

Urban Choice Charter School

Redefining Urban Education

*** MARCH 2010 NEWSLETTER ***

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER



- Mar. 3: School Based Planning 4:00 pm
Mar. 4: Board of Trustees meeting 6:00 pm
Mar. 6: Parent Forum 9:00 a.m.
Mar. 6: Family Crafting Day 10:00-2:00
Mar. 15: SCHOOL IN SESSION!
Mar. 23: Parent Satisfaction surveys sent home

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Apr. 28: Open House and Scholastic Book Fair
May 21: *New Yorker* Artist **HARRY BLISS** is coming!!!

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TRANSPORTATION and ATTENDANCE

Kisha Stubbs

Transportation Problems?

Call the Transportation Dept. directly at 336-4000. They will direct your call to the proper terminal. If they cannot help you, call Ms. Stubbs or Mr. Schmidt at 288-5702.

Attendance Procedure:

- (1) *Call the school at 288-5702 to report your child will be out;*
- (2) *Send in a written excuse when your child returns to school.*
- (3) Children who do not have a written excuse will be marked as an "unexcused absence".

Middle School RTS Bus Passes...

RTS bus passes may be obtained at the Rochester City School District Transportation Dept., 835 Hudson Avenue, from 7:00-3:00 daily. Ask for Ms. Bermudez. Each bus pass will cost \$2.00. Bus passes may also be obtained here at UCCS from Ms. Stubbs for the same \$2.00 cost.

A Message From Our Founder

John Bliss

Getting it right

I have been spending a lot of time reading about what makes great schools and how school districts can improve themselves. The essays have been written by all kinds of people and there are some different opinions but when you cut through all of the biases and attitudes there are some common themes that keep coming up. One in particular makes me feel very proud about how we do things at Urban Choice.

Great schools have a clear culture. There is a palpable *vibe* that visitors get when they walk in. There is a sense of belonging and continuity. Does this mean everything is perfect and everyone is doing exactly the same thing? No, but it does mean that the staff and students understand what is expected of them and they *buy in*. There is honesty, respect and caring among those of us in the community. There are also tears, anger and frustration. The school reflects life. Emotions vary from day-to-day but through all the distractions is a common focus on kids and teachers.

Urban Choice Charter School still makes decisions that revolve around the classrooms and by doing this we have remained true to our mission. When things don't go as we plan or we are thrown off course there is a common question we ask ourselves - *Will the end result improve conditions for kids and teachers?* The atmosphere in the classrooms set the tone for the rest of the school. We can manipulate what we do and who may do it but in the end, culture trumps structure. The happiness factor is never underestimated.

DEAN'S CORNER

Jonathan Schmidt

There are great things happening at Urban Choice Charter School every day for your children. Our school combines the resources and expertise of highly effective teachers and the invaluable support of an involved community. The two in combination is what sets UCCS in a class of its own - *empowering and inspiring all students to lead successful lives.*

All of our students receive maximum teacher attention due to the numerous adults supervising in and around their classrooms. They ensure that instruction matches each student individually in order to achieve growth and progress to enter the next grade level equipped with the necessary skills. If needed, our Student Support Services group implements strategies to ensure student progress. Our specialty teachers never tire of delivering engaging instruction in the areas of music, art, computers, and PE, rounding out our students' educational experience. We consider our students the best of the best.

All of this is complimented by our after school programs: Chorus, Arts & Crafts, Martial Arts, Robotics and Knitting, not to mention our new Saturday program. We are also looking forward to our upcoming Arts Night where our students will perform live and have their art work on display. Our dedicated UCCS parents are involved in our activities, and have even supported us on our recent trip to Albany for Advocacy Day. There is so much going on at our school and not near enough room in this newsletter to share. Thank you for all your school support and dedication. Continue to check out our website and watch for all our good news...we love working with you!

***** IMPORTANT NOTES *****

We WILL have school on Monday, March 15th

Our school calendar indicates it is a day off but we **WILL** be in session on that day.

- **DISMISSAL** – If you wish to change your child's normal dismissal procedure, please send a note to the office or call **PRIOR TO 3:30**. We will NOT be able to change your child's dismissal procedure after that time.
 - **Date the note and instruct your child to hand it to their homeroom teacher upon arrival. The school is not responsible for any student that fails to turn in a request in a timely manner.**
 - **Come to the main office (elementary building for K-6, middle school building for 7-8) to pick up your child for early dismissal. You will have to sign your child out and show identification**
 - **Early dismissal through the main office ends at 3:45**

Elementary School: Dismissal begins at 4:00 - parent comes to flagpole door, student pick-up and sign-out is in the cafeteria/rec space. Parent and student exit through the flagpole door, **students must be picked up no later than 4:30**

Middle School: Dismissal begins at 3:45 - students must be picked up from the middle school cafeteria by 4:15
Questions? Call Kisha Stubbs or Carol Wynne @ 288-5702

- **WELCOME MR. DUNCAN!** If you haven't noticed, we have a new Security Guard. We are very pleased to have Mr. Emmanuel Duncan as part of the UCCS family. Mr. Duncan is a RCSD police officer who will be with us until the end of this school year.
- **PARENT EDUCATION DAY** – Saturday, February 6th marked our first Parent Education Day. A BIG thank you to Mr. Moses Robinson of the Rochester Police Department for his presentation and dedication to UCCS.
- **ARTS NIGHT** – A reminder to all – our Arts Night is scheduled for **Wednesday, March 24th from 6:00-8:00 p.m.** Come and view student artwork from Grades K-8. The event will be held in the elementary building where we will also host musical performances by middle school and elementary school students. Please feel free to contact Miss Bell, Mr. Coffey, Mrs. Schepp or Mrs. Rodgers if you have any questions. A Michael Jackson tribute, clowns, student artwork, magic and refreshments – we hope to see you there! Sir Duke by Stevie Wonder will be sung, Imagine by John Lennon will be performed by a student group, A few classical compositions on guitar by middle school students.
- **SATURDAY GIRLS GROUP** – Mrs. Ashline, Ms. Haylo, Mrs. Petzing: On Saturday, January 30th we held our second group for middle school girls at UCCS. We had a great turnout and the girls had a busy day. They started with spending time improving their study skills with Ms. Haylo. They then all had a chance to make their own pizza and had fun making some for the teachers, including Mr. Bliss! After eating lunch together and having some fun conversation, Mrs. Ashline presented some anger management skills for the girls to use, including a deep breathing relaxation exercise. To finish up, Mrs. Petzing helped all of the girls make their own stress ball which they can use as part of their new anger management skills! Overall we had a very fun and successful day and the girls are benefiting from the extra time spent at UCCS!
- **ROCHESTER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTER** – We have another new and wonderful partnership! The Rochester Educational Opportunity Center through SUNY Brockport provides interns that assist with clerical tasks in the Health Office and in the Library. New REOC interns will begin their five weeks with us on March 1st and April 5th. We look forward to yet another rewarding partnership!
- **DRESS DOWN DAY !!!** – Friday, March 12th will mark our first ever, school-wide, Dress Down Friday. Students and staff can pay from \$1.00 to \$5.00 on that day to wear jeans. The money raised will go toward the 8th grade Washington DC trip. **Jeans may not have words or offensive images on them, may not be torn, and may not be "low riders".**
- **PRINCIPAL SEARCH** – Beginning on Sunday, February 28th, we will be advertising in the Democrat & Chronicle and other local institutions that we are looking for a principal. There has been a "Principal Search Committee established consisting of: Carissa Dibble (4th grade teacher), Kyra Francis (8th grade teacher), Josephine Horton (parent rep) and Carol Wynne (administration). If you have questions please contact any of the representatives above at 288-5702.

VOLUNTEER AND COMMUNITY NEWS

Miriam Steinberg

We have an interesting series of workshops happening in the Middle School right now. The Metro Council for Teen Potential received a grant to lead a series of workshops called Life Skills. The workshops are aimed at middle school aged kids and are facilitated by people trained at MCTP specifically to lead these discussions. The kids are divided up by boys/girls and the topics are age-appropriate issues such as healthy relationships, communication, peer pressure, responsibility, dating and future goals. We have gotten great feedback from our students. The first series of workshops will be for 7th grade and will then be followed by 8th grade.

St. John Fisher is sending us another group of nursing students to help out in our classrooms. They will be here for six weeks and not only will they be helping our nurse Mrs. Flanagan, but they will also teach a class on a health-related topic to some of our students.

One of our amazing volunteers is going to be featured in a video being filed at our school. Deb Waltzer, who volunteers in Mrs. Paine's 3rd grade class, (and has been with us since the beginning of our school in 2005), is going to be featured in a video being done by the Jewish Federation Coalition for Literacy. The JFCL is working with film students from RIT to produce a video highlighting some of the community work that they do. They will be visiting Mrs. Paine's classroom to film Deb Waltzer reading to the students. It should be a very cool experience for the 3rd graders to see this process!

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH BALANCES - PLEASE help us keep our costs down!

Below are guidelines for meal payments. Thank you in advance for helping us out keeping accounts up-to-date!

When a REDUCED PAY FAMILY reaches a negative balance of \$10 we will send an invoice home via U.S. Mail. When a FULL PAY FAMILY reaches a negative balance of \$25 we will send an invoice home via U.S. Mail.

In either case, if no payment is made on the account within ONE WEEK we will call to notify you that we will be pulling the student(s) meal card(s) on a specific date and that you will be responsible to provide breakfast and lunch for your child(ren).

If there is no positive response to the above steps we will take the following action:

- Pull meal card from student(s) and hold in the main office so no additional charges can be accrued.
- Student(s) will not receive a report card(s) until the **FAMILY** meal bill is paid in full.
- Meal card(s) will be returned to the student when the **FAMILY** bill is paid in full.

WOW!

Siblings from Mrs. Spencer/Mrs. Pike's kindergarten class and Mr. Haak's second grade class were touched by recent events in Haiti. They wanted to raise money to help so they went around to K, 1 and 2 classrooms to talk about the events. Students in these classrooms donated change and we raised **\$159.45** to donate to UNICEF.

A BIG THANK YOU TO GRADES K, 1 AND 2!

Sign, return this to school and you could win a PRIZE! 3 winners selected every month.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR February winners: Marjorie Sailer (Madison Sailer), Ebony Burroughs (Tasia Harvey and Jahmir Mewborn), and Diane Wynn (Trenton and Jalyn Wynn)

Your Name: _____ Home Phone: _____

HEALTH OFFICE

Maureen Flanagan

SLEEP zzzzzzzz



Is your child getting enough sleep? Do you know that kids can suffer from the same difficulties sleeping as adults? They may not have bill problems or job stress but they still have things on their little minds that could affect their sleeping.

We are noticing an ever-increasing number of children showing up in the nurses office because they are "tired" and just want to lay down to sleep.

If your child is not getting enough sleep here are some signs for you to look for:

- Irritability
- Moodiness
- Slowed speech
- Flattened emotional responses
- Impaired memory
- Lapses in attention

Insomnia, nightmares, night terrors and sleepwalking are common in children with bad sleep habits. If you suspect your child is having sleep difficulties, try some of these remedies:

- No beverages (or foods like chocolate) containing caffeine at least 4 hours before bedtime
- Maintain an even temperature in the bedroom (not too hot, not too cold, not too noisy, not too bright)
- Try to maintain the same "go to sleep" and "wake up" time each day/night.

FOOD SERVICE

Jim Joninas

Menu Improvements

The Urban Choice Charter School Food Service staff and Sarkis Catering, our food provider, have an ongoing dialog to discuss our working relationship and food service improvements. This ongoing dialog helps both the caterer and the school to continually improve our service to the students.

Topics we discuss include the likes and dislikes of the students, food variety, serving size, condiments and seasoning. This year our breakfast menu has returned to a more traditional menu that is favored by the students.

We are serving more of the lunch foods the children like such as, Burgers, Jamaican Beef Patty, Pizza, Steak Sandwiches, Salisbury Steak, Chicken Nuggets, Chicken Fries, BBQ Chicken Strips, BBQ Turkey, Fish, Tacos, and Fresh Fruit. Unpopular lunch entrees have been eliminated.

The same meals are served in both school buildings, however the middle school has a fresh garden salad everyday that is offered free to all students whether they eat school lunch or bring their lunch from home.

Every effort is being made to provide healthy and nourishing meals for breakfast and lunch. We listen to the "Voice of the Customer", our students, and strive to achieve continuous improvement with our food services.



LITERACY CORNER

Paula Haylo, Melissa Blankenberg

Choosing the Right Books For Your Child



There are bazillions of books in your library! How can you find what's best for your kids? No matter if your kids are 5 or 12, if you choose the right books you can make reading an incredibly rewarding experience for them. These guidelines will help you select books that are age-appropriate.

Kindergarten:

Look for Mother Goose, nursery rhymes, and other books that show familiar objects/experiences.

Young children like listening to slightly complex texts with good rhythm and effective word repetition. They're also coordinated enough to have constructive fun with toy-like books that pop-up, move or provide other astonishments.

Early School Years (Ages 5-8)

Some kids may learn to read before they're in 1st grade. Picture books with strong storylines and character development are especially good for reading aloud or with kids.

If your child is reading independently, choose a book with a straightforward story that has familiar, every day words.

Some publishers produce "easy readers" that independent readers often enjoy. 3rd graders are often able to handle stories with some complexity. The vocabulary should be relatively familiar but include some challenging words.

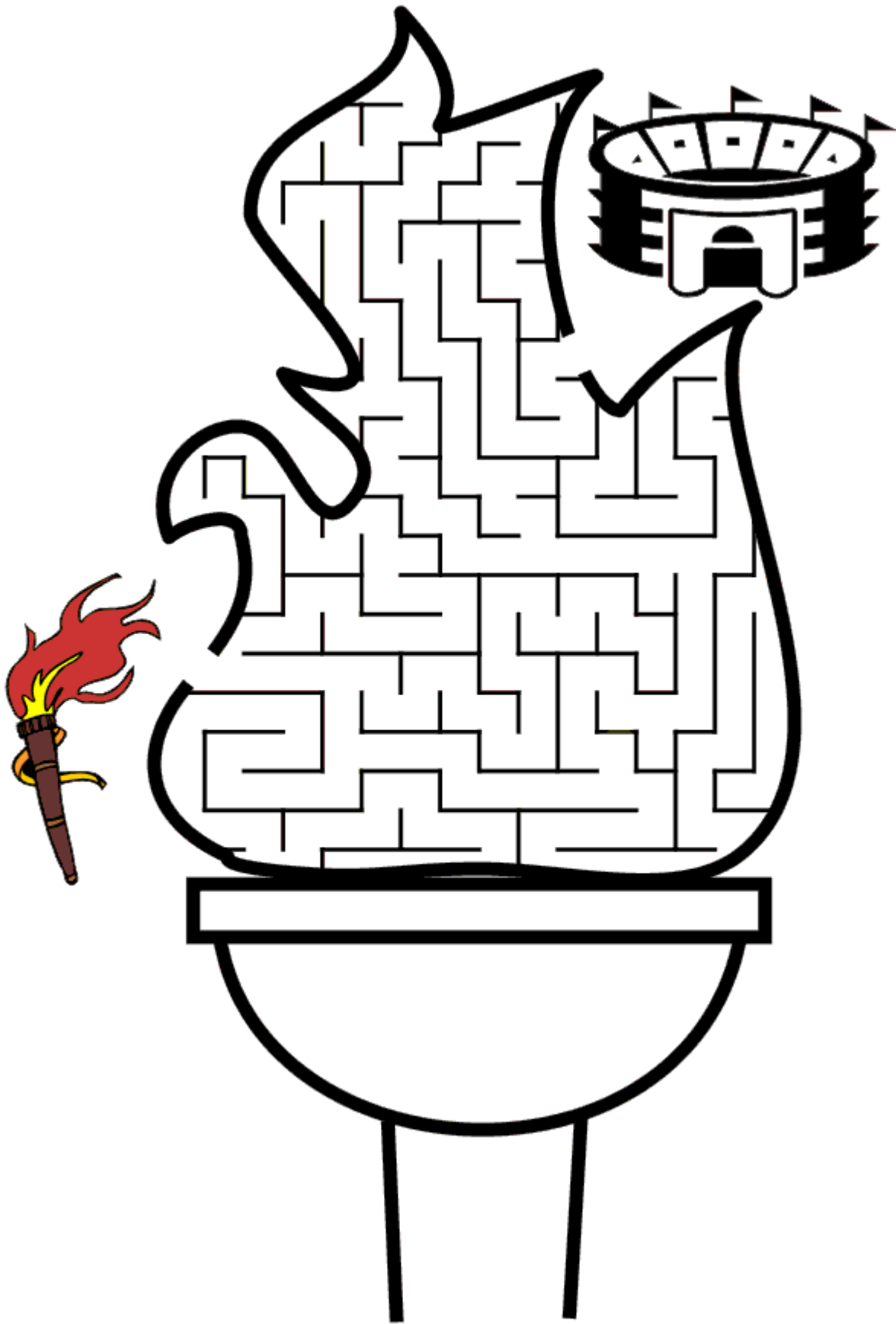
A lot of informational books have been published for early grades. These books encourage children to read about topics that interest them and to satisfy their curiosity about complex subjects.

Older Children (Ages 9-12 and older)

Think about your child's personality, likes and dislikes. This will help you choose between an informational book or a novel in an area that your child is interested in.

KID'S CORNER

Run the Olympic torch through the maze into the Olympic stadium .



KID'S CORNER

WINTER OLYMPICS WORD JUMBLES

Unscramble the first four words in each set of jumbles. Then use the circled letters to unscramble the final word. Some of the words may unscramble into more than one word, but only one word is related to the puzzle.

1. WINTER OLYMPIC SPORTS

G I I K N S
□ □ □ □ □ □

C E H K O Y
□ □ □ □ □ □

E G L U
□ □ □ □

A G I K N S T
□ □ □ □ □ □ □

Answer:

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

2. ATHLETE TRAITS

C E E F I R
□ □ □ □ □ □

D O P R U
□ □ □ □ □

E E N S T V
□ □ □ □ □ □

E N K E
□ □ □ □

Answer:

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

3. ABOUT THE OLYMPICS

A E H M N S T
□ □ □ □ □ □ □

A E F M L
□ □ □ □ □

E E N S T V
□ □ □ □ □ □

A D E L M S
□ □ □ □ □ □

Answer:

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

4. OLYMPIC WINNERS

D I M O P U
□ □ □ □ □ □

A E H M N T
□ □ □ □ □ □

D G L O
□ □ □ □

C E H E S R
□ □ □ □ □ □

Answer:

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Answers: 1. skiing, hockey, luge, skating, skeleton 2. fierce, proud, strong, keen, confident 3. anthems, flame, events, medals, athletes 4. podium, anthem, gold, cheers, champion