



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Friday, 10/7, 8:45am

Café 163:
5th Grade Parent Meeting

Monday, 10/10

Columbus Day Observed
NO SCHOOL

Wednesday & Thursday, 10/13 & 14
School Photos

Friday, 10/14, 8:45am

PTA General Meeting
All Are Welcome!

Friday, 10/21, 8:30am – 12:30pm
Costume/Rummage Sale

Friday, 10/28, 8:45am

Café 163:
Meet the Administrators

Friday, 10/28, 6:30 – 8:30pm

Dia de los Muertos
Halloween Party

Tuesday, 11/8

Election Day
NO SCHOOL

PTA Election Day Bake Sale

Friday, 11/5, 8:45am

Café 163:
Talk Straight with Your Kids:
Dr. Fred Kaiser

Friday, 11/11

Veterans Day
NO SCHOOL

Tuesday, 11/15

Half Day
NOON DISMISSAL

Parent-Teacher Conferences
Scholastic Bookfair

Friday, 11/18, 6:30 – 8pm

Chess Night

Friday, 11/18, 8:45am

PTA General Meeting
All Are Welcome!

Thursday & Friday, 11/24 & 25

Thanksgiving Break
NO SCHOOL

Saturday, 11/26 thru Friday, 12/2

Bank Street Bookstore
Sale for PS163

Friday, 12/2, 7 – 11pm

Evening Auction and Gala



Wonderful 163!

News and Information from the PTA of **The Alfred E. Smith School**

OCTOBER 2011

Principal's Corner

We're Off to a Great Year!

The new school year is off to a wonderful start! And before you know it, it will be time for parent-teacher conferences (Tuesday, November 15, from 1-3pm and 5-8pm). Parent-teacher conferences at PS163 provide an important opportunity for parents to learn about their child's progress. While a ten-minute conference may not seem like a great deal of time, in context a properly planned conference will enhance your understanding of your child's learning.

Preparation for the parent-teacher conferences begins now. Each week, you will receive a homework sheet covering all assignments for the week. Please review your child's homework once it is complete. If your child experiences difficulty with a homework assignment, let the teacher know what the problem is. Of course, it always is best to encourage children to complete the homework assignments on their own. If you do help, please let your child's teacher know how you have done so.

If you listen to your child read, play math games with your child, and observe them as they do their homework, it will help you understand how your child learns. It will provide insight into your

child's learning strengths and identify areas in which your child may need some assistance. If you have questions, drop a note to your child's classroom teacher, who will always be willing to help.

Before the conference, have a chat with your child. Find out what is your child's favorite subject. Ask what your child loves about school and what questions he or she might have for the teacher. You may wish to develop a list of questions in advance of the meeting. Typically, the questions fall into two categories: academic and social. Here are some questions that you might include on your list:

- How well is my child doing in each subject?
- What are my child's strengths and challenges?
- Is my child working up to his or her ability?
- Does my child get along well with other students and teachers?
- Does my child participate in class discussions and activities?
- What are the tests my child is expected to take or has taken, and what are the results?

Be sure to ask your child's teacher how you can help your child do his or her personal best each day. When the conference is over, talk to your child about the outcome. Make sure to discuss your child's strengths and accomplishments.



Photo: Rolando Alvarez

Remembering 9-11 at 163...

The 10th anniversary of September 11, 2001 was marked with a moving ceremony joining our students and our community's firefighters.

LOST & FOUND

Please make an effort to check the lost & found area located in the cafeteria. Your child may not tell you when something is lost.

VERY USEFUL NUMBERS

Main School Number
212-678-2854

Nurse
212-865-6859

Parent Coordinator
Andi Velasquez
212-678-2854
ps163pc@yahoo.com

Guidance Counselor
212-678-2789

PTA Co-Presidents
Carrie Reynolds
212-222-8008
carriechase@earthlink.net
Wilma Lopez
646-671-7492
lopezwilma7@aol.com



PS163 NEEDS YOU!

Fall Costume & Rummage Sale • Scholastic Bookfair • Library • Dia de los Muertos Halloween Party • PTA Election Day Bake Sale • Chess Night • Bank Street Bookstore Booksale • Online Auction • Auction Party

How to Join the PS163 ListServ

Stay connected with other PS163 parents! Join the PS163 internet community on Yahoo Groups, where you'll be able to receive email announcements and send messages to other parents.

To sign up:

1. Go to www.groups.yahoo.com/groups/PS163NYC
2. Click on 'Sign Up'
3. Create Yahoo ID if necessary
4. YOU HAVE JOINED!

Any problems, contact the PTA Co-Presidents Wilma Lopez (lopezwilma7@aol.com) or Carrie Reynolds (carriechase@earthlink.net)

Work with your child to develop an action plan to improve in areas where he or she might need assistance.

— Dr. V. Pepe
Principal, PS163

What Are "Clubs"?

Have you heard about in-school "clubs"? Children in the upper grades (3-5) get to choose a club—or an elective—each semester. The children get to choose from a selection of offerings such as Macrame, Oceanography, Quilting, Jewelry Making, Club Shape-Up, and more. Clubs meet once a week and include children from different classrooms in the same grade, and they are taught by PS163 staff. Clubs let kids (and teachers!) explore areas outside the core curriculum. They are a wonderful, unique aspect to life at PS163!

Lunch Volunteers Needed!

We need volunteers to help with lunchroom duty—please be in touch with Havo Velic (hvelic@msn.com) and let her know if you can help. Your return on this small investment will be huge—in the wide grins you'll get from the kids, and in the knowledge that you are making lunchtime a more enjoyable experience for everyone.

This year, lunch starts early and ends late! The administration put a new schedule in place to best accommodate the number of classrooms we have. Spreading lunch out during the day means the cafeteria is less crowded. It also means parents in lower grades might have to bring in afternoon snacks, and those in the upper grades might have to bring in morning snacks to tide the kids over.

Lunch Payments

Based on the lunch forms families returned, the DOE will determine which children receive free lunch, pay a reduced price lunch, or pay full price for lunch. Families will be billed for the first time at the end of October.

Save the Date: Friday, December 2 Annual PS163 Winter Auction

Start gathering auction donations and watch your mail for the Auction Party invitation! All money raised at the event goes to essential programs for your kids. This is the biggest fundraiser at PS163—WE NEED YOUR HELP! Contact Rudie Hurwitz, ps163auction@gmail.com

Online Auction 2011!

PS163 will offer an Online Auction just in time for the holiday season! We will begin to post items online as soon as we receive them. The auction will be available for viewing before it officially opens to the public on November 15. So October is auction donation month! We want the majority

of donations to us by the end of October in order to have everything online in time for the auction. You will be able to see photographs of vacation destinations, books, jewelry, and shop for all of your holiday gifts online. Some special auction lots will be featured at the silent auction during the PS163 Auction Party on December 2. We will announce the information on the Yahoo listserv and also on our PTA Web site (ps163pta.org). Be sure to tell your friends and family to visit the PS163 online auction at ps163.cmarket.com. Questions? Send an e-mail to ps163auction@gmail.com

Other Upcoming Events and Information:

Fall Costume and Rummage Sale

Friday, October 21 from 8:30am-12:30 pm
Last year, this event raised almost \$1000 for PS163! You'll find lots of bargains—Halloween costumes, kids clothing, adult clothing, books, toys—at our rummage sale. Take advantage of the rummage sale to do a "fall cleaning," then donate your treasures to PS163 and take home new ones!

We need volunteers to help sell donations, and of course we need donations of Halloween costumes and other bagged clothing to sell. These items may be dropped off in the PS163 lobby on Wednesday and Thursday, October 19 and 20, and at the sale itself on October 21. Please, no stuffed animals! Also, large items (desks, bikes, large toys) will not be allowed in the building, so drop them off on Friday, October 15 ONLY. Questions? Interested in volunteering? Contact Carrie Reynolds at carriechase@earthlink.net

Scholastic Bookfair, November 15

The Scholastic Bookfair will take place Tuesday, November 15. Each fall during Parent/Teacher conferences, the gym is transformed into a book store. Parents can choose from a wide selection of English and Spanish books for every reading level. Buy books to read at home. Give them as gifts. What's more, teachers select books for their classrooms, and when you buy books from teacher wishlists, you help build our classroom libraries and support our children's learning. Buy books for your child's class. Help out other classes. And volunteer to work at the fair! Come an hour before or stay for an hour after your conference. To help out, contact Daniel Holt at dh65@earthlink.net or Cynthia Carris Alonso at carris27@aol.com. See you at the Scholastic bookfair!

Library Volunteers

Did you know that PS163 does not have a paid librarian? Every time your child visits the library with his class, he is doing so because of the efforts of parent volunteers. These volunteers keep the library open, keep the books coming and going, and make sure your child has the joy of finding

that special book on the shelf in the library. Help keep the library open!! Volunteer to What's Needed: Volunteers to commit to a specific time slot to work in library; book labeling and sorting
Contact: Jessica Weigmann, jessweigmann@yahoo.com

PTA Election Day Bake Sale

Tuesday, 11/8 (No School), 7am-7pm

Our Election Day bake sale not only brings in money to support our school, it provides a service to the community. Voters show up early, and keep coming until late, and they welcome home-baked goodies and warm coffee to get them through their day. Show off your baking skills, or your math skills at the cash box, and lend a hand—we are out there all day long. What's Needed: Donations of baked goods & savory sweets; Volunteers to staff tables throughout the day (1-hour shifts)
Contact: Melissa Welsh, mmw7@columbia.edu or Cynthia Carris Alonso, carris27@aol.com

From the Math Corner

Welcome to the new families joining our school community. I hope everyone had a wonderful summer vacation. I want to address some of the questions that you might have about your child's math education.

“How can I find out what my child is learning?” Attend the parent teacher conferences! Look at the curricular calendars. They bullet the content skills covered for the month. There are suggestions of math /literacy books that help children make connections. Check the school listserv for math-related suggestions, workshops, and presentations. Ask your child what they are doing in school and look at their work.

“What can I do to help my child with math at home?” Home is where math begins! Seize the opportunity to problem-solve whenever possible. Plan opportunities with your child to shop, cook, budget, use money, estimate amounts, weigh food, tell time, etc. Invest in talking about math. List the ways that you use math over the week. Young children can go on geometry treasure hunts: “I spy a circle,” “I spy a cylinder,” etc. Children are collectors—let them sort, classify, and count their collections. Play math games, encourage them to invent new rules.

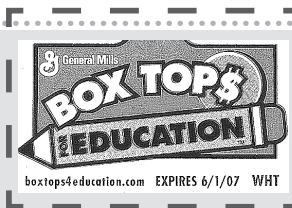
“How can I reinforce what is taught in the classrooms?” Read the Home Links sheets and use the student reference book. It is a wonderful resource. (It is very important that any resource book not returned last year be immediately sent to school. Each June the book must be returned and your child will receive a replacement book for their new grade level in September.) Play the games in the

resource book; most can be played without any special equipment. However, there are certain materials that are useful to have on hand. I would like all families to have a deck of cards, a metric ruler, a set of dice (polyhedron dice would be wonderful), and a calculator. Fifth-graders should have a protractor. Buy your child an inexpensive clock and let them practice telling time. Ask what time will it be in an hour, or if the pizza takes twenty minutes to cook, what time should we put it in the oven. Play the games at home that are played in the classrooms. Practice not only builds fact skills but provides opportunities to exchange money, shop, think logically, organize their time, etc.

—Susan Knaster,
former PS163 Math Coach



These guys had lots of fun at the Back-to-School Playdates. Did you miss it? See you next time!



Collect Box Tops! Did you know that you can help our school raise money by collecting Box Tops coupons? Look for them on products you buy—including the following: Cheerios; Nature Valley bars; Huggies wipes; Avery paper supplies; Juicy Juice boxes; Chex cereal; Pillsbury cookie dough; Ziploc bags; Betty Crocker cake mixes; Hefty trash bags; Cottonelle toilet paper. Drop your Box Tops in the big collection bin in the lobby. The class that donates the most Box Tops every few months will win a prize.

For more information, go to www.BoxTops4Education.com.
Catherine Guiley, Box Tops coordinator



TRICK OR TREAT!

**Friday, Oct. 28,
6:30-8:30pm**

GHOSTS & GOBLINS & GROWNUPS!

**It's THE ANNUAL
PS163 Halloween Party
DÍA de los MUERTOS!**

MUSIC! DANCING! FOOD! CRAFTS!
We need **YOUR** help!

Can you: Bring a food dish?
Set-up? Serve food?
Volunteer at Crafts Tables?
Clean-up? & more...

Contact: Wilma Lopez at
LOPEZWILMA7@AOL.COM

Bank Street Bookstore Sale for PS163

From Saturday, November **26** through Friday, December **2**, any purchase you make at Bank Street Bookstore (Broadway at 112th Street) will benefit **PS163!** Just use a special coupon and Bank Street Bookstore will give our school **20%** of any purchase made that week. This applies to books, games, toys, art supplies, puzzles, **everything!** Look in your child's backpack for coupons that will be sent home before the event, tell your friends, and save your **Hanukkah** and **Christmas** shopping sprees for **that week!**



AUCTION

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Donation Form

Friends of PS 163 The Alfred E. Smith School, 163 West 97 Street, New York, NY 10025, Phone: (212) 678-2854
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Donor name: _____

Address: _____ Phone number: _____

Description of items or services donated:

_____ Estimated value: \$ _____

Are you comfortable with your donation being sold online? _____

Donor signature: _____ Print Name: _____

P.S. 163 contact name, email, & phone number: _____

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Please send all donation pledges by NOVEMBER 11, 2011. Write ps163auction@gmail.com with any questions or call Rudie Hurwitz, Auction Chair, at 917-673-9890. You may attach your own gift certificate if you like, as well as any other necessary documents to this form, return it to the auction chair, and save a copy for your files. All donations are fully tax deductible as Friends of PS 163 is a 501(c)(3), or charitable, organization. If you would like your monetary donation to be tax-deductible, please make your check out to "Friends of PS 163".

The Federal Tax ID number of Friends of PS 163, Inc. is 20-1670261.