

The Eagle's Nest

THE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER OF PITTSBURGH LIBERTY K-5

Oct. 2019

Vol. 5, Issue 1

Celebrating *Dia de los Muertos*



LEAF's sugar skull factory is in full swing! At Liberty's community-wide Dia de los Muertos celebration on Oct. 25th, the children will hand-decorate their own calaveras. See story page 6.

October Calendar

Parent Information Sessions for the ALICE Drill, Oct. 1, 8AM, and Oct. 7, 5PM. ALICE stands for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate. For more information: bit.ly/pps-alice

ALICE Drill, Thurs., Oct. 10. Liberty will practice to ensure students know where our rally point is located in case of any evacuation.

Parent Advisory Council (PAC) Meeting, Thurs., Oct. 4, 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

Scholastic Book Fair, Fri. Oct 11 - Fri. Oct 18. Volunteers needed! See page 5.

Equity Committee Meeting, Wed. October 16, 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

Parent-Teacher Conferences, Oct. 17 4:30–7:30pm and October 18 from 8–11am. Please look for a letter from your child's homeroom teacher to schedule a time that is convenient for you.

Newsletter submissions due, Mon. Oct. 21. Email to president@pghleaf.org

Picture Day, Tues. Oct. 22.

5th Grade Parent meeting, Oct. 23 6–7pm: Topics: 5th Grade Field Trips and Magnet School Fair

Community celebration of *Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead)*, Friday, Oct. 25, 6-8PM, School Cafeteria: LEAF's 2nd annual family potluck supper, silent auction fundraiser, and kids' craft-tacular! See story page 6. To volunteer contact Jennifer: jablair1@hotmail.com

Fri. Nov. 1 (half day of school),

- ***Family Friday:*** Liberty invites students to bring a family member or other beloved adult to school. It's a chance to see the great work our kids are doing, meet the faculty and your fellow Liberty families, and join our children for activities in the classroom.
 - 9-9:30 – Parent activity
 - 9:30-10:15 – Classroom activities
- ***Students' in-school celebration of *Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead)*.*** Parent volunteers needed to help make bread! See story page 7.
- ***Early dismissal:*** 12:56

Principal's Corner

Welcome Back! The start of this school year has gone very well. All the work we have done over the past several years is really starting to yield better results for our school community.

As many of you know, we have been using PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) as a way to prevent negative behaviors and support students in making better choices. Below, you will find our WHY, WHEN and HOW we teach our expectations.

Why we teach our school expectations:

- Refreshes the school rules and procedures with students
- Reminds students what expectations are
- Can apply to all students in class without “blaming” them for doing anything wrong or bad
- Non-threatening
- Takes the “blame” off the teacher or authority figure for having to follow rules and expectations.
- It is something all students are already familiar with, so no new teaching needs to take place, which makes it fast and more easily comprehended
- Going over the rules and expectations multiple times reinforces good behavior choices

When we teach our school expectations:

1. When a student, students, group, or class are not following PBIS rules and expectations
2. When the class or school seems to be “slipping” in following through PBIS expectations
3. Midway through the year, or long breaks, as a refresher and to help start back after a break on a positive foot
4. On a regular basis as part of classroom management, for example, reviewing one PBIS rule or expectation per week

How do we teach our expectations:

1. Use a calm, neutral, non-threatening tone
2. Do short lessons, demonstrations, and discussions on PBIS concepts, routine, expectations, etc. on a weekly, daily, and/or monthly basis
3. Randomly call on students to state specific PBIS expectations or concepts, then reward them with a small treat, for example, “Suzy, how are we supposed to line up for recess?”

4. As part of regular redirection, for example, “start your assignment and work quietly to respect others who are working” or “make sure to wash your hands after using the restroom”

This year we added onto our Positive Referral System that we started at the beginning of last year by mailing postcards home to parents when their child receives a “Soaring Eagle” ticket when they are “caught” being Respectful, being Responsible, or achieving Academic Excellence. When students receive a Soaring Eagle ticket, they come to the office to be congratulated, pick a number for a raffle, and receive a small reward.

When students make a negative choice, consequences may be assigned. We use a progressive system that aligns with the infraction a student has done. We have lunch, recess, after-school, and Saturday detention, but we really work to limit recess detention. As a part of Restorative Practices, the student may need to give back to the school community through service work. We also try to avoid Out of School Suspension but for reasons of safety, a student may receive an out of school suspension.

We are looking forward to a wonderful school year and hope to see you at one of our many events!

*Sincerely,
Ms. LouAnn Zwieryznski, Principal*

Planning the year ahead: LEAF, PSCC, and the Equity Committee

There are several ways for parents and teachers to get involved at Liberty and support the school community. The primary groups with this purpose are:

- PSCC: Run by the school. Discusses governance and curriculum.
- LEAF: Run by parents. Traditionally, LEAF plans events, raises funds, and provides parents a voice for advocacy.

On the third Wednesday of every month of the school year, PSCC and LEAF meetings are held back-to-back at 5PM and 6PM, respectively (with a break for a FREE dinner in between!).

In the past year, PSCC and LEAF have collaborated often—most recently on a joint venture, the Equity Committee. In February and May of this last school year, we teamed up and started a conversation to address the very real opportunity gap that exists for students in our school and across the district (a helpful video on the topic is at bit.ly/opportunity-gap).

This school year we are continuing our work on this important issue. On Wednesday, September 18th we began creating a mission and a vision for the Liberty Equity Committee. We discussed the reasons WHY we need an equity committee at Liberty and brainstormed WHAT the equity committee can and will do to build and create a more equitable space for all of our children to learn in. We welcome all members of the Liberty community (teachers, parents, staff, grandparents, guardians) to join us when we continue this process and generate our plans for the coming year at the October PSCC and LEAF meetings on Wed. Oct. 16, 5pm–7pm, School Library.

The following is a tentative plan for this year's PSCC meeting topics.

- Oct 16: Equity Committee
- Nov 20: Social Emotional Learning (Online)
- Dec 18: Math Fun Night
- Jan 15: Equity Committees (Curriculum, Data, Community)
- First week of Feb (date TBD): PSCC Budget meeting (Online)
- Mar 18: Spanish
- Apr 15: Health Equity
- May 20: Equity Committee Report Out and Plan for 2020-2021

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

Attention, Liberty teachers!

Does your classroom need a facelift that doesn't fit in the budget? Is there a special training you need? Or special equipment, supplies, or costumes for Liberty events? Please fill out the form at bit.ly/pghleaf-teachers, submit it in the LEAF box in the school office, and get reimbursed by LEAF, our parent organization. The check will then be delivered to you shortly after the monthly LEAF meeting.

Book fair volunteers needed

The Scholastic Book Fair at Liberty is Friday Oct 11 through Friday Oct 18! We have a big need for parents to help set up, staff, and take down the fair. To sign up, visit pghleaf.org/volunteer. Questions? Contact Tisha Woo, twoo1@pghschools.org

Tentative dates/times:

- Thursday 10/10: set up the bookfair after school, 4-5:30 pm
- Friday 10/11: process sales and assist student shoppers, 9:30-11:30 am
- Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 10-15-10/17: process sales and assist student shoppers, 9:30-11:30 am
- Friday 10/18 or 10/21 (date subject to change depending on Scholastic's pickup time): pack up fair (time TBA, 1.5 hour commitment)

Dia de los Muertos—a Liberty tradition!



Hello, Liberty families! Elaine Vitone here—2nd grade parent, editor of this newsletter, and organizer of this year's community-wide *Dia de los Muertos* celebration Fri. Oct. 25th, 6-8PM. (Waves!)

Building on the success of last year, the parent-teacher organization (aka LEAF) is super psyched to host this second-annual potluck supper, silent auction, and kids' craft-tacular. The event is in observance of *Dia de los Muertos*, a delightful Mexican holiday that celebrates the lives of deceased friends and family. At the event, the children draw pictures of their loved ones and place them on our school altar, which they adorn with handmade paper flowers and *calaveras* (sugar skulls).

Last year, my family made about 100 sugar skulls—blank canvases that Liberty kids decorated at the party (pictured, right—they're about the size of a small apple). We're aiming to make at least that many again this year!

At the event, please stop by the silent auction table and bid on restaurant gift certificates, Pittsburgh-based lessons and activities, and local gift baskets! Plus a few decorated sugar skulls (pictured, previous page, left) and T-shirts, courtesy my super talented mother-in-law.

If you would like to donate to the auction a gift basket or gift certificate from your business, contact Maria Guyette: president@pghleaf.org

If you'd like to volunteer (bring a potluck item, help setup, help cleanup, or work at the auction table), contact Jennifer Blair Edwards: jablair1@hotmail.com

Parent volunteers needed Nov. 1st. To make *pan de muertos* (bread) at Liberty!

In addition to our community-wide celebration on Oct, 25 (see previous story), *Día de los Muertos* will be celebrated by the students in school on the following Friday, Nov. 1, from 9:30-noon.

On that day, intermediate would appreciate several parent volunteers to assist the kids with the making of their *pan de muertos* (bread)—a school tradition more than a decade in the making! There are not any prerequisites needed to help out other than a tolerance for some noise, the acceptance of the possibility of food coloring-stained hands—and clearances on file, of course. Visit bit.ly/pps-volunteer for those forms.

Volunteer opportunities for that day (end times are approximate)

- Kindergarten: 2 volunteers, 9:15-11 am
- 1st grade: 2 volunteers, 9:15-11 am
- 3rd grade: 2 volunteers, 9:15 am-12 pm
- 4th & 5th grades: 3-4 volunteers to help with dead bread, 9:15 am-12 pm

To volunteer please contact Ms. Tracy Theobald: ttheobald1@pghschools.org

Meet the FACE coordinator

Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Coordinators promote student achievement by collaborating with school staff, parents and family members, and community organizations to provide a network of support for students. This year's FACE coordinator is Ms. Kelly Connor. Her role is to act as a liaison between Liberty and families in the communities in which they live. This also includes the Shadyside business

community. She provides data regarding family engagement to the district, in addition to organizing and promoting events that happen at Liberty. She is the co-administrator for the Liberty Facebook page, and is eager to have many more. (Please like the page at facebook.com/LibertyPPS!) She would also love to recruit more families to participate in our Liberty life, whether it be as volunteers, tutors, or chaperones. If you are interested, please contact her at kconnor1@pghschools.org

Meet your School Board Rep, Sylvia Wilson

- 2017 Committee Chair, Education
- District 8 (PIAA) Representative
- Board of Museum Liaison

Committees Chaired:

- Personnel
- Education

Committees Co-Chaired:

- Negotiations

Ms. Wilson is a retired PPS teacher who worked for 26 years at Spring Hill, Miller, and Manchester Elementary Schools. While teaching, she served on the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers Executive Board from 1977 through 2010. She was the elected secretary on the board from 1979 through 2010. She later was a full time staff member of the PFT as the Assistant to the President for 14 years prior to her retirement in 2013. Sylvia Wilson has been active in the community with various organizations. For more than twenty years, she was an active volunteer with community youth baseball and football organizations. Additionally, Ms. Wilson serves on the ALCOSAN Board as the joint city-county appointee, and is currently the Board Chair (first woman and first African American to hold the position). Ms. Wilson is also active in the Democratic Party as a committee woman, ward chair, and DNC member representing PA. Ms. Wilson can be reached at: swilson1@pghschools.org

Meet your assistant superintendent

Dr. Monica Lamar is Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Leadership. She was previously principal of Pittsburgh Dilworth PreK-5 and principal at Woolslair and a teacher at Rogers CAPA in 1995. In her current role, Dr. Lamar supports and supervises a group of city schools and set goals for student achievement and operational efficiency across the district. Dr. Lamar received her Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Slippery Rock University, a master's degree in Administrative and Policy Studies from University of Pittsburgh, and her Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership from Duquesne University. She may be reached at: mlamar1@pghschools.org

Free flu shots

At Giant Eagle

Adults and children over 9 can receive free flu shots at Giant Eagle, and get \$5 worth of free groceries! Scan your Giant Eagle card there, and they will load the \$5 balance to your card within 24 hours. One coupon per patient. One-time use only. Offer valid through 2/29/20.

At the museum

On October 19 and 26, from 10 am–3pm, free flu shots will be offered to adults and children at the Carnegie Museums of Art and Natural History, 4400 Forbes Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15213. Regular museum admission fees will apply. Flu shot availability is limited and will be given on a first-come, first-served basis. UPMC Health Plan membership is not required to receive a flu shot, but UPMC Health Plan members should show their member ID card.

School Communications

Are you wondering if you're missing important announcements? Here's the rundown on the communication channels used by 1) the PPS school district, 2) the school, 3) the parent-teacher organization (that's us—LEAF), and 4) your child's teachers

DISTRICT COMMUNICATIONS

Via email, calls/voicemails, postal mail

The PPS website portal called the Home Access Center (HAC) (<https://www.pghschools.org/Page/5012>), at is the main hub for contact info used in these mass communications to parents/guardians. If you are not getting these communications and need to be added to or updated in the HAC, contact Ms. Sandrina Pullie at 412-529-5098 or spullie1@pghschools.org and tell her your child's name. (By the way, HAC also has tons of useful real-time info for families: student schedules, attendance, published assignments, quick links to communicate with teachers, class averages, report card information, & transcript grades!) If you're having trouble logging on to HAC, contact the Parent Hotline at 412-529-4357 or parenthotline@pghschools.org

Via mobile app

You can access HAC from your phone! The app is called eSchoolPLUS Family. For Apple: apple.co/hac_apple | For Android: bit.ly/hac_android

Facebook

The Pittsburgh Public Schools Facebook Page is used to communicate closure information and districtwide events:

<https://www.facebook.com/PittsburghPublicSchools/>

PeachJar

PeachJar is a newer app/website/paperless delivery system for flyers from the district. (It's not widely used by Liberty.)

<https://www.pghschools.org/Page/1454>

SCHOOL-WIDE COMMUNICATIONS

Remind (announcements via text)

Remind is a tool that Liberty uses to send instant, school-wide communications. (For example: bus delays, heads-up on important info going home in students' folders, picture day, etc.). *Connect to our RemindMe group by texting "@mszwie" to 81010.*

Email list

General notices and school-wide flyers are emailed by the principal, Louann "Ms. Z" Zwieryznski, on a weekly or as-needed basis. She uses the list of email addresses that is in the HAC. (What the heck is the HAC? See "DISTRICT COMMUNICATIONS" section, above!). If you are not getting those emails and would like to add/update your contact information, write or call Ms. Sandrina Pullie at 412-529-5098 and tell her your child's name. (You can also get Remind messages via email. Visit <https://www.remind.com/join/c64ebf> and sign up for email notifications.)

Orange Folders/hard copy

Hard copy calendars, flyers, and other announcements from our school are sent home in students' orange folders on the last full school day of the month (or occasionally a bit earlier if the end of the month is especially busy). BTW, these materials are lovingly assembled each month by parent volunteers! If you'd like to pitch in, visit pghleaf.org/volunteer or email president@pghleaf.org

The purpose of the folder is to inform families of school and community notices as well as provide important feedback on your child's academic work. Parents are asked to review the contents with their child and return the EMPTY orange folder the next school day. Be sure your child's homeroom teacher has an accurate email address to receive these flyers.

Via Facebook

Ms. Z maintains the school Facebook page, which is used for school closures and other important announcements, sharing photos of our adorable kids, etc.

<https://www.facebook.com/LibertyPPS/>

PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION COMMUNICATIONS

LEAF (aka Liberty Elementary Academic Fund) is the parent-teacher organization for Liberty.

Facebook

The LEAF *public Facebook page* helps keep us connected to one another and up to date on meetings, community-building events, and fundraisers for our students. Like us! <https://www.facebook.com/PghLibertyPTO/>

LEAF also has a *private discussion group* where parents/guardians can engage with Ms. Z. Click on the big blue “VISIT GROUP” button on the right.

Newsletter

Current and back issues of The Eagle's Nest are distributed at the end of each month via orange folders, and also on our website, at: pghleaf.org/leaf-newsletter

TEACHER COMMUNICATIONS

If you have questions, feel free to contact your child's teacher. The Liberty directory is online at: <https://discoverpps.org/liberty/staff>

(Or maybe your teacher is using an app to communicate with families--there is a popular one for that too! It's called ClassDojo: <https://www.classdojo.com>

RAD days

RAD is the Allegheny Regional Asset District. A portion of the 1% Allegheny County Sales and Use Tax goes toward free admission to performances and family friendly activities. Their website, Radworkshere.org, lists free events. A few kid-friendly highlights this year:

Sun. Sept. 22: Carnegie Science Center

Free Admission: 10am-5pm

One Allegheny Ave. (North Shore) carnegiesciencecenter.org

Wed. Oct. 9: PNC Park

Free Admission: 10am-3pm (TOURS ONLY). Tours take place on the hour with the last tour starting at 2pm. 80 guest maximum per tour, on a first come, first served basis. NO RESERVATIONS. Enter the gate next to the Willie Stargell Statue on Federal Street. 115 Federal St. (North Shore) • pirates.com/tours

Tues. Oct. 8: Pittsburgh Botanic Garden

Free Admission: 10am-4pm Fun for all ages, and the family dog is welcome, too.
799 Pinkerton Run Rd. (Oakdale) pittsburghbotanicgarden.org

Sat. Oct. 12: The Frick Pittsburgh

Free Admission: 10am-5pm Free family activities!
7227 Reynolds St. (Point Breeze) • thefrickpittsburgh.org

Sun. Oct. 6: Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium

Free Admission: 9am-5pm (gates close at 4pm) Expect traffic congestion and large crowds. 10am-Noon: Kids activities and giveaways with Chamber Music Pittsburgh. Noon-1pm: Performance by the River City Brass Quintet. Visit pittsburghzoo.org/rad-day for up-to-date times and locations.
7370 Baker St. (Highland Park) • pittsburghzoo.org

Sun. Sept. 29: Children's Museum / Museum Lab

Free Admission: 10am-5pm
10 Children's Way (North Side) pittsburghkids.org • museumlab.org

Spanish

Pittsburgh Liberty K-5 is a school-wide magnet school with an emphasis in Spanish; teachers routinely use Spanish throughout the day in addition to providing direct instruction in the language. Students learn about the culture of many Spanish speaking countries throughout the year. Classrooms "adopt" a country for a semester, learning about its geography, history, and culture. As a culminating activity, students, teachers and staff share their knowledge with each other and their families.

In each newsletter, we introduce basic Spanish words, numbers, phrases, and some introduction to basic conversation. Here are a few intro words and phrases to kick off this year:

Popular Spanish words

| | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| <i>gracias</i> | thank you |
| <i>a</i> | to |
| <i>ir</i> | to go |
| <i>estar</i> | to be |
| <i>bueno</i> | good |
| <i>de</i> | of, from |
| <i>su</i> | your, her, his, or their |
| <i>hacer</i> | to make |
| <i>Amigo</i> | friend |

Common Phrases

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| <i>Buenos dias.</i> | Good morning | <i>Como esta usted?</i> | How are you? |
| <i>Buenas tardes.</i> | Good afternoon | <i>Estoy bien.</i> | I am fine. |
| <i>Buenas noches.</i> | Good evening, | <i>Mucho gusto.</i> | Nice to meet |
| greeting | | you. | |
| <i>Hola, me llamo Juan.</i> | Hello, my name | <i>Adios.</i> | Goodbye. |
| is John | | <i>Hasta luego.</i> | See you later. |
| <i>Como se llama usted?</i> | What is your | <i>Con permiso</i> | Excuse me. |
| name? | | <i>Por favor.</i> | Please |

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 ; 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