

# THE ESSENCE

November 2008  
Volume 3, Issue 2

*To support and speak on behalf of parents and children in the school, community, and before government bodies, and other organizations that make decisions affecting children. To assist parents in developing skills they need to acquire and to encourage involvement in the public school system.*

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**MIDDLE SCHOOL: B**  
**HIGH SCHOOL: A**

**"Continuity gives us roots; change gives us branches, letting us stretch and grow and reach new heights"**

*(Pauline R. Kezer)*



**Let's Talk!!!**

## *A message from your ...*

### *PTA Leadership*

The structure of the Department of Education (DOE) is evolving every day; our children are expected to meet higher standards, the New Reform Initiative--Children First is moving forward rapidly. Two years ago, the Department of Education introduced a new grading system for all schools to hold them accountable for living up to high standards. This grading system is called the Progress Report. The report tracks student academic progress, identifies steps to improve each student's learning, plans a course of action to achieve improvement, and derives a course of action to ensure progress. It sets expectations for schools and promotes accountability. It also enables students, parents, and the public to hold the DOE and its schools to task. These progress reports are issued yearly in the first semester of the school year. With the exceptions of new schools (without a graduating class), each elementary, middle, and high schools gets a progress report grade of A through F. Schools that earn A's and B's on their Progress Reports qualify for rewards while schools that get low grades will get help for improvement and/or face [consequences](#).

This year, Queens Gateway's Middle School scored a 'B' and an 'A' for High School! These [grades](#) are based on three parts: 15% school environment which includes attendance and the results of the parents', students' and teachers' Learning Environment Surveys; 25% student performance each year on the New York State tests in ELA and Mathematics and for high schools, diplomas and graduation rates, and 60% student progress measuring student improvement from last year to this year on the New York State tests in ELA and Mathematics and for the high schools' credit accumulation and Regents completion and pass rates. Families can use the Progress Report to identify areas in which their schools are performing well and to identify areas that need improvement.

Queens Gateway is a school 'in Good Standing' but there is still lots of work to be done. Upon reviewing the report card data, it was observed that our middle school received a "C" for student progress which means that some of our students did not make any progress over last year. We also received an overall score of "B" for school environment. At a twinkle of an eye our status can change. No one wants to send their children to a low performing school ...Right?

Queens Gateway needs your help! Parents and teachers can start by filling out and submitting their Learning Environment Surveys. Last year 69% of our teachers and 25% (148 out of approximately 650 parents) of our parents returned their surveys. That is a poor representation of our school community. Based on the responses from parents and teachers, communication is low and parents want to be more involved in their children's education. We need your input. How can Queens Gateway and the PTA improve communication? Queens Gateway PTA believes that when administrators, teachers, parents, staff and students work together the results are astounding. **Speak up!** The Learning Environment Survey is our opportunity to share the good things about our school and to identify areas for change. **Fill it out! Fill it out! Fill it out.**

We still have time to make corrections before the next set of surveys come out. Contact Ms. Craig, your Parent Coordinator at 718-739-8080 ext. 2213 and/or Ms. Williams, your PTA President at 212-410-8064 with your suggestions and concerns.

*"Just let me go, we have to be able to criticize what we love, to say what we have to say 'cause if you're not trying to make something better, then as far as I can tell, you are just in the way." (Ani Difranco)*

## Guidance Grapevine

November 2008

Dear Parents,

The holidays are upon us and find our families with a renewed excitement surrounding the new leadership for our country, while at the same time having concerns for the many financial and social problems in our families and communities. At a time when most families are celebrating, there are four students who have lost a parent or sibling to disease and/or street violence within the last four weeks.

While dealing with daily stress associated with living in New York City, the Gateway Family has sponsored events to try to make "a difference." We donated 27 pints of blood at our semi-annual Blood Drive. 27 pints can save 71 lives! We have begun our Annual Canned Food Drive. We must realize that families are losing jobs and may need assistance from local pantries. Please support this effort and send in canned food with your child. The 3<sup>rd</sup> period class that collect the most cans, will receive "special recognition." In December, the Leadership Class will sponsor the "Santa's Helpers" toy drive. Please continue to support the events.

The Honor Roll Assembly is scheduled for Thursday, November 20, 2008. During the second period (8:52-9:35 am) we will recognize students in the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> grades. During the third period (9:39-10:25 am) we will recognize students in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades. **Students who attained an 85+ on their June 2008 report card will participate in the assembly.** Please join us.

Let us give thanks for all our blessings. Happy Thanksgiving!

Sincerely,

Linda Allred

Assistant Principal Pupil Personnel Services

"aka GG"

And for your reading pleasure..... **"Kids Nag, Parents Cave In"**

### *Kids Nag, Parents Cave In*

Whether Colin wants a bigger mini-bike or his sister Sarah wants to go out with friends, they use the same approach.

"I ask, and if she says no, I'll ask [again and again,]" says Sarah, 14.

"Maybe five times, but you can kind of tell if they're gonna give in or not," says Colin, 16.

According to a study by the Center for a New American Dream, a Maryland-based consumer group, a survey of 750 families found that if a child gets a "no" but keeps asking for a product seen on television, by the ninth time the average parent will give in to the demand.

For busy, tired parents, it's simply easier to say yes.

"They realize that it's our habit that if they ask again, that after enough times, 'Mom, please, I didn't get to do it ... I haven't seen so and so in so long,' then... you'll give in," says Kris Lee, the mother of Colin and Sarah.

But psychologist Tony Levitas says that when parents constantly cave in, kids learn a damaging lesson.

"In the big picture of things, it **creates a society of budding narcissists who think they're entitled to whatever they want," he says.**

**Experts recommend that parents make a clear rule - no means no. After that, if a kid keeps asking, they should enforce the consequences - loss of a privilege or a timeout.**

"I would have the parent sit down with the child and say, 'Look, I know we've been doing it this way for a while, but I don't think that's a good thing for you, and this is what we're gonna do now ... and we need you to respect what we say, and if you don't, this is what's gonna happen,'" Levitas says.

Sarah says she *knows* she has to change her ways.

"It's not a very good habit to have when you're getting older because you keep on asking the same question ... people will be like 'No, I already said that,'" she says.

## Tips for Parents

Television advertising may have more of an effect on your child than you realize, according to a survey released by the Center for a New American Dream (CNAD). The consumer group, which polled more than 750 families with children between the ages of 12 and 17, found that if children continually ask for a product they have seen on television, parents will likely give in on the ninth attempt, even after eight straight "no's." Consider these additional findings from the survey:

More than 10% of "tweens" – kids aged 12 or 13 – will ask their parents more than 50 times for stuff they see in television ads.

Nearly a third of kids surveyed said they felt pressured to pressure their parents for items like clothes, shoes and CDs because their friends had them.

Approximately 53% of kids aged 12 to 17 said buying certain products made them feel better about themselves. That number jumped to 62% among 12- and 13-year-olds.

About 81% said they routinely ask parents for money or permission to buy a product, even though 40% said they knew before asking that the answer would be no.

Six in 10 kids are prepared to keep nagging, and 55% said this strategy usually pays off in the long run.

Among kids who said they'd asked for products their parents disapproved of, 59% said they felt if they didn't give up, they'd win. Kids 12 and 13 years old were more likely to aggressively pursue the "nag factor."

CNAD says that advertisers and retailers are targeting kids through television because youth aged 12 to 19 spend or influence spending \$155 billion a year. Consider these additional statistics about kids, money and advertising cited by the National Institute on Media and the Family:

The average American child views 20,000 television ads per year (2,000 of which are for beer and wine).

Children as young as age 3 recognize brand logos, with brand loyalty influence starting at age 2.

Young children are not able to distinguish between commercials and television programs. They do not recognize that commercials are trying to sell something.

And the influence of advertising on children is even documented in a study, published in the *Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics*, showing that children who watch less television make significantly fewer demands for toys.

How are advertisers targeting your child? The Center for Media Literacy cites the following common advertising strategies may influence the degree to which your child may nag you to purchase a particular product:

**Ideal Kids:** The kids in commercials are often a little older and a little more perfect than the target audience of the ad. They are, in other words, role models for what the advertiser wants children in the target audience to think they want to be like. A commercial that is targeting 8 year olds, for instance, will show 11- or 12-year-old models playing with an 8-year-old's toy.

**Heart Strings:** Commercials often create an emotional ambience that draws you into the advertisement and makes you feel good. The McDonald's commercials featuring father and daughter eating out together, or the AT&T Reach

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Out and Touch Someone ads are good examples. We are more attracted to products that make us feel good.

**Amazing Toys:** Many toy commercials show their toys in life-like fashion, doing incredible things. Airplanes do loop-the-loops and cars do wheelies, dolls cry and spring-loaded missiles hit gorillas dead in the chest. But many of the toys never perform in this manner.

**Life-like Settings:** Barbie struts her stuff on the beach with waves crashing in the background, space aliens fly through dark outer space and all-terrain vehicles leap over rivers and trenches. The rocks, dirt, sand and water don't come with the toys, however.

**Sounds Good:** Music and other sound effects add to the excitement of commercials. Sound can make toys seem more life-like or less life-like, as in a music video. Either way, they help set the mood advertisers want.

**Cute Trademark Personalities:** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles sell pizza. Spuds McKenzie sells beer. "Joe Cool" camel used to sell cigarettes. All of these ads are ways of helping children identify with products either now or for the future.

**Selective Editing:** Selective editing is used in all commercials but especially in commercials for athletic toys like Frisbees or footballs. Commercials show only brilliant catches and perfect throws. Unfortunately, that's not the way most children experience these toys.

**Family Fun:** "This is something the whole family can do together!" or "This is something Mom will be glad to buy for you." Many commercials show parents enjoying their children's fun as if the toy will bring more family togetherness.

**Excitement:** Watch the expressions on children's faces. The children never appear to be bored. How can your child help thinking the toy's great?

**Star Power:** Sports heroes, movie stars and teenage heartthrobs tell children what to eat and what to wear. Children listen, not realizing that the star is paid handsomely for the endorsement.

If your younger child develops a habit of nagging, you can take several steps to curb the undesirable and often materialistic behavior. The National Parent Information Network offers the following tips:

**Set a good example.** At this age, kids still look up to their parents more than to their peers, so you're the best role model for helping your child cope with a complicated material world. If you want to discourage him or her from developing an insatiable appetite for possessions, let him or her see you behaving with restraint and wisdom. Enjoy window-shopping together *without* buying anything to show that while it's fun to look at store displays and gather ideas for gifts and other purchases, you don't need to buy something every time you go to a store.

**Turn off the television.** Advertising is everywhere in our culture, but television probably wields the greatest influence on children, who watch commercials as avidly as they watch programs. Toy company executives know that children are forces affecting their parents' buying decisions, and they advertise relentlessly during children's programs. Limit your child's

### Tips for Parents *Cont'd from Pg. 2*

exposure to television commercials, and he or she will be less likely to develop a lengthy wish list.

**Don't fulfill every request.** Children who get everything they ask for don't learn to handle disappointment, and they don't learn to work – or even just wait – for items they desire. Do yourself and your child a favor by saying no to unending requests, even if that provokes tantrums in the toy store at first. Enlist the aid of friends and grandparents – who often delight in "spoiling" your child – by suggesting they buy only one gift at birthdays or holidays, instead of half a dozen.

**Teach your child about money.** Grade-schoolers can learn about the value of possessions by paying for them themselves. Giving your child an allowance provides him or her with cash and you with the opportunity to teach your child how to use it.

**Show an appreciation for the deeper value of things.** Your child can learn that you appreciate objects not for how costly or trendy they are but for their inherent quality or sentimental value – "This chair means a lot to me because it was Grandma's when she was little." Your child may not begin to adopt your reasoning right away, but over time he or she will see that popularity and high price tags aren't the only factors that make objects beloved, and that quality is better than quantity.

The American Academy of Pediatrics says that you can help your older child or teen understand how advertisers influence the desire to purchase a product by teaching him or her these basic points about media education:

**People create media messages.** Any media message, whether it's a magazine article or a television talk show, is created by a team of people. Those people write it, decide what pictures to use and what elements to omit. All of these things give the message a purpose.

**Each media form uses its own language.** Newspapers make headlines large to attract readers to certain stories. Media with sound may use music to make people feel a range of emotions. When your child learns about these techniques, he or she is able to understand how a message is delivered instead of only being affected by it.

**No two people experience the same media message in exactly the same way.** How a person interprets a message depends on aspects unique to that person's life. These can include age, values, memories and education.

**Media messages have their own values and points of view.** These are built into the message itself. Your child should compare the promoted values against his or her own values. It is important for your child to learn that he or she has a *choice* in whether to accept the values that are being promoted in any media message.

### References

American Academy of Pediatrics  
Center for a New American Dream  
Center for Media Literacy  
*Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics*  
National Institute on Media and the Family  
National Parent Information Network

# Support Your PTA Today!

We are well on our way to our 100% PTA Membership goal! Many thanks to the parents, teachers, staff AND administration who attended last month's meeting and/or donated to the PTA. Thanks for your SUPPORT!

Would you like to see your Business card printed in the PTA Newsletter?

Email:  
[PTA\\_Essence@yahoo.com](mailto:PTA_Essence@yahoo.com)



# Happy Thanksgiving

# PTA Wall of Fame

Louis Aghanwa  
 Patricia Aghanwa  
 Anthony Agwai  
 Tochukwu Agwai  
 Linda Allred  
 Irene Anderson  
 Rudal Anderson  
 Carmencita Arizabal  
 Jesus Arizabal  
 Artur Aronov  
 Zhanna Aronov  
 Marcia Austin  
 F. Bacchus  
 Indira Balkaran  
 Jai Balkaran  
 Ann Barrett  
 Asma Begum  
 Shahana Begum  
 Devanand Beharry  
 Indranie Beharry  
 Kamla Bhagwandas  
 Ravi Bhagwandas  
 Rhonda Blache  
 Ibrahima Bocoun  
 Jennifer Bocoun  
 Derek Braithwaite  
 Nicole Britton  
 Marlene Bryant  
 Judith Calhoun  
 Kenny Calhoun  
 Kilpatrick Camacho  
 Sally Camacho  
 Nancy Carrington  
 Muhammad Chaudhary  
 Musarrat Chaudhary  
 Andrea Collins  
 Sean Collins  
 Steven Cox  
 Lisa Crosland  
 Jude Delisca  
 G. Max Delson  
 Marjory Delson  
 Cristina Diaz  
 Dora M. Diaz  
 Elso Diaz  
 Hazel Dickens  
 Dulcia Dwyer  
 Cynthia Edwards

Mabel Enabulele  
 Aboy Esonwune  
 Rita Esonwune  
 Marion Fitzgerald  
 Carol Folds  
 Elizabeth Gittens  
 Ana Gallardo  
 Suzette Gayle  
 Pamela Hall  
 Denise Hazel  
 Nalini Hendrax  
 Yasmin Henry  
 Eddie Herrera  
 Iliana Herrera  
 Lorna Higgins  
 Elvadeen Huie  
 Marlen Hunter  
 Warren Hyatt  
 Forida Islam  
 Anthony Jefferson  
 Kim Jefferson  
 Anita Johnson  
 Kim Johnson  
 Nathaniel Johnson  
 Bebi Karimbaksh  
 Juanita Kelly  
 Mahboob Khan  
 Rakesh Kissoon  
 Rookmin Kissoon  
 Kayi Kudosu  
 Evelyn Kupvpika  
 Radeep Lalak  
 Patricia Lewis  
 Lyvis Linton  
 Maxwell Madu  
 Dhermantie Mahadeo  
 Gurdath Mahadeo  
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 Audra Massiah  
 Beverly Massiah  
 Matjerry Mathurin  
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 Yvonne McFarlane  
 Velma McLennon  
 Rosario Merida  
 Maritza Morillo  
 Miguel Morillo

Ghandi Moussa  
 Charmaine MunnRowe  
 Joy Myers-McDonald  
 Indranie Naraine  
 Jagat Naraine  
 Devika Narainsamy  
 Kellee Nazaire  
 Kamini Nazirbage  
 Mamzad Nazirbage  
 Charlene Nicholson  
 Mertland Nicholson  
 Nikolay Nikolayev  
 Nina Nikolayev  
 Vincent Nikolayev  
 Adenike Oyalabu  
 Dr. Bode Oyalabu  
 Beth Passaro  
 Sherrie Power  
 Ada Rampersaud  
 Jairam Rampersaud  
 Eduardo Rivera  
 Gitana Robertson  
 Malcolm Robertson  
 Lourdes Rodriguez  
 Rafael Rodriguez  
 Anthony Samuels  
 Irma Samuels  
 Maria Sanchez  
 Amanda Sancler  
 Debbie Sanichar  
 Zakia Shaikh  
 Yonette Shepherd  
 Sheila Smith  
 Alicia Strong-Jones  
 Fredricka Thelwell  
 Allison Thomas  
 Catalina Torres  
 Jose Torres  
 Agnes Toussaint  
 Diana Uva  
 Donette Washington  
 Donnette Washington  
 Sandra Williams (1)  
 Sandra Williams (2)  
 Berth Yacoub  
 Jeanny Yacoub

## DATES TO REMEMBER

**PTA Executive Board MEETS**  
**Every First Monday of the Month @ 6:00 p.m.**  
**School Leadership Team**  
**Every 1st Tuesday of the Month @ 6:00 p.m.**

TUESDAY	November 18	PTA Meeting— Thanksgiving Celebration
THURS.-FRI.	November 27-28	Thanksgiving Recess (No School)
TUESDAY	December 16	PTA Meeting @ 7:00 p.m.
FRIDAY- MONDAY	Dec. 24 – Jan. 1	Winter Recess - No School

## Newsletter Team

**Sandra Williams**  
 PTA President, *Editor-in-Chief*

&

**PTA Executive Board**  
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**Carola Craig, *Editor***  
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\*\*\*\*\*

**Wendy Alleyne, *Teacher***  
**Linda Allred, *Guidance***  
**Officer Jones, *Safety***

*Forward your ideas/questions to:*  
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