

The Highland Avenue Newsletter



In the Newsletter:

- Service Learning for Highland
- Highland Fundraising
- Ga-Ga Ball in Highland
- Ga-Ga Ball Facts
- Upcoming Events

Other fundraisers

• Sock Fundraiser

• Treats for Troops

• Giving Tree

• Can-Can drive

• Table to Table

• Ms. Smith Walk-a-thon

• Soup-er Bowl

Generations working together: Highland students doing a project with the Mill Gardens residents.



Volume 3, Issue 2

December 2019

Learning Beyond the Classroom Service Learning at Highland

21st century education involves educating the whole child; Academics, Social, Emotional, and even educating the student in self discovery—who they are. How do we teach all this, especially when it comes to students finding out who they are as a person and where they stand in this complicated world? Sometimes we have to look to those very wise people who came before us to get some answers. I recall a statement by Mahatma Gandhi, “The best way to find yourself, is to lose yourself in the service of others.” It is in this light that Highland School, over the past several years, has made it a priority to provide opportunities for students to be part of something bigger than themselves. And though fundraising is a part of it and donations are wonderful and we are always grateful, we wanted our students to really serve others. And through several partnerships now, Highland school is putting a little sweat equity into serving the communities they are a part of. After all, **there is nothing like actually seeing the people you are helping.**

The Highland School Student Council, advised by Mrs. Lelinho, and open to grades 4-6 have made it a priority to not only fundraise, but provide experiences for students that are centered in serving. In the Spring, Mrs. Lelinho brings members of the student council to a food shelter in Hoboken, where students work in a kitchen and prepare meals for the homeless. This year, Mrs. Lelinho took it a step further and brought her students to Paterson, where students and their families nailed wood studs together to build walls to be used in houses built by Habitat for Humanity. (The students discovered that driving nails into wood



Hammering for Habitat in Paterson: Students and their assembled walls.

is a little harder than it looks). Both of these experiences are hands on and get students personally involved in service to others.

Our Guidance Department, supervised by Mrs. Scala, has also set up 2 great opportunities to teach students empathy and appreciation while engaged in service. Mrs. Scala and the teachers routinely organize trips to Mill Gardens, a senior citizen home in Midland Park, where 5th grade students interact with the residents; talking, playing games and doing projects. These residents may even be visiting Highland School in the Spring to build with legos.

Even more exciting is the relationship we have started with the CTC academy in Fairlawn, which educates students K-5 with significant disabilities (but we like to say ‘differently-abled’). Select students were chosen to attend and serve as mentors to these differently-abled children, who it turns out, are teaching us more about life than we are teaching them. Who is serving who?

At Highland we believe these experiences are life changing as they give perspective to causes greater than ‘self.’ If we continue to work together to build awareness and continue to find more age appropriate opportunities, we will be sending out into the world, not just smart kids, but empathetic people, who are good human beings. Thank-you for your continued support.

Upcoming Events

"The only disability in life is a bad attitude." — Scott Hamilton

THE HIGHLAND
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Some GaGa Facts

Gaga Ball was invented in 1975 by a 17 year old camp counselor named Steven Steinberg in the Baltimore area.

Steinberg was the counselor of 6 year olds who loved hitting a ball, but the ball kept rolling away down a hill, so he put up some make shift walls and the rules evolved from there.

The name supposedly came about when Steinberg told the kids they look like babies, to which they all replied, "Goo-Goo-Ga-Ga."

December 11th: 5th and 6th grade Highland Winter Concert, 7pm (e-mails have been sent out from Ms. Georghiou and Mr. Peters regarding logistics)

December 13th: Early dismissal for students (Staff Professional Development)

December 13th: Mid Marking Period Check point (1/2 way through 2nd marking period)- check Power School and contact teachers if there any concerns, or to thank them.

December 16, 18, 20: PTA Holiday Store— students may purchase gifts during school. Look for information from the PTA.

December 19: Food Barn Assembly grades 3-4—students will learn to eat healthy and try some food. (letters sent home)

December 23: Giving Back to Midland Park— Mrs. Smith Walkathon. District is raising money for a faculty member who has cancer. Students who donate and participate will walk two miles to raise money for this Midland Park resident and faculty member. (Information distributed 12/6).

December 23: Class Parties at 11:30pm— Only approved foods please.

GA-GA Ball comes to Highland PE

Thanks to the Midland Park Elementary PTA the Highland Physical Education department has a new toy to introduce to the students. It is inflatable, can hold an entire class, and fans that healthy competitive fire we want in our students.

The Gaga Ball Pit, pictured below has become a favorite of Highland students. Students smack a ball around trying to get students out while bouncing off the walls in the process. The only question my teachers have: "Where was this when they were kids in school?"



The Rules of Ga-Ga Ms. Maimone's 3rd grade class enjoys some GaGa Ball.

1. All players start with one hand touching a wall of the pit.
2. The game begins with a chief teacher throwing the ball into the center of the pit.
3. When the ball enters the pit, the players scream "GA" for the first two bounces, and "GO" on the third bounce, after which the ball is in action.
4. Once the ball is in play, any player can hit the ball with an open hand.
5. If a ball touches a player below the knee (even if the player hit himself or herself) he or she is out and leaves the pit. If a player is hit above the knees, the play continues.
6. If the ball goes out of the Ga-Ga pit the last player to touch the ball is eliminated.
7. Using the walls of the octagon to aid in jumping is legal as long as the player does not permanently sit on the ledge of the octagon.
8. Players cannot hold the ball.
9. If a ball goes out of the pit, a player who is out may catch the ball to return to the game.
10. The last player standing is the winner of that round.