

# The Eagle's Nest

THE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER OF PITTSBURGH LIBERTY K-5

December 2019

Vol. 5, Issue 3



*In November, Fifth graders and their families gathered for a feast—see story p. 3 . For more photos of our amazing kids, visit: Liberty Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/LibertyPPS> LEAF facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/PghLibertyPTO>*

## December Calendar

### **Parent Advisory Council (PAC) Meeting, Thurs. Dec 5, Pittsburgh SciTech:**

PAC is the District's central mechanism for ensuring that parents are well informed and can help develop programming and policy. Liberty is currently in need of a representative at PAC. If you're interested in filling this role, contact LouAnn "Ms. Z" Zwieryznski, principal: [lzwieryznski1@pghschools.org](mailto:lzwieryznski1@pghschools.org)

**Equity Committee & LEAF/PSCC Meeting: Wed., Dec. 18, 5pm–7pm, School Library:** See story page 4. We'll have a brief break for a light dinner at 6pm. Childcare will be provided. Please RSVP Maria: [president@pghleaf.org](mailto:president@pghleaf.org)

**Dave & Buster fundraising deadline Dec. 5th:** We're selling Dave & Buster's PowerCards! LEAF (Liberty Elementary Academic Fund) will get 1/2 of the money from each card! The Fundraiser order form is attached--see last page. When you have completed, send back to the school in an envelope with LEAF: DAVE & BUSTERS written on it WITH PAYMENT included in the envelope (checks can be made out to Liberty Elementary Academic Fund).

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**Newsletter submissions due Thurs. Dec. 12:** Email to [president@pghleaf.org](mailto:president@pghleaf.org)

**Tues., Dec. 10th, 5-9 pm: Chipotle Fundraiser, 5986 Centre Ave:** Make dinner a selfless act by joining us for a fundraiser to support LEAF at the Chipotle in East Liberty. Tell the cashier you're supporting the cause to make sure that 33% of the proceeds will be donated to LEAF!

**Pittsburgh Liberty Elementary School's Winter Performance.**

- K-2nd Grade: Thursday, December 12, at 2:15, school cafeteria.
- 3rd, 4th, 5th Grades: Thursday, December 19, at 2:15, school cafeteria.

## **LEAF, PSCC, Equity Committee updates**

We have spent the past 2 PSCC/LEAF meetings creating a mission and starting to plan action items for the Equity Committee. We will now be trying out a new format on the third Wednesday of the month -

First, family activities centered around the content your children are learning will start the evening for about 30 minutes, followed by a 15 minute business meeting for LEAF (we will discuss fundraising, upcoming events, and teacher requests).

We will then have dinner and spend about 1 hour working to accomplish the action items for our equity committee.

Childcare will be provided! We look forward to seeing you, but if you are unable to make it to the meeting, please remember that your voice is important, too. Keep in touch on facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/PghLibertyPTO/>, and reach out at any time: [president@pghleaf.org](mailto:president@pghleaf.org)

### ***Winter (are we really there yet?)***

We are really not technically in winter yet, but we have seen snow! A couple of ideas to get outside during the winter months -

Pittsburgh Snow Angels - FREE exercise!

<https://pittsburghpa.gov/snowangels/index.html>

If you can lend a hand shoveling snow for a neighbor who is unable to shovel, sign up at the website and they will connect you with someone requesting help shoveling.

***Pennsylvania Snow Pass – Discounted ski tickets in PA for 4th and 5th graders***

<https://www.skipa.com/kids/4th5th-grade-snowpass>

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4th and 5th graders in the state of PA can sign up for a Snowpass for \$35 (before Dec 1) or \$40 (after Dec 1)

### What it Includes:

- (1) 4th & 5th grader First Time Ski/Snowboard Package (beginner lift, lesson & rental package)
- (3) complimentary one-session child lift tickets when accompanied by a paying adult.
- (1) 50% off the adult Learn to Ski/Snowboard package to one area of your choice.

### **Not Winter**

If you really don't want to think about winter, then help us think about Fun Fair! We will have our first planning meeting in January, date TBA. Email [president@pghleaf.org](mailto:president@pghleaf.org) to join the Fun Fair Team!!!

## **Giving back!**

Liberty staff and students donated \$425 to the American Cancer Society from our October Candy sale! Thanks to the H.O.W. (Helping Our World) Club and all who helped out!

## **5th Grade Family Feast**

For the past 12 years the 5th grade families have hosted a Thanksgiving Feast. Students, families and teachers have joined together in creating their own Thanksgiving tradition. This year we celebrated on Wednesday November 20. The students started by sharing whom and what they are grateful for. After sharing, everyone gathered to eat some delicious food!

## **Black History**

Each year, Black History Month culminates with a K-2nd grade student performance. Building on this beloved school tradition, starting in 2019-2020, LEAF will elect a Black History Chair to more formally organize Liberty's recognition of Black trailblazers throughout the school year. Contact Jennifer Blair Edwards: [jablair1@hotmail.com](mailto:jablair1@hotmail.com)

## **Gifted services at Liberty**

Every Friday, a group of Liberty students take a bus to Pittsburgh Gifted Center (a.k.a. Greenway), a school campus in the West End, to participate in what's known as Gifted

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and Talented Education Services. Per their website, the overall aim is to provide educational opportunities and experiences to help high-achieving students extend their learning, develop individual potential, enhance their self-concept, and become life-long, independent learners. “PPS is committed to providing differentiated activities and opportunities,” the site states, “through which students can discover and develop their unique and individual needs, interests, talents and abilities.” In addition to the instruction students receive at Greenway, students also receive gifted services at Liberty through differentiation in their classes.

### ***What is "gifted?"***

What is “gifted?” In this context, it means higher-than-average IQ. If average is within the of 85 to 110 range, gifted is 115, 120, 130, and so on. (For perspective: Einstein was 147!)

Some signs that your child may be gifted: The child is a quick study and absorbs new knowledge fast. The child just somehow knows things, and you wonder, “When did she learn that?” The child might be bored at school. There are misconceptions surrounding IQ: It’s important to keep in mind that it is absolutely possible to have a learning disability and a higher-than-average IQ. And sometimes, the reason a child is misbehaving is because she or he is bored—and truly could benefit from the gifted program.

### ***To have your child tested, a few things to keep in mind:***

A few things to keep in mind if you’re planning to have your child tested for gifted:

- Barb Bradley, a Gifted Center faculty member, suggests: First, talk to your child's teacher regarding the student's progress through the lens of gifted education. “Most conversations are around progress in the regular curriculum,” she says. “When considering testing you would ask questions more around what types of differentiation have been needed for your child. Is your child going beyond what is expected on assignments regularly? Has the teacher needed to enrich the assignments to meet the child’s needs? How often is this needed? Does the child have a strong desire to find out additional information on a topic being studied and bring that information back to their peers?” If you decide to have your child tested, contact Liberty’s social worker, Erin Kelly, to request a form. It will be provided within 10 days—the child will then be scheduled within 60 days of submission of your completed form. (The 60-day clock is paused during the summer and resumes at the start of the school year.)
- There’s good reason to not tell your child what the test is for; it can lead to a lot of anxiety, stress, and potential heartache.

- It is possible to have students tested as early as kindergarten; however, the district strongly discourages this, for several reasons: PPS students do not start going to Greenway until 1st grade. Additionally, waiting gives the children time to settle into school, and also allows their teachers to get to know them and make the best recommendations possible to the gifted center. And in the meantime, the faculty will accommodate the children, enriching their learning onsite as needed—talk to your child’s teacher if you have questions.
- Testing only happens during the school year. This is new as of 2018–19.

### ***What to expect after the test***

- If a student has an IQ of 130, they are automatically admitted into gifted services.
- If the child is within the range of 120-129 (or maybe 115), the gifted team will do a review. When there is a need for additional information, they will ask the school social worker to request a portfolio of the student’s work. Then the Gifted Center makes the determination. In those situations, it is very helpful for our school social worker to sit down with parents and discuss the big picture for the child, because the department is aware that there are many things that can affect IQ testing score: any history of trauma, poverty, grief, loss, feeling unsafe in their neighborhood, etc. It’s important to share any factors that should be taken into consideration; this information will be kept confidential.

If a child is not admitted to gifted services, it is by all means not the end of the world! The reason the service is run by the Department of Special Education is because it’s an exceptionality. These kids need more services (they do have IEP plans).

### ***Equity in gifted services***

In recent years, media outlets and education advocates have raised important questions and dialogue about racial bias in gifted services:

- [“Who gets to be considered ‘gifted’ in Pittsburgh schools? Too few black girls.”](#) PublicSource, March 16, 2017.
- [“If everyone got screened, gifted education in Pittsburgh could be more equitable. School officials aren’t sold.”](#) PublicSource, March 17, 2017.
- ["Keys to Expand Access to the Gifted Program in the Pittsburgh Public School District"](#) An issue brief by A+ Schools that examines identification processes used by PPS and nearby districts; compares the demographic profile of the district compared to those students identified as gifted; and highlights steps that other districts have taken to be more inclusive, as well as ways to expand enhanced learning opportunities to all students.

- For more information Visit the Pittsburgh Public Schools gifted services website at: <https://www.pghschools.org/giftedandtalented>

*Editor's note: The above article has a permanent home online! Visit LEAF's website, [pghleaf.org](http://pghleaf.org) for this and much more helpful information for every phase of your child's journey at Liberty K-5.*

## Dave and Busters Fundraiser

Get ready for a FUN fundraiser! For the month of November we will be selling Dave & Buster's PowerCards! You and your student can purchase for yourself and sell to family and friends as well! It will make a great holiday present and they will be available before the winter break. LEAF (Liberty Elementary Academic Fund) will get 1/2 of the money from each card!

How to do it? The Fundraiser order form is attached--see last page. When you have completed, send back to the school in an envelope with LEAF: DAVE & BUSTERS written on it WITH PAYMENT included in the envelope (checks can be made out to Liberty Elementary Academic Fund). The deadline to order is December 5th

Any questions? Contact Tamesha Bottoms ([tameshabottoms@gmail.com](mailto:tameshabottoms@gmail.com))

## Holiday fundraising on AmazonSmile

If you do any of your holiday shopping on Amazon.com, there's an easy and automatic way to support Liberty students at the same time. Amazon's nonprofit arm supports a site called AmazonSmile—which is virtually identical to Amazon in terms of pricing, selection, and convenience. When you check out, 0.05% of your purchase price will be donated directly to the charity of your choice. Simply use your usual login credentials, but via the AmazonSmile address instead ([smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com)). Then, when the site prompts you to select your charity, type "Liberty Elementary Academic Fund" in the search bar.



## Spanish

*Colors: Los colores*

orange: *anaranjado*  
 yellow: *amarillo*  
 blue: *azul*  
 red: *rojo*  
 green: *verde*  
 black: *negro*  
 brown: *marron, cafe*

pink: *rosado*  
 purple: *morado*  
 white: *blanco*  
 gray: *gris*  
 gold: *dorado*  
 silver: *plateado*  
 bronze: *bronce*

### **Months: 12 Meses del ano**

January: *enero*  
 February: *Febrero*  
 March: *Marzo*  
 April: *Abril*  
 May: *Mayo*  
 June: *junio*

July: *Julio*  
 August: *Agosto*  
 September: *Septiembre*  
 October: *Octubre*  
 November: *noviembre*  
 December: *Diciembre*

### **Four Seasons of the year: estaciones del ano**

winter: *el invierno*  
 spring: *la primavera*

summer: *el verano, or el estio*  
 autumn or fall: *el otono*

### **Questions?– Preguntas**

What?: *¿Que?*  
 Why?: *¿Por que?*  
 Who?: *¿Quien?*  
 Which?: *¿Cual?*

When?: *¿Cuando?*  
 How?: *¿Como?*  
 Where?: *¿Donde?*

### **Answers– Respuestas**

Yes: *si*  
 No problem: *sin problema*  
 No: *no*  
 I have no idea: *No tenga ni idea*

Maybe: *Tal vez*  
 Always: *siempre*  
 Never: *nunca*  
 Of course: *claro*

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## **Recipes: Holiday Dinner**

### **Maple–Roasted Sweet Potatoes**



Ingredients

2 1/2 pounds sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1 1/2 inch pieces  
 (about 8 cups)  
 1/3 cup pure maple syrup  
 2 tablespoons butter, melted  
 1 tablespoon lemon juice  
 1/2 teaspoon salt  
 freshly ground pepper to taste

Directions

1) Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.  
 2) Arrange sweet potatoes in an even layer in a 9 by 13 inch glass baking dish. Combine maple syrup, butter, lemon juice, salt and pepper in a small bowl. Pour the mixture over the sweet potatoes; toss to coat.  
 3) Cover and bake the sweet potatoes for 15 minutes. Uncover, stir and cook, stirring every 15 minutes, until tender and starting to brown. 45 to 50 minutes more.  
 4) Remove from oven (by an adult) and Enjoy!

**Chocolate Overload Cookies**Ingredients:

1 package devil's food chocolate cake mix  
 3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) butter, softened  
 1/4 cup Hershey's cocoa  
 2 eggs  
 2 cups ( 11.5 oz package) Hershey's milk chocolate chips  
 3/4 cup quick-cooking oats (optional)

Directions

1) Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Mix all ingredients, add chocolate chips last.  
 2) Roll dough into 2 inch balls and place on an ungreased cookie sheet.  
 3) Bake 10 to 12 minutes, until set.  
 4) Have an adult remove them from the oven. Cool completely, and enjoy.

## Spirit wear

Liberty spirit wear can be worn as part of the school uniform! Order your child- or adult-sized shirts, hoodies, sweatpants, and sweatshirts online any time at [bit.ly/LibertySpiritWear](http://bit.ly/LibertySpiritWear) ; items are delivered monthly, starting this month (October).



*This newsletter is produced by the parent-teacher organization known as LEAF (Liberty Elementary Academic Fund), a nonprofit organization. LEAF's mission is to support the students, teachers and families at Pittsburgh Liberty K-5 through fundraising, volunteering, and community events. Visit our site for more info: [www.pghleaf.org](http://www.pghleaf.org)*