On Friday, September 21, 2007, students at Temple Hill Academy celebrated International Peace Day viewing the pinwheel exhibit in the “Pinwheels for Peace” Garden. Kindergarteners walked the pinwheeled path that curved gracefully across the front lawn. The pinwheels were made by K-6 THA students under the direction and installation by two art teachers at THA, Elizabeth Cappello and Kirsten Olsen.

Pinwheels for Peace is an Art Installation project. The concept was created in 2005 by two art teachers in Florida. It is not a political movement. It is not about the conflict of war. The pinwheels are intended to remind us of things that are simple, joyful, and peaceful. Just two years after its inception, over 2,500 locations are joining in this celebration of peace. For more information on this project, go to www.pinwheelsforpeace.com/theproject.

Alyssa Waite, adorable granddaughter of TA Joni Waite (GFMS), selects the perfect pumpkin in the patch.

Above: THA Kindergarten Teachers Mr. Antonelli & Mrs. Alvarez and TA’s Mrs. Vazquez & Mrs. Pavlik accompany their classes through the Pinwheel Garden.
Interview With A Teaching Assistant …

Patricia A. SanSevero—Gardnertown School

What is your teaching assistant position at your building location? I work in 5-6th grade PLC class.

What would you say are your greatest joys and challenges to working as an elementary/secondary TA?

Prior to working in the PLC room I was Building Floater and the greatest joy was being able to work in every classroom, every grade level, and getting to know and work with all of the students and teachers in the building. It was also a wonderful learning experience for me! I would recommend all TA’s to take the opportunity (if given a chance) to be a building floater! Now I enjoy being in the room with all of these wonderful kids on a more 1-1 level. It is fun being able to help plan out the kid’s class work, activity centers, and homework. I am also fortunate enough to have a teacher that allows me to do what I do best ... help educate children!

Name any classroom projects you may have contributed to either with your class/student or school:

Last year our school participated in a “no bully” zone that was encouraged by our SAVE room Teacher and Teaching Assistant. This program was great because it encouraged all children in our school to become aware of and learn about the signs and how to prevent becoming a bully. It also taught everyone how to be more sensitive to all other students needs and/or situations.

What advice would you offer to a teaching assistant newbie?

My advice would be to make sure you focus whole heartedly on the educational and developmental needs of all the lives that you touch on a daily basis and remember that any little bit of information you are able to get across to the students can carry them a very long way! You CAN make a difference!

Favorite Quote or Words of Wisdom

Don’t Sweat the Small Stuff! I know it is nothing fantastic or phenomenal but it says a lot in a little way! As long as you don’t let the little things get to you ... You will do just fine!

Editor’s Note: Patricia SanSevero is now actively working on the Grapevine newsletter committee.

All About Me:

Married—20 years to Joe on October 5, 2007
Children— Kristy 19, Michael 13, Joey 11
Pets—2 dogs: Lady, & Stitch, 2 cats: Tigger & Snickers, and some fish
Born and raised in Staten Island, NY
Moved to Newburgh, NY in September 1994
Husband was in the NAVY therefore all my children were born in a different State!
Kristy - Illinois
Michael - New Jersey
Joey - New York

Special points of interest:

• I enjoy spending time with family and friends.
• I love to go riding on the kids’ ATV.
• I love to go to the movies with my family.
• I love to go walking with the family and dogs for exercise.

Me and my kids at a sweet 16! Pictured from left: Michael, Patty, Kristy, & Joey (hubby is camera shy)
2007 Graduates

On May 19th 2007, Orange County Community College held its 2007 graduation ceremony. As pictured on the left, TA Michele Dowling, her son Mark Dowling, TA Lola Kusumoto and TA Darcy Kennedy (both of SJH) wore their caps and gowns with pride.

Pictured right, NFA graduates, Veronica Lyden and a friend, get a second chance at a graduation ceremony after the first ceremony was rained out. Congratulations on all the graduate's achievements and continued success in all future endeavors!

Member Update: Graduate Darcy Kennedy has a new granddaughter, Caterina Elizabeth Kennedy, born on 8/27/07, weighing 8 lbs. 13oz., 21 in long. Congratulations Kennedy family!!!!

Constitution Conflicts

On September 4, 2007, NTA president Phil Cordella addressed union members at NFA. He informed everyone of the conflicts concerning the retirees. The retirees would like to be able to vote in our elections and feel that the NTA Constitution supports their right to do so.

President Cordella felt that the retirees fear that members may vote to end their fully paid retiree health insurance. With this motivation, a constitutional review committee will review the language of the bylaws.

There will surely be more information forthcoming from the NTA and an upcoming secret ballot vote at each building's October faculty meeting. By the time of the Grapevine's printing, we will probably be hearing voting results from the NTA and President Cordella.

A Whole New Look

For those of us adjusting to our busy back to school schedules, you may have missed the revamped look of the NTA's website.

Of special interest are the many links relating to teaching assistants. You can view the latest editions of the Pendulum and the Grapevine newsletters, or view a listing of all teaching assistant calendar meetings for the 2007-2008 school year. If you click on the blue text links above the meetings calendar, they will direct you to name/contact info for the Exec. Committee, Grievance Committee, Vote Cope, Elections/Nominations, Policy Board and many more. It also lists the TA building representatives who give so freely of their time and efforts.

The NTA Board of Directors meetings and Delegate Assembly meetings minutes are current and informative. You can also click on an e-mail link for the NTA TAC Executive Committee at:

teachingassistant@hvc.rr.com
Okay, okay, here's the scoop……………
Are you smarter than a sixth grader?
The first NECSD Teaching assistant to email the Grapevine with the correct answer to the question below will receive a Barnes and Noble $20.00 gift card. Good luck!!!!
E-mail the answer to: Grapevinetanews@aol.com

Question: What famous children's author first book was reputedly rejected by 28 publishers before Random House bought the book rights?

This contest is open to all NECSD teaching assistants with the exclusion of the Executive Committee and all Grapevine Committee members. The winner will be listed in the winter edition of the Grapevine. Barnes and Noble books and gift certificates can be bought through the NYSUT website by going to www.nysut.org. You will need to click on NYSUT Member Benefits Trust, and then Discounts, which will take you to the Barnes & Noble.com Online bookstore.

Message from the Executive Committee

Dear Members,

Welcome back to another exciting school year! We hope many of you enjoyed the "NTA Welcome Back Cruise" on Friday, Sept. 28. Maybe quite a few of us will see each other at an in-service class (a class being taught by Teaching Assistants—Jean Stumpf & Theresa Brady-Leyden—for the first time).

Enjoy your year. Make the most of it. Try to come to a few Teaching Assistant meetings or join a committee. Call an Executive Committee member with any questions or concerns.

The Executive Committee

Exec. Comm. E-mail: teachingassistant@hvc.rr.com


Articles/ideas listed in the Grapevine are not necessarily those of the Newburgh Teachers' Association, NECSD, NYSUT or AFT.