

The Nova Herald

Volume 1, Issue 1

Summer 2012

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Beginning on July 1st, 2012 our school's name will change from SchoolPlus to SchoolNova
- We are holding an Art Contest for the best symbol for SchoolNova

FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR: OUR INAUGURAL ISSUE

Timothy Palumbo

It is important to note that after 8 years and with more than 60 classes our school will officially change names to SchoolNova on July 1st. We intend to continue to grow as a learning center and add resources and support to our student body of more than 200 students.

When Dr. Polonskaia introduced the idea of a school paper, I jumped at the chance to become involved with it. I thought it was a great opportunity to throw myself into the midst of a tremendous culture of learning. Since the day I began teaching English here at SchoolNova, I immediately noticed that there seemed to be so much going on here. However, with my schedule it was hard to know exactly what was working on. There was a bustle and camaraderie between students and teachers that was tangible. It was that connection that I wanted to be able to illustrate through a common piece of literature. I see this paper as a means of connecting us all. It is the mission of this paper to contribute to a culture that validates learning and our individual experiences. Here, students can find out their classmates are working on and what they may find interesting outside of school.

All around me I see students applying their knowledge in ways that astound me. In fact, it is the full range of that application that our students wanted to report on in this, our first issue. Inside this issue, you will find articles, which demonstrate the enthusiasm that our students carry. Whether in Science Olympiads, Music Festivals, or debating ways to improve our school, our writers care about the community they learn in. So welcome, and read on. We want you to be part of it too.

SCHOOLNOVA: SKILLS BEYOND SUNDAYS

Boris Kosikov and Trevor Leong

We enrolled in this program because many of our parents felt that normal curriculum wasn't enough. Here standards are raised for all grades. Parents feel that the school is beneficial and enroll their students due to the recommendations of friends and peers. My own mother said, "I believe the school to be outstanding. It improves my child's mind and tortures him with extensive homework. The school has been haunting him for five years now, and I love it." The impact on my academics often comes from the small size of the classes. This size often lets the teacher spend more time individually with students. Each teacher seems to have his or her own strategy. Some teachers throw in little strategies that add up to a huge conclusion at the end of the year. Others equip students with tools to help them excel more gradually in a subject. All teachers agree that the extra work can have a potentially big impact.

But just what do we get out of it? After asking our classmates, the answer seems to be a sense of community and a chance to learn more. Our English classmates Katherine Zhao and Kevin Wen agree that they look forward to meeting new people and learning new things each time they move up through the class levels. Each subject is separated into different levels based on difficulty. At the end of each year, we hope to move up to the next level of difficulty. Sometimes it is at this point we are often grateful that we do not receive grades for our classes. Trevor laughed and admitted in class, "I probably wouldn't progress if there were grades." While Trevor is kidding, we can often see the most progress in our participation in outside academic contests. Many students find opportunities to compete through our school that they do not find in their normal public school curriculum. SchoolNova students compete in the American Math Competition, Kangaroo International Math Olympiad, The Russian Language International Olympiad "Medvezhonok" and "Le Grand Concours". Our school was well

TO SNACK OR NOT TO SNACK...

Kathryn Zhao

Food has always been a necessity of life and will always be. Learning is vital too, because we need to incorporate skills in our everyday lives to help us. Naturally, we must stay focused while learning.

Does food help our minds focus? Some people think that food distracts our attention while others think that it makes us focused. Each view has some validity, but there isn't an exact answer.

Food can help us focus because if you're hungry, instead of listening to the teacher you'll be thinking about food. Most likely, you will learn nothing or just forget everything because you can't pay attention.

Eating can also become a distraction in class too. If someone is chewing really loudly, then it can divert other students' attention. Also, if something is spilled or causes a big mess, it will make the class stop working and clean up.

In the opinions of most schools, food does not help the mind focus at all. Kids are allowed to bring snacks but there is a specific time for snacking. It is believed to distract kids and they won't focus on their work.

Schools may think this because if children were snacking the entire day than there would be no point of lunch and it could easily cause messes. Aside from that, if kids were eating chips throughout the entire school day, their hands would be oily and everything they touched would be oily.

This logic seems valid in many schools across the country. So don't expect to be snacking a full six hours each day.

In our school, things are different. Every Sunday a table is stacked with trays filled with snacks of all sorts. From fruit to cereal to drinks, every kid can take whatever he or she wants.

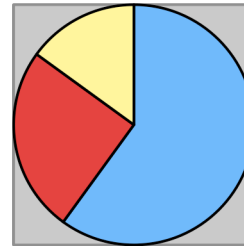
This seems fine because classes range from 9 to 3, like a typical school day. There is no lunch so snacks are the only option. Without these snacks, it can be hard to focus with an empty stomach.

Food has great powers. It has the ability to make us focused or distracted. Food will always stand as a necessity of life along with learning. But to stay focused, food can easily affect us in both good and bad ways.

In an effort to get to the bottom of this debate, we asked 20 of our peers how important snacks were to them

throughout their Sunday. Interestingly, one student pointed out that he or she does not eat breakfast and relies on food throughout the day. The answer to the polls is as follows:

IS SNACKING IMPORTANT TO OUR STUDENTS?



■ Very Important
■ Somewhat
■ Not Important

IN OTHER NEWS...THE FRENCH OPEN

Eddie Yan writes about one of his favorite subjects...

The French Open at Roland Garros is underway, with the third round completed. All the men's favorites, Nadal Djokovic and Federer have all glided to the Round of 16. Of the women, Sharapova, Kuznetsova, and Azarenka have all advanced as well. Who will win? Will it be Nadal for the 7th time, or an underdog? Will Li Na, last year's champion defend her title?

The men's round has been full of surprises. Seppi upset Verdasoc in five sets last round, and Mathieu upset Isner in the second round. Nadal, Federer and Djokovic have all progressed expectedly as they are the top 3 in the world. The women's round is more competitive, but still packed with surprises. In the first round, Razzano, the 111th ranked in the world upset Williams, the number 5 in the world. It was Williams' first time losing in the first round.

The top two seeded women are Azarenka and Sharapova. My prediction is that the winner of the men's draw will be Nadal or Federer. The winner of the women's side seems much less predictable. It could be anyone. You will just have to stay tuned and find out. I know will be.

SPRING CONCERT A SUCCESS

Alex Stepansky

This year's in-school concert was a success in showing all of the parents and the teachers themselves, all the progress that has been made in Stony Brook's weekly language classes. Kids attending these language courses experience lessons in both grammar and vocabulary. The Language Festival included languages such as Russian, French, Spanish, and Italian.

The Spring Concert took place on the first floor of the Math building where out parties usually meet. The room was beautifully decorated for the occasion. This concert had 14 of the language classes perform. The concert was put on by our students, age categories 8 and younger. Each class performed a rehearsed dance routine, a play, or a sing-along in a foreign language. The performers had been practicing their routines long before the show took place. To reward the performers for their hard work the teachers and staff set up a refreshment table, which the kids seemed to enjoy. The teachers of this school are highly experienced and definitely know how to prepare a show. "We started sending our two children to SchoolNova soon after we moved to Stony Brook in 2008, and we have been very happy with it. Our children took lessons in math, physics, French, Russian, and they all have been of very high quality. The school has been particularly good about accommodating them at the level that is right for them. Through the school they met new friends, and the parties enhance their social life," said one of the happy families that attend this school. The concert is just one of many things this school does to enhance the learning experience.



represented in all of these contests, and the pursuit of these contests is an important part of student motivation here at our school.

SCHOOLNOVA ACADEMIC COMPETITION RESULTS IN 2012:

- **AMC 8:** 12 participants
 - 1 National distinction roll (top 1%),
 - 3 honors rolls (top 5%) and
 - 1 young student achievement roll
- **AMC 10/12:** 4 participants from our school
 - 1 young student achievement roll
- **Math Kangaroo:** 100 participated:
2 students from our school were among top 10 winners on National level
 - 5 were among top 10 on NYS level
- **National French Contest:** 17 participated, 7 are in National Top 10
 - 1 gold and 2 silver medals won
 - French teacher - Marleine Chiofalo received an award
 - 11 Students are among Top 10 of Suffolk County (2 gold, 3 silver and 3 bronze medals)
- **Russian International Olympiad:**
- 11 participated 2 were in Top 10% in USA.



CLASS OUTSIDE? WHY NOT?

Kevin Wen

Going outside never seems to be an option at our school, as the classes are mainly inside. However, students would actually benefit from going outside as it may incorporate Physical Education as well as vitamin D intakes from the sun. Furthermore, students would benefit even further from airborne chemicals that plants produce, called phytoncides.

As stated in the *New York Times* article, “The Claim: Exposure to Plants and Parks Can Boost Immunity”, scientists have recorded studies which have shown that spending more time outside increases immune function and decreases stress. Those results were concluded when an increased amount of white blood cells were found on test subjects that had taken a two hour walk in the forest over the period of two days and when there was a lower pulse rate and a lower blood pressure on the test subjects who had walked through a forest or a wooded area for a few hours.

Since it seems that going outside benefits a person’s health, that is another reason why there should be more “outdoor time” at our school. Students can have an increased immunity against the weather and will become calmer, helping teachers teach without any interference.

In an article, “Nature and Longevity”, by Sharon Basaraba, it states how nature can help increase the life span and health of humans. It declared that studies in the UK,

New Zealand, and Japan all showed that nature could improve mental focus and attention as well as offer relief from daily routines and demands, which may cause stress. Lower stress is also very important during the childhood years. Early stress could lead to depression and anxiety disorders or to cardiovascular diseases.

In both articles, “Nature and Longevity” and “The Claim: Exposure to Plants and Parks Can Boost Immunity” it can be concluded that going outside helps students have an increased immune system, lower pulse rate, lower blood pressure, a lesser chance of becoming obese, fresher air to breathe, less stress, and an improved mental focus and attention. Plus, students will also be aiding the environment by helping start photosynthesis.

In conclusion, students would benefit vastly from going outside and it would be a stupendous teaching tool as students could concentrate better. Plus, there could be a gargantuan increase in students if the physical education aspect was added to our school. All those benefits would ultimately affect us in a positive way, but they can only be achieved if students were let outside.



SIGMA SUMMER CAMP

Ivan Viro

Organized by the teachers of School Plus, the Sigma summer camp is an enrichment camp, where children ages 11-14 learn from professors about different subjects. This is the first time that our school is having a summer program. It was with great enthusiasm that I applied for admission to the camp. My editor asked me some questions about what I was looking forward to most. Here’s how the conversation went:

Q: What excites you most about Sigma Summer Camp?

A: I desire a camp, which makes education a priority, not outdoor sports. I think this is the camp that will fulfil that desire.

Q: What expectations do you have for your experience?

A: A great one! I think it will be a fun time for old and new friends. I expect it to be a situation where everyone can get to know each other due to the small size of the camp.

Q: What do you look forward to most regarding the education you will receive there?

A: I am hoping that there will be a good balance of education and other activities. Even the educational part would be more of a discussion rather than lectures with a lot of experiments. I look forward to the chance to do some hands-on work with my own experiments.