



The Rennell Review

Issue 2

Rennell Elementary School

October 14, 2010

Principal's Page



Game On Part II- Last month I began sharing the overview for Game On. This month I would like to share more specific details of how Game On is used to help boost student performance.

In education, there are hundreds if not thousands of strategies that can be used with students. There is a great deal of research on which strategies are most effective in the field of education. What is not documented is which of these most effective strategies work best with the children at Rennell.

Each three-week period the teams select two to three strategies that they think will help students perform better. We test these strategies by using the scientific method. One team uses a selected strategy while the other team focuses on a different strategy. At the end of the three-week period, we analyze the data to determine which method worked best with our particular students. In doing this, we are not only able to use research based techniques, but we are able to use the ones that work best with these particular students.

A good example is the strategy that was used in this past game by the Marvels. Both teams have copies of the Science Study Guide, but the Marvels took the Science Guide and wrote more specific questions that helped students become more focused with studying science concepts. The Masterminds also had study questions, but they were more general in nature. What we learned is that our children need more help with study skills. As a result, both teams will now receive the more specific science questions.

Another strategy that has been used is one that impacts our restrooms. All of our students deserve to have a clean restroom to use throughout the day. We have asked our students to pay particular attention to helping us maintain the restroom. Students are asked to flush after using the restroom as well as make sure

they have placed all trash in the trashcan. If paper is on the floor, we have provided students with a long-

handle dust pan and broom so that they are not putting their hands on the dirty floor. By just placing an emphasis on the importance of keeping restrooms clean, the students at Rennell have taken pride of ownership in keeping their area clean. They take care to put paper in the trash and rarely even need the use of the dustpan. We have been able to eliminate or greatly reduce inappropriate behaviors in the restroom. We also have restroom check signs much like you would see at restaurants or mall bathrooms. These allow students to visually check the restroom and report problems directly to the teacher. A great example occurred this past week. A student was making a visual check of the restroom and noticed that there was chocolate milk splattered on the wall. This probably happened with a child was throwing away their breakfast items. The young man checking on the restroom notified an adult and the restroom was cleaned by the custodian immediately. As a result, other students enjoyed a fresh, clean restroom rather than having the milk sour and cause the restroom to smell. This student felt proud that he was contributing to our school in a positive way.

Some of our strategies focus on academics, while others may target behavior or personal responsibility. We have found that it is important that we match techniques to our specific population because strategies from past experience are not always the most effective with the current group of students. The Game allows us to monitor a strategy for a three-week period, determine what works best and then make sure we are implementing it across the entire campus.

Our focus in next month's article will be on how we use strategies to help students persevere.

Sincerely,

Leslie Thomas



Counselor's Corner

Career and College Awareness Guidance

Lessons:

Mastery is a major developmental task of the elementary child – learning many academic and social skills, learning to cope with success and disappointments, exploring different areas of interests and beginning to develop emerging talents, to mention a few. Guidance lessons in August and September addressed this task with a focus on elementary career awareness and development. Students learned that when people choose careers to pursue, they consider what they “love to do, are good at, and want to learn to do much better.” Students shared with each other something they are doing now that they “love to do, are good at and want to learn how to do better.” We then identified several careers some of their specifically mentioned interests might lead to some day. The career of school counseling was also described and the students learned how they can ask for my help if needed.

In additional lessons, 5th graders discussed the advantages of pursuing advanced education after high school - college, technological schools, community college, military school, and special interest institutes (such as art or cooking).

Information about acquiring financial assistance for college was an integral part of this lesson, as was information about above level classes, such as Level 1 classes in middle school. Students began to realize that trying their best to learn in school now will give them more choices as they progress in their education and choose their future careers. Later this year grades K-4 will be taught a similar lesson about post-high school education, appropriate to their age levels.

Ideas for Parents:

Your child's career development will be influenced by their current academic development, but much more so by their social and emotional development now. Below are a few parenting strategies that can aid your child's career, academic, social and emotional development:



- 1) Discussing how you selected your careers, your abilities and interests your career allows you to use, and the colleges or other training programs you have attended to learn skills for your work.
- 2) Giving your children opportunities to explore 1 or 2 interests and talents at a time
- 3) Acknowledging your children for their efforts to learn at school and elsewhere
- 4) Giving your children opportunities to make friends
- 5) Celebrating successes, especially including the small successes
- 6) Listening intently and empathically to their expressions of interests, successes and frustrations

NOTE: Arguably the most important strategy listed above is #6. Listening to your child will be discussed further in a future newsletter. If you want to learn more about this topic now, I highly recommend the following book: ***How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk*** by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish.

Future Guidance Lesson Topics:

October through January guidance lessons will focus on peer relationships – respecting and valuing the uniqueness of each person, empathy for others, peacefully and assertively solving “smaller” problems with peers, identifying “bigger” peer problems which require adult assistance, and practicing how to report those bigger problems to adults.

Small group counseling:

If your child is experiencing a difficulty in school which you think might be helped with small group counseling, please call me to discuss this possibility. You may call the main school number (281-213-1550) and ask for me.

Cheryl Schindler, Counselor
Rennell Elementary School



Student Safety



Recent events in the news have heightened awareness in all of us of the importance of working with our children to address bullying. Last Spring, our Student Services Department launched a campaign called Project Safety. Through this program, students are provided monthly lessons about bullying behaviors. The lessons focus on why this behavior is not acceptable and how children can report such behaviors and seek assistance from adults. Mrs. Schindler, our counselor, will be working with students during guidance classes to provide these lessons.

In addition, our entire staff has been receiving additional training on how to identify bullying behaviors and effectively address them in the classroom. We have looked at when and where bullying behaviors are most likely to occur and have put in action plans to address these behaviors.

We realize that often bullying occurs on the bus. As a result, administrators have started riding bus routes with students two to three times a week to help keep our students safe.

We know that even our best efforts cannot eliminate bullying. It will take all of the adults that love and care about the children at our school uniting as one voice to say that bullying will not be a part of Rennell.



Did You Know?

- Our school is a brand new floor plan.
- Our school opened on time and under budget.
- Our school has energy management features that help us conserve, reducing the overall cost of operation.
- Our school has teaching features that allow students to see actual energy usage and explore various methods of producing energy through a science kiosk.
- Our school has see-through walls and rooms, allowing students to see how our building systems work together to create a comfortable learning environment.
- Our school is the only elementary in Cy-Fair that offers food prepared at the campus.

Special Thank You

Were you aware of the very special talent in our midst? Holly of HollyAnne Photography is an amazing photographer! She recently took photos of every staff



member at Rennell. The photographs are displayed in the office near the faculty mailboxes. We want to thank Holly for sharing her special skills with our school. If you are looking for a photographer that has that special touch when it comes to making every picture a work of art, check out Holly's website at hollyanne.com. Thank you again Holly for the wonderful pictures!

Sincerely,

The Rennell Staff



Learning Lollapalooza



Please mark your calendar for a fun family event. On Monday, November 1st we will be having our first Learning Lollapalooza. It will be an evening where your family can come and actually do some fun, educational games and activities and then take home those materials to continue the learning fun at home! There will be lots more information to come, but put this date on your calendar now for a fun, educational time. Again it will be November 1st from 6:30-8:00. We hope to see you there!

Heart Walk



The American Heart Association is holding the annual Cy-Fair Heart Walk on Saturday, October 30, 2010. The Rennell Redhawks will be participating as a team. If you and your family wish to participate, please register at the following website:

www.northwesthoustonheartwalk.org

First, click on register, then click on Rennell Redhawks (our school) to sign up.

We will be meeting at Rennell the morning of the walk beginning at 8:00am, and we will all be going over to the starting line together as a team.

Hope to see you there!

Rennell Wellness Committee



Lifetouch will be here on October 22 for picture retakes.



Field Day, November 22

Save the date RedHawk parents!

It's an all day event for all grades (pk-5th grade). We'll have a blast! The older grades will help younger grades accomplish their activities on each station. Twenty-one stations in all! They'll have lots of fun sharing and helping one another. Come and join us!



Field Day T-Shirts

Remember to purchase a field day t-shirt. Orders are due by November 1st.

****SEE ATTACHED FORM****



DATES TO REMEMBER

October 18

Betty Rennell Day- Is postponed until a later date.

October 22

Picture Retakes

November 1

Learning Lollapalooza

November 12

Veteran's Day Program

November 22

Field Day

November 24-26

Thanksgiving Holidays

PTO Corner

Dear RedHawk families-

We have had a busy first six weeks of school! We have held two PTO General meetings, approving our officers and our 2010/2011 budget. We have held our first Volunteer Orientation and had a great turnout. We had a very successful picture day. We have gotten many programs underway and continue to add to our list of activities.

It's that time of year- our Major Fundraiser through Innisbrook began last Thursday, October 7 and will run through Friday, October 22. We are excited to be offering such great products this year, and all will be delivered in early December- just in time for your holiday gift giving! We hope you will participate and help us reach our goal. If we do reach our goal, we will not have to focus on a second major fundraiser in the spring and can concentrate on other activities!

We have so many activities going on around the school right now! The final touches have been put on our first directory and have been sent to the printer- we can't wait to share the directory with our PTO members when it arrives in November. Our car decals have come in. We appreciate your patience as we have dealt with errors and reordering them, but they have been corrected and distributed! We are so excited to get our Spirit Shop up and running- it's always so much fun to watch the kids take the time and carefully make their purchases. Our first Spirit Night was a success; it's always fun for the kids to see their friends and teachers during dinner. We hope you will join us on October 26 at On the Border.

We are currently working on a website to help you stay up to date on all activities at Rennell! We hope to have the site up and running later this month. A special thank you to Gene Manuel who is working with the board to help set up this site. If you have any suggestions of information you would like to see on the site, please feel free to email us at rennellpto@gmail.com.

One last note- we need your help! When you are sending money to school with your child, could you please attach a note to the money or place it in an envelope that is clearly marked with your student's name and homeroom class. Please clearly mark PTO on the envelope and it will make it to us quickly! Thank you in advance for your assistance with this.

RedHawks on the Rise!
Molly Speciale, PTO President



VIPS—Volunteers in Public Schools

We have had a wonderful response from parents, family members and the community for volunteering in Rennell Elementary School. Thank you all for your time and talents. To date, we have over 168 people signed up to help our children and teachers in making Rennell a great learning environment. Go RedHawks!

Cy-Fair ISD

Volunteers In Public Schools
20th Annual Fall Conference

Tuesday, October 19, 2010
8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School
District
The Berry Center
8877 Barker Cypress

Registrations are now available in Cy-Fair ISD schools and in the Partners in Education department. All parents and volunteers are encouraged to attend. The minimal registration fee of \$10 will cover breakfast, lunch and all workshop materials (register prior to October 15th). For registration materials or more information, go to the Cyfair ISD website (www.cfid.net/dept2/pie/201011/registration%20packet%202010.pdf) or contact RennellVIPS@gmail.com. Hope to see you there!

FUNDRAISER TIME



- Fundraiser Kits were sent out **Thursday, October 7th!**
- Fall Fundraiser will run between Thursday, Oct. 7- Friday, Oct. 22
- Delivery Date for Products ordered is estimated to be the first week of December
- Definitely utilize the benefits of ordering online via www.innisbrook.com (select **EZ** to put in order)
 - The online EZ Order allows for an **EASY** fundraising experience!
 - Using the online EZ order process allows those participants to be eligible for the "instant win prizes" through Innisbrook!
- Prizes
 - Silly Banz are given to all participants that sell at least 5 items
 - Sell more than \$200 and be placed in a drawing to win a \$100 Gift Card
 - See Prize Brochure for even **MORE** prizes!!
- If we **meet our goal** of \$35,000 there will be **NO SPRING FUNDRAISER!!**
- Make Checks Payable to: Rennell Elementary PTO (Do NOT collect Sales Tax)
- **PLEASE! PLEASE! FILL OUT COLLECTION ENVELOPE WITH CHILDS INFORMATION SO WE CAN CREDIT THEM WITH THEIR ORDERS!**

Thank you to everyone who purchased a spirit shirt and a car decal. They have all been delivered. If you have any questions please email me at marye@skirm.com.

Please remember to turn in your Box Tops and be on the lookout for a Spirit Shop in Oct.

Thank you,
Mary Skirm
VP Minor Fundraising

Homeroom Activities

Save the date... Our Holiday Party this year will be on **December 16th**... Watch the November newsletter for more information...

THANKS SO MUCH to everyone that has signed up to be a homeroom parent or homeroom helper in their child's classroom this year.



Some of our homerooms still need a homeroom parent.



Pre- K
5th Grade

Hoffman - Am
French

If you're interested please go to <http://www.rennellpto.ptomanager.com> and complete the volunteer interest and child's teacher information tabs and email me. Thanks so much for volunteering your time for our students!

Tammy Thiel
tammythiel@earthlink.net
281-304-9721

5th Grade Party

The preparations and planning for the 5th Grade Year End

Activities are already underway! Students will soon be voting on a final theme and related games and activities. The goal is to have the theme finalized in time to get commemorative t-shirts to the students for November's field day event and subsequent spirit days.

There's still plenty of work to be done and if you would like to be part of the planning committee, please contact me at heather.kelly@att.net.

Heather Thomas Kelly





Thank you to all the parents, staff and teachers that joined the PTO to “HELP BUILD OUR NEST”!

We are excited to announce that we reached our goal of 75% of our Rennell families joining the PTO!!

Funds from this membership drive help provide classroom parties, festivals, educational programs, staff appreciation lunches, playground equipment and much more!

We are in the planning stages of scheduling the rooftop song and dance by Mrs. Thomas, Mrs. Melancon and Mrs. McDonald. More details to follow!

Congratulations goes to Kindergarten, Second Grade and Fifth Grade for winning the opportunity to see Mrs. Thomas, Mrs. Melancon and Mrs. McDonald go head to head in a great game of FEAR FACTOR!

These grades all tied with 60% of families joining the PTO.

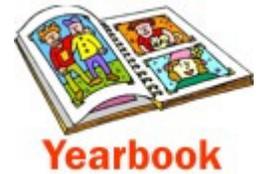
The following classes had the highest percentage of families join the PTO in their grade, so they will enjoy an ice cream party:

- Kindergarten – Bell
- First Grade – Baker
- Second grade – Truncali
- Third grade– McKenna
- Fourth grade - New
- Fifth grade – French

We also want to say a HUGE THANK YOU to our teachers!! 100% of Rennell teachers joined the PTO this year! Each of them enjoyed a Sonic drink during their planning time last week!

RedHawks on the Rise! Thank you Rennell Families!!!

Rennell Red Hawks Inaugural Yearbook



The yearbook committee will need many fun seeking volunteers to take pictures and put together our very first Rennell Elementary School Yearbook. I need a large group of people to cover the many events of this year, in all grade levels and by several people/cameras. No experience needed. If you take pictures at the school or school activities and the pictures are clear with good color, this volunteer spot is for you. You will only need to upload the pictures online, anytime, any day, or bring a copied disk to me. I also need a group of volunteers to “sift” through the pictures and a group to categorize the pictures by event/grade. Please contact Clarissa Escobedo at clarissa.lorraine@yahoo.com or (832)687-1754 for more information and to sign up.

Box Tops for Education



Our first contest is here! We will have a contest the week of October 18th –October 22nd. We are sending home a sheet for you to use to collect your Box Tops. The Box Tops can either be attached to the sheet or you can send them in a zip lock with your child’s name and teacher. The class that brings in the most Box Tops will win a surprise! We are really hoping that we have a large amount to count and turn in. So get out there and buy that cereal, cake mix or Kleenex and cut those Box Tops!

*****Box Top Form is attached*****

