

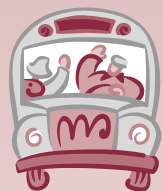
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south
colonie
central
schools

focus

Preparing World Class Citizens

January, 2006



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The 'Key' to news about the district

When it comes to school information, South Colonie's Key Communicators are the first ones to call

In today's hectic world it is often difficult to keep up with everything that's happening in your schools. So, who are you going to call?

Why not try one of South Colonie's Key Communicators? This network of people is "in the know" when it comes to school information and is faster than a speeding grapevine and more accurate than a runaway rumor.

"Never has there been a more effective group to help our district disseminate accurate information about our schools in a timely manner," said South Colonie Superintendent Michael Marcelle. "Communications is so important to everything we do here. We'd be lost without this vital group of individuals from our community."

South Colonie has had a Key Communicators network in service for several years but many people still don't know about it. Key Communicators are residents who
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An agent from Loomis, Fargo & Co. collect sacks of pennies donated this school year by students, staff and families from Roesseville and Veeder Elementary Schools to the Penny Harvest Program.

Schools collect more than a ton of pennies

Coins stack up to help the local community

Students, staff and families from Roesseville and Veeder Elementary Schools gave their pennies a purpose this year. The children spent four weeks collecting their unused coins for the Penny Harvest Program, an initiative sponsored by the New York State Service Learning Leadership Institute, local businesses and foundations.

Operated through Common Cents New York, a New York City based organization dedicated to encouraging youth to become community activists, Penny Harvest challenges students and families to work together to canvas their buildings and collect pennies. The pennies were placed in canvas money sacks and collected at the schools with armored trucks driven by the Loomis, Fargo & Co., one of the sponsoring companies.

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... Pennies

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Students from Veeder School each collected 52 sacks of pennies this fall and Roessleville students added another 35-plus sacks, the sacks weighing 30 pounds for a total of 2,610 pounds. Loomis, Fargo & Co. sent its trucks to Roessleville Elementary School (and later Veeder) to collect the coins. Joining South Colonie students and staff in the celebration were representatives from Penny Harvest and sponsoring agencies Key Bank, the Community Foundation for the Capital Region and the Community Foundation of Niskayuna.

An educational component

In addition to building good citizenship and character skills, Penny Harvest also provides an educational component for students. Schools who meet the "25 sack challenge" (both South Colonie schools surpassed that) earn a Philanthropy Roundtable. At the roundtable in January, student leaders from each school were to meet to decide how to use the money they raised from the Penny Harvest (usually \$1,000) to address needs in their community.

Using the Penny Harvest curriculum, teachers help guide the children philanthropists through the challenging tasks of assessing and mapping their community and its needs and resources; agreeing how to prioritize those needs; visiting and evaluating organizations that address those needs, issuing Requests For Proposals, using the Internet, making phone calls and using other means of research; and finally, making the tough decisions about how to best use their \$1,000 to make a difference.

Why do our K.C. serve?

• **Maureen Lee, 5th grade teacher, Lisha Kill Middle School**

"As a teacher I feel it is extremely important to stay informed on all levels in my school district. I have a keen interest in academic issues and want to be able to fill in any gaps of knowledge about our philosophy as a district to our parents and my students."

• **Joan Sheehan, retired South Colonie teacher and district resident**

"I have always been a positive supporter of the district and being a Key Communicator strengthens that support. By being kept informed about related business, which often includes educational opportunities, budget issues and services for both students and residents, I can answer questions that might arise"

• **Arnold and Shirley Hamm, South Colonie community residents**

"As parents of three South Colonie graduates, we feel that being part of the Key Communicators group is a great way to build support and understanding in our schools."

• **Mary Brizzell, Colonie Town Supervisor**

"I believe that being a Key Communicator is an important role in my position as Town Supervisor. It's not only a more personal communications method but it keeps me informed and connected with our schools and keeps the lines of communications open amongst residents, parents, town government and the district."

• **Susan Peak, former PTA officer, parent and district resident**

"As a 23-year resident of the district, I have been involved as a Key Communicator since its inception. I believe now, as I did then, that clear and sincere communication is vital to any kind of success."

• **Frances Zumbolo, South Colonie parent**

"I think the Key Communicators program is very important because it's a non-threatening way for parents to ask questions, ease their minds on sensitive issues and get important information that they might not otherwise receive."

Meet Our Key Communicators

Your clip and save phone numbers and email addresses ...

Nina Amadon	458-7038	brokernina@yahoo.com
Mary Brizzell	783-2728	brizzellm@colonie.org
Bonni Bucci	459-7493	
Christine Cardone	869-4404	cgcardone@aol.com
Calvin Francisco	869-7682	
Arnold & Shirley Hamm	869-3020	ahamm@nycap.rr.com
Maureen Lee	869-6181	
Virginia MacPhee	783-9950	
Doris Mallory	438-6841	
Susan Peak	869-6218	Sue.peak@mildred-elley.edu
Catherine Romano	459-3276	
Ron & Kathy Schubin	869-3077	
Joan Sheehan	459-5086	jcsoakwood@verizon.net
Jim Thompson	869-6811	
Peter Tunny	869-7404	PetKat@verizon.net
Frances Zumbolo	489-6734	franzu@nycap.rr.com



... Key Communicators

Continued from page 1

have a strong interest in our schools and who have volunteered their time to act as a liaison between the school district and the public. With a direct link to school officials, these people are more than willing to share information about the district with their friends, neighbors and anyone else whom they might interact with during the course of a day.

The Key Communicator Program also helps residents voice their concerns without having to present them in a formal setting and it helps the superintendent keep in touch with the needs of the community and address rumors before they become problems.

If someone has a question, concern or an idea, the Key Communicator has direct access to school officials by phone or email. There are also times when Key Communicators are asked to give advice and insights on issues facing the school district and having your feedback helps guide them in presenting opinions.

“Key Communicators, since they ARE the community, are a valuable asset to South Colonie administrators, teachers, staff and the Board of Education members,” Marcelle added. “Their input, because it comes from you, helps guide us in our decision making and mold the direction our schools take as they continue to strive for excellence.”

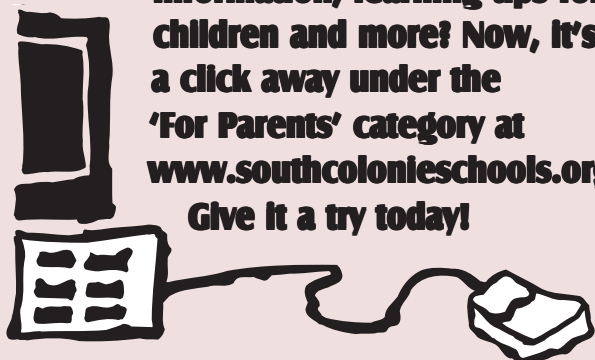
Residents are encouraged to call Key Communicators if they have a question or concern about the district. A list of names and phone numbers is provided here and on our web site at www.southcolonieschools.org. If you'd like to become a Key Communicator please contact the South Colonie District Office at 869-3576. Your input is important to us.

Where are you going to find:

Back issues of South Colonie's award-winning parent newsletters, information on today's learning standards, school closing

information, learning tips for your children and more? Now, it's only a click away under the 'For Parents' category at www.southcolonieschools.org.

Give It a try today!



Key Communicators

Some commonly asked questions

• What is the Key Communicator program all about?

The Key Communicators program is essentially a network of people who are well connected to both the schools and the community. The idea is to promote a continuing two-way exchange between Key Communicators and the schools.

• Why do we need Key Communicators in our district?

Developing one-on-one relationships is an effective means of communicating within the community. Key Communicators are there to help people know more about the school district and help the school district know more about what people think, feel and know. To gather this information, some people are just more comfortable talking to a friend or neighbor — the Key Communicator — than someone who works directly in the district.

• How does the Key Communicators network work?

Each Key Communicator is routinely kept informed of important school issues through periodic meetings, the district web site and phone and/or email messages from the South Colonie administration. Throughout the normal course of a day — soccer practice, band rehearsals or while chatting in the supermarket — Key Communicators are asked to share the information and then make the district aware of questions or concerns.

• Who can be a Key Communicator?

Parents, community members, school district employees and students can all sign up. To be a Key Communicator you must meet two simple criteria: you must be a district resident and you must want to become an active communications component for the South Colonie Central School District. It's that easy.

• If I decide to participate, how long will I be a Key Communicator?

As long as YOU wish. You choose when to subscribe and when to unsubscribe.

• What steps must I take to become a Key Communicator in the district?

It's very easy. Simply contact the District Office — 869-3576 —and we will take down your information and answer your questions.



Shaker Road celebrates Holidays Around the World

First graders at Shaker Road Elementary School celebrated their own holidays in America by learning about how others celebrate Holidays Around the World. The students researched information about various countries, made crafts from each country, and baked/cooked foods from each country. The celebration ended with parents visiting the first grade classrooms with "passports" to see what the students learned and to taste some of the "goodies."



The Lisha Kill Human Relations Club recently sponsored its annual Mix It Up Day. Fifth graders randomly selected numbers and were matched with a "new" friend they visited with in the cafeteria. The idea behind the exercise was to help teach tolerance to children as well as important social skills.

Michael Marcelle
Superintendent of Schools

Anthony DeBlois
Assistant Superintendent for Instruction

Peter Haessig
Assistant Superintendent/
Management Services

Beverly Miller
School Business Administrator

David Seaver
Director of Human Resources

Board of Education
James (Tim) Ryan, President
Paul Gordon, Vice President
Brian Casey
Robert Domenici
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Vernon Fonda
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Neil Johanning
John Monteiro

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