



Our World Neighborhood Charter School
Elementary School
Kindergarten to Grade 5
36-12 35th Avenue
Astoria, NY 11106

Middle School
Grade 6 to Grade 8
31-20 37th Street
Astoria, NY 11103

December 17, 2009

Dear OWN Families:

Next week we will begin our December holidays. It is a time for rest, fun, and most importantly for spending time with our friends and family. Let me take a moment to wish you all a pleasant and enjoyable time and that the coming New Year will bring you the hope and realization of better things.

The OWN community has continued to experience and celebrate many wonderful accomplishments. In November and December, we had Parent-Teacher Conferences, the Gr. 6-8 Awards Assembly, the Fall Harvest Dance, and the spectacular OWN Variety Show. We saw families engaged in working with the school to ensure that each student is achieving at high levels, we saw students, faculty, and parents singing, dancing, and having fun together, and we had a great time doing it.

However, as we continue to enjoy our school, we are faced with many uncertainties. Last year, OWN did not receive an expected increase in funding from New York State and the City. Instead, there was a freeze on our funding. However, the rents went up, the cost of heating and cooling increased, the cost of health insurance for our staff increased over 15%, and OWN had to find a way to continue to provide excellent learning opportunities for all its students. The state assembly attempted to return some of the funds that they had taken away from OWN, approximately \$350,000. *OWN has not seen those funds and the fact is that we are likely not to get the money.*

Why do you need to know this? Because the same forces that aligned to put pressure on our state assembly people to deny funding increases to charter schools are ready to do the same again and our children cannot afford it. OWN cannot continue to operate and serve our students if we are faced with another funding cut. There are still many people who would like to see all charter schools closed down, and the quickest and easiest way to make it happen is to make it impossible for the schools to financially operate.

What can we do? We must send a strong message to our elected officials demonstrating our support for charter schools. I want to take at least **100 OWN parents/guardians to Albany on February 2, 2010**, in a show of solidarity for our children, our school, all charter schools, and education. This trip will be free, so if you are interested you must reach out to me as soon as possible, and also attend a workshop on Saturday, January 16, 2010 @ 10 a.m. where we will plan and learn how to engage with our legislators in Albany so that we can let the politicians know that we are concerned about the education of our 700 children. Let us show our strength. We cannot survive with more funding cuts.

Respectfully,

Brian Ferguson
Executive Director & Principal

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www.owncs.org

January 2010 UPCOMING EVENTS

Pillar—Truth

Monday, Jan. 4	K-8 School re-opens
Wednesday, Jan. 6	PTO Night Meeting @ 7pm Middle School
Friday, Jan. 8	PTO Day Meeting @ 8am Elementary School
Tuesday, Jan. 12	Gr. 6 (Sec 603 & 604) Field Trip to Museum of Chinese in America
Thursday, Jan. 14	Gr. 3 Family Potluck Dinner @ 6 p.m. Gr. 5 Parents' Mtg.—Middle School Information Session @ 6:30pm
Saturday, Jan. 16	Parents and Staff Advocacy Day Workshops @ 10 a.m. Elementary School
Monday, Jan. 18	No School—Dr. Martin Luther King's Birthday
Wednesday, Jan. 21	February 2010 Parents' Letter sent home
Saturday, Jan. 23	K-8 Admissions Open House for prospective new students
Tuesday, Jan. 26	Board of Trustees Meeting @ 7pm Elementary School
Wednesday, Jan. 27	Gr. 7-8 Semester Exams K-5 Admissions Open House for prospective new students @ 1pm
Thursday, Jan. 28	Gr. 7-8 Semester Exams
Friday, Jan. 29	Quarter II ends Gr. 1 Field Trip to NY Hall of Science
Tuesday, Feb. 2	Advocacy Day—OWN Parents Visit Albany
Wednesday, Feb. 3	PTO Night Meeting @ 7 p.m. Middle School
Friday, Feb. 5	PTO Day Meeting @ 8am Elementary School <i>K-7 Re-enrollment forms for 2010-2011 due for all students planning to return to OWN for September 2010</i>
Wednesday, Feb. 10	Gr. 6-8 Awards Assembly @ 8:15a.m.
Thursday, Feb. 11	K-5 Quarter II Report Cards mailed home Black History Month Celebration @ 6:30 p.m. Middle School Gym
Friday, Feb. 12	Gr. 2-5 Jump Rope for Heart