

THE SCA – A YEAR IN REVIEW

As most of you know, the Manhasset School Community Association “SCA” is our district’s version of a Parent Teacher Organization “PTO”. The SCA consists of parents, community members, and school faculty who unite in various ways to enrich the educational and social experiences of the children of Manhasset. We promote close cooperation between these groups through monthly parent council meetings and by communicating regularly with our members.

The SCA is supported by our membership – annual dues are \$25 per family – and also by a number of major fundraising events including the SCA Luncheon and SCA Fair. This support allows us to provide students in Manhasset with the highest advantages in education. In addition, there are many wonderful volunteer opportunities available for parents who want to be part of the school-community experience.

The funds raised each year by the SCA are given back directly to the schools and to our children in grades K-12 – through enrichment programs, recreational programs, arts-related programs, educational and social programs, student assistance, eco-friendly and nutrition/wellness initiatives and more. Throughout the year, the SCA was also pleased to provide financial assistance to those students in need for various activities such as summer center, enrichment trips, social events, SAT review, AP exams, and much more.

Today, we want to take a look back at the 2007-2008 school year and share with you some of the many SCA accomplishments that make us proud. We are grateful for the extraordinary support from our members and from the community as a whole. None of this would have been possible without those who give generously of their time and their money.

Membership

Our membership drive starts in the fall with reminder postcards sent mid-year. This year’s SCA membership increased by 20% - thank you for your active participation and strong support! Partly because of a successful 2007-2008 membership campaign, educational programs such as Character Education and Summer Studies, Educational Grants and community education will have the funding they need to remain strong.

Website

The SCA Website Committee undertook the task of constructing an entirely new website. Every week website editors compile information received from each of the SCA committees and prepared it for online publication. The comprehensive weekly email “*SCA Highlights*” has become a “must read” and helped reduce the paper usage of the “backpack express” by delivering timely news efficiently and conveniently directly to parents. There are approximately 1800 subscribers to the *SCA Highlights* and current visits to the website doubled when compared to statistics of last year. To sign up for *SCA Highlights* please visit www.manhassetzca.org.

Children’s Theatre

Children’s Theatre is a wonderful committee where theatrical productions of cultural interest are coordinated and staged for the children of Manhasset. Professional playhouse companies present the finest in theatrical displays for the younger residents of our town and their families. These shows can be seen at a nominal charge when compared to other theater venues. This year’s productions included *Season’s Greetings Magic Show* and *Cinderella*. We are looking forward to presenting our selections for the 2008-2009 school year, *Nate the Great* and *Alice in Wonderland*. This committee is truly representative of the pursuit for educational and engaging activities continuously sought after by the Manhasset SCA.

Saturday Series

Saturday Series is an enrichment program presented for children in grades K-6 living in the Manhasset School District. There are two 8-week educational and recreational sessions offered on Saturday mornings at Shelter Rock Elementary School. The first session takes place in the fall, beginning in September, and the second session takes place in the winter, beginning in January. Nearly 500 children combined attended Saturday Series!

Some of the staple classes are Acrobatics, Model Building, Woodworking, Taekwondo, Junior Chefs, Chess, Spanish, Golf, Fencing, Beaded Flowers, Cake Decorating, The Actor's Garage, Manhasset Idol and All Sports. With much success, new classes introduced this past year were Cheerleading and CSI Manhasset. And everyone enjoyed the fall theater production of *Mary Poppins* and the winter production of *The Little Mermaid*.

We are always looking for parent volunteers for 1 or 2 hours during the sessions to help in the classrooms, at the information desk and with security. And don't forget, Manhasset High School students can earn community service credit by assisting the teachers in class.

Enrichment

The elementary schools were very fortunate this year to have a wealth of enrichment programs brought into our schools. Each grade K-6 is afforded the opportunity with SCA funds to have 3 programs a year, related to performing arts, language arts, science and social studies curriculum. Some of the highlights this year were The Journey into Eastern Woodlands Territory for the 4th grade, a full day program where the children were immersed in the culture and traditions of the tribal community. Elementary school students also experienced several live performances by Theatretworks USA: *Dinosaurs* for the 2nd grade, *Paul Revere* for the 4th grade, and *Living Voices-The Diary of Anne Frank* in 6th grade. Each grade also has the opportunity to meet an author, and this year we had Brian Pinkney, Peter Catalanotto, David Adler, Chris Soentpiet, Brian Heinz, and Gordon Korman. WOW!! We are lucky. Remember to talk to your kids about these worthwhile programs.

Educational Grants

Through the fundraising efforts of the SCA, more than \$20,000 was awarded for the 2007-08 academic year to assist Manhasset High School graduates in furthering their education. Need is a prime consideration in determining a student's qualification for an SCA educational grant, along with character, citizenship and academic success. This year, each recipient revealed a genuine passion and dream to become an artist, a doctor, a teacher, an engineer...and the list goes on and on. Cards and letters were received from students and their parents filled with expressions of sincere appreciation and gratitude to the SCA for their help and support. A teacher once said, "Nine tenths of education is encouragement." All Manhasset residents are encouraged to support the SCA, which in turn will help our young students realize their full potential.

In addition, this committee will also recognize the top 20 students with the highest GPA from the Class of 2008. A monetary award was presented to these students at Senior Awards night to highlight their achievement and academic success.

Summer Studies

Each spring, the SCA encourages juniors to pursue an interest outside of their normal academic scope during the summer between junior and senior year. The Summer Studies Awards program requests that candidates complete an application, write an essay, and sit for an interview before a 10 member committee. This year the SCA awarded \$10,000 to juniors whose interests included science research, cultural experiences, music and art programs, and athletic programs. Some students will be remaining in the New York area for their programs, while others will be traveling to Thailand, Spain, Iowa and Washington DC. Each student received up to \$1,000 to help defray the cost of their individual program.

Senior Frolic

The Senior Frolic is a themed High School graduation party held the evening of graduation (June 27th) from 10pm until 4am. The tradition started in Manhasset over 65 years ago. The Frolic is designed to provide a safe environment in which seniors can celebrate their graduation. Parents of seniors begin planning and organizing the Frolic as soon as the scenery and decorations from the last Frolic are taken down.

The Frolic is a true Manhasset tradition and what greater way to teach our children the importance of tradition and community. The community is invited to “walk through” on June 27th at 7:30 pm. Don't miss it!

Planet Manhasset

The SCA's newly formed district-wide eco-committee, has accomplished quite a bit its first year out. It has:

- Introduced reusable stainless steel bottles and recycled cotton snack sacks to reduce the use of plastic bottles and paper bags in the elementary schools.
- Worked with elementary school principals and SCA webstie editors to reduce paper use through a new email system to replace the backpack express.
- Created a monthly eco-newsletter, “Simply Green”, available on the SCA website.
- Worked toward introducing a recycling program for paper and plastics at the school. The Town of North Hempstead has presented a new school program which the committee will help institute in the fall.
- Presented the Board with a no-idling policy for both buses and cars, for consideration for adoption into our official bylaws.
- Introduced to the district facilities department low-VOC paints, which were immediately embraced.
- Secured a guest speaker from Al Gore's “Climate Change” organization who showed a variation of "An Inconvenient Truth" to 8th-12th grade Earth Science, Living Environment and Environmental Science classes.
- Organized a special community Christmas tree recycling event, at which over 130 trees were brought in for recycling.
- Helped set up and execute recycling at large-scale school and community events such as International Night, Lacrosse Day of Champions and the SCA Fair.
- Will begin a student driven MS/HS “Green Club” in the fall.

Nutrition & Wellness

The newly formed SCA Nutrition and Wellness Committee has been leading initiatives since February in an effort to provide all students in the Manhasset School District with the highest quality of nutritious foods, review our current wellness policy, and ensure that food services provide information and products in order to maintain good health. The committee has been dedicated to working collaboratively with parents, school principals, administrators and food service providers.

Initially, the committee submitted surveys to parents and students to gain their input, concerns and food preferences. The completed surveys are guidelines being used in the upcoming food service provider renewal. The following are highlights of implemented improvements:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables are served daily at all locations
- MSG has been removed from all locations
- Olive oil has replaced hydrogenated trans fats in all locations
- Replaced Gatorade with Vitamin Water
- Suggested alternatives for storage, stocking and inventory
- All kitchen staff wearing required uniform components to ensure cleanliness and safety

- Committee participated in educational workshops and sponsored speakers/events for School Sports and Fitness Day

Community Education

Community Education Committee encourages voters to have a voice in the Manhasset School District budget and Board of Education vote in May each year. The efforts begin with voter registration information at “Back to School” nights, and through information given to new families in the district. Age-eligible students in the High School are also registered to vote. As the school year progresses, families are reminded to register to vote, and as the day of the vote approaches, reminders are sent out via the SCA e-newsletter about deadline dates for voting in the School District election. Absentee ballots are made available to voters who may be away the day of the vote.

In addition to getting out the vote, the SCA provides opportunities for community members to learn more about each year’s proposed budget. Information is sent out that highlights details of the budget, both on-line and in flyers. Coffees are held in members’ homes to allow neighbors the opportunity to ask questions to the school administration or the Board of Education. Links to the School District website are also publicized so that community members can directly access information on the budget details.

Champions for Charity

For the second year, the Manhasset SCA participated in the Americana Manhasset’s ***Champions for Charity (R)*** holiday shopping benefit. We are so pleased that with the help of parents in our community that enrolled and shopped, we were able to raise over \$7,000 for the Manhasset SCA. This money will be put toward programs such as Enrichment, Educational Grants and Student Assistance.

Nominating

The SCA Nominating Committee is responsible for facilitating the nomination/selection process for the yearly open Executive SCA positions. This committee is comprised of an elected chair and co-chair, four appointed representatives from each of the district schools, one Executive Board representative and the Immediate Past Executive President. All representatives have a child attending one of the Manhasset schools for the term that they are elected/appointed. Committee members are asked to engage in discreet, confidential and respectful discussions to determine the best candidate for the open positions based on the constitution and bylaws set by the SCA governing body. As a result of these discussions, a slate of officers is presented in writing to the community and voted upon at the annual SCA membership meeting typically held in early May.

SCA Luncheon

More than 360 parents, community members and administration gathered in the fall of 2007 to enjoy a delightful luncheon at Leonard’s of Great Neck in support of the SCA. The annual SCA Luncheon is rich in history and significance, as it plays an integral part in the fundraising process of the SCA.

This year’s Luncheon was filled with boutique shopping, silent auction, raffles and entertainment. A string septet comprised of members of the Chamber Orchestra played for the enjoyment of all. The audience was also treated to a few musical numbers from the High School production of “Anything Goes!” performed by several cast members.

The 2007 Fall Luncheon co-chairs and their committee members were a dedicated team who worked so hard to ensure a great time was had by all. The SCA is extremely appreciative to all of its donors and wonderful volunteers whose time and efforts help so successfully in giving back to our schools and community.

SCA Fair

This year's SCA Fair was held on Saturday, May 3rd. It was wonderful to see the many smiling faces of children and adults alike as the exciting rides, challenging games and delicious food offered something for everyone. The Fair's new attractions, which included a petting zoo, an old-fashioned candy shop and an arts and crafts table, were a big hit. There was extraordinary entertainment throughout the day by Manhasset's very own talent. The wide variety of vendors under the Big Tent offered a multitude of new wares, while fairgoers enjoyed sifting through the Attic Treasures to find some new treasures of their own and browsing the many books for sale.

The 2008 SCA Fair co-chairs and their committee chairs, along with countless volunteers from our community, worked tirelessly before and during the Fair. The Fair's success is truly a tribute to the community spirit in Manhasset. With the entire community working together, this year's Fair was one of the most successful ever. The SCA is incredibly grateful to all of the local businesses, organizations, families and individuals whose generous donations of food, supplies and funds, sponsorships and underwriting made the Fair possible. The proceeds of the SCA Fair are the main source of funding for the Manhasset SCA.

Student Directories

In early fall, school families received their Student Telephone Directories, compiled and designed by parent volunteers. This valuable resource facilitated students staying in touch with their classmates and parents communicating with each other during the school year.

Staff Appreciation Luncheons

On May 15th, Staff Appreciation Luncheons were held at all schools. Teachers, administrators and staff throughout the secondary school were treated to a variety of delicious dishes prepared and served by parents as a token of gratitude for their dedicated efforts on behalf of our children.

Munsey Park

The students in grades K-6 at Munsey Park certainly enjoyed an educationally and socially enriched 2007-2008 school year.

The SCA sponsored an annual Halloween party for the 5th and 6th graders at Munsey Park. The annual party allows the children to enjoy a fun and spooky evening in a safe and controlled environment. The children enjoyed a haunted house, food, games, prizes, a DJ, and of course, showing off their costumes. Two of our 5th graders dressed up as "Regis and Kelly" and even had their picture aired on the November 12th episode of Live with Regis and Kelly.

In January, Munsey Park hosted its innovative "Guess Who's Coming to Read?" program now in its eighteenth year. This program featured prominent members of the community and in the New York area. The readers took time out of their very busy schedules to read books to our children in grades K-3. They explained how important reading can be and how necessary it is in their professional and every day life. The SCA and parent volunteers all helped to make this event one of Munsey Park's most exciting and special events of the year.

The Munsey Park School SCA celebrated its second International Night in March. Nearly 750 students and family enjoyed an educational excursion hosted by volunteers who represented 29 countries on four continents. The food, entertainment and parade of nations were spectacular. A fabulous time was had by all. Also in March, our Community Service Committee in conjunction with our gym teachers and staff, organized a "Jump for the Cure" where students jumped rope and raised more than \$18,000 for the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation.

In April, the SCA sponsored National Library Week. Some parents and teachers dressed up as characters from several different books. During the first week of May, the SCA held a Scholastic Book Fair which took students, teachers, parents and community members on a "Reading Road Trip". Parents and students purchased books for their teachers and classroom libraries from our Teacher Wish List Program. Participating in a program called "One for Books", the entire school handed in their loose change of dollar donations to raise money which was used to purchase books for Great Neck's Educational Opportunities Center. The school raised over \$1300. Six filled boxes of books were delivered to the EOC. It was a week full of much fun and excitement.

Through the work of our Principal, the school's Health and Safety Committee and the SCA, Munsey Park was able to have a *Your Speed Is...* sign installed on Northern Boulevard in front of the school. This effort took several years and was finally accomplished this year.

And, finally, our 6th grade students will graduate on June 25th in a very special 6th Grade Promotional Ceremony. Each student will be individually honored and recognized and will read an original poem to an audience filled with proud family and friends. Thanks to the support of the SCA, this special group of graduates will surely remember their years at Munsey Park as magical and unforgettable.

Shelter Rock

The 2007-2008 school year began with an enormous amount of enthusiasm among our Shelter Rock SCA chair people and dedicated parent volunteers. Our two very successful and informative Open Houses, complete with our Shelter Rock fundraiser, provided a very spirited kick-off to the school year.

Shelter Rock enjoyed the first SCA sponsored week-long event, Red Ribbon Week. Children sampled healthy options and attended various workshops throughout the week. Next was our 5th and 6th grade Halloween Party which proved to be a howling good time for all!

In December, our Shelter Rock Student Council was busy working with our SCA Community Service Committee on various fundraisers for very worthwhile causes throughout the year. In January, we welcomed 21 of our community's professionals and local celebrities to visit and read to our K-3 classes for "Guess Who's Coming to Read?". This turned out to be such an exciting and rewarding day for both the children and our guest readers. February and March were busy months with the very first edition of our Shelter Rock Electronic Newsletter.

In addition to this excitement, Shelter Rock "Blasted into Books" for our 2008 Book Fair. The Library and Media Center was magically transformed into an intergalactic fantasy for all of the children. Continuing to make reading a magical journey, our National Library Week was kicked-off with a magic show and special fundraiser at Barnes & Noble. Back at the school, parent volunteers read to the children while some dressed in character costumes for the kids' enjoyment. The older grades teamed up and went on scavenger hunts throughout the school library.

Our 6th graders have been celebrating throughout the year with special events that have made their final year in elementary school memorable. A 6th Grade Yearbook has been put together filled with seven years of memories at Shelter Rock. One of the final celebrations is the annual trip to Splish Splash. And finally, the 6th Grade Promotional Ceremony on June 25th will mark the end of this special year and incredible journey for all of our graduates.

Middle School and High School

The Secondary School (7-12) began our SCA supported activities with the HS Freshman and New Student Orientation on the front lawn in August. The district administration planned a wonderful transition assembly and the SCA was on hand to assist with fun, support and pizza!

On their first day of Middle School, the 7th graders enjoyed an Opening Day Picnic. Setting the stage for a smooth start for our new middle schoolers, the students were treated to lunch, Orange and Blue team games, and fresh air with old and new friends on the lawn.

The first of three issues of the SCA Secondary School Newsletter were distributed to MS/HS families in October in an effort to keep families informed throughout the school year of upcoming news and events. The Middle School Book Fair was also held in October. 7th and 8th grade students visited the MS Media Center during their English classes to peruse and purchase books.

The HS Homecoming Community Dance, funded by the SCA, was an enormous social success with 585 students (grades 9-12) in attendance. And, the Middle School SCA sponsored Halloween Party was attended by over 450 middle school students. This annual favorite, which featured a new "haunted maze" this year, was a fun-filled evening as students came in costume, played games, ate and danced.

The Secondary School Speakers Bureau provided program assistance to educate and entertain students in the secondary school: middle school students enjoyed a presentation from motivational speaker Jeff Yalden in November and the HS band / orchestra held a joint concert with students from Central College in Iowa. In partnership with CASA and the BOE, high school juniors and seniors heard Maureen McCormick, Head of Vehicular Crimes in Nassau County, speak about "Choices & Consequences" related to responsible driving.

The SCA was delighted to purchase several new ping pong tables for the Secondary School which debuted in January at a successful fundraiser tournament organized by upper classmen. Middle School students have also had an opportunity to enjoy the new ping pong tables at a tournament held during January's Friday Night Live.

Beginning in January and running through April, the SCA assisted the High School administration in providing Manhasset HS students the opportunity to celebrate and socialize at the Frosh, the Soph, the Junior Prom and the Senior Prom. Many thanks to our volunteers who sold tickets, organized paperwork and attended these events. The HS class advisors and a team of teachers provided security and all volunteers worked together to provide our children with lasting memories.

In June the Middle School End-of-the-Year BBQ/Dance was held so 7th and 8th graders could enjoy camaraderie with classmates in a night of food, games and dancing. The SCA provided a gift of Class of 2012 t-shirts to all "graduating" eighth graders.

CONCLUSION – THANK YOU!

The entire Manhasset SCA gratefully acknowledges and appreciates the commitment of its members and our community as a whole for helping to promote the educational, cultural and social experiences of Manhasset's children. We are incredibly proud of our accomplishments this year and extend a sincere thank you to our parents, teachers, schools, volunteers and community members for your continued support of the SCA as we look forward to yet another successful school year.

For more information on SCA news and events or volunteer opportunities, please visit www.manhassetzca.org and be sure to sign up for our weekly SCA emails.