

Multicultural Art Activities

The saying goes “Many hands make light work”, at Ridgeview, the saying should be “Many hands make beautiful murals”. Every student made a handprint with the help of their classroom teacher or Mrs. Mitchell in the art studio. The hands were joined together to make beautiful art work in the lobby, highlighting the fact that we are all different, but can work and live together beautifully. February is **Cultural Intelligences month** in Sparta and the CIS committee has worked to put together many activities to explore different cultures. Multicultural art activities will be explored in the Art Studio. Speakers will come in to discuss different cultures with the students. These include: African- American, Mexican- American, Native American, and Korean cultures. An activity calendar was developed and sent home to families with ideas to explore different cultures at home. Ridgeview students are learning that we can be different yet learn and grow together.



Pictured from left to right: Arthur Brown, Justin Brown, Mackenzie Kerkstra, Sarah Richmond, Mrs. Daab-Cushway (honors band director), Mackenzie Byrne, Mr. Z, Jessica Noorman, Chris Miller

SMS Students Participate in District Honors Band

Members of the Sparta Middle School band program were represented again this year in the annual MSBOA District Honors Band January 8 and 9. The band is made up of 7th and 8th grade students from 33 middle schools in our MSBOA district. After a short rehearsal January 5, students met their honors band director, Penny Daab-Cushway, and rehearsed Jan 8 from 9:00 to 6:00 stopping occasionally for lunch and snack breaks. They returned Sunday morning for some fine tuning of the program and later gave a concert for family and community. A lot of the kids met students from other schools and developed an appreciation of what hard work and effort can achieve in a short amount of time. For the 2nd year, the concert was held in our own Spartan Auditorium. Hundreds of people got to visit our new facility and commented on how they would like to see Sparta as the home for this annual performance. A special thanks to the band boosters and high school students for their volunteer work. Also, thanks to Downtown Trini's for their help with this as well.

EDUCATIONAL REFORM

By Kent Swinson, Superintendent

For the past nine to ten years the central theme every spring in districts throughout Michigan has been “the need to make reductions”. Sparta certainly has not been spared from this task as funding has continually decreased and expenses have increased. Throughout this period a major crisis has been averted by bailouts from either State or Federal sources. This has continued to push the problem down the road rather than truly deal with the causes. Based on communication from our new Governor this may no longer be the case, especially since there does not appear to be any more bailouts on the way.

So what is the connection between educational reform and school funding? Obviously funding is necessary to provide quality educational services. However, when those resources are limited you cannot continue to do business as usual. Our district has followed through over the years on the commitment to be fiscally responsible while maintaining quality classroom instruction. These past efforts will allow us to continue to explore how best to re-structure education in the Sparta Area Schools without making drastic cuts in the coming year.

“...commitment to be fiscally responsible while maintaining quality classroom instruction.”

Last year the district asked and received input from parents, staff, and the community on issues associated with the re-structuring of education. That input was used to drive decisions last spring and will be reviewed as a basis for future changes. Our Board and Administrative Team have met several times this year to discuss ideas on how best to deliver instruction in the classroom which is the center of the district's mission. It is refreshing to focus on instruction rather than deciding on what cuts to make to balance the budget.

Educational reform is a reality regardless if the driving force is funding or student achievement. Together we are charged with the responsibility to provide our students with the best educational opportunities possible. I know of no districts which do not have to consider funding in the decisions they make, however, we are fortunate to be in a position to make educational reforms next year without making major reductions at the same time.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

District & Community Information	2-3
Sparta Preschool.....	3
Sparta Ridgeview Elementary	4
Sparta Appleview Elementary.....	5
Sparta Middle School.....	5-6
Sparta High School	6-7
Englishville High School.....	7
Community Education.....	8

The Frustration of School Traffic

By Kent Swinson, Superintendent

Sitting in line to pick-up your son or daughter at any of our school buildings can be a daily frustration. It is compounded by winter weather when driving conditions are poor. There is a long history behind the current traffic congestion beginning with the building of the new High School, the closing of Central Elementary, moving to a single bus run, the closing of Applevew during renovations, and the re-alignment of grade levels. In a period of four years our transportation system had to be revised every fall due to those changes. Regardless of the history, the frustration level for many remains the same. Even the fact that driving to school is by choice when bussing is provided does not seem to comfort those that wait in lines of cars.

In trying to deal with the problem over the years the district has increased staff time to assist parents in dropping off/picking up students, assigned a safety officer to direct traffic, hired outside traffic personnel, added signage, re-paved drives, added pavement markings, provided directions in parent newsletters, worked with the Village with traffic lights, enlarged bus loops, as well as other building specific adjustments. However, problems obviously still exist. They are not being ignored as improving traffic flow is important to many parents.

One potential change we are examining is our bussing schedule. The single bus run has served the original purpose of reducing transportation cost the past six years. A draw back of the system is the start and end times for all buildings are dictated by a common transfer site in the morning and afternoon. Since buildings start and end times are relatively the same traffic congestion is intensified around all buildings both times of the day. If we can come up with a plan to stagger the schedules of the secondary and elementary buildings it would result in a much better flow of traffic throughout the district. The challenge is to be cost effective and beneficial to the educational needs of our students. We are continuing to look at options which will reduce the frustration of school traffic.



The evening ended with a picture taken of all past and present Spartan wrestlers.

Sparta's 50th wrestling anniversary celebration includes 50-21 win over Cedar Springs

At a night honoring 50 years of Sparta wrestling, the Spartans current team continued the winning tradition with a 50-21 win over Cedar Springs.

With about 80 former Sparta wrestlers on hand, the Spartans continued their roll through the season with hopes of reaching a Division 2 team state final.

The celebration began with exhibition matches by several youth wrestling club members. After the JV match the 2010 Hall of Fame Inductees, Steve VanOeffelen, Class of 1973, Mike Vanderhyde, Class of 1973, Todd Eck, Class of 1981, Dave Andrus, Class of 1991, Chad Kik, Class of 1992 and Coach Ron Helmboldt 1967-2005 were introduced along with former State champions in attendance.

There have only been five coaches in the last 50 years, Harry Compton, Dohn Gohn, Ron Helmboldt, Cary Stamas, and current head coach Tom Bennett. All five coaches were able to attend and enjoy seeing former wrestlers.

PTC News

A NIGHT OUT AT McDonald's

Sound fun to see Sparta school staff working hard and having fun behind the lines?

McDonalds of Sparta is hosting a fundraising event:

**WHEN: Tuesday, April 19
5-7 pm**

**WHERE: McDonalds-Sparta
Eat in or Drive-thru**

Come out and treat your family to a fun night out and support Sparta schools

Presented by: PTC & Meet in the Middle parent groups

Reserve the date

Sparta PTC presents the 2nd annual



**Saturday, April 30
Applevew Elementary**

- carnival games
- prizes
- cake walk
- hot dogs
- snow cones
- cotton candy

A fun way to spend the day with family!

Bell Ringer Due Dates

The *Bell Ringer* communicates with the residents of the school district five times per year. If you wish to have an article or "Community Corner" notice considered for publication, please email it to amie.bitely@staff.spartaschools.org. Please use only MS Word or Corel WordPerfect for your format.

The *Bell Ringer* is distributed in the first issue of the *Advance Newspaper* in November, January, March, June and August. If you are not receiving the *Bell Ringer*, please contact the Advance at (1-800-439-0960). Issues of the *Bell Ringer* are also available for download at www.spartaschools.org.

Deadlines to submit information:

June 7, 2011 issuedue May 4

August 2, 2011 issuedue June 22

Free/Reduced Lunch

If your family's economic situation has changed, especially if someone in your family has lost a job, please request an application for free or reduced price meals from your child's school. Applications may also be filled out online by following the link on the District's homepage, www.spartaschools.org.

SPARTA AREA SCHOOLS

OUR PURPOSE is to teach children the skills and attitudes needed to be productive members of society in order to improve the quality of life for all.

Preschool & Childcare Opportunities at Sparta

Preschool Service Calendar follows the District School Year Calendar

All preschool programming in Sparta follows the Great Start Readiness Program Guidelines. This model is based upon what is known as the High Scope Philosophy. High Scope is a developmentally appropriate approach to learning combining direct instruction with orchestrated play. High Scope uses specific intended learning outcomes from Creative Curriculum and the State of Michigan Preschool Standards and Expectations.

Tuition Preschool

Sparta Area Schools operates a three and four year old preschool class. Class size is limited. Classes are filled on a first-come, first-served basis according to the enrollment date. A \$30 non-refundable fee is due at the time of enrollment. The fee is \$12.00 per session which meets for three, 2.5 hours per day for three year olds and four days a week, 3 hours per day for four year olds. Students will attend preschool at White Early Childhood Center. Wrap around care is also available for both tuition preschool programs.

Eligibility:

- Child must be at least three years old but not yet five years old by December 1, 2011.
- Child must be three years old by December 1, 2011 to attend the three-year-old class.
- Child must be four years old by December 1, 2011 to attend the four-year-old class.
- Child must be toilet trained.
- District residents will receive first priority.
- Parents must provide transportation.
- Proof of immunization and a birth certificate must be presented before school starts.
- No child may enter the program unless all necessary documents are completed.

Preschool with Childcare for children ages 3 and 4 years old

This program is offered throughout the calendar year including summers (provided there are enough children enrolled during the summer). Childcare will be open Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. except for major holidays, Thanksgiving recess and Christmas recess (dates to be determined). The program will remain open on snow days. Children must be toilet trained. Breakfast and nutritious snacks will be provided. Children must bring a sack lunch. Children may start attending at 2 years, 6 months as long as they are potty trained.

The fee is \$130 per week (\$26 per day). A \$30 non-refundable fee is due at enrollment. One enrollment fee will be charged per year.

This program is housed at White Early Childhood Center.

Great Start Readiness Preschool

Now accepting applications for the 2011-2012 school year. This program is free to children residing in the Sparta School district who will be 4 years of age by December 1, 2011. Students must meet two of twenty-five eligibility requirements (*you need not be of low income*). Classes meet Monday through Thursday in part day sessions. Openings are limited; call 887-8218 for more information and for an application.

Students will attend readiness preschool at Ridgeview Elementary.

Young 5's and Kindergarten Extended Childcare Services

Sparta Schools offers childcare during the school day from 7:55 am-3:20 pm at Ridgeview Elementary with extended day services (6:30 am-8:00 am and 3:15 pm-6:00 pm) provided at Applevue Elementary. Transportation to and from the extended day services will be provided by the district.

The fee is \$105 per week (\$21 per day). A \$30 non-refundable fee is due at the time of enrollment. Breakfast and nutritious snacks will be provided. Children must bring a sack lunch.

This program will be housed at Ridgeview Elementary.

Before & After School Care for Students in Grades Young 5's, K-5

"The Open Door" Before and After School Care program is open from 6:30 - 8:00 am and 3:00-6:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Fee per session is \$5 for mornings and \$9.50 for afternoons. A \$30 non refundable fee is due at the time of enrollment. The program will be open daily, including snow days, no school days, Christmas recess (dates to be determined) and Spring Break. The center will be closed major holidays and Thanksgiving recess.

Summer care may also be provided depending on the number of students enrolled.

Questions for any of the programs listed above, call Sparta Community Education, 887-7321.

Come See What Sparta Has to Offer!

The Beginning Years Round-UP!

**Preschool thru Kindergarten
Ready for the 2011-2012 School Year?**

On Thursday, March 24, parents and their children are invited to Ridgeview's first ever **All Programs Open House/Round Up!** This event will offer families the opportunity to visit dozens of booths featuring information and activities on preschool, childcare, Young 5's and Kindergarten programs. Our 0-3 year old program (Parents as Teachers) will also be featured. Activities will include a Student Learning area, an ice cream treat, tours of the building and opportunities to get started with enrollment. The event runs from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. in the Ridgeview gym and is in place of Kindergarten Screening and Open Enrollment night at White Early Childhood.

If you plan to start the enrollment process please bring:

- Your child's birth certificate
- Your child's immunization record
- Proof of residency (*school aged programs only*)
- Your child's social security number
- A recent physical (*for preschool and childcare only*)

This new format replaces our tradition of Kindergarten Round Up which was followed by a screening appointment for each student. We are basing Kindergarten and Young 5 placements for the 2011-12 school year on the recommendation of our preschool teaching staff. The teachers know their students well and will have assessed their skills and kindergarten readiness before the students exit in May/June. For students who have not had a preschool experience, the Ridgeview staff will be on hand to assist you with understanding how to determine what is best for your child. We invite you to stop in to Ridgeview on Thursday, March 24 and see what Sparta Schools has to offer our youngest Spartans!

For further information or to begin the enrollment process visit our website at www.spartaschools.org and click on the registration link.

If you can't make it on March 24th, please visit the Ridgeview or White ECC office to get enrollment paperwork at your convenience.



SPARTA PRESCHOOL NEWS



Pictured as characters in Goldilocks: Christopher Fuestel, Lola Davey, Eleyna Briscoe, and Kadie Norman

White Winter Adventures

The preschool-aged children at White Early Childhood Center have been busy learning while they play the past couple of months. Embedded in songs, games and movement exercises are lessons on shape and colors, letters and numbers, the work of particular authors and much more. In January, the seventy three students who attend White were engaged in adventure - going on a bear hunt...find the hidden bear with your name on it! while acting out story plot - Goldilocks really entertained.



SPARTA RIDGEVIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Important Dates at Ridgeview

MARCH

March 1 1st Grade Fine Arts Program
 March 5 Mother/Son Griffins Hockey Game @ VanAndel Arena
 March 7, 14 & 21 2nd Grade Grand Rapids Museum Field Trips
 March 19..... SEF Retro-Bowl at Sparta Lanes
 March 24..... All Program Open House/Round Up, 5:30-8:00p.m.
 March 28 & 29..... Parent/Teacher Conferences, 3:30-7:00 p.m.
 March 31..... No School

APRIL

April 1-8..... NO SCHOOL, Spring Break
 April 12 & 13... 1st Grade - Frederick Meijer Gardens, 9:00 a.m. -2:30 p.m.
 April 18..... Mobile Dentist Week
 2nd Grade Grand Rapids Museum, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.
 April 19..... Night Out At MacDonalds, 5:00-7:00 p.m.
 April 20 RIF (*Reading Is Fundamental*)
 Science Night For Dads & Kids
 April 22..... NO SCHOOL
 April 30..... P.T.C. Family Fun Festival, Appleview

MAY

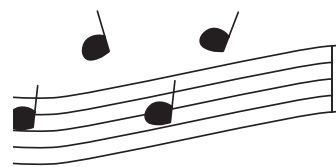
May 3 Kindergarten Fine Arts Festival, Ridgeview, 5:45-7:45 p.m.
 May 5 EC Mother's Day Tea, 9:30-10:30 a.m. & 1:30-2:30 p.m.
 May 17 & 18 ... 1st Grade Visits Zoo, 9:00 AM-2:30 p.m.
 May 19 Early Childhood Traveling Zoo, WECC
 May 20 NO SCHOOL
 May 26 Last Day for GSRP
 Early Childhood Family Picnic, WECC,
 9:00-10:30 a.m & 12:30-2:00 p.m.
 May 30 NO SCHOOL - Memorial Day

For more information about upcoming events, visit www.spartaschools.org, click on your school, then "calendar" to see the district wide calendar.



Book Buddies Create Penguin Buddies

After studying about penguins in their respective classrooms, Mrs. Lambert's 2nd Graders and Mrs. Van Slooten's Kindergartners teamed up to create paper penguin buddies. The 2nd graders read a Scholastic news article about penguins to their younger friends and then not only helped them complete a penguin and write a factual sentence about it, but made one of their own.



Musical Events at Ridgeview Elementary

In the past few months, Ridgeview music students have been learning about *Rhythm, Dynamics, Tempo, Melody, and Improvisation*. In December the 2nd Graders presented a great holiday concert that showcased their beautiful singing voices, and understanding of the above music concepts. In the upcoming months, the 1st Grade and Kindergarten students will also be given the opportunity to perform for you.

The 1st Grade "Day in the Life" concert was on Tuesday, March 1, 2011 in the Ridgeview Gym. The focus of this concert was for the students to teach their families and friends all of the musical knowledge that the students have learned so far this school year.

Kindergarten students will present their "Day in the Life" concert Tuesday, May 3, 2011 in the Ridgeview Gym. The focus of this concert is for the students to demonstrate what a typical day in a kindergarten music class look like.

Parents, please continue to look in your child's Friday Folder for further information about the concerts!

Ridgeview's Foster Grandparents

We are so fortunate to have foster grandparents, Gisela Leichty, Millie Anderson, and Dale Allers, working in our building. We partner with the Gerontology Network to provide this wonderful service. Our Foster Grandparents work with the children in their assigned class and spend extra time with students who need further direction or assistance. If you visit Ridgeview you will see them helping students with their coats and book bags, reading with individual students or helping students with their school work. The program is so appreciated by the students and staff, and builds wonderful relationships. If you are interested in joining this program, contact Nicole Peterson at Ridgeview Elementary, 887-8218



Sledding Fun!

During the month of February, the children from the preschool classes joined together for some sledding fun. The preschool class of the Great Start Readiness Program, Early Childhood Special Education, and White Early Childhood Center all joined together to go sledding and then go inside to enjoy some hot cocoa and animal crackers.



Pictured above: 1st grade students Bobby Rice, Ashley Cowdrey, Evan Winger, and Chaleigh Kutzli show their illustrations from Leo Lionni's, *Mr. McMouse*.

Mr. McMouse

Mrs. Groters and Mrs. Myers first grade classrooms had a great time creating murals that showed scenes from stories they have read. The students were inspired to begin this project as they heard *Mr. McMouse* by Leo Lionni and saw the unique paper illustrations. All 1st grade students are expected to identify the beginning, middle, and end of a given story; so students used their creative abilities to make paper figures and scenery to depict the various parts of *Mr. McMouse*. Students then worked collaboratively to assemble the murals which were displayed in the hallway.



SPARTA APPLEVIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Important Dates at Applevue

MARCH

- March 5..... PTC Mother /Son Griffins Hockey Game @VanAndel Arena meet behind Middle School, 5:00 p.m.
- March 14..... PTC Meeting, HS Media Center, 6:15 p.m.
- March 15-17..... 4th Grade Lansing Trips
- March 17..... 5th Gr. Music Program, HS Auditorium
- March 18..... Report Cards
- March 19..... SEF Retro-Bowl at Sparta Lanes
- March 31..... NO SCHOOL

APRIL

- April 1-8 NO SCHOOL, Spring Break
- April 19 Night Out at McDonald's, 5:00-7:00 p.m.
- April 22 NO SCHOOL
- April 28 5th Grade Historic Sparta Walking Tour
- April 29 Progress Reports, PTC Hosts Author Visit ~ Jonathon Rand
- April 30 PTC Hosts Family Fun Festival at Applevue

MAY

- May 5, 6 & 11..... 3rd Grade to Hoffmaster State Park
- May 6 5th Grade Chicago Trip
- May 20 NO SCHOOL
- May 30 NO SCHOOL, Memorial Day

For more information about upcoming events, visit www.spartaschools.org, click on your school, then "calendar" to see the district wide calendar.



Get Caught Reading! March is Reading Month

Next month, Applevue is celebrating and promoting daily reading for learning and for enjoyment. Each day in March, school-wide activities and special family events such as "Read S'More Night" are being planned. One community-wide event that is planned and the whole Sparta community can get involved in is "Get Caught Reading!"

We are asking for photos of people in the Sparta community who are reading in their daily lives. So grab your camera and snap some photos of your family, friends and co-workers reading in the local library, in restaurants, at home, or in the work place. Photos will be put on the "Got Caught Reading" display in the entrance of Applevue School. Please provide the name(s) of individuals in the photo(s). Photos can be dropped off at Applevue's main office, mailed to 240 E. Spartan Drive, or emailed to sandy.davis@staff.spartaschools.org or mary.kuzawa@staff.spartaschools.org. If you need the picture returned please provide a self-addressed stamped envelope. What a great way for everyone in the community to promote reading!



Third Grade SUPER Readers!

Reading is really the COOL thing to do this winter in third grade. Students in all third grade classes at Applevue have the opportunity to join the 50 POINT and 100 POINT A.R. Club. So far, there are over 20 students in the 50 POINT Club and two amazing readers in the 100 POINT Club. Students must read and test on a variety of books at their independent reading level to make either club. This light-hearted yet competitive incentive helps to motivate students, both boys and girls alike.

50 POINT Club:

- Alora Behro
- Evan Cowdrey
- Hayden DeGraaf
- Sydney Geysbeek
- Nick Groters
- Sebastian Hall
- Natalie Harrigan
- Kimberlyne Kober
- Megan Jones

Olivia Meyers

- Kendall Paige
- Kendall Sarafin-Puff
- Andrea Schriver
- Paige Streit
- Logan Tidey
- Kyle VanderWerff
- Zach Vitunskas
- Brendan Volkers
- Chase Wilson

Collin Wooten

- Ethan Wooten
- Ethan Zurek

100 Point Club:

- Gavin Goss
- Mason Sherman



SPARTA MIDDLE SCHOOL

Important Middle School Dates

MARCH

- March 19..... SEF Retro-Bowl, Sparta Lanes
- March 22..... Rollerskating Party, Roller Fox, Ravenna
- March 28..... Meet in the Middle meeting, 6:15 p.m., Admin. building
- March 31..... NO SCHOOL

APRIL

- April 1-8 NO SCHOOL, Spring Break
- April 19..... Night Out at McDonald's, 5:00-7:00 p.m.
- April 22..... NO SCHOOL
- April 25..... Meet in the Middle meeting, 6:15 p.m., Admin. building

MAY

- May 20 NO SCHOOL
- May 23 Meet in the Middle meeting, 6:15 p.m., Admin. building
- May 30 NO SCHOOL, Memorial Day

For more information about upcoming events, visit www.spartaschools.org, click on your school, then "calendar" to see the district wide calendar.

Rollerskating Party

Sparta Middle School will be hosting a fundraiser at the Roller Fox

- Tuesday, March 22nd from 5:30 - 8pm.
- \$5.00 admission includes skate rental, an additional \$3.00 for roller blades or \$5.00 for premium roller blades.
- Parents can drop their students off.
- Roller Fox, 12189 Apple Ave., Ravenna, MI.

DON'T MISS A FUN TIME!!



Dr. Mykee visits Sparta

By Karyll Russell, SMS Counselor



At Sparta Middle School we strive day by day, week by week, month by month to educate and foster a safe, caring, and orderly environment. To do so we place a great deal of emphasis on the Spartan Values of quality, respect, compassion, pride, positive humor, honesty, integrity, and trust. As a part of these efforts, Jessica Harris, Foreign Language instructor, and Chair of the District's Diversity, Staff, and Support Services Committee, wrote a grant, alongside other Kent County districts, to have Dr. Michael Fowlin, nationally recognized diversity speaker, visit our community to share his performance with Sparta students - grades 6-11.

Dr. Mykee, as he's known, encouraged, motivated, and challenged students to work toward inclusion of all by being positive contributors to the school and community. We are all challenged daily to work beyond tolerance and acceptance of one another, toward appreciation. By appreciating those things that make us unique we foster an environment where all students are safe, cared for, and orderly. One student's reflection helps better describe Dr. Mykee's message and impact. Please visit the Sparta Middle School website to read her thoughtful words.

Sparta Education Foundation's

RETRO BOWL 2011

Bring your friend and families for a
day of fun at Sparta Lanes!

Saturday, March 19

Sign-up forms are available at all the school offices
or visit our website,
www.spartaschools.org/organizations



SPARTA MIDDLE SCHOOL, continued



Who Killed Elvis?

The Sparta Middle School Production Company is proud to present its spring production *Who Killed Elvis?* by Craig Sadaro.

What happens when The Drop on Inn, a small town diner, can't keep up with its mortgage; change the name and hold an Elvis impersonation contest. Come see this lively family-friendly "who-done-it" comedy filled with great Elvis music, exciting costumes and outstanding acting by Sparta's finest 5th -8th graders as they unravel the mystery of who killed Elvis. You'll be dancing in your seat to some Elvis's most famous songs.

Showtimes at the High School Auditorium:

Thursday, March 10 - 7:30 pm

Friday, March 11 - 7:30 pm

Saturday, March 12 - 2:00 and 7:30 pm

Call 887-7506 ext 1353 for reserved seats.

Tickets may also be purchased at the door.

Adults \$7.00 Students/Seniors \$5.00

7th & 8th Grade Band Festival

By Jim Zwarensteyn, MS Band Director

The Sparta Middle School 7th and 8th grade bands will be participating again this year at District Festival. Both bands play on March 4th at Greenville High School in their auditorium. The 7th grade is tentatively scheduled to play at 11:25 a.m. The 8th grade is tentatively scheduled to play at 1:00 p.m. Finalized time will be announced just before the event. Festival is an opportunity for bands to show their progress over the year. They must prepare a march, a required piece appropriate to their size band and a piece they may select to show a different style of playing. Then they are required to play two more songs, which they may not see prior to then. They have a few minutes to look it over, after which they must perform them. Then they are judged by a panel of professional musicians to review how much they have achieved during the year. Sparta bands have represented our community well over the years. This year's group should be no different. Parents, if you would like to see your band children perform at their highest level, make this day available. Festival is free and open to the public.



Spelling Bee

By Jeana Sixbury and Jessica Noorman

The school-wide spelling bee this year was an intense competition. On Wednesday, January 19th over thirty students from grades fifth through eighth spelled their hearts out in the Middle School Café. After many rounds, we came down to 2 finalists. Emily Byers, an eighth grader took first place and Alana LaTour, a fifth grader came in second place. They will be representing Sparta at the regional spelling bee which will be held at Potter's House in Grand Rapids on February 22nd. If they happen to succeed and win regional, they will advance to the Greater Grand Rapids Final Spelling Bee. It will be held at the Gerald R. Ford Museum Auditorium on Tuesday, March 22nd. **Good luck to our Spartan spellers!!**



SPARTA HIGH SCHOOL

NEW DATE!!

Parent/Teacher Conferences
March 14, 5:00-7:30 p.m.

Important High School Dates

MARCH

March 1 & 3..... Mandatory Parent/Sophomore Scheduling Nights
(letters mailed home in February)

APRIL

April 30..... Prom at GR Children's Museum, 8:00 - 11:00 p.m.

MAY

May 24..... Senior Awards Program, 7:30 p.m.

May 26 & 27 Senior Exams

JUNE

June 1Senior Checkout, 8:15 a.m.

June 2..... Graduation at Sparta High School, 7:30 p.m.

June 9..... LAST DAY OF SCHOOL

For more information about upcoming events, visit www.spartaschools.org, click on your school, then "calendar" to see the district wide calendar.

\$1000 SCHOLARSHIP FOR FUTURE TEACHERS

Interested in a career as an EDUCATOR?

Apply for the SEA (Sparta Education Association) Scholarship

Pick up applications in the High School guidance office.

Applications due April 29, 2011

A gift from the teachers of Sparta Area Schools.

Spartan Music Coffee House



The Sparta Band Boosters are hosting the first Spartan Music Coffee House on March 8th from 5:00-8:00pm. The High School Commons will be transformed into a community café and our very own musicians will serenade the crowd with non stop performances throughout the night. So come, drink a latte, listen to live music and help our award winning marching band raise money for uniforms!

Graduation is Thursday, June 2 at 7:30 p.m.

Senior Bash immediately following

Important High School Graduation Tickets Information
Each graduate will be provided with up to 8 tickets.

- 200 additional tickets will be made available via lottery for graduates requesting more than 8 tickets.
- 50 tickets will be made available for SHS undergraduates. These tickets will be distributed on a first come/first serve basis. Seniors are encouraged to have their undergraduate friends make reservations.
- 50 tickets will be made available for the general public, These tickets will be distributed on a first come/first serve basis. Non-family members are encouraged to reserve tickets.
- Tickets reservations can be made by seniors or parents/guardians beginning on April 12, 2011. Please contact Mrs. Marilynn Bitely at SHS (616-887-8213 ext.5). Tickets will be available for pickup after May 5, 2011.



SPARTA HIGH SCHOOL

The Taming of the Shrew

High School Spring Play

Made and remade many times over into such hits as the movie, *Ten Things I Hate about You* and the musical *Kiss Me Kate*. *The Taming of the Shrew* by William Shakespeare is the story of Katherina the Shrew, her sweet sister Bianca, and their suitors' attempts to woo, win and eventually marry them. Centering around the "taming" of Katherina, the play is a remarkable commentary of love, life and the role of women in society. He said. She said. The never ending battle of the genders has always made for popular entertainment. Set in more modern times, this updated version of *The Taming of the Shrew* has just about something for everyone!

When: April 14, 15, 16

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Where: High School Auditorium

Tickets: Adults \$7.00, Students/Seniors \$5.00

High School Solo and Ensemble

35 Sparta High School Band Members participated in MSBOA District Solo and Ensemble Events on Saturday, January 20th in Grant. A total of 26 different events performed for judges throughout the day. 16 events qualified for State Solo and Ensemble in March. Soloists who earned division I ratings were Gary Brown, Emily Hurst, Loren Matulis, Adam Ronning, Kayla Towers, Collin Lewis, Hannah Soules, Emma Kauffman, Caleb Yonkers, and Nate Soules. Also receiving a division one was a Freshman Flute Trio, a Flute Duet, and the Wind Ensemble Brass Quintet and Woodwind Quartet. The percussion ensemble which involved 14 band members received all A's and will also be performing at State Solo and Ensemble. Congratulations to the Spartan Band Members who represented our community with pride.

Parent/Teenager Quandary:

"What were you thinking?"

By Emma Kauffman



Sometimes teenagers can be known to make extremely horrible decisions. We're all well educated; we've been on this earth for upwards of 18 years, so why is that? The choice seems pretty clear between staying at home with my parents on a Friday night and sneaking out of my bedroom window into the excitement of the night. We've all heard the question, "What were you thinking?" Recent research into the teenage brain shows that they question isn't too

far off in it's assumption: sometimes we just don't think. The frontal lobe of a young adult hasn't been completely connected by nerves yet. A fatty coating called myelin serves as a sort of 'insulation' on the nerves. In an adolescent there isn't much of it, meaning the nerves in the frontal lobe don't transfer messages as fast as they do in an adult. Not to say that that teenagers who get caught lying to parents should blame it on the myelin. It's possible to make good, well-informed decisions; it just takes longer. So encourage your high schooler(s) to take a deep breath, relax, and think.

Attention Parents and Guardians of the Class of 2011:

Purchase and create your own Parent Ad for your graduating senior. Look for your Jostens mailer which will explain the process... or visit JostensAdService.com right now ... or use the link on Sparta High School's home page. Happy ad-making!

Student Perspective: New Year, Same Me

By Emily Dubicke

Being a teenager can be difficult sometimes, trying to fit in, and staying true to a value system. It's a struggle that many of us go through the duration of our teenage years. Operation Beautiful is on a mission to help teens recognize that the person you see in front of the mirror every morning is unique. At operationbeautiful.com, the aim is to help eliminate the image of "beauty" that society often times views as true. All that is needed are some sticky notes and a pencil. Write a nice note saying, "You're beautiful!" or, "You're great just the way you are!" and leave it somewhere. Anywhere. A stranger will pick it up, read it, and might even be inspired by the kind comments from the writer. So, my challenge this year is to accept myself for who I am. I'm not going to try to change for anyone else, and I'm not going to let *anyone* tell me anything that is not true. And maybe I'll drop a few notes on the way!

Senior Bash News

Plans for an awesome all-night after graduation party (BASH) are in full swing! It's not too late for Sparta HS seniors in the class of 2011 to get involved! To attend BASH or learn more about student & parent fundraising volunteer opportunities contact: Patty Anderson, 887-2399, Amy Burmeister, 887-8669 or Barb Taylor, 887-2515

Graduating seniors won't want to miss this night of FUN, FOOD and FRIENDS!

VIP Graduation Seating Silent Auction!

The Class of 2011 BASH Committee is offering **three sets of eight reserved seats** (*your choice*) for the **2011 Sparta High School Graduation Ceremony**, Thursday, June 2nd to the three highest bidders.

Simply fill out the VIP Graduation Seating Silent Auction Form below and submit before May 6th to the Sparta High School office or send it to SHS BASH, P.O. BOX 353, Sparta, MI 49345. *Additional forms are available in the high school office.*

Submit your BID now!

Top three bidders will be able to choose their set of eight reserved seats and support BASH (*all night after graduation party*) fundraising. Individuals with the top three bids will be contacted by May 13th. Winners will have their self-selected prime seats reserved for graduation ceremony viewing!

Please note: Each graduate is presented eight tickets to the ceremony and these tickets will not be in addition to allotted tickets nor will they be part of the lottery system in place for students to request more tickets.

VIP Graduation Seating Silent Auction Form!

Yes! I would like to participate in the Silent Auction for my choice of eight reserved seats for the 2011 Sparta High School Graduation Ceremony Thursday, June 2, 2011.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Amount of Bid _____



SPARTA ENGLISHVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

The Breakfast Club

By Marc Schulz, Lead Teacher

For the students of Englishville the phrase "Breakfast Club" has more meaning to it than an 80's hit movie. While the theater portrayed 5 high school students serving detention on a Saturday morning, Englishville's Breakfast Club is recognizing students who are demonstrating positive growth. The Breakfast Club meets six times in a school year; at the midpoint and end of each trimester. Any student passing all of their classes or demonstrating exemplary attendance will be invited to breakfast, cooked by one of the Englishville staff. So far this year, the students have enjoyed pancakes, eggs, sausages, and homemade biscuits and gravy. The students have responded with many thank-you's, which is a bit ironic since we are thanking them.

The Breakfast Club does not exist only to recognize those who have met the requirements but it also serves as a tool to build and sustain a culture of success.

As a teacher I have found peer recognition of effort and accomplishments as a very powerful self-motivator. It is my hope that the breakfast club will be the recognition that continues to fuel the students towards achievement. Many students come to Englishville with a history of not being successful at school which can easily transform into a dislike for learning. If, as a small learning community, we can make learning rewarding, then we may be able to instill in each student the desire and motivation to succeed.

If recognition can lead students towards achievement then learning takes place, credit towards graduation is earned, and teachers can challenge the students with lessons that dive deeper into the content. It is a win-win scenario! And the breakfast is delicious as well!

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

First Aid & CPR Classes

CPR-AED - \$40

Child Care/Teaching, Adult Foster Care & Work Place/Industrial Adult, Child, & Infant CPR, AED & Choking
4th Saturday: April 23, May 21 & June 25
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

First Aid - \$35

Child Care/Teaching, Adult Foster Care & Work Place/Industrial With Blood Borne Pathogen Training
4th Saturday: April 23, May 21 & June 25
1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

CPR-AED & First Aid Combination - \$55

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

(BLS) Health Care Provider CPR-AED - \$45

Medical & Dental Professionals/Healthcare Students - Initial Training & Recertification
Book may be exchanged for CPR Mask at class
4th Saturday: April 23, May 21 & June 25
9:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

All instruction provided by Sparta Ambulance (A division of Rockford Ambulance). All classes are American Heart Association authorized. All classes held @ Meadowlark Retirement Village located at 65 Ida Red (Near M-37 & 13 Mile Rd). Materials (Book) & Card (2 year AHA) provided upon completion

To register, call Rockford Ambulance Service at 616-866-0724.

Sparta Area Schools Community Walking Schedule 2010-11

SPARTA HIGH SCHOOL

Mon., Wed., Fri. 7:00-7:45 a.m.

Walkers must sign in at the office as they come the main entrance. Facility usage is limited to the walking rack in the field house area. Visitors should not be in any other part of the building and must exit the building by 7:45 a.m. or sooner if they complete their walk. Parking is available in the visitors spaces at the front of the student parking.


SPARTA MIDDLE SCHOOL

Mon., Tues., Wed., Thurs. 6:00-8:30 p.m.

Walkers should enter the main entrance in the front of the building. This is the same format as past years with walking limited to the hallways making the loop around the courtyard. There are adult education classes in session, so visitors are asked to keep noise to a minimum in order not to disturb instruction. All walkers must exit the building by 8:30 p.m.

When there are scheduling conflicts with school activities, walking may be cancelled.

CALL 887-7321 TO REGISTER FOR CLASSES



AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY RELAY FOR LIFE
Celebrate. Remember. Fight Back.

Sparta's Fifth Annual Relay for Life

Sparta had their official Kick Off for Relay for Life 2011. The event was held on Feb. 22 at the Sparta Church of the Nazarene. Many returning teams were present along with seven new teams. The theme for this year's Relay is "Around the World for a Cure". We had food from different countries, a very inspirational speaker, a mini-Relay lap and a luminaria ceremony. Teams celebrated those who are fighting their battles with cancer, remembered those who have lost their battles, and were inspired to "get out there" and begin fighting back by raising money for the American Cancer Society.

Sparta's Relay for Life 2011 will be held on June 10-11, from noon to noon at the school track. If you are interested in finding out more about the event or forming a team, please contact Lynn Schaner, Event Chair, at lschaner@aol.com or 887-7293, or go on our website at www.relayforlife.org/spartami. We are really excited about the plans already made for this year! It's going to be bigger and better than ever! We'd love to have you join us in this fight!

AIM (Athletes in Motion) Self Defense

This fun course is designed for self-defense purposes emphasizing child safety awareness. From the bully on the playground to the person on the street looking to kidnap a child, your child is taught skills which enable him/her to survive in this world. Self discipline rather aggressiveness is promoted.

When: Tuesdays, beginning April 19 - June 14, 2011

Where: Ridgeview Elementary Gym

- Class I 6:00 - 6:45 p.m. Beginning students, all ages
- Class II 6:45 - 7:30 p.m. Returning students, yellow belts
- Class III 7:30 - 8:15 p.m. Returning students, green belts and above

Cost: \$69.00

AIM USA Volleyball

An experienced AIM USA volleyball coach teaches this fun and action packed program. We have classes for both the beginning and intermediate players. Students will learn and refine the proper skills and techniques to be successful volleyball players. These skills will be key to their future volleyball success. Classes are focused on the skills needed to compete on the middle school team. Students will earn certificates and medals.

When: Thursdays, beginning April 21 - June 9, 2011

Where: Ridgeview Elementary Gym

- Class I 6:00 - 6:45 p.m. Beginners, 4th-6th grade
- Class II 6:45 - 7:30 p.m. Intermed./Advance, 5th-6th grade

Cost: \$69.00

AIM Tumbling & Gymnastics

This fun and exciting program is designed to enhance self-confidence and improve coordination, physical fitness and flexibility. Learn from experienced instructors who teach the skills of floor gymnastics and tumbling. Students earn certificates, ribbons and medals. Beginning students will learn fundamentals and returning students learn advanced skills. Parent/Tot classes focus on developmental areas of coordination and motor skills.

When: Tuesdays, beginning April 19 - June 14, 2011

Where: Ridgeview Elementary Gym

- Class I 6:00 - 6:45 p.m. Students ages 4-5
- Class II 6:45 - 7:30 p.m. Students ages 6-7
- Class III 7:30 - 8:15 p.m. Students ages 8-10

Cost: \$69.00

Must be 18 years of age or older to participate in open gym basketball and volleyball.

30 & Over Basketball

When: Sundays

Where: Middle School Gym

Time: 5:00-8:00 p.m.

Weeks: Ongoing (Nov. - April)

Cost: \$2 per person/per week



Open Gym Volleyball

When: Sundays

Where: Ridgeview Elementary Gym

Time: 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Weeks: Ongoing (Nov. - April)

Fee: \$2 per person/per week



Ballroom Dancing

Join the fun, enjoy the exercise and learn the basics of swing, foxtrot, waltz, touch dancing and the hustle. For beginner and intermediate levels. Instructor: Chris Taylor

When: Mar. 15 - Apr. 26

(will not meet April 5, spring break week)

Time: Beginners 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Intermediate 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Where: Appleview Cafeteria

Cost: \$75/couple



Girls & Boys Summer Basketball Camps

Girls, grades 2-6

When: June 13-16, 10:00 a.m. - noon

Where: High School Gym

Boys, grades 2-6

When: June 13-16, 12:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Where: High School Gym

\$25.00, includes t-shirt and ball. (\$30.00 late registration)

Registration Deadline for Girls & Boys Basketball Camps is June 1.

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Mr. Mark Kasmer..... Assistant Superintendent887-8253
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Mr. Jerry Gavin..... Transportation Director887-0136
Mr. Tony Smolinski..... Operations Supervisor887-0136

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS

Meetings are generally held on the second Monday of the month at the Board of Education offices, 465 S. Union St., Sparta, MI 49345. Meetings are open to the public and begin at 7:30 p.m.

The Bell Ringer is published by the Sparta Board of Education. Please call 887-8253 with inquiries.

The Sparta Area Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability in its programs and activities. In order to protect these rights and assure compliance, the Sparta Area School District has appointed Mr. Joe Droski as Coordinator of Title IX, Mr. Mark Kasmer as Coordinator of Title II, VI, and the Age Discrimination Act and Mrs. Susan Gates as the Coordinator of Section 504.

2011 Leisure/Rec. Registration Form

Name: _____ Gr. _____

Parent's Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell: _____

What programs do you want to register for? _____

I realize that by signing this form I will not hold Sparta Area Schools and/or their staff, coaches, or employees or Athletes in Motion, Inc. responsible for any accidents or loss of personal property, however caused. I realize that the staff of Sparta Area Schools and Athletes in Motion, Inc. will do everything possible to offer a safe and injury free program. I realize that by participating in these programs, there is a certain degree of risk and injuries may occur. I also verify, by signing this waiver, the above participant is covered by a family health plan. If the above participant is not covered by a health plan, I, the undersigned, will assume all financial responsibilities for any injuries that might occur. Waiver must be signed for your child to participate.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return this form with a check to: Sparta Community Education, 1655 - 12 Mile Rd., Sparta MI 49345