

# GREENBURGH CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7

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## Richard J Bailey School

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## Josephine N. Moffett, Ed D

Superintendent of Schools  
**Marguerite Demers Jones**  
Principal  
**Panaiota V. Constantine**  
Assistant Principal

October 29, 2006

Dear R.J. Bailey Families,

The Center for Disease Control reports that, **“Physical inactivity, poor eating habits, and tobacco use are primary causes of the chronic diseases- such as heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes- that are the leading causes of death in our nation. These risk behaviors are typically established in childhood and adolescence, and the physiological processes that lead to chronic diseases also can start in youth.”**

We know that more children are overweight than ever before and that documented cases of childhood diabetes and asthma are also on the rise. In response to these and other serious medical concerns and the Project SAVE recommendations, our Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Hasna Muhammad, presented a comprehensive “Health and Wellness Plan” to the Greenburgh Central 7 School Board at the September meeting. The plan calls for schools to be proactive in establishing programs that will teach students information and practices that will establish lifelong wellness.

At RJ Bailey we are highly conscious of the need to teach the importance of good nutrition and physical fitness, and we have embarked on several new initiatives. We are working hard to create opportunities for our children to experience and practice healthy choices and form healthy habits. First of all, we have established a school-based Wellness Committee composed of the following members:

- Mr Quincy Wright, Coordinator, Teacher
- Mrs Rosa Albert, Parent
- Mrs Annie Thigpen, Parent, Library Staff
- Mr David Vandiver, PE Teacher
- Mr Vinny DeMaria, PE Teacher
- Mrs Martha Baratta, School Nurse
- Mrs Cheryl Ferrara, School Social Worker
- Mrs Irene Alves, Teacher
- Mr David Propp- Enrichment Teacher
- Ms Toby Miller- Director of FIT KIDS, Westchester Department of Health
- Ms Gayle Binney, Manager, The Dannon Company
- Ms Susan Merims, Food service Consultant
- Ms. Penny Constantine, Assistant Principal
- Ms Marguerite Jones, Principal

The Wellness Committee meets the first Monday of every month at 8:20am. The next meeting is November 6<sup>th</sup>. You are invited to participate! To see RJ Bailey students in action go to <http://www.westchestergov.com/health/fitkids.htm> scroll down to “Fit Kids in the Schools.”

Our school-wide initiative was kicked-off with **WELLNESS DAY** at Bear Mountain State Park. The entire school relocated to the state park where our physical education teachers Mr. Vandiver and Mr. DeMaria implemented a unit on exercise, fitness and sports. The full RJ Bailey faculty helped.



As part of our new Wellness initiative, RJ Bailey has instituted “Wellness Wednesdays.” The day begins with a music and exercise program led by Mr. Vandiver and broadcasted over the school’s public address system. During recess the students walk the track to music. Enthusiasm abounds!



The PE Department has also instituted a new intermural grade level competition in several sports. The Westchester County FIT KIDS organization provided us with a full class set of pedometers (140) which can track the mileage each student performs, and the gym classes are alive with music and activities. In the following pictures, students try jumping rope for 3 straight minutes, not an easy task until you build up endurance!



As we work to constantly improve our school climate and create an even better atmosphere of academic excellence and social responsibility at RJ Bailey, we have adopted the motto, **I LOVE THIS SCHOOL!** All too often the media pound the message that kids hate school. We know that school should be a place where children love to go. Children should be excited about learning and about school activities that tap and develop their special talents and abilities.

- ✚ **Dance:** As we implement the rigorous IB academic program and prepare for state assessments, we also emphasize the importance of the arts. The number 1 request made by students last year was to have a talent show, and the majority of students wanted to dance. In Greenburgh we have a proud connection to dance and performance. With the assistance of Mrs. Miriam Bernabei, we have established a new after school dance program for RJ Bailey students with instructor Angela Reid. Traditional technique will evolve into hip-hop and African styles as the year progresses. The girls' class is Tuesday and the boys' class is Thursday. Eventually, the classes will merge as skills build.
- ✚ **Service Learning:** Sixth grade teacher, Mrs. Lisa Russell, brought a wonderful program to our attention. The Books of Hope program partners with schools to have students create handmade books for children in Uganda and India who have suffered significant hardship. The organization provides shipping to these locations. You can read more about it at [www.thememoryproject.org](http://www.thememoryproject.org). We will begin this project in November.
- ✚ **The Hartsdale Rotary:** Last month 4<sup>th</sup> graders were asked to write what ways they can perform community service. Members of the Hartsdale Rotary presented at a grade level assembly and presented each 4th grader with a dictionary to take home. Outstanding essays of a few students were shared. Congratulations to Fabio Amendola, Rashad Baker, Sofia Pardillo and Miguel Lanier.
- ✚ **The RJ Bailey "Good Student" Poster Contest winners are as follows:** Fourth Grade: 1<sup>st</sup> place Zachary Lapeter, 2<sup>nd</sup> place Kaltrina Celaj, 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Aaron Williams. Fifth Grade: 1<sup>st</sup> place Taylor Ha, 2<sup>nd</sup> place Eula Baek, 3<sup>rd</sup> place Najee Khan. 6<sup>th</sup> Grade: 1<sup>st</sup> place Niya Khan, 2<sup>nd</sup> place Jane Hwang, 3<sup>rd</sup> place Jasmine Miller. Student receiving "excellent contribution" are: Infiniti Bowie, Michelle Sanchez, Matthew Spagnoli, David Rivera, Skylar Brown, Angricia Valenza, Siliane Pierrette, Kevin Granados. There were 146 wonderful entries.
- ✚ **The RJ Bailey cabinet and BLC are working on proposals for a number of other projects,** including starting a Safety Patrol, Dannon Partnership activities and a formal unveiling of the dedication plaque naming our auditorium after our beloved music teacher Mitchell White. News on these items and more will be provided soon.
- ✚ **Halloween:** In keeping with the longtime RJ Bailey tradition, students will be permitted to bring Halloween costumes to school in a bag on Wednesday, October 31<sup>st</sup>. At 1:15pm they will have the opportunity to dress and participate in a parade in the school yard. Parents are welcome to attend.

Our next Principal's Coffee will be held at 9am on Friday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>. We have a great deal to be proud of in Greenburgh and, according to our motto, **WE LOVE THIS SCHOOL!** Please share this information and invite your neighbors and friends to join us.

Sincerely,

Marguerite Jones, Principal