



FOOTHILLS ACADEMY

Sept/Oct 2008

Issue 39

Official Newsletter of FAPTO

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Welcome Back FA Families



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Director's View ***by Dr. Donald S. Senneville***

Meeting The Challenge: Accountability, Academics And Stewardship

We're throwing down the gauntlet, calling ourselves and our students out on the issue of achievement. Though we've done well, we're challenging ourselves and our students this year to achieve higher levels of learning, to develop a stronger, more nurturing community, and to exceed our current strong standing among college prep schools in Arizona. Our notion of challenge contains three main dimensions. First, students, teachers, and administrators have an obligation to live up to the responsibilities of their positions in the school; that's *accountability*. Second, students, teachers, and administrators have the task of facilitating and developing higher-order learning that results in higher grades, higher test scores, and acceptance into appropriate colleges and universities; that's *academics*. Third, students, teachers, and administrators must continue to shoulder the demands of caring for and managing the wide range of that which is entrusted to us; that's *stewardship*. By excelling in these three areas, we will meet the challenge of achieving our highest goals.

Accountability

Exactng and maintaining a healthy level of accountability is a perennial challenge to any organization.

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In the case of Foothills Academy, the approach to ensuring accountability is one of community proportions. There is less emphasis on the “trickling down” of authority than on the “upward development” of caring, attending to details, and being aware of the consequences of our actions and/or our failures to act. Our notion of exercising positive self-direction, one of the cornerstones of our school’s philosophy, applies to everyone involved – students, teachers, and administrators (parents, too, depending on the degree of their involvement). The general point about accountability for all is that we’re accountable for how we have fit ourselves into the pattern of the community. Am I a conscientious student? Am I a bully? Am I a victim? Am I a leader? Am I an educator, or am I merely a place-holder? Do I let things slide, or am I pro-active in getting things done, solving problems, and opening communications? Can I do better than I’m doing? In short, being accountable means being positively self-directed. We must learn to be accountable for assessing our own level of success and making positive adjustments to our actions and attitudes accordingly. This view of accountability provides the foundation for how to meet the challenge of excelling academically.

Academics

The challenge to excel academically has become increasingly complex in the last few years. With the passage of the No Child Left Behind act (NCLB) in January, 2002, the focus of teaching shifted: We now spend a high percentage of our instructional time teaching to a test. As you know, the federal NCLB requires that each state develop a list of standards and that schools teach to them, and the degree of success of that teaching is to be measured by a state approved test. In our case, of course, the test is the AIMS. A lot of us have found that there are good things about this shift in focus. At least, we say, we now have a largely agreed upon set of things students are to learn, and we have a test that helps us see if they’ve learned those things. However, as educators know, there is much more thinking and learning going on in school –important thinking and learning – that can’t be captured with any paper and pencil test. Meeting our challenge to excel academically involves doing well on tests and doing well in the other areas not covered by the test. Academic success at Foothills Academy includes the ability to set goals and reach them, to be self-reliant and responsible, to develop the ability to direct and evaluate one’s own learning, and the ability to resist all sorts of temptations that face young people, so that the foregoing can be accomplished. (Then there is having a sense of history, of aesthetics, of being a citizen, of making ethical decisions; being a good team member, exercising leadership . . . There is a real-life test for these things.) We do well on tests, and we’ll continue to work to do better (not only on the AIMS, but SATs and ACTs as well). We now have an All-Honors high school with a middle school program designed to make the transition into that higher academic environment. The broad academic challenge is enhanced by the effort we introduced last year, with some success, to foster an attitude of stewardship.

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BOX TOPS !!

We are collecting Box Tops for Education again this year. Please remember to put your box tops into baggies and label with your teachers name on the outside of the baggie. We collect them in the huge pink BOX TOPS container in the front office.



THANK YOU

Our Fall Semester Club season is in full swing. On Mondays- Photography and Tech are offered, Tuesdays- Arts & Crafts, Wednesdays-- Yoga, and Thursdays -- Photography and Weightlifting. The fall session will run through December. We will look to offer these and additional clubs 2nd semester. All clubs run approximately one hour.

Our eight week Tennis Clinic at the Boulders Resort has begun. This is a great opportunity for students to learn the game under the watchful eye of The Boulders Tennis Staff and Mrs. Mullane. The location and courts are second to none. The Clinic takes place on Wednesdays at 3:30pm

Sports

The High School Girls Volleyball team is enjoying a winning season. New Coach La White has the girls working hard. The team competes in The Charter Athletic Association and plays their home games at Shiloh Community Church.

The winter sports season will be upon us shortly. We will be offering High School Boys and Girls Basketball, and Middle School Boys and Girls Basketball. Registration will begin the first week in November. We are looking for coaches for the Basketball season. This is a paid position, with fingerprinting required. If you know of any interested candidates, please contact Terry Mullane at tmullane@foothillsacademy.com

Current Lunch Program:

Monday Bad Donkey- Subs \$6	Tuesday Rubios \$5
Wednesday Subway \$5	Thursday PeiWei \$5
Friday Bad Donkey-Pizza \$6	

Lunches can be purchased prior to school

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The transition, then, into college and university experiences is made by students with strong test scores and an arsenal of personal skills for long-term success. Meeting this broad academic challenge is enhanced by the effort we introduced last year, with some success, to foster an attitude of stewardship.

Stewardship (adapted from my article in BHN early last year)

By stewardship we mean (from the dictionary) “the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one’s care.” Our approach is to assume that Foothills Academy students are mature enough to begin to see their environment (their school, their books, their relationships, their demeanor, their learning) as something they have control over and responsibility for, perhaps to a degree beyond what is generally taught in school. The push is to encourage students to take on the challenge of stewardship here at school where a great deal can be defined in a relatively closed setting. Good stewards will clean up after themselves at lunch, they’ll dress properly, they’ll arrive with the right tools for school, they’ll foster good relationships with peers and teachers, they’ll care about their environment, they’ll assume the responsibilities of friendship, and more. Now, this is a true challenge. Most of us have trouble getting our kids to take out the trash, let alone meeting all these high flown goals! However, with consistent guidance and practice, our students have shown over time that they can actually become good stewards. Stewardship lives in Student Council, NHS, NJHS, Peer Judiciary, Peer Mediation, Peer Tutoring, Yearbook Staff, School Newspaper, Literary Magazine, Senior Project, our Sports Programs, our Clubs, our classes, and our lunch-times.

It should be clear that there is an interrelationship among the three dimensions of our effort to meet the challenge of reaching higher levels of learning, building a stronger community, and exceeding our current standing in the community. Good academics, especially considering our wide interpretation, require a high level of accountability. Stewardship is the supporting role, the guiding part. My hope is that our readers will engage this challenge with its three dimensions to achieve the highest goals for 2008-2009.

Internet Danger Presentation

Detective Tanya Corder of the Scottsdale Police Department will be giving two school presentations on Internet Danger on Wednesday October 22, 2008.

She will meet with all High School Students beginning at 8:30am-9:45am and with Middle School Students from 10:00am-11:15am. Parents of their respective grade level students are invited to attend. For further information, please contact Terry Mullane at tmullane@foothillsacademy.com

Tips For Picking Up Kids After School

It's been over a month now, and we still seem to be having a bit of a traffic jam when picking kids up from school. Here are some tips to help make it easier and less stressful for all of us.

First, **Get Off The Phone.** Hang Up and Pay Attention to what you are doing: Driving in a School Parking Lot where there are a lot of children!

Do not use the exit lane from Ashler Hills Drive as an entrance. If you block the exit lane, no one can get out and then we are all stuck.

Slow Down. When there are two lines of cars waiting for children, the lane in between them is not a speed way. Again, there are lots of kids walking across the driveway who may not be paying attention as they are looking for their ride and getting into cars.

If you arrive early and know your child is not getting out of class within about 10 minutes, please don't get in line to wait for them. Instead, use the parking area. Waiting in line only holds up everyone else. Plus, it is easier for you to get out of the parking lot if you are not in line - provided there is no one blocking the exit!

It's Field Trip Time

On Thursday, October 30 the 10th grade International Relations class will be traveling to the Mesa Arts Center for the National Geographic Live presentation of "A Camera, Two Kids, and a Camel" by famed photographer Annie Griffiths Belt.

Students will have the opportunity to experience many parts of the world from a unique perspective as she shares her photographs and stories. We will round out our day with a stop for lunch before heading back to Foothills.

So remember to turn in your permission slips and money ASAP.

Thanks,

Diana Kogan

Peer Judiciary

I would like to Introduce you to the 2008 – 2009 Peer Judiciary Council.

This year's members are Scott Amundsen, Julia Kaplan, Kelsey McGee, Bruno Moreira, Andrew Cho, Kyle Schaff and Leah Sinatra. Our first meeting will be held shortly to elect officers and take care of the beginning of the year business. Watch shortly for an updated photo on the Foothills Academy website.

Diana Kogan, sponsor

Major Retailers Want To Give Our School Money!

This will be our ONLY Fundraiser this Year!

We're pleased to share some exciting news about a new fundraising program for Foothills Academy PTO. It's called "scrip", and it's the fundraising program that works while you shop.

Scrip is simply a word that means "substitute money" – in other words, scrip is gift cards from national and local retailers. They're the same gift certificates that you buy at the store. Many popular retailers participate in our scrip program including grocery stores, restaurants, gas stations and pet supply. The list is extensive, just to name a few... Safeway, Walgreens, CVS, Petsmart, Exxon/Mobile, Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, Dillards, California Pizza Kitchen, Starbucks, AMC Theaters, Best Buy, Blockbuster, Sams Club, Wal-Mart, Home Depot....the list goes on and on. Please view the full list at www.glscrip.com.

You're probably asking yourself how these stores help us raise money. It's simple -- scrip participating retailers agree to sell gift cards to FAPTO at a discount. Families buy the certificates for full face value, they redeem them for full face value, and our school keeps the difference as revenue. And scrip is exciting, because everybody wins:

- The retailer gets cash up front and repeat business...
- We get a powerful fundraising alternative that involves no auction and no selling...
- Our school gets a regular source of revenue.

The beauty of scrip is that you put your regular household shopping dollars to work. We earn money for our school without spending a single additional penny. Just spend your regular shopping dollars with scrip at the stores that participate in the scrip program!

Ordering is easy. Go online to www.glscrip.com and print a current retailer list (it is updated weekly). Highlight the retailers you would like to purchase cards from, indicate the quantity you wish to purchase of each card and return the form, with a check made payable to FAPTO, to the FA office by the 10th of each month. The gift cards will be ordered and returned to school by the 16th. Your child can pick them up at the office with a current school id. Easy! Our next order will be collected November 10th.

If you have any questions please contact scrip@fapto.org. Thanks for participating!

View from the Business Side

By Joan Puddy

The school year is off to a great start. The students are engaged (and engaging!):

- Student Council representatives (under the leadership of Alexis, Caroline, and Georgia) are making AND implementing plans for events that will surely enhance each student's experience at Foothills Academy.
- Twenty-four beautiful new laptop computers are being wheeled 'round campus, effectively utilized by teachers and students alike, providing reliable internet access (Thank you, FAPTO!).
- The FA sports program is well underway with girl's high school volleyball and basketball season is right around the corner.
- Science labs at all grade levels are a popular activity among students – I just came from Mr. Brimacombe's 8th grade science class where the students were enthusiastically conducting their "Chemistry in a Bag" experiments (think baking soda, bromthymol blue, and calcium chloride).
- Planned field experiences include trips to the Pueblo Museum, Chinese Cultural Center, Celebrity Theater (Anne Frank: A Voice Heard), Mesa Arts Center, and Renaissance Festival.

As Business Manager and Associate Director of Foothills Academy, I do not have the opportunity to visit classrooms and with students as much as I would like to. I am fortunate this year to be sitting in on Student Council meetings (La White is doing a fantastic job as advisor to this ambitious group). Foothills Academy operates as a small school district and the office staff and I stay busy with all the day-to-day details involved with managing a small non-profit school while continually working toward that "perfect" financial audit.

The biggest challenge that we currently face at Foothills Academy is funding. Currently, **228 students are enrolled at Foothills Academy**. And although that means small class sizes and more "elbow room," it is not good news for our cash flow. Foothills Academy, like all charter schools, is a public school: Funded by taxpayer dollars, based solely on enrollment and attendance. Our enrollment cap is 250 students. Bottom line? Foothills Academy's funding "gap" between state funding and our budget, is in excess of \$150,000 FY 2008 – 2009.

As you know, Foothills Academy relies on our families to voluntarily contribute \$475 per year per student (PSF) to help bridge the "gap." To date, Foothills Academy has received 46.36% (\$51,846) of budgeted Program Support Fees (PSF) for 2008-2009. Nearly \$60,000 remains outstanding. Yes, the fee is optional and voluntary. However, for your student and all students at Foothills Academy, please contribute what you can.

If you are thinking of making a donation beyond your PSF, please remember that Foothills Academy is a 501c3 non-profit school and your donation is tax deductible. We recognize that these are tough economic times but we also know that you and your student appreciate Foothills Academy – dedicated and talented faculty and staff, a safe environment, and a top-notch college prep experience that leads to college admission to institutions of higher learning such as Stanford, Carnegie Mellon, and the Honors Colleges at both U of A and ASU (to name just a few). Last year alone, over a half a million dollars were offered in scholarship monies to our graduating seniors.

The monetary gap between state funding and the school's budget is real and we need your help. Although required by the Arizona Department of Education to label the PSF as "optional," the school's future depends upon your financial participation.

For those of you who have paid your PSF in full or are continuing to pay throughout the school year, thank you!

"Foothills Academy – A Private Education at Public School Prices"