

# Odyssey Day School Newsletter

DECEMBER 2008



## From the desk of *Lori Conway*

Dear Parents,

I did not spend much time at all this go-round deciding what to write about. It has been a difficult month for me personally, and I could not have gotten through it without the support of the Odyssey staff. It is to them that I dedicate this month's letter home.

As perhaps a few of you know, my youngest brother had serious liver surgery a couple of weeks ago. His recovery has been fraught with highs and lows, and more than a few scary setbacks. Juggling my time at the hospital, my time with my family, and my time on task at school during the crunch period of getting out Fall term reports was a Herculean task. As Thanksgiving drew closer, my feelings of thankfulness towards the staff increased exponentially, because the busier life got at school, the more I was running into Boston to be at the hospital with my brother, and I knew I was becoming a bottleneck to the entire process of producing student reports, which you all should know is a labor of love on the part of the teachers who spend so much time writing about your children's progress.

Throughout the weeks of drama, never did an administrator or teacher complain about any of the many balls I must have let drop. They all rallied around me—the brand new Head and newcomer to the community—and offered support at every juncture. To Kimm, Margaret, and Kerry: You three made sure the trains kept running, no matter what curve balls came my way each day. You listened to me and comforted me as I struggled through the unknown, and faced a potential loss I could not imagine bearing. To Kimm in particular: On the night of the November faculty meeting, you dropped everything to drive me to Brigham and Women's, seeing that I was too shaken up to drive myself during rush hour, astutely remarking, "It's people who matter. This is about people. Let's go. You're no city driver." That I most certainly am not! And Kimm kept me calm on the long drive in, and helped me figure out how to break bad news to my daughter on my cell phone and who to call next from the car. Margaret and Kerry: You headed up the faculty meeting, took my agenda and ran with it! You had no idea what half of the agenda items referred to, yet you stepped into my role with no planning time whatsoever and flew the meeting. My three administrators are as extraordinary as they come.

Thank you also to Gail, who rode the rollercoaster with me every day and whose kindness was bottomless. And to every single teacher who checked in with me practically daily, I am still in awe. You were all so busy writing reports on top of a million other duties, but you took the time to express your care and it meant the world to me. Finally, to the Board of Directors: You knew what I was dealing with, and were so compassionate and understanding.

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### Upcoming Events

- ◆ Dec. 8-12 Literacy Week
- ◆ Dec. 10 Winter Musical & Book Fair
- ◆ Dec. 11 "Look What I Made" fundraiser
- ◆ Dec. 15-23 Limited Child Care
- ◆ Dec. 24-Jan 4 Winter Vacation
- ◆ Jan.5 school opens

# Kid News



*“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.”*

*~John  
Fitzgerald  
Kennedy*

Parents, think about it. These are the women and men who nurture your children every day. They teach them, serve as role models for them, and act as stewards for the school that is educating them. The students are being educated not only academically, artistically, and athletically, but in terms of character and citizenship. I assure you that the character part does not come from curriculum. Oh, it can, and there are plenty of books on the topic. But how the lessons really stick is when children see the important adults in their lives living out these values every day.

There is something magical about the Odyssey community that fosters this kind of caring. During this season of thanksgiving, I am reflecting daily, if not hourly, on the gift of my brother's life. I am also reflecting on the gift of Odyssey Day School, and I hope that through this personal story you can join me in appreciating the staff and the Board and all they do for your children. These adults play a crucial role in who your children will *become*, and it is a worthy exercise to stop on occasion amidst our busy lives and think about what really matters. As Kimm said, it's the people. It doesn't get any simpler or nobler than that.

## Preschool News

I hope you all received the photo of PS-Susan's Thanksgiving feast! Susan and Renee did an incredible job staging an authentic first Thanksgiving from 1621. The children dressed as Pilgrims and Indians, and invited the Kindergarten class to join them for apples, popcorn, cornbread, and other traditional Thanksgiving goodies. A wonderful time was had by all!



## Elementary School News

On Monday, November 24, Grades K-8 came together for the first annual Odyssey Day School Thanksgiving Assembly. Joined by a few parents, the students and faculty all enjoyed a special gathering to reflect on Thanksgiving and thankfulness, and to share multicultural poetry of the season and even a couple of musical interludes. Thanks to all of the teachers and students who volunteered to be readers, and to Lizzy, Samantha and Aislinn, who had the courage to perform musically for the school. And bravo to all of the students in kindergarten, first and second grades who worked together to perform whole-class readings that were greatly entertaining to the rest of us. I can't wait to do it again next year, and hope more parents will join in!

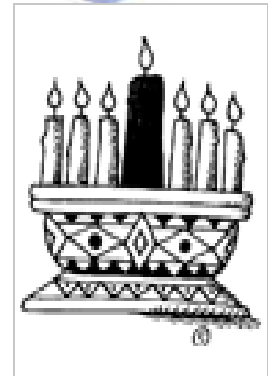
# Community News

## Faculty & Staff News

For the first time since school began, we have had no changes to staffing, no marriages, no births, and no deaths to report—an uneventful month in terms of faculty and staff news, and an opportunity to gel as a community, solidify roles and responsibilities, and move forwards towards the New Year in good spirits!

## For Parents

- ✚ Please remember not to parallel park along the fire lane or block the cross walk at drop-off and pick-up! Other parents complain about you when you do this!
- ✚ Please do not leave your car running while dropping off or picking up.
- ✚ Secondary school application deadlines are fast approaching. If you have an 8<sup>th</sup> grader who is applying out and need the school to provide transcripts, teacher recommendation forms, or letters of recommendation and have not already done so, please let us know what is needed and provide us the paperwork and stamped, addressed envelopes for submitting materials on behalf of your child.
- ✚ There are many items in the Lost & Found. If you cannot find something belonging to your child, and your child's teacher does not have it, please be sure to check the bin before worrying that the item has vanished entirely!
- ✚ Thanks to Jeremy and the Student Council for organizing Hat Day on Friday, November 21. The array of head adornments was dazzling, and the kids raised \$65.
- ✚ Family Movie Night was a blast. "Ratatouille" was enjoyed by the younger crowd (and their parents), while our older students watched "The Whale Rider." I will not even venture a guess as to how many pizzas were consumed, but perhaps Penny Jones could tell you. Many thanks to Penny and all who helped organize the event. We'll do it again soon.
- ✚ On Tuesday, November 4, two very special events occurred. We elected a new President, and Ana Nuncio, former Spanish teacher, returned with her author friend Lupina Vela to do a special reading and signing of their new children's book. It was a wonderful assembly.
- ✚ In the event of snow, school closing info will be available on WBZ news radio, Fox 25 TV and internet, and on a school recording by 6:30 a.m.
- ✚ Thanks to Brian and the 5/6 and 7/8 Life Skills classes for spreading the new mulch in the toddler playground.
- ✚ Another great big thanks to Kim M. and Janet for the very successful Hoff's pie fundraiser. The pies were yummy!



*Whether you celebrate or do not celebrate December holidays, we wish you all a wonderful Winter Break full of happy family moments, peace, and relaxation!*



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***“Parents and  
teachers as  
partners”***

**We're on the Web!**  
[www.odysseydayschool.org](http://www.odysseydayschool.org)

## From O.P.A.

Many thanks to Annie Barr, the Odyssey Parents Association, and the many volunteers who helped make the Dockside FUN-raiser such a success! A great time was had by so many parents, students, and teachers, and some substantial money was raised to make possible more OPA-sponsored social events during the year. Look out for the next OPA Newsletter with plenty of information about upcoming meetings, volunteer opportunities, and events.

## From the Board of Directors

An excerpt from the Annual Fund letter from Spencer Warncke: “If Odyssey Day School is to succeed, we need every one of you to join our community of supporters and donate to our Annual Fund. We cannot meet our goals without your help, and we hope that you will choose to support us in this great endeavor. No contribution is too small, and no contribution is too large. ***Whether you can afford to contribute \$5 or \$5000, we encourage each and every one of you to participate. Please show our children that you are committed to their education. Please show our faculty that you are committed to supporting the important and extraordinary work they are doing.***” Please join me in taking out your checkbooks. An ODS education should be recession-proof.



**DASHING THROUGH THE SNOW, ON A ONE-HORSE OPEN SLEIGH, O'ER THE FIELDS WE GO,  
LAUGHING ALL THE WAY...**