfare Trust Fund

A financial consultant from Stacey Braun Associates, Inc. will be in the WCT office on the following dates:

April 28
May 12 & 26
June 9 & 23

Appointments are (1) hour blocks available between 2pm & 6pm on a first come first served basis. When you call the office to schedule an appointment, we will forward a questionnaire to you.
Please complete it and bring it with you to the meeting.

Since these slots fill up very quickly call as soon as possible. The WCT office number is 227-5065.
If the above dates are not convenient for you, call Stacey Braun Associates, Inc. directly at 1-888-949-1925 and other arrangements may be possible.
Congratulations

Betsy Solomon (retired, Kinry Road) and husband Klaus (Newburgh Teachers’ Association) welcomed their second grandchild, Lillian Julia Rosemarie Solomon. Lilly was born on March 25, 2010 to Alan Solomon (John Jay graduate) and his wife Jen. Congratulations again to the entire family!

Dawn Turpin-Orgetas (Oak Grove) and her husband Dino welcomed a baby girl, Mia Aubrey, into the world on March 26, 2010. Congratulations!

Corie Kirsch (Oak Grove) and her husband Eric welcomed a baby girl, Samantha Juliet, into their family on April 4, 2010. Congratulations!

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