

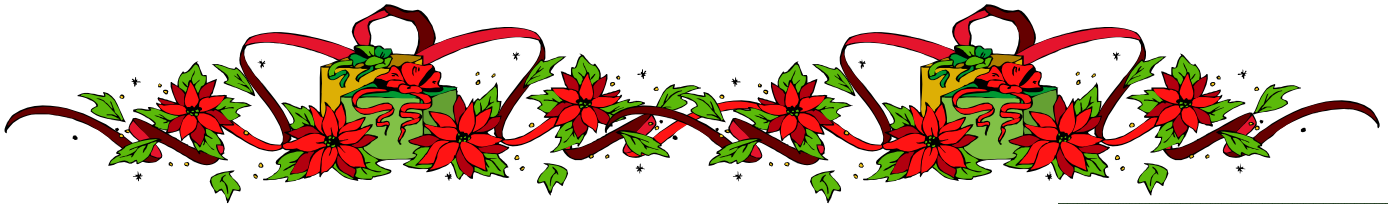


Louise O'Connor Photo

Barre Town Middle and Elementary School

December 2011 Newsletter

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2011 David Stefaniak Memorial Holiday Food and Gift Drive

The 2011 David Stefaniak Memorial Holiday Food and Gift Drive is now underway. Our goal is to provide food, winter clothing, and gifts for some Barre Town families who need a bit of help in this holiday season.

Over 25 years ago, Barre Town parent David Stefaniak brought community attention to the needs of some of our families and friends for food assistance, particularly at Christmas time. Upon David's untimely death, volunteers took up his work and to this day his efforts live on.

If you are a family in need, please contact the nurse's office at school (476-1431) **prior to December 9**. Our goal is to provide a winter clothing item and a toy for each child. The donations will be filled on a first-come, first-serve basis.

With the help of our generous Barre Town community, we would like to have all of our participating families adopted this year. A family, a business, a class, or individuals may adopt families or individuals. Please contact me if you would like to donate food, money, gifts or adopt a family.

The Barre Town Student Council will be joining the effort this year by helping to coordinate the food donation.

Thank you for reaching out to families in our community in this wonderful holiday season.

This will be my last year coordinating this drive. If you are interested in running the drive in the future, please contact me.

Thank you,
 Kerri Lamb (email: btmes@hotmail.com)

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4TH GRADE CONCERT DATE CHANGE!



The 4th grade band's first concert of the school year, originally scheduled for Friday, December 16, will now be held on **Friday, February 10**, at 2:45 p.m. in the large multipurpose room. More details will be sent home to parents as the concert draws closer.

Crops by Kids Garden

Things have been fairly quiet in the garden in November, but not totally. The Crops by Kids Garden was a stop on one of the 5th Annual Farm-Based Education Conference's field trips. On Thursday, November 4, people from all over the country got a chance to see our exemplary space and ask questions about our experiences. We should be proud that we are looked to as a model for others.



The weather has been unusually mild, allowing classes to continue visiting this outdoor-learning venue. Ms. Marshall's kindergartners included the garden in their "weather walk," using their five senses to observe changes in the outdoors. Mrs. Sulek's kindergarten class raked leaves to mulch several of the plantings that will winter over. Of course, this activity had to include a few fun jumps into the leaf piles before moving them to their designated locations over the garlic and perennial strawberries.

The compost bin is being added to regularly by various groups at school. Layers of food scraps, leaves, and garden-plant remains are filling the green cone-shaped container. How fortunate we are to have the opportunity to see the full composting cycle happen right in the garden. We can't wait to see the final product next spring. Thank you, Mr. Lembke, for overseeing this project.

We will be selling FEDCO seeds once again this year in order to raise money for our spring plans. Please consider supporting this fundraiser, as 50% of all the proceeds go into our garden account. The order forms will be coming out mid- to late-January. We will remind everyone next month.

Enjoy any holidays you celebrate with family and friends. We are looking forward to a blanket of snow soon that will keep everything insulated until spring.

Ellen Sulek

Family School Coordinator by Carolyn Appleton

North Branch Nature Center

Elm Street, Montpelier

Holiday Open House - Sunday, December 11, 1-4 p.m. Come one, come all! Visit our holiday season open house and enjoy free refreshments and seasonal activities. There will be tours of the Critter Room, activities for kids - like making a holiday gift out of natural materials or adding a Monarch to our symbolic "Mexican" fir tree.

Barre Opera House

476-8188

www.barreoperahouse.com

Vermont Symphony Orchestra Holiday Pops - Friday, December 9. Apart from the eggnog, Christmas IS for kids! Celebrate Christmas 2011 with the Vermont Symphony Orchestra as we take a look at the youthful side of the holiday.

The Green Mountain Nutcracker - A charming perennial holiday favorite presented by Moving Light Dance Company. Saturday, December 17, 6 p.m., and Sunday, December 18, 2 p.m. Ticket prices range from \$12-22 in advance, and \$14-24 at the door. Call for special student and senior pricing options (not available on-line) or purchase on-line (without discounts). Rating: Suitable for all ages!

Fifth Graders Ski FREE

Count to 88. Easy, right? ---Especially, if you're a fifth grader. Well, that's the total number of free days on snow you'll enjoy without spending a dime at Ski Vermont's alpine resorts and Nordic ski areas if you're a fifth grader armed with a Fifth Grade Passport in hand. Ski Vermont believes that winter in Vermont is a way of life, an opportunity to get outdoors, to be healthy and active, and to share amazing experiences with friends and family. That philosophy has led Ski Vermont to develop the Fifth Grade Passport, a program that lets fifth graders ski and ride for free, and fall in love with the experience of sliding on snow, now in its 12th year of enriching

families' winters.

It's simple to get your 5th Grade Passport.

1. Print the application (<http://www.skivermont.com/events-and-deals/program-passport>) or pick one up in the BTMES lobby.
2. Have proof of 5th grade status (recent report card or copy of birth certificate)
3. \$10 processing fee.

Please mail to: Attn: Fifth Grade Passport, Ski Vermont, P.O. Box 368, Montpelier, VT 05602.

Passports are valid December 1-May 1, excluding blackout dates. PLEASE ALLOW TWO WEEKS FOR PROCESSING. Passport holders must be accompanied by a full-day lift-ticket paying adult; the passport is not valid with any other offers or discounts. Call 223-2439 for more information.

Aldrich Library - East Barre Branch

Mill Street, East Barre; 476-5118

Barre Kids' Story Hour - Tuesdays - Free. Ongoing Story Times - Literature hounds show up for tall tales. Kids under 3 meet at 10 a.m., ages 3-5 meet at 10:30 a.m.

ECHO Lake Aquarium and Science Center/Leahy Center - Burlington

GROSSOLOGY -

The Impolite Science of the Human Body

- Sometimes it's stinky, sometimes it's

crusty, and sometimes it's slimy. Explore why our bodies produce mushy, oozy, scaly, and smelly gunk at GROSSOLOGY: The (Impolite) Science of the Human Body during its autumn appearance at ECHO. Based on the best-selling book, GROSSOLOGY features giant, interactive animatronics and outrageous exhibits and games to tell the good, the bad, and the yucky about runny noses, body odor, and much more. GROSSOLOGY, sponsored by Vermont Children's Hospital at Fletcher Allen Health Care, will be at ECHO through January 8.



School Health Office by Tanya Crawford-Stempel, R.N.

Celebrating the Holidays – A Time of Joy, Feasting, and Vigilance

December is here! With this season comes all of the anticipation and celebration that makes this one of the best times of year for our children. The eagerness for the holidays, snow and outdoor play, the giving and receiving of gifts, and, of course, treats galore, all add to the excitement and business of this time!

For most parents, the holidays are a time to enjoy our children's joy, to give in a little to indulgence, and to make school and home even more special by adding to the celebration with treats. For parents of an estimated three million children with life-threatening food allergies, ongoing vigilance ramps up while the delicious and well-intentioned treats permeate many aspects of their child's life; with them the potential of a catastrophic outcome.

At Barre Town School, we have several students with life-threatening food allergies of various kinds; peanuts, tree nuts, dairy, poultry, etc. These children have experienced signs and symptoms of an anaphylactic reaction (throat swelling, difficulty breathing, full body hives, etc.) during their lifetime. Many of you have children who are in classes with these students and have received letters explaining how you can help keep these students safe through an allergy avoidance plan. Though these thoughts are fresh at the beginning of the school year, around this time of year, with the increase in family busyness, and more classroom/grade celebrations and fund raising, we ask for renewed awareness.

At a recent meeting with a mother of a student with food allergies, the reality of daily vigilance became clearer and more personal. Her experience was shared through a letter thanking her son's classroom community for their part in keeping her son safe by not sending allergy foods to the classroom, and

describing some of their family's real-life experiences.

"(His) allergy to such a little (and delectable) item could cause death. It is not difficult for us to alter our eating patterns to keep him alive; it is difficult to help others understand the severity of the situation and to do the same. We know that the unmarked ingredient list of a simple cookie or cupcake holds the safety of our child, and it would never be worth the possible end result. So our diligence continues, our monitoring is never ending, and our request for support is a daily need. We have learned that most people are supportive, understanding, and passionate about helping. We live in a community that keeps each other safe, and we appreciate your commitment."

Other parents of children with allergies have similar reflections of the experiences so many of us take for granted. In describing how constant vigilance is needed while traveling, one parent writes:

"Our family recently took a trip to Toronto for a little family vacation. I will admit, I was nervous about food. We spent two nights in a boutique hotel my husband had stayed at before and knew what to expect. We chose against a family hotel because of the pets and ice cream bars. Our first night we intended to have ice cream for dinner at Lutsalicious the peanut free ice cream parlor, only to find out it was closed. I was horribly disappointed as it was the main reason for our trip. We ate dinner at the old stand by – McDonald's. I had my list of nut free bakeries with me, but wasn't up for a new challenge."

What seems clear in talking with most parents of children with allergies is how grateful they are that other parents are willing to help create a safe environment for their kids at school. They realize the impact of restricting what other children can eat in their classrooms (though there is no restrictions at lunchtime), and are willing to be an active resource for other parents in the class who would like to bring treats. Most are willing to (or have) made treats for the whole class themselves to ensure that balance of safe environment for their child, and festive celebration

for all. Of course all of these parents wish they did not have to take any of these precautions, take up this vigilance, or advocate for these classroom modifications – but the bottom line is that when it comes to life-threatening food allergies, it is a matter of life or death.

We would like to thank all of you Barre Town Parents who have and who continue to help keep our students safe. This season, when considering your child's classroom celebration or fund raiser, why not look to non-food items as an alternative. Included in this issue of the Barre Town Parent Newsletter is a list of ideas to consider.

Non-Food Ideas for Classroom Celebrations!

Interested in making a classroom special without delivering a sweet treat? Here are some ideas as alternatives to the cookies!

Things to give students:

- Silly Bands/Rubber Bracelets
- Pencils/Erasers/Pencil Grips
- Bubbles
- Temporary Tattoos
- Glow Sticks
- Card or Book circulated to be signed by classmates
- Stickers
- Play-Dough
- Small Toys/Puzzles
- Small Games/Cards
- Shoe Laces
- Jump Ropes

Activities:

- **Buy something for the classroom** (books, games, music).
- Send in supplies and directions for a **craft** for the kids to do instead of eating a snack. It is a bonus if the parent comes in to help with the craft.
- Arrange for the kids to **play a game** instead of eating a snack. If you don't have any ideas, talk to your child's teacher. They are likely to know what the kids will enjoy and what will work well in the classroom setting. Again, it is a bonus if the parent comes in to play games with the kids.

School Health Office (continued)

- Arrange a **treasure hunt** around the classroom for the kids. There can be a special prize at the end. You can even use a theme that ties into what they are learning in class.

Winter Safety

Soon, the days will be getting longer, the snow will be getting deeper. Time to go outside and play! Here are some Winter Safety Tips, courtesy of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Winter Sports and Activities - Set reasonable time limits on outdoor play to prevent hypothermia and frostbite. Have children come inside periodically to warm up.

Ice Skating

- Allow children to skate only on approved surfaces. Check for signs posted by local police or recreation departments, or call your local police department to find out which areas have been approved.
- Advise your child to:
 - skate in the same direction as the crowd.
 - avoid darting across the ice.
 - never skate alone.
 - not chew gum or eat candy while skating.
- Consider having your child wear a helmet while ice skating.

Sledding

- Keep sledders away from motor vehicles.
- Children should be supervised while sledding.
- Keep young children separated from older children.
- Sledding feet first or sitting up, instead of lying down head-first, may prevent head injuries.
- Consider having your child wear a helmet while sledding.
- Use steerable sleds, not snow disks or inner tubes.
- Sleds should be structurally sound and free of sharp edges and splinters, and the steering mechanism should be well lubricated.
- Sled slopes should be free of obstructions like trees or fences, be

covered in snow, not ice, not be too steep (slope of less than 30°), and end with a flat runoff.

- Avoid sledding in crowded areas.

Snow Skiing and Snowboarding

- Children should be taught to ski or snowboard by a qualified instructor in a program designed for children.
- Never ski or snowboard alone.
- Young children should always be supervised by an adult. Older children's need for adult supervision depends on their maturity and skill. If older children are not with an adult, they should always, at least, be accompanied by a friend.
- Consider wearing a helmet.
- Equipment should fit the child. Skiers should wear safety bindings that are adjusted at least every year. Snowboarders should wear gloves with built-in wrist guards. Eye protection or goggles should also be used.
- Slopes should fit the ability and experience of the skier or snowboarder. Avoid crowded slopes.
- Avoid skiing in areas with trees and other obstacles.

Snowmobiling

- The AAP recommends that children under age 16 not operate snowmobiles and that children under age 6 never ride on snowmobiles.
- Do not use a snowmobile to pull a sled or skiers.
- Wear goggles and a safety helmet approved for use on motorized vehicles like motorcycles.
- Travel at safe speeds.
- Never use alcohol or other drugs before or during snowmobiling.
- Never snowmobile alone or at night.
- Stay on marked trails, away from roads, water, railroads and pedestrians.

Sun Protection - The sun's rays can still cause sunburn in the winter, especially when they reflect off snow. Make sure to cover your child's exposed skin with sunscreen.

Fire Protection - Winter is a time when household fires occur. It is a good time to remember to:

- buy and install smoke alarms on every

floor of your home.

- test smoke alarms monthly.
- practice fire drills with your children.
- install a carbon monoxide detector outside bedrooms.

*American Academy of Pediatrics, 12/10
SafeKids, 11/05*

Music Department

Thank you so much for supporting the Music Department with our important programs and activities. The sales of the 2012 Entertainment Book are complete and it was a successful fund raiser! We appreciate your continued support for Barre Town Music Department.

Senior Band represented Barre Town at the Barre Veterans' Day Parade. We are very proud of all their efforts.

Senior Chorus had their first Flash Mob in the Barre Town cafeteria. It was a great success and we sure worked hard to make it happen. Thanks to Mr. Crowley, Cathy Smith, Paul Belisle, and Bridget Apfel for the extra help.

Select Chorus will be performing for the DAR meeting at the Hilltop Restaurant on Saturday, December 10, at 1:00 p.m.

Mrs. Eldred's grade 2 class will be going to The Flynn Theater on Dec. 1 to see the Vermont Symphony Orchestra performance of The Carnival Of The Animals.

We look forward to seeing you at our Winter Concerts!



Peg Mehuron

PTO

Thank you to everyone that supported PTO during our fall fundraiser! We could not have done this without you!

PTO will be selling t-shirts, water bottles, and coffee mugs for the holidays. They make great gifts and stocking stuffers! Call 479-9304 for more information! Savings cards are also available.

Our next bookstore will be on December 6 --- last one before the holidays! Make sure to come in and stock up! A good book is a great way to pass the time during the cold winter months!

Want to become involved in PTO? Come join us! Our next meeting will be on December 13 in the library at 6:30 p.m.. Hope to see you there!

YMCA: Dreaming BIG



Hey Barre Town!!! Mr. D here. I would like to take this moment to say hello as your new YMCA After School Director.

I'm pretty excited. Just over 11 years ago, I was graduating from Barre Town as an 8th grader looking forward to Spaulding and then beyond. Even back in 2001, I knew how I wanted to live my life: "Have fun. Travel the world. Work with kids." In 2009, I graduated from Philadelphia Biblical University with a degree in youth ministries. I spent the next two years traveling and volunteering in over 15 countries and 35 states. After all those adventures, life brought me back to my Barre roots. Traveling the world was fun, but so is what's going on with the Y right here in Barre.

THE Y IS IN BARRE?!?!?

That's right. Barre Town is one of the few schools in Vermont privileged enough to have their own Y After School Program meeting EVERY SCHOOL DAY from 2:30-6 p.m. We are a small program right now, consisting of an excellent four-person staff and a handful of students ages 5-12. The day consists of games, healthy snacks, art projects, and time and resources for students to get their homework done.

Throughout the year, all kids enrolled in The Y enjoy field trips and different seasonal enrichment programs ranging from Zumba to karate. (Programs are picked based off of the interests of the kids.) We learn how to make healthy food choices, and what it means to be a successful individual, member of a big group, and member of society. Simply put, we are a program looking to have fun while enhancing the cores of The Y: care, honesty, respect, and responsibility.

The benefits of this program are countless. Aside from providing a safe place for kids to be after school, gain help with homework, and have fun with other students, The Y is an excellent resource for parents who need someone to watch their kids before they can get out of work. Located in the school cafeteria, the only responsibility of parents or guardians is to pick up the students before 6 p.m. each day they're registered.

Who's Eligible? The Y is a program set up specifically for students age 5-12. Financially, it is below most any other daycare prices in the area, and offers flexibility in enrollment. Students can be signed up for two to five days depending on desires of family.

Costs? The cost for The Y is dependent on how many days the child is enrolled per week. The Y has scholarships that every child is able to apply for, and the state offers subsidy to families who qualify. Our desire is to make sure that any student who wants to be a part of The Y joins.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me, Caleb Dufresne, at dreambigbarre@gmail.com.

My dream is big. I want Barre Town to have the most excellent YMCA program possible, and I want any student interested to be a part of it. **So, please email me, or find more information in the front lobby.** Barre Town is going places. Come be a part of it. Please fill out the survey at the end of the newsletter to help us make the Y your Y.

Mr. D

Calendar of Events

December

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
5 3:40 p.m. - School Health Advisory Committee, 2nd Floor Conference Room	6 8 a.m.-1 p.m. - PTO Bookstore, Lobby	7 6 p.m. - School Board Meeting, Library	8	9
12	13 1:30 & 6:30 p.m. - Grades 5-6 Winter Concert, Gym 6:30 p.m. - PTO Meeting, Library	14 1:30 & 6:30 p.m. - Grades 7-8 Winter Concert, Gym	15 Snow Date for Winter Concerts	16
19	20	21 6 p.m. - School Board Meeting, Library	22	23 VACATION
26	27	28	29	30
				

January

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2 Staff Development Day - No School for Students	3	4 6 p.m. - School Board Meeting, Library	5	6
9 3:40 p.m. - School Health Advisory Committee, 2nd Floor Conference Room	10 6:30 p.m. - PTO Meeting, Library	11	12	13
16 Staff Development Day - No School for Students	17 8 a.m.-1 p.m. - PTO Bookstore, Lobby	18 6 p.m. - School Board Meeting, Library	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			