

A word from the principal.

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the first edition of our P.R.I.D.E. Post! It's hard to believe that the third marking period has come to an end. As the year continues to quickly unfold, we wanted to take a moment to highlight a few of the many recent student experiences and accomplishments.

We are so impressed at the level of student engagement and creativity here at Pelham Middle School, and it is truly an honor to share their extraordinary accomplishments with you.

Thank you for your continued partnership in the learning process. Without your support and collaboration, this would not be possible. We are very proud of our students and are looking forward to continuing to share our Pelham P.R.I.D.E. with you!

Sincerely,

Lynn M Sabia
Principal

Sean A Llewellyn
Assistant Principal



Sixth Graders Write their Own Books

Sixth grade students wrote their own stories as a culminating assignment for their creative writing unit. Teachers spent the semester teaching the students about the different elements of fairy tales including the significance of their cultural elements. In addition, students picked a culture to research and incorporated that research into a story they wrote themselves. This story was worked on over several weeks and completed in phases. All students put their stories on a website called *StoryJumper*. *StoryJumper* allowed the students to create their own storybook and record their voices reading their own tales. A group of teachers acted as a committee and chose 30 writers out of the grade to visit the

elementary schools to read their stories to second grade classes that had previously completed a fairy tale unit. The teachers used a rubric that assessed the entire writing process as well as student effort and engagement throughout the project. The students chosen by the committee were considered "Commended Writers" and were each given a hardcover copy as well as the chance to read to the second graders. All other students received soft-covered versions of their stories. This was possible thanks to a grant by the Pelham Education Foundation. The visits to the elementary schools on Thursday, March 21st were a huge success!

Seventh Graders "Walk for Water"

This year's seventh grade students are "Walking for Water" this spring! They hope to reach the end of a three year goal of 15,000 dollars to build a well in South Sudan. This effort has been ongoing, as each year the seventh grade reads Linda Sue Park's novel, *A Long Walk to Water* and participates in a multifaceted unit. As a culmination to this unit, the students create fundraising storyboards and posters. Later, they use these posters to raise money by participating in a walk during their English class to simulate the experience of millions of girls and women worldwide. The students walk the perimeter of the field, carrying gallon bottles of water for the entire period. This experience helps the students develop empathy, as well as raise awareness for the need for clean and safe water. The novel and IB unit it is connected to allows students to consider how our connection to basic human needs leads not only to comfort, well-being, and education, but political stability as well. By helping to build a well in South Sudan, the students of Pelham are not only improving the lives of the people in one village, but making a positive global contribution.

**Water
for
South
Sudan**





Cheryl Wills Speaks to Seventh Graders

Cheryl Wills, an award-winning television personality for New York 1 News, visited Pelham Middle School to meet with our seventh graders. Ms. Wills is also the author of a number of books, including *Die Free: A Heroic Family Tale*, which traces her great-great-great grandfather Sandy Wills' courageous service in the American Civil War as a member of the "United States Colored Troops." A nationally recognized public speaker, Ms. Wills has previously hosted and spoken at events at the United Nations General Assembly, The Essence Music Festival, and the Congressional Black Caucus. The entire seventh grade is reading *Die Free* in conjunction with our Civil War unit and having heard Ms. Willis speak will help bring the book to life!

Chorus Students Enjoy Barnaby Bright Performance

Middle School chorus students were treated to a presentation by the folk-pop duo Barnaby Bright. It is comprised of singers and songwriters Becky and Nathan Bliss, who are currently touring to celebrate the upcoming release of their new album *This is Life*. The duo sang a number of their songs, introduced their instruments, talked about their songwriting process and answered questions from the students. The students were excellent audience members and participants. The duo was compelling, providing a beautiful and emotional rendering of their work. They are managed by Hugo Vereker, PMHS father to Violet and Theo, who generously offered to bring them to our school. You can find out more about this duo on their website at barnabybright.com.



Garden Army Marches On

This spring, the Living History Club/ School Garden Army constructed a greenhouse cover for Pelham Middle School's School Garden. The U.S. School Garden Army was a 1917 program of the Federal Bureau of Education that taught agricultural skills to students in an attempt to prevent food shortages on the home front with local, sustainable produce as the US government worked to keep Allied soldiers fed and relieve starvation of civilian populations in Europe. Each eighth grade social studies class will soon plant a different vegetable and then maintain it along with the Living History Club / School Garden Army through the rest of the school year.

Holocaust Survivors Speak to the Eighth Grade

In March, our eighth grade class had the opportunity to hear two survivors recount their experiences during the Holocaust. Helga Schmitz-Fernich Luden was born in 1934 in Ulmen, a town in the Rhineland region of Germany.

Helga's family was the only Jewish family in the town but members of the Schmitz-Fernich family had lived there since the 1800s. In 1939 Helga was sent with her mother to Gurs transit camp in the Basque region of southwestern France. While in the camp, her mother taught her how to make a quick escape if necessary and one night she was forced to so. Helga escaped to the woods where she was found by French-Jewish partisans and brought first to a convent and then to an orphanage. Helga's mother found her there well taken care of, then they were taken in by a Catholic family near Marseille. Esther Geizhals was born in Lodz Poland in 1929. At the age of 10, she and her family were moved to the Lodz ghetto where they lived under terrible conditions until 1944. At that time Mrs. Geizhals was transported to Auschwitz extermination camp. Six weeks later she was moved again to Bergen Belsen and on to Rochlitz concentration camp in Czechoslovakia. In 1945, as the allies were advancing, the whole camp was made to walk for days without food or drink and just a few hours of sleep on fields. Many died and later this was known as the death march. Mrs. Geizhals and four other people escaped during the death march and worked their way to the next village where they were liberated by the Russian army. These visits continue a tradition at Pelham Middle School of inviting speakers from the Holocaust and Human Rights Education Center to address our students in conjunction with their study of the Holocaust, Elie Wisel's *Night*, and their genocide research project.



Upcoming Dates

April 15-22 - Spring Recess, Schools Closed

Friday, April 26 - Grade 6 Friday Night Live - 7 p.m. - MS Gym

Wednesday, May 1 - Joint PTA Meeting with HS - 7 p.m. - MS Library

Thursday, May 2 - SEPTA Meeting - 7 p.m. - MS Library

Tuesday, May 7 - Chorus Concert - 7 p.m. - Auditorium

Wednesday, May 8 - Band Concert - 7 p.m. - Courtyard

Thursday, May 9 - Orchestra Concert - 7 p.m. - Auditorium

Monday, May 13 - IB Community Project Expo - 6:30 p.m. - MS Gym

Wednesday, May 15 - Check Portal for Interim Grades

Tuesday, May 21 - Budget Vote and School Board Election

Monday, May 27 - Memorial Day, Schools Closed