



# HUFFMAN HERALD

## The PTA Newsletter

### Message from the President, Cara Mendelsohn

#### New Year's Resolutions

Get organized. Eat right. Exercise. I make these resolutions each year, and I have already broken them (again!). But that doesn't mean I won't keep trying. We all make resolutions of one sort or another. The good thing is that by thinking of resolutions, we focus on what is important to us. It helps us look at ways we can improve and encourages us to try new things.

This year, I ask you to add volunteering at Huffman to your list of resolutions. Pick one day, one event and sign up. We all say we want a great education for our kids, but that entails more than just working on flash cards or reading books. Our teachers and administration are top notch and we are so lucky to have them! But a school goes from good to great when partnering with the parents and community. Working together with the school staff, we can make a difference in not just the lives of our own children, but of all the students. But did you know the secret? Volunteering at an elementary school is actually fun!

So, how to get started? First, if you are willing to help out, we have to know! Email [volunteers@huffmanpta.org](mailto:volunteers@huffmanpta.org), and you can get matched up with our upcoming events. Second, to volunteer in the building, you must have completed a background check with PISD. You can do this by going on the district website. We have a link to it from our Huffman PTA website at [www.huffmanpta.org](http://www.huffmanpta.org).

Specifically, we're looking for additional help with Multicultural Night (my favorite event of the year!), Fine Arts Night, the Family Festival, Teacher Appreciation Week, Field Day and our first-ever Year End Student Award Ceremony. There are so many great things happening – resolve to get in on the fun and make this the best year ever!

I wish you and your family a very happy and healthy 2007!

#### Construction Update

Isn't it GREAT!?! We are about to enter Phase III (the final phase) of the construction. Second and Third Grade classrooms renovations are in the final stage and the students will be in their new classrooms on January 29th. Fourth and fifth graders will move out to the portables on or after February 22<sup>nd</sup> for construction to begin in their area.

We are also very excited about our new, beautiful marquee. It will be finished off soon with a brick base. The engraved bricks are part of a current fundraiser; look for more information in this newsletter and on the school website.

A committee is in the process of commissioning a muralist to paint the long wall outside of the gym along with several other hall locations. Her work is amazing and will further beautify our 'new' school.

And last, but not least...Have your kids mentioned the new rock climbing wall in the gym? Make sure you check it out next time you visit the school (hopefully that will be tonight for Family Bingo and the Spelling Bee).

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**HUFFMAN'S GOLD KEY BUSINESS PARTNERS – THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT**



Kaleidoscope  
Dinner My Way  
Tutoring Club  
Planet Burrito  
Knowledge Points  
Avon-KT Handley  
Snip Its

Arbonne-Amy Mitchell  
Huntington Learning Center  
First Choice Emergency Room  
Willow Bend Chiropractic  
Dr. Stephen Rayburn, D.D.S  
Sigma Tutors  
Doug & Jeanne Wieser

The Viking Craftsman  
American Standard  
Huffman Girl Scouts  
Charo Chicken  
Adventure Kids  
AXA Advisors-Abe Mansour  
Cub Scout Pack #265

Motophoto  
Wal-Mart  
Maximedia Recording Studios  
Sport Clips  
Pump It Up!  
Burris and Associates/Certainteed  
Allegra Print & Imaging

# What Has Your PTA been Up To?

## Spirit Night

**By Margie Pisterzi, VP – Fundraising**

The December Spirit Night was held on the 7<sup>th</sup> at **Chick-Fil-A**. We want to thank Chick-Fil-A for their hospitality and their generous donation from the evening's proceeds.

If you and your family have yet to join us for a Spirit Night, you are missing some good friendly fun – a chance to socialize with other Huffman parents and see featured Huffman staff in a non-school setting.

We look forward to seeing everyone at the **Jan. 18th** Spirit Night at **Potbelly**, at the Park and Ohio locale, **6-8PM**. The Kindergarten Teacher Team will be featured. See you there!



## Volunteer of the Month December 2006

**By Traci Koen, VP – Volunteers**

December was a busy month for most everyone, with school activities, preparing for travel, guests and holiday activities. There are two people that we would like to recognize who contributed greatly to the efforts of our PTA during the hectic months of November and December.

### **Brigitte Petersen**

Brigitte is the Environmental Chairperson this year; she has been leading Huffman's first environmental club for the students as an after school program since September. The club focuses on educating the students about recycling and making environmentally conscious choices through many fun activities. You may have seen the posters around school - made by the students during the club - promoting awareness about Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.

Brigitte also led the litter-free lunch competition between grade levels. Along with club members, she measured the trash after each lunch period on a Monday and a Friday to see who was able to reduce their trash the most. Huffman's cafeteria also began organic recycling in late November, during each lunch period. In an effort to launch this program successfully, Brigitte spent many hours in the cafeteria and recruiting parent volunteers for lunches between the hours of 10:30am and 1:30pm to help the students learn and implement this process.

The PTA appreciates Brigitte taking on this new position and making a positive impact on our school and our environment! To help Brigitte in her efforts please contact her at [environment@huffmanpta.org](mailto:environment@huffmanpta.org). Thank you, Brigitte!

### **Michele Bennett**

Michele has been coordinating the YO packet, which means Youngest Only, and is the packet of information we receive on a regular basis in the backpacks of our youngest children at Huffman. She started this position with the PTA two years ago and established a committee of great volunteers who get together once a week to assemble the packets. At times she has been known to assemble them alone, but either way, the job is always done and we receive the information home each week during the school year.

Michele also stepped up this year to take on a second PTA position as our 2<sup>nd</sup> grade coordinator when she realized there was a need. In this position, Michele has been in contact with the grade level teachers for their workroom needs, planning holiday parties and arranging a special lunch for the teachers. Michele is one of those true volunteers who graciously steps up to fill the needs of our PTA. To volunteer assembling YO packets, please contact [yo@huffmanpta.org](mailto:yo@huffmanpta.org). Thank you, Michele!

*To nominate a volunteer to be the next volunteer of the month contact [volunteers@huffmanpta.org](mailto:volunteers@huffmanpta.org).*

The second half of the school year brings many opportunities to volunteer. Please take a look at the upcoming events for January and February and think about where you might be able to volunteer.

**Thursday, January 11 – Family Bingo Night and Spelling Bee, [programs@huffmanpta.org](mailto:programs@huffmanpta.org)**

**Sat. January 20 – Bike Rodeo, [youthprotection@huffmanpta.org](mailto:youthprotection@huffmanpta.org)**

**Thursday, February 1 – Math Night, [volunteers@huffmanpta.org](mailto:volunteers@huffmanpta.org)**

**Friday, February 16 – Multicultural night, [multicultural@huffmanpta.org](mailto:multicultural@huffmanpta.org)**

## Congratulations to our three Area 15 Reflections Winners

**Blake Castleman  
Grace Cavalier  
Evan Gabriel**

The whole school is proud of our three High Flying Hawks! Way to Go!

## Congratulations to Huffman's Teacher of the Year nominees



Lindsey Jensen and Laura McKenzie

### Mad Science Starts Again...

Mad Science will be back at Huffman conducting an exciting NEW series called **Crazy Chemworks** with tons of hands-on Lab experiments. The 8 week session will run every Wednesday from January 31 – March 28. Registration can be done online at [www.madscience.org/dallas](http://www.madscience.org/dallas) or by filling out a registration form, available from the Huffman forms box in the hall outside the front office.



Watch your child's YO packet for information coming home soon about after-school Spanish and Art opportunities.

For questions about the after-school programs, contact Lynn Benjamin: [childrensprogram@huffmanpta.org](mailto:childrensprogram@huffmanpta.org).

### From the Front Office

In order to make the carpool lines move more smoothly during afternoon pick-up, please make sure you have a visible sign, large enough to be read from outside your car, bearing your child's name and grade level.

## "Fun and Games Around the World"



### Celebrating Huffman's Multicultural Diversity Friday, February 16

#### What:

Multicultural Night is an event that brings the cultural diversity of the Huffman community together to celebrate each family's heritage.

Last year over 30 countries were represented by Huffman families.

This year's theme is "**Fun and Games Around the World**" with an emphasis on showing the children different games from differing countries and that many of the same games are played all over the world yet with a cultural twist.

Families can wear native or traditional dress in a parade of nations.

Some families will decorate a table educating the children on their country and heritage.

Other families may want to teach the children by creating an interactive game that represents their country or show them games or toys that are played in their homeland.

#### Where:

Huffman Elementary Gym and Cafeteria

#### When:

Friday, February 16, 2007

6:00PM – 8:00PM

Set up between 10:00am – 5:00pm Friday

#### Why:

Because YOU make up the Huffman family and we want everyone to know each other through mutual respect for one's diversity.

If you would like to participate and/or volunteer in this wonderful event, please complete the sign-up form attached with the newsletter (or find it at [www.huffmanpta.org](http://www.huffmanpta.org)) and return it to your child's homeroom teacher.

## Are You Talking to Me?

Submitted by Rose Taper,  
Parent Education Chairperson

Effective family communication does not just happen;

**STRONG FAMILIES MAKE IT HAPPEN.** Here's how!

Be aware of **non-verbal communication.**

- Does the speaker's verbal message match the non-verbal message?
- Do you the listener have your fists clenched? Are you open to a hug? Have you turned away?

When listening, practice these things:

- **Concentration:** Focus on what the speaker is saying. Do not assume you know what he is about to say and start planning your answer.
- **Tolerance:** Maintain an openness and respect for the speaker's opinions.
- **Rephrasing:** Check your interpretation of the speaker's message. "Do you mean?" "Did I hear you say...?"
- **Sensitivity:** Pay attention to the speaker's feelings as well as his words. Acknowledge and reflect his feelings in your next question.

State your position in **I-messages**. "I am embarrassed when you raise your voice and use that kind of language."

Work toward **self-disclosure** by sharing personal information. As self-disclosure builds, trust builds.

Disarm anger and criticism by **acknowledging the emotion** rather than talking about the content.

Recognize **gender differences**: Males and females communicate differently. Men have more difficulty in sending and receiving non-verbal messages. In general, women disclose more and use an expressive style while men disclose less and use a style that is controlling and task-oriented.

### Parenting Quick Tips

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## ¿Me hablas a mí?

La comunicación efectiva en la familia no se suscita por arte de magia.

**LAS FAMILIAS UNIDAS HACEN QUE ESTA SUCEDA.** ¡A continuación te decimos cómo!

Esté alerta a la **comunicación no-verbal.**

- ¿Concuerda la comunicación verbal con el mensaje no verbal (expresiones físicas)?
- Cuando escuchas... ¿Mantienes tus puños listos para pelear? ¿Estás dispuesto a recibir un abrazo? O simplemente te das la vuelta.

Al escuchar, practica lo siguiente:

- **Concentración:** Concéntrate en lo que te dice la persona que habla. No asumas que sabes lo que va a decir, ni planees la respuesta antes de que él termine de hablar.
- **Tolerancia:** Respeta y mantén mente abierta hacia la opinión de la persona que habla.
- **Analiza:** Checa tu interpretación del mensaje de la persona que habla. "Quieres decir que...?" "¿Dijiste que...?"
- **Sensibilidad:** Pon atención a los sentimientos de la persona que habla así como a sus palabras. Reconoce y refleja dichos sentimientos en tu próxima pregunta.

Afirma tu posición con **mensajes de personales**. "Me siento avergonzado cuando levantas la voz y usas ese tipo de lenguaje."

Trabaja **compartiendo información personal**. Al compartir información personal, la confianza aumenta.

Disminuye la cólera y el criticismo; **reconociendo el sentimiento** en lugar de discutir el contenido.

Reconoce que existen **diferencias en el género**: Los hombres y las mujeres se comunican de diferente manera. Los varones presentan más dificultad al enviar y recibir mensajes no verbales. En general, las mujeres muestran sus sentimientos y usan un estilo expresivo. Mientras que los hombres demuestran menos los sentimientos y usan un estilo controlador y enfocado hacia el objetivo.

### Educando a sus hijos Consejos

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## Gear into Action at Huffman's FIRST ANNUAL BIKE RODEO



**Hey, kids!** Grab your bike and helmet and join the Plano Police Department, Richardson Bike Mart and Cub Scouts at Huffman's first annual Bike Rodeo! The Bike Rodeo will feature a bike check, an obstacle course, bike races and safety tips. And did we mention? ... GREAT PRIZES!!!

Our goal is to educate all Huffman students about bicycle safety in a fun, memorable way. We encourage all parents and children to attend and bring along your family, friends and neighbors. We will need parents to help during the event. Please call Emily Greenfield at (972) 380-8267 if you are able to attend and willing to lend a hand. Mark your calendars:

When? **Saturday, January 20, 2007  
9AM to 12 NOON**

Where? **Huffman Elementary parking lot**

### *Newcomer's Breakfast*



**Friday, January 19<sup>th</sup> 7:45am  
Huffman Cafeteria**

Are you new to Plano, new to Texas or just new to Huffman? If so, we want to give you the opportunity to meet other parents just like you.

Whether you have children the same age or have relocated from the same state, the connections you make today could turn out to be friendships that last throughout your years at Huffman.....or longer!

**Please RSVP** to [newcomers@huffmanpta.org](mailto:newcomers@huffmanpta.org) or return a registration form (see [huffmanpta.org](http://huffmanpta.org)) to the Huffman front office on or **before Tuesday, January 16<sup>th</sup>**.

## Ski Plano!

**Ski Plano!**, for the Plano ISD Education Foundation features: Cool Beverages and Hors d'oeuvres, Dinner and Music, Silent Auction, Avalanche Snowball Drop, and Luck of the Draw Mystery Prize. The attire is: Ski or Aprés Ski Attire  
*2006 attendees included*



*PISD Superintendent,  
Dr. Doug Otto, pictured at right.*

Reservations are required by January 31, 2007. The event always sells out, so reserve your seats early! Tickets are \$100 per person.

We hope you will consider attending this PISD Education Foundation fundraising event, on **February 3, 2007 at Southfork Ranch.**

*The mission of the Plano ISD Education Foundation, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, is to support quality education for Plano ISD students by generating and channeling private and corporate resources toward areas of identified need, increasing community involvement and support, and encouraging open communication between the community and our schools.*

This foundation was responsible for the grants recently awarded to Huffman teachers Andra Harris, Jane Oestreich and Hoda Abdel-Ghani. The foundation also puts on the **Teacher of the Year gala**. Fundraisers such as Ski Plano! make these grants and events possible. Numerous Huffman parents, past and present, are involved in the planning committee and will be showing their **Huffman Pride** by attending. If you are interested in purchasing a ticket (or a table of 10!) please email [info@huffmanpta.org](mailto:info@huffmanpta.org).



## Huffman Science Fair OPEN HOUSE

**Monday January 22 3-6 pm**

This is open to Huffman parents and students to view all Science Fair Projects.

Reminder: Projects are due Wednesday, January 17, and the Science Fair is Friday, January 19, 2007.

To contact Marci Watson, email her at [Marci.Watson@pisd.edu](mailto:Marci.Watson@pisd.edu).

## Upcoming Events

- Thurs., 1/11 – B-Fun Night  
Family Bingo and Spelling Bee  
6:30-7:30PM
- Mon., 1/15 – Student/Teacher Holiday  
M.L. King Birthday observed
- Wed., 1/17 – Science projects due for  
Huffman Third, Fourth and Fifth Graders
- Thurs., 1/18 – Spirit Night at Potbelly,  
6-8PM
- Fri., 1/19 – Newcomer's Breakfast  
7:45AM in the Huffman Cafeteria
- Sat., 1/20 – Bike Rodeo, 9AM – Noon  
in the Huffman Parking Lot
- Mon., 1/22 – PTA Board Meeting and  
Practical Parenting presentation  
9AM
- Mon., 1/22 – Science Fair Open House  
3-6PM
- Mon., 1/22 – Next meeting of H.E.L.P.  
2:45-4PM
- Tues., 1/30 – Deadline for Mad Science  
enrollment
- Thurs., 2/1 – Math Night
- Fri., 2/9 – Teacher Appreciation Lunch
- Wed., 2/14 – Class Valentine Parties
- Fri., - 2/16 – Multicultural Night
- Mon., 2/19 – Teacher Development Day  
No school for Plano Students
- Tues., 2/20 – TAKS reading test for 3<sup>rd</sup> and  
5<sup>th</sup> grades  
TAKS writing test for 4<sup>th</sup> grade

## PTA QUICK LINKS

Plano Council PTA  
<http://www.planopta.org/>

Area 15 PTA  
<http://www.area15.txpta.net/>

Texas PTA  
<http://www.txpta.org/>

National PTA  
<http://www.pta.org/>

## TX PTA Legislative Day is February 28 in Austin

Field trips are not just for kids! Don't miss the day Texas PTA goes to the Capitol!

Participants will be briefed on Texas PTA's 2007 legislative priorities, receive talking points on priorities, and take home tips on ways to stimulate community interest.

The day's activities include Breakfast and Lunch at the Texas PTA State Office, Guest Speakers including Dr. Shirley Neeley, Commissioner of Education, and an afternoon visit with legislators.

To find out how to sign up, visit  
<http://www.txpta.org/2007CapitolDay.html>



Our engraved brick path campaign is now underway. If you would like to purchase a brick please pick up an order form in the front office. Return the completed form to Huffman with check to Susie Learmont's attention.

### Brick Prices

1 Brick	\$50.00
2 Bricks	\$100.00
3 Bricks	\$125.00

**Buy 2, get 3rd for half price!**

All proceeds of this fundraiser are dedicated to murals and campus beautification for the newly remodeled building.

The next meeting of the PISD PTA Council is Tuesday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10AM at the Administrative Building, 2700 W 15<sup>th</sup> St.

**Texas  
PTA**

*everychild.one voice.®*

Keep current with all the latest news at  
[www.huffmanpta.org](http://www.huffmanpta.org)