

# Focus

## Joel Barlow High School PTSA Newsletter



AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2007

### **PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

#### **Starting a new school year**

Welcome to all new and returning Barlow students, their parents and guardians! This is the first of many FOCUS newsletters we will be publishing this year.

As always, the PTSA would appreciate any suggestions for content of the newsletter. This is a way for *you* to keep informed, so let us know what works and what doesn't. Are we leaving something out that you think needs to be included here? We will consider all ideas within the limited space we have.

Our Executive Board still needs a Vice President and a Post-Prom Committee Chairperson. If you are interested, please contact me at [m2cgold@sbcglobal.net](mailto:m2cgold@sbcglobal.net) or Jill DeSalva at [J.Stryker23@aol.com](mailto:J.Stryker23@aol.com) (Volunteer Coordinator) to discuss the positions and their responsibilities.

Remember to mark your calendars for the Open House dates and our PTSA meetings, which are held on the second Wednesday of each month.

I hope you all had a great summer! Don't forget those summer math and writing packets. I am finally getting my kids to work on theirs!

I'll see you at the Open Houses.

Best regards,  
Melanie Goldstine  
*PTSA President*

### **FROM THE PRINCIPAL ...**

Hello, Easton and Redding Communities!

Being new to any organization can be a scary time for the newcomer. This is just as true of freshmen and older students who are coming from other towns or returning to our system from private schools as it is of incoming principals. All of us carry a certain amount of apprehension – Will the staff and students be friendly? Will I find my way around the building? Do I have the skills necessary to face the challenges? These are natural questions. As we head into the 2007-2008 school year, I invite us all to take a deep breath and look forward with optimism and excitement to a great school year.

One hallmark of the Region No. 9 school district is the strong sense of community and commitment to the students that one can observe in the student body, the faculty, and the support staff. The people of Joel Barlow take great pride in their Falcons. We believe that students learn best when they are at ease socially and challenged intellectually. This is one reason that we are working to personalize each student's experience. Although it's true that there are nearly 1,000 students who attend Joel Barlow, for any given family the student body consists of their own children and their circle of friends. Our goal is to promote personalized growth for every individual.

Students who are personally engaged in their learning are more likely to retain information over time, challenge themselves by reaching beyond their comfort levels, and develop habits that are aligned with 'wellness' and good decision-making. An influ-

ential study of what works in high schools, Breaking Ranks II, published by the Education Alliance at Brown University, has identified six needs that students must have fulfilled if they are to flourish. They include the following: voice, belonging, choice, freedom, imagination, and success. The Joel Barlow community values these attributes and promotes them both in the classroom and on the sports fields as well as in the hallways and the extra-curricular life of the school.

As we head into the Fall season, I invite all of our families and our students to engage in partnership with our teachers and staff as we strive to develop these and other valuable assets in our students. The best way a student can do so is by joining our school life beyond the classroom doors. Consider trying out for a sports team or the musical or joining a club or the yearbook. The best way for the adults who serve our students at home and in the building to do this is by opening lines of communication. Parents, you might find that communicating with a high school staff feels different or possibly a bit intimidating, but I encourage you to do so. I will be sharing the same message with the teachers.

I'm looking forward to a challenging and fun year of growth with our students.

Tom McMorran  
*Principal*

**THE FIRST MEETING OF THE  
2007-2008 PTSA  
WILL BE HELD ON  
SEPTEMBER 12, 2007  
IN THE  
CAFETERIA ANNEX ROOM  
AT JOEL BARLOW HIGH SCHOOL**

**PLEASE JOIN US!**

## **POST PROM SUCCESS AND REQUEST**

The "Licence to Thrill" (spelled as it's spelled in the movie!) Post Prom party at Barlow was a huge success, thanks to the energy, creativity and generosity of so many people!

Close to 400 students and guests entered through the glittering "Goldfinger" lobby to spend their après-prom hours choosing from a large selection of food amidst the bright fabrics, carpets and baskets of produce which surrounded the marketplace; playing lazer tag, blackjack and Dance Dance Revolution in the Casino Royale; sipping hot coffee and dipping strawberries in a chocolate fountain as they chatted in the Cuba Cuba Cafe; having their fortunes told in tapestry lined tents in the Moroccan Lobby; watching James Bond movies and munching on popcorn in the theatre lounge; even having their pictures taken or their caricatures drawn or (temporary!) tattoos applied, or vying for prizes at the Chinese auction and the cash tube —and it all took place within the walls of Joel Barlow High School! There were so many fun things to do in the safe, substance-free environment that many attendees stayed until the bitter end!

This party would not have taken place without the contributions of time, energy, funds, goods and services so cheerfully given by so many people in our community, and the Post Prom Committee would like to extend their grateful thanks to everyone who was kind enough to answer our calls for help. We could not have done it without every last one of you!!

Kristin Mudge  
*Chairman, 2007 Post Prom Committee*

**VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED  
FOR THE POST PROM COMMITTEE  
2007-2008**

**PLEASE KEEP OUR CHILDREN  
HAPPY AND SAFE AT THE END  
OF THE SCHOOL YEAR!**

**Contact:**

**Jill DeSalvo, [JStyker23@aol.com](mailto:JStyker23@aol.com)  
Melanie Goldstine, [m2cgold@sbcglobal.net](mailto:m2cgold@sbcglobal.net)**