



## New School on Schedule

Work continues to progress on schedule at our new elementary school on Mount Hope Road. The building is currently water tight which will allow important infrastructure work to continue during the cold winter months. As you drive by on Mount Hope Road or Finchville Turnpike, you can watch the brick work proceeding as well as the paving in the front parking lots. Please visit the *Building Projects* page of our web site to see additional pictures.

## Alumni Hall of Fame



Dr. Sam Bowser  
Class of 1975  
2007 Inductee



Maureen Halahan  
Class of 1976  
2007 Inductee



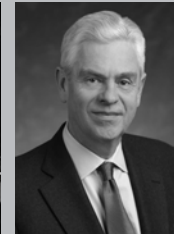
Julia Matthews  
Class of 1987  
2007 Inductee



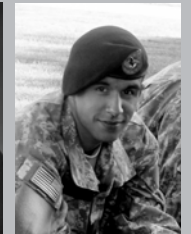
Fr. Thomas Looney  
Class of 1978  
2007 Inductee



Kenneth O'Connor  
Class of 1995  
2007 Inductee



Gary Lynch  
Class of 1968  
2008 Inductee



Carlos Gonzalez  
Class of 2001  
2008 Inductee

As an offshoot of the Golden Jubilee celebration, Minisink Valley created the Alumni Hall of Fame. Exemplary alumni may qualify for the Hall of Fame due to their accomplishments in the areas of academic/professional achievement, athletics and/or citizenship. The Hall of Fame committee would like to congratulate the inductees.

These alumni will be honored at a brunch that will be held on Sunday, April 13, 2008 at 1:00 p.m. at The Gardens on Catlin Creek in Slate Hill. Anyone wishing to make a reservation to attend this brunch please contact:

Mr. Hauck at 355-5151, or at [khauck@minisink.com](mailto:khauck@minisink.com) or  
Mr. Michel at 355-5111, or at [smichel@minisink.com](mailto:smichel@minisink.com).

## American Heart Association Heart Walk

We are proud to announce that the American Heart Association has once again selected Minisink Valley as the site for the 2008 Orange County Heart Walk. This year's walk, scheduled for **Sunday, May 4, 2008**, will honor Mike Levine, former reporter and editor for the *Times Herald Record*.

### Minisink Valley CSD

P.O. Box 217, Rte. 6, Slate Hill, NY 10973

### Board of Education

Ethel Crow, *President*, Gina Richichi, *Vice-president*

John M. Lenane, Michelle McDonald, Shawn O'Connor, Robert Prokopchak, Paul Rickard, Joan Romanyschyn, Victor Vignola

### Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Martha Murray

**TO: LOCAL RESIDENT OR BOX HOLDER**

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Newsletter  
Debbie Roda

# From the Superintendent's Desk

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

As we start another new calendar year, we turn our attention to the New York State assessment program for students in grades 3-8 and the Regents exams for our high school students. Our elementary and middle school students will be taking the English Language Arts exam in January and the math exam in March. Many of our high school students will be taking Regents exams the last week of January and again in June 2008.

Our students and their teachers work hard throughout the year to make sure that our students are ready to do their very best on these state exams. Parents can help by making sure that their children are present on the day of an exam and that they have the proper rest and nourishment they will need to perform.

A new calendar year also signals the start of our budget review. The actual budget process begins in October when teachers start to meet with one another and with their principals to detail what they believe they will need to continue to deliver a quality educational program for our youngsters. That list is compiled by the principals and/or department directors and presented to central office administrators who review and make recommendations to the board of education. Then the finance committee of the board of education meets with the principals and directors to hear the reasons for the requests they are making. These budget development meetings are held in public and community members are encouraged to attend. Meetings this year will be held on February 7, February 21, March 6, and March 18.

Finally, every household should have received a four-page flyer describing a capital project the board of education is recommending to the community. The items listed in the brochure are things that need to be addressed in order to protect the investment the community has in its schools. We are fortunate that a combination of building aid and special EXCEL aid will fund this capital project at the rate of 97.7%, with 2.3% being picked up by the local taxpayer. The district will see improvements and upgrades in the elementary/intermediate school, the middle school, the high school and the bus garage valued at \$26,200,000 for a net cost of \$600,000. This translates to \$3 per \$100,000 of assessed home value. That \$3 is not compounded but remains at that level for the fifteen years of the debt.

These are busy times in our schools. We invite you to be a part of the many activities and meetings held in the coming months. Please continue to check [www.minisink.com](http://www.minisink.com) for dates and times.

Sincerely,

Dr. Martha Murray



Students in the middle school are collecting items to ship to the troops in Iraq. Like the World War II GI's who gave chocolate to the European kids whom they met in the 1940's, our soldiers give shoes or Matchbox cars to the Iraqi and Afghan kids who have no shoes or toys. Pictured here are seventh grade students Rhea Singh and Daisy Paz, with greeter Rose Hall and security aide, Mark Miller at the collection box in the main lobby. A special thank you goes to middle school teacher, Beth Murphy, for organizing the effort.

## DRAMA PRODUCTIONS

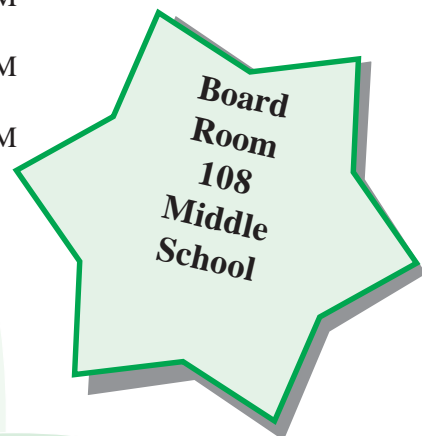
Middle School presents  
*Alice In Wonderland*  
March 13, 14 -7:00 PM

Intermediate presents  
*The Jungle Book Kids*  
March 17 -7:00 PM

High School presents  
*Seussical*  
April 10, 11, 12 -7:30 PM  
April 12 -2:00 PM

# Budget Development Calendar

February 7, 2008	Finance Committee Meeting – Budget Development - 6:30 PM
February 21, 2008	Finance Committee Meeting – Budget Development - 6:30 PM
March 6, 2008	Finance Committee Meeting – Budget Development - 6:30 PM
March 18, 2008	Finance Committee Meeting – Budget Development - 6:30 PM
March 19, 2008	Deadline for Propositions Submitted by Registered Voters
April 3, 2008	Public Budget Presentation 7:30 PM
April 10, 2008	Board of Education Approval of 2008-2009 Budget at Regularly Scheduled Board Meeting
April 18, 2008	Submission of Petitions by Board of Education Candidates by 5:00 PM.
April 18, 2008	Absentee Ballot Applications Available
May 8, 2008	Public Budget Hearing - 7:30 PM
May 15, 2008	Last Day to Register to Vote
May 20, 2008	Budget Vote and Board of Education Election - Noon to 9:00 PM



## EXCEL Building Aid

In the spring of 2006 the New York State Legislature established a new state building aid program called EXCEL (Expanding our Children's Education and Learning). They authorized a one time \$2.6 billion allocation, \$1.5 million of which has been designated for Minisink Valley. Districts must use the funds for one or more of the following purposes:

- Address health and safety issues
- Improve accessibility
- Enhance technology
- Increase instructional space
- Reduce energy costs

VOTE  
February 5

Although there is no sunset provision for this legislation, we know that these funds will not be available forever. The capital project that we are proposing to this community will be eligible for this one time allocation. The EXCEL funds, together with the 95% building aid ratio the district enjoys on eligible capital projects means that the project the voters will be deciding upon on February 5, 2008 will be funded at the 97.7% level. Our community will receive \$26,200,000 worth of improvements and upgrades for a cost to the taxpayers of \$600,000.

## Important Message for MVCSD Taxpayers

STAR is the New York State Tax Relief Program that provides a partial exemption from school property taxes for owner-occupied, primary residences.

The *Basic STAR Exemption*, for all primary residence homeowners regardless of age or income, will provide a \$30,000+ full value assessment exemption for the school year 2007-08. If you are a new homeowner or have recently moved to a new residence, you must submit your application to your local assessor by March 1, 2008 to qualify for the exemption in the following year. You do not need to re-apply if you already receive this exemption and your residence is unchanged.

The Enhanced STAR Exemption is available to taxpayers who are 65 years of age or older by December 31, 2007 and whose total income does not exceed \$70,650. The Enhanced STAR Exemption provides a \$50,000+ full value assessment exemption on your school tax bill. You may need to re-apply each year to receive the Enhanced STAR Exemption.

STAR exemption forms are available at your local assessor's office or may be picked up in the Minisink Valley Central School District's Business Office. **Complete and submit your application form to your local assessor, along with proof of residency and proof of income** (*required for Enhanced STAR, only*). Your local assessor can advise you of what forms of proof are acceptable.

**STAR  
applications  
must be filed  
with your local  
assessor by  
March 1, 2008**

### *National School Lunch Free and Reduced Meal Program*

Our school district participates in the federally assisted National School Breakfast and Lunch Program. This means that students whose family income falls within prescribed limits may participate in the breakfast and/or lunch program *free of charge* or at the reduced rate of *\$.25 per meal*. The state publishes income eligibility guidelines, based on household size, each school year. To learn if your child is eligible for free or reduced price meals, you can go to the district's website at [www.minisink.com](http://www.minisink.com) (forms/ publications, free and reduced meal application) or contact the district registrar, Mrs. Ann Shand, at 355-5812. We encourage all eligible families to take advantage of this very beneficial program.

**Referendum Vote  
February 5, 2008**

### **Operation Safeguard**

**If you see something, say something.  
Don't keep it to yourself.**

The New York Office of Homeland Security, in conjunction with law enforcement agencies throughout New York State, is reaching out to school districts to create better public awareness of potential terrorist indicators and suspicious activities. This outreach promotes reporting of suspicious activities to a tips hotline @ 1-866-723-3697 (1-866-SAFENYS).

Some ways that community members can help prevent terrorism include

- Know the routines. Be alert as you go about your daily business. Understanding these routines will help you spot anything out of place.
- Be aware of what is going on around you. Learn to spot suspicious mail, packages, or luggage abandoned in a crowded place.
- Take what you hear seriously. If you hear or know of someone who has bragged or talked about plans to harm citizens in violent attacks or who claims membership in a terrorist organization, take them seriously and report it to law enforcement immediately.