

# superstar 11

## march calendar

# spring time!

the vernal equinox  
is march 20th.

- 2 | Mindfulness Workshop Annex 7pm
- 9 | Evening Roundtable w/Principal
- 9 | Executive Board Open Meeting 7pm
- 10 | South Mountain Variety Show
- 15 | General PTA Meeting 8:15am
- 26 | Midnight at the Oasis SM Auction
- apr 8 | Roundtable Meeting Annex

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### School hours:

#### Full Sessions K-5

#### South Mountain:

First Bell 8:05am

8:10am-2:40pm

4-hr Sessions

8:10am-12:10pm

#### Annex:

First Bell 7:55am

8:00am-2:30pm

4-hr Sessions

8:00am-12:00noon

#### south mountain

#### variety show

show 1: 6-7pm

show 2: 7:30-8:30pm

### SAVE our PLANET

st. patricks day  
march 17, 2011



Reduce your carbon footprint and go green! Please sign up for digital version of this Superstar newsletter!

Go to the website: [smsuperstars.com/newsletter](http://smsuperstars.com/newsletter)

### box tops:

Please keep bringing in those Box Tops!

**Yvette Holowczak**

[yvettewh@gmail.com](mailto:yvettewh@gmail.com)



daylight savings  
spring forward

almost spring!

## presidents column

Laura Reichgut & Amy Porman, PTA Co-Presidents

As we write this article, there is still a great deal of snow on the ground and we are anxiously waiting to see what the next forecasted storm will bring. We hope by the time you are reading this, it is much warmer and the streets and sidewalks are finally clear again!

This winter the weather brought many challenges and we want to acknowledge and express our deep appreciation to the members of the South Mountain community who remained calm and cooperative and (mostly) cheerful throughout. Many mornings we arrived at school to find Principal Lehn, staff, teachers, and parents shoveling and salting and shoveling and salting and shoveling...we are all very grateful to everyone who helped in any way!

And yet despite the conditions outside, there were special events to enjoy in January and February. The Family Roller Skating Night was a lot of fun and many thanks to Laura Griffin and Felicia Hill for coordinating the evening. We also want to thank David Crutcher, Felicia Hill and Jen Glass for their hours of work organizing the Variety Show, and without them we would not have been able to carry on this tradition at South Mountain. We know all of the students involved had a wonderful time preparing and rehearsing, and we hope that all of the volunteers know how much they were appreciated.

We also had the opportunity to attend a variety of meetings and programs. Thanks to Patricia Canning and Wendy Miller for arranging the Midtown Direct presentation on Nutrition. After such a challenging winter it has been wonderful that South Mountain Social Work Intern, Patience Moore has been able to bring the "Mindfulness" approach into our school. We hope that you are able to attend one of the "Mindful Parenting" workshops led by Patience Moore. We would like to thank Russell Kaplan for bringing Charlotte Blake Alston to our school. Even if you weren't able to attend the evening performance for families, Ms. Alston presented assemblies to all of the children during the school day as well.

And now that we are all finally beginning to thaw, we can look forward to the many activities in March! As you know, Principal Lehn has been conducting **Morning Roundtable Meetings**, open discussions with parents, throughout this year. She has also offered to hold an Evening Roundtable on Wednesday, March 9th, from 6 to 7 pm. And anyone who wishes to stay for the PTA Executive Board Meeting immediately following is welcome to join us! We hope this will be the first of many Open Board Meetings at South Mountain.

You may remember that one of the goals of The PTA has been to eliminate as much paper waste as possible. We just want to remind you that most of our communications will be through the website and e-blasts. You should be receiving this communication on a regular basis (usually about one email per week). If you are not receiving these emails please let us know so that we can make sure your contact information is updated right away.

(continued on next column)

On the occasions that we do need to send paper copies home, please note that we are trying to distribute one per family (not student), so even if you have multiple children at South Mountain, we are making every effort to send home only one hard copy.

And on the topic of the Executive Board, we want to thank the Nominating Committee helping to identify and recruit future Board Members and volunteers. If you have any interest in learning more about how to become involved, please make sure to reach out to any of them for information.

And finally, we look forward to seeing many of you on **March 26th** at The Women's Club for **Midnight at the Oasis**. This bi-annual auction evening is a great way for the adults of South Mountain to come out and support their school and socialize with other members of the community. The auction proceeds provide the funding for much of the PTA programming and school enhancements. This year we are especially focused on the auditorium improvements, and if the auction is as successful as it has been in previous years we will be able to purchase new lighting for that space.

*Please note: ticket sales have begun, space is limited, and we always sell out. We hope that whether you attend or not you will consider buying a raffle ticket or two. You never know...you just may win something while supporting your child's school at the same time!!*

Laura & Amy



## spring is near!

## principal's message

Tina Lehn, Principal

The weather this winter has been particularly challenging and has tested our patience in many ways. You have dealt with problems with parking, icy sidewalks, and limited access on pathways into both buildings. Thank you all for your patience. Spring will be especially welcomed this year.

Our Student Council has been busy during the last few months. They have organized some fundraisers, reached out to the larger community to help in some very meaningful ways, and most recently, are planning our student run school newspaper. Already we have a title, an editorial board, and two parent advisors and they are on their way to publishing the first edition.

Often we think about schools as places where children learn and where teachers teach. But one of our priorities in South Mountain is making time for our teachers to participate in learning communities. These learning communities are small groups of teachers who come together after school hours on a regular basis to reflect on their classroom practices, collaborate with peers, and learn together what best practice looks like. Currently, we have some wonderful teacher — led groups that meet three times a month, learning together about such topics as: *How to Individualize Math Instruction; Analyzing Student Data to Drive Instruction; Responsive Classroom Techniques; Push-in Language Arts Enrichment in the Upper Grades;* and several in depth professional book studies. As varied as these learning communities are, there is a common thread that runs through each one: a shared commitment to make a difference in the lives of every child in our school and to search for effective ways to do this.

Our teachers have chosen which learning community they would like to be a part of, often initiating the focus and seeking out others who would like to learn more about this subject. At the moment, several groups are preparing to share what they have learned during the first half of the year with the rest of our staff. In this way, they will share their learning with me and with each other. I am eagerly anticipating these meetings! The teachers are already thinking about what they want to learn more about next. It has been a privilege for Mrs. Samuels and me to sit in on these meetings and to learn from our teachers. Your children are benefiting from this collaborative and reflective work.

Tina

General PTA Meeting  
Tuesday, March 15th  
8:15am

## School In Action

Join us for presentations  
of special programs  
at South Mountain

## contact info:

## South Mountain PTA Executive Board

## Co-Presidents

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## Standing Committee Chairs:

**Kanani Briggs** *South Mountain Cares*  
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**Marilyn Lehren** *Special Ed Liason*  
marilynlehren@hotmail.com

**Russell Kaplan** *Cultural Arts*  
Russell@CommuniKidsNJ.com

**Eileen Trinity** *SMILE Coordinator*  
jcet110198@aol.com

March

15

**happy march!****fundraising**

Shana Teitelbaum & Janet Christmann, Fundraising VP Co-Chairs

Happy March everyone! Hopefully you're all surviving this snowy winter. Spring is right around the corner.

South Mountain's biannual Auction, "**Midnight at the Oasis**", is on March 26th from 7pm to midnight at the Maplewood Women's Club. Hope you've already booked those babysitters because it's going to be a festive night! There will be tasty food and drinks along with dancing and amazing raffle prizes. In addition, there are several silent auction items so come prepared to support your school and have a blast! Thanks to Laura Brown-Mixon and Niv Miyasato, heads of the Decorations Committee, for all their creative efforts!

Auction tickets are available for \$60 per person but are limited so please send in your ticket requests and payment as soon as you can. Thank you to Jennie Tinkelman and Pearl Louie for doing a great job managing ticket sales. Thank you, also, to Tracy Guth Spangler and Nancy Cohen for all your hard work to date on the Auction program.

We are very appreciative to all who donated to the Class Basket Raffle Prizes and to Karen Wolf, Jill Abramson and Julie Fuhrman for spearheading this portion of the Auction. The Class Basket Raffle & Special Teacher Raffle Ticket Pre-Purchase Form has been sent out with a return deadline of March 18th. If you cannot attend the Auction but would like a chance to win these great prizes, now's your chance! Thank you to Kanani Briggs and Estela Valdez for all your coordination efforts!

All auction donations are still welcome — tickets to a show, services of any kind, new, unwrapped merchandise, gift certificates, etc. Contact Maria Witt (mariagwitt@yahoo.com) or Brenda Berger (brenda@hankypanky.com) and let them know if you have a donation to contribute. Thanks to all of you in advance, as well as a big shout out to Maria and Brenda for such a great job with the solicitation process!

Don't forget to bring those Juice Pouches and Box Tops to school. Thank you to Yvette Holowczak, Julia Cerny, Stacy Maebert and Katherine Foley for your efforts on our school's behalf.

*Shana & Janet*

The Women's Club of Maplewood  
60 Woodland Place  
Maplewood, NJ

South Mountain's biannual Auction  
**Midnight at the Oasis** is on  
March 26th from 7pm to midnight.

Join us for a themed evening of cocktails, dinner, dancing and a great selection of raffle prizes to win and auction items to bid on.

Tickets: \$50 per person if purchased by 2/18; \$60 per person after 2/18.

*Please note that space is limited and tickets sell out quickly so don't delay.*

Through March 1st, tickets are available to the South Mountain School Community only. If tickets are still available after March 1st, guests are welcome.



03/11

**variety show**

**South Mountain Variety Show  
Rescheduled for March 10th**

**Upcoming Rehearsal Schedule:**

**Final Rehearsal** — March 7th: Show 1 (2:40-4:00pm); Show 2 (4:15-5:30pm)

**Show Times: March 10th**

- Show 1: will be held from 6:00-7:00pm  
*Performers should arrive by 5:30pm and meet in the cafeteria.*
- Show 2: will be held from 7:30-8:30pm  
*Performers should arrive by 7pm and meet in the cafeteria.*

**it's here!**

**Midnight  
at the Oasis**

hope to see you at  
our event on March 26th  
at The Women's Club!



## spring is around the corner!

### administration + communications

Marilyn Wright & Julie Saydah, Administration VP Co-Chairs  
Priscilla Goldman & Thomas Mixon, Communications VP Co-Chairs

Hello, South Mountain Community!! Let's hope that Spring is around the corner. We could all use a little sun on our faces and flowers under our feet. We hope you are having a great year.

By now everyone who placed an order for the PTA Directory should have received it. If you have not, please contact Julie Saydah or Marilyn Wright. We also hope that you are taking advantage of our wonderful school website: [www.smsuperstars.com](http://www.smsuperstars.com). This is a wonderful way to learn about your school and what's happening on a daily basis. Our communications team works incredibly hard to make sure that our SM community has the ability to access the most up to the minute school information. Take a look, we know you'll love it!

The Administration and Communications teams are happy to report that work has begun on streamlining the First Day Packet registration process! For those of you who have been in the school for a few years and have multiple children, you will be very happy. Please keep an eye out for more updates on this topic. If we all work together we can make South Mountain a "greener" school!

*Marilyn, Julie, Priscilla & Tom*



## hello everyone!

### south mountain cares

Kanani Briggs, South Mountain Cares Committee Chair

*Hello everyone,*

*So happy to be moving out of those cold and snowy winter months!  
We have some great volunteering opportunities for families coming up in March and April:*

#### **March 7th and March 10th**

Families are needed to cook and share a meal with the families from the Interfaith Hospitality Network. Timing is from 6-8:30 pm at Our Lady of Sorrows in South Orange. We had such positive feedback from the IHN guests and our volunteers that participated last October.

#### **April 20th**

If you are around during the Spring Break, we have been invited to staff the Interfaith Food Pantry of the Oranges in East Orange. We will need about 10-12 volunteers (school age children are welcome) to assist in packing bags of food to hand out to those in need.

If you are interested in either of the above volunteer activities or have questions, please contact Kanani Briggs, [skbriggs1@gmail.com](mailto:skbriggs1@gmail.com).

*Kanani*



## after school superstars

### volunteers wanted!

*Spring is almost here and we need your help! The After School Superstars needs parents to help coordinate the spring session. We want to offer this enrichment program once again, but cannot do so without your support. Help us keep After School Superstars at South Mountain and contact [pta@smsuperstars.com](mailto:pta@smsuperstars.com) to volunteer.*



***The LAST fun Friday night of the year is coming March 18th at 6:15pm and it is free! Join us for pizza, a movie and a great time. We are hoping that every 5th grader will attend the last of these special events.***

Also, test your knowledge of math, English, social studies and science on April 8th. The alumni of South Mountain Elementary School have challenged the 5th grade to a game of "Are You Smarter than a 5th Grader?" It promises to be a really fun night — look for more details coming soon.

slow start...

## cultural arts corner

Russell Kaplan, Cultural Arts VP Chair

By all accounts, this year's Cultural Arts calendar started off slowly, but almost as if planned, as soon as the weather made going outside challenging, our arts programming kicked in to inject a steady stream of curricular supportive creative energy into our schools.

I trust that our students have shared much of what they have experienced, but here is a quick recap of our winter events:

In December, every one of our students was instrumental in the discovery and creation of unique South Mountain tribal rhythms as the artists of Drum Cafe introduced us to the cross cultural art of drumming.

In January, our 5th grade students were bussed into New York City to attend the Metropolitan Opera's magical production of Mozart's The Magic Flute. This production, conceived and directed by The Lion King and Spiderman's Julie Taymor, provided a mind-stretching opportunity for our children to enjoy a classical art form that few had ever experienced. This trip was so well received, by students and teachers alike, that we hope to make this type of trip an annual event.

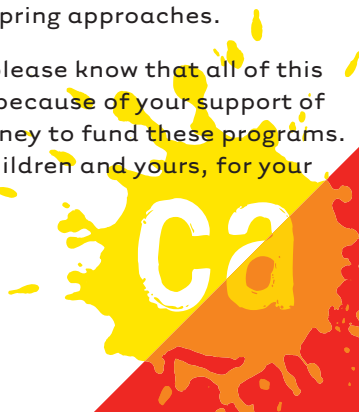
Later in January, our second graders enjoyed being able to revisit the past when they traveled up to the Annex to join our K-1 students for a music filled program by Billy B, the science song-and-dance man. Billy B., who has performed all over the country, including at the White House, presented his Singing Tree program to much laughter and applause. This program, which focused on the ecological import of trees, taught our kids, among other things, how a tree trades its 'bad breath' (oxygen) for our 'bad breath' (carbon dioxide) to create the most elemental symbiotic relationship on earth.

Our final program of the winter was a pair of presentations by Charlotte Blake Alston. A nationally renowned story teller, in the African folk-tale tradition, Ms. Alston provided us parents with the rare opportunity to experience first hand the arts programming that we are bringing to our students. Her Wednesday evening program for parents and students was a perfect springboard for dinner table discussion.

As winter turns to spring, we have two final cultural arts supported programs on the horizon. The first is a pair of assemblies and hands on workshops that will explore the ecological role of honeybees. The second is a much anticipated artist in residency program for our 4th grade students. We are very excited about this program and look forward to sharing much more information with you as Spring approaches.

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, please know that all of this wonderful arts programming is only possible because of your support of the PTA. We receive absolutely no district money to fund these programs. So once again I thank you, on behalf of my children and yours, for your belief in the importance of arts in education.

Russell



## nominations



for 2011/2012

### The 2011 Nominating Committee has been formed!

Our members are:

**Patricia Canning**  
**Susan Jennings**  
**Janet Christmann**  
**Jennifer Lehrman**  
**James Davis**  
**Gretchen Sekel**  
**Tracy Guth Spangler**  
**Dawn Stith**

We currently have four positions that need to be filled for the 2011/2012 PTA Board:

**Administration VP**  
**Programming VP**  
**Fundraising VP**  
**Recording Secretary**

If you are interested in nominating yourself or someone else for one of the above positions (or if you have ANY questions), please contact Janet Christmann (janetc973@gmail.com) or Patricia Canning (patmatcan@yahoo.com) by March 11th. The Nominating Committee will present the slate and we will take nominations from the floor at the March 15th PTA meeting.

★★★ Please note: The Nominating Committee does not have the final vote. The South Mountain community will vote on the slate of nominations at the April 27th general PTA meeting. ★★★

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## get your forms in!

## programming

Patricia Canning & Wendy Miller, Programming VP Co-Chairs

**Midtown Direct Series***Creating a Healthy Eating Environment for your Family*

Thanks to those of you who joined us for our January Midtown Direct meeting. Nutritionist Susan Schachter shared some tips with us about reading labels and thinking about healthier options to serve to our families. Her mantra: *no high fructose sugar, no hydrogenated fats and eat "real" food resonated with many of us.* Thanks so much to Susan for sharing her 20+ years of professional experience with us. Please feel free to contact Susan at [schachternutrition@yahoo.com](mailto:schachternutrition@yahoo.com) if you have any questions or would like further information. Also, please contact us if you would like copies of the handouts.

**Roller Skating Family Night**

We caught a snow-free evening in January and had a great time skating at our annual Roller Skating Family Party. We saw many of you connecting with friends, on and off the rink, and the kids are really becoming great skaters! Thanks so much to Felicia Hill and Laura Griffin for organizing this event and making it a wonderful evening!

As we think towards the warm weather and swimsuits, we continue to think about eating well, de-stressing and becoming healthier. In support of this, please join us for some of our upcoming meetings:

**Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Practices**

Wednesday, March 2, 7-9pm

Patience Moore, a social work intern at South Mountain will impart her knowledge of finding ease through simple, accessible practices that we can integrate into our busy schedules. Please wear comfortable clothes and bring a yoga mat for these sessions.

**Upcoming Dates:**

March 15: **General PTA meeting** – Presentation of the Slate for the PTA Executive Board Of 2011-2012.

As always, we welcome your feedback about any of the PTA sponsored events. Please contact us at: [patmatcan@yahoo.com](mailto:patmatcan@yahoo.com) or [wemiller5@aol.com](mailto:wemiller5@aol.com). Also, please let us know if you would like to volunteer to help with any of the upcoming events.



*Patricia & Wendy*



**EARTH HOUR**  
MARCH 26, 2011

## ADVERTISE!

We have made changes to the advertising section of the Superstar newsletter. *The PTA welcomes personal or business ADs from South Mountain families and South Mountain Alumni only.* Space is limited, so AD submission is on a first come basis. AD deadline is the 15th of the month for placement in the next month's issue (*this will give us enough time to track down payments*).

**For larger display ADs, please inquire. Submissions by email only.**

Printed and digital PDF versions will be in color. Subject to change.

**For advertising information, including any requests for the 2010/2011 Rate Card, please contact by email:**

**Thomas Mixon**

[thomas\\_mixon@nysp.uscourts.gov](mailto:thomas_mixon@nysp.uscourts.gov)

All checks should be made payable to:  
**SOUTH MOUNTAIN PTA**

Drop payment off in the PTA mailbox, communications folder, located in the school office at South Mountain.

**classifieds:**

**Deadline:** the 15th of the prior month when you wish your AD to appear. Subject to availability.

*South Mountain Families ONLY!*

**credits:**

**Design, Production, Paper donated by** William Kochi  
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**Printing by** *KODE Press*

**Evening Roundtable**

Wednesday  
March 9th, 6-7pm  
South Mountain

March

9

**NEW!**

Please join us for our Evening Roundtable with Principal Lehn on Wednesday, March 9th, from 6 to 7pm. Anyone who wishes to stay for the PTA Executive Board Meeting immediately following is welcome to join us! We hope this will be the first of many Open Board Meetings at South Mountain.

evening  
round  
table