

Get on board with the
Brick Township
Special Education
PTA



THE SEPTA EXPRESS

SEPTA Executive
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2010/2011

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www.bricksepta.org

Just in time for the holidays....

Brick SEPTA is having a **CHOCOLATE BAR FUNDRAISER**

Courtesy of Van Holten's Chocolates

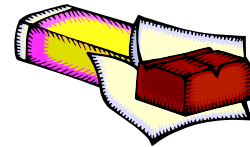
Price: \$3.00 for each delicious bar!



Buy one today to help SEPTA continue bring you great events
and support a first-rate local business

Great for:

- Stocking Stuffers
- Teacher Gifts
- Friends and family



Each creamy quality milk chocolate treat includes a coupon for **10% off**
your next purchase from **Van Holten's Chocolate**.

****SEE A SEPTA BOARD MEMBER FOR DETAILS****

Come to a MEETING

January 24th
February— no meeting
March 14th
April 11th
May 16th
June 6th

**All SEPTA General
Membership meetings are held
at the Educational Enrichment
Center (EEC) Multipurpose
Room at 100 Hendrickson
Road at 7:30 PM.*

EXPLORE OUR WEBSITE!

If you are reading this, you've already seen our new
improved website. Please take a few minutes to explore our
site for information about upcoming meetings, events,
fundraisers and more.

- Don't forget to click onto GOOGLE CALENDAR for meeting and event reminders!
- Not a SEPTA member yet? Download our MEMBERSHIP FORM and join today!



Do you have any questions about special education or have
any suggestions for future newsletters?

PLEASE CONTACT US!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Hello everyone! It is hard to believe that we are already into December and the holidays are upon us. They say the days are long but the months are quick and it seems this year is going at lightning speed. Not a day goes by that I'm not thankful for my extended SEPTA family. It is because of the never-ending support, fountain of knowledge, and the friendship and camaraderie - SEPTA has become a household word for me and my family. As we enter into 2011, I hope for SEPTA to become a household word for you too. If you've not yet joined SEPTA, it isn't too late to become a member. The membership form as well as our calendar of events is available on our website at www.bricksepta.org.

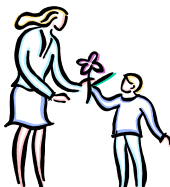
If you haven't been able to attend one of our general membership meetings, I hope you'll join us. SEPTA meetings are an informative night out in a friendly and casual setting at the EEC. The SEPTA Executive board is committed to lining up speakers for each meeting on a wide range of topics you are interested in. We value what you, our member, want to learn more about. So, please, do not hesitate to tell us what you would like from SEPTA. Also, if you are interested in speaking at a SEPTA meeting- we welcome you with open arms. I want to share that we are in the process of setting up qualified childcare at our meetings starting in January. I know how hard it can be to line up sitters for special needs children and believe this service will be invaluable to our members plus give the kids a chance to make friends outside of school too.

In this newsletter, you'll see SEPTA has already gotten off to a very busy start this year between the meet & greet, great speakers, and children's programs. SEPTA is also entering into fundraising mode so we can continue to give back to the Brick Township special education community. The fundraisers will afford us to continue hosting events like our annual Blue Claws outing as well offer 2 SEPTA scholarships to graduates. I want to thank you in advance for your support of these fundraisers during a trying economic time. As we wrap up the year, I ask that if you partake in holiday or year-end giving to consider giving to Brick SEPTA. Our treasurer will be glad to provide you a timely receipt for your taxes. I thank you in advance for this consideration.

Last but certainly not least, on behalf of the Brick Special Education PTA, I wish you all a very happy and healthy holiday season.

See you at SEPTA!

MaryTara Wurmser - President



SEPTA NEWS



MEET and Greet a Success

On September 22nd SEPTA kicked off the 2010-11 school year with its annual **Meet and Greet** event. We had a tremendous turn-out and food and refreshments were plentiful.

The evening began with our first **General Membership meeting** of the year. We then commenced with a **special election** presided over by NJPTA's **Lois Testa**, where our membership elected **Sherry Doyle** as our new **Corresponding Secretary**.

Next, SEPTA was privileged to present our guest speakers for the evening : **Mayor Stephen Acropolis, Assistant Superintendent Pat Lorusso and Director of Special Services Robyn Magovern.**

SEPTA was also proud to offer a **providers fair** for the evening, giving our members the opportunity to meet with representatives of organizations with significant ties to special education .Special thanks to **Board of Education members Kim Terebush, Michael Pifko, Vicky Leone and Len Cuppari** for

attending and sponsoring the **BOE** booth. We'd also like to thank our other special providers: **Family Support Center, POAC, Autism Family Services of NJ, the Ocean County Library (Brick branch) and Brick Challenger Hockey.** Most importantly, SEPTA wholeheartedly appreciates all of our **members, families, friends, teachers, paraprofessionals, and principals** who took the time out of their busy schedules to show us their support. We are honored to serve the Special Education community (*more on pg. 3*)

of Brick Township and look forward to our best year yet!

Guest Speakers

SEPTA has a proud tradition of providing guest speakers at our meetings to discuss a variety of topics related to special education.

At our *October meeting*, we welcomed **Debbie Holiday** and **Stephanie Carrano** of BullyAlarm.com, a non-profit organization whose mission is to bring awareness to the hot-button topic of bullying. After presenting a day of assemblies at Lake Riviera Middle School, our guests spoke to us about many aspects of bullying; including its *prevalence, related psychology, and methods used to prevent bullying behavior*. Our members were provided with the

opportunity to discuss *how bullying effects our special education children*, many of whom cannot speak for themselves, or are unaware that they are even being bullied.

Our *November meeting* featured three guest speakers:

First we were given a brief presentation by **Lori Gusz** of **Teachers Insurance Plans of NJ** about our **Quotes for Cash Fundraiser**. Offered until recently only to teachers, **PTA members** are now eligible to apply for auto insurance policies through TIPNJ. **For every quote application, TIPNJ will donate \$10 to SEPTA and for every quote that results in a policy, SEPTA will receive \$25.** See our website for more details.

Next, one our of own members, **Kimberlee McCafferty** read excerpts from a book she is working on detailing her experiences raising two special needs children. You can read more of her work by visiting her blog at: autismmommytherapist.wordpress.com.

Our final speaker was **Drew Deganahl** from **ID Pup**, who introduced us to this **clothing tag identification system** for special needs children and adults who are **at risk of wandering**. Less intrusive than an electronic device, the **ID Pup patch** portrays the silhouette of a dog on the outside which can be ironed onto existing clothing. Contact information can be written on the underside to assist first responders in returning the lost child to their home. For more information visit www.idpup.com.



SEPTA & Brick Challenger HALLOWEENFEST

On October 24th, *SEPTA and Brick Challenger* teamed up to bring our annual Halloweenfest to the special education children of Brick Township. Held at the Haven's Farm Cultural Arts Center, attractions included a hayride through the pumpkin patch, inflatables, pumpkin painting and gorgeous fall weather.

Special thanks to *Loon-E the Clown* who delighted us with balloon animals and *Grease Lightning* who provided music for the event. Halloweenfest would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of Brick Challenger's Donnie and Danny as well as all of our generous volunteers.

Surviving the Holidays

Contributed by Jackie Chadwick

School holidays should be a fun time, however they can also be a time of uncertainty, and even chaos. Most children like routine and the holidays can be anything but! Here are few tips on having fun and staying calm during the school holidays.

Family gatherings

Whether you are visiting relatives or having them over for the holidays, planning is the key.

- Explain what is going to happen ahead of time: where you are going? How long it will take to arrive? Who will be there? What you are going to do? How long will you be there? It is important to emphasize what behavior is expected.
- Tell your child something about each person attending and if possible, show pictures. This is a great time to discuss holiday traditions!
- Teach your child what to do if a situation begins to overwhelm him or her. Designate a quiet space to go to where he can listen to soft music, read a book or play with a favorite toy.

Traveling

Whether your trip away from home lasts for just one day or several, providing a little familiarity goes a long way.



- Attempt to maintain daily routines as much as possible especially morning and bedtime.
- Remember to bring your child's teddy bear or snuggly toy and have a few favorite foods available.
- Take a DVD, hand-held electronic game or a few toys with you so there is something familiar and routine for your child to do during a long drive.

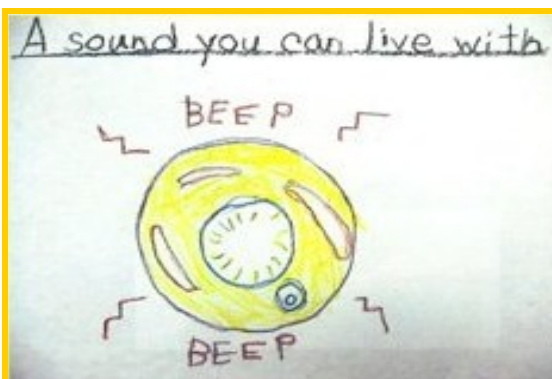
Staying home

A week or more off from school is disrupting and many times distressing for special needs children of any age.

- Ask your child to help decorate your home for the holidays! If your child has difficulty with change, do it over the course of several days.
- Give your child choices (and some control), if possible. Is it lunch and a visit to the library today or should we call a friend for a play-date?
- Always have a back-up plan for times when a scheduled activity is cancelled.
- Don't over-schedule. Try to maintain balance and allow for plenty of "down-time."

As the holidays approach, remember that putting just a few plans in place (with room for adjustments, of course) can allow everyone to relax and enjoy the spirit of the season!

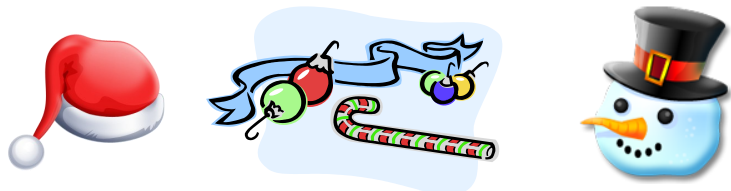
Congratulations VINCENT!



SEPTA is proud to announce VINCENT MUTI as the *First Place* winner in the *Special Education Division* of the Brick Fire Prevention Safety Poster Contest. Vincent is a student at Veterans Elementary and the son of SEPTA's own Vinnie Muti. **Awesome Job Vincent!**

BRICK SEPTA

WISHES YOU A HAPPY AND HEALTHY HOLIDAY SEASON!



Join us in 2011 for

"A TASTE OF BRICK"

Details coming soon!!!

THE SEPTA EXPRESS

Edited by: Nicole Barresi