



# SEPTA

## Brick Township Special Education PTA

SEPTA Newsletter  
Winter 2005

### President's Message

#### SEPTA

#### Officers for 2005/2006

President - Diana Gerlach

1st VP—Dee Beringer

2nd VP—Nichol Manatakis

Recording Secretary—Denise

Ragozzino

Correspondence Secretary —

Kim Vaccaro

Treasurer—Corey Dalton

PTA Advisor—Candy Fredericks

#### Meeting Schedule 2006

Held at the EEC at 7:30pm

Jan 23

March 27          April 24

May 29            June 12

#### Membership Information:

Contact: Janet Bixenman at

732-477-4845

Membership Fee is \$6.00

SEPTA Website: [www.bricksepta.org](http://www.bricksepta.org)

**Board of Education Meeting Schedule** for 2006 is as follows:

2006: Jan 12 (Pre-agenda), Jan 19, Feb 2 (Pre-agenda), Feb 9, March 2, March 9, April 6 (Pre-agenda), April 18, April 20 and May 4.

Bd of Ed meetings are open to the public. Please attend, if you are available. We encourage parent representation. For more information check the Brick Schools Website: <http://bricktsd.schoolwires.com>

Hello everyone! The school year is well under way and the holidays are upon us. SEPTA has been busy hosting guest speakers at our meetings as well as activities for our children. At our September meeting, we honored the children whose artwork was chosen for our calendar contest. In October we hosted our first family event; a Halloween Carnival which was a great success. Our October meeting brought guest speaker, John Mercurio, Health & Wellness Consultant to discuss stress management. Sarah Logan from the ARC of Monmouth came to our November meeting to give an overview of IEP's. We have another activity planned for the children in January as well as more guest speakers lined up for our meetings in 2006.

SEPTA now has a fantastic website which is being handled by one of our very talented parents. I encourage you to check out the website frequently as we are constantly adding links to organizations as well as information on upcoming workshops and seminars.

I would like to take the opportunity to highlight two special children in our district. Michael Porter, age 5, was recently photographed by Toys 'R Us and is featured in their "Differently Abled" catalog. This catalog is a wonderful resource and can be shared with family members and friends who may not be sure as to what is an appropriate gift. You can view Michael's photograph by picking up the catalog at Toys 'R Us or visit their website at [www.toysrus.com](http://www.toysrus.com) and clicking on the link for "Differently Abled" and turning to page 46. Michael is the little guy smiling with the Spiderman truck!

Our other featured child is, Bailey Pampalone, age 6. Bailey was chosen as one of the children to be featured in print ads for COSAC's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. To learn more about COSAC, visit them at their website at [www.njcosac.org](http://www.njcosac.org). Congratulations to both of these wonderful and inspiring students!

I would like to wish everyone a happy and healthy holiday season and look forward to seeing you in the New Year!

Warm regards,  
Diana Gerlach

**New Jersey PTA**— Diana Gerlach, Candy Fredericks, Dee Beringer, Jeanette Smith and Brenda Calderone attended the NJPTA Convention on November 18th in East Brunswick. Candy worked at Convention registration all day. Diana, Dee, Jeanette and Brenda attended "The Federal Role in Education" presented by Valarie Smith, Secretary's Regional Representative, US Department of Education. Next Diana and Dee attended "A World of Difference: Building Awareness and Compassion for Families with Disabilities" workshop presented by Tracy Marmorato, Special Needs Awareness Advocate, Park Lake School PTA. Jeanette and Brenda attended "Not for Presidents Only" workshop presented by Mary Scout, Registered Parliamentarian. The workshops were very informative and will be instrumental to the Brick Special Education PTA as we strive to become more knowledgeable in areas of education and legislation. Later that day, all attended the NJPTA Awards Banquet where Brick SEPTA received the award for Outstanding Achievement in Advocacy. It was not only an informative day but all agreed it was exciting and fun as well.

### **Ways & Means - Annette Arthur/Chairperson**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Delicious Orchards pie sale was a smashing success again this year and a huge thank you goes out to all families who supported SEPTA by purchasing pies. We still have a limited amount of SEPTA calendars available at \$10.00 each. The calendars featuring our children's art-work would make unique holiday gifts for family and friends. A sample calendar may be seen on our website at [bricksepta.org](http://bricksepta.org). We will now be concentrating our efforts on our First Annual Gift Auction which is to be held in the spring of 2006. Additional information regarding this upcoming event will be arriving in your children's backpacks. We are currently looking for SEPTA members to assist the gift auction committee as well as any donations you may wish to contribute. Please contact Annette Arthur at (732)701-1343 or email [psalmon@comcast.net](mailto:psalmon@comcast.net) to purchase a SEPTA calendar or if you are interested in helping with the gift auction. Happy Holidays!

### **Programs/Cultural Arts—Melanie McGackin/Chairperson**

Our first program this year was our Halloween Carnival and it turned out to be a huge success!! The children really seemed to enjoy themselves and of course had their fill of sweets, activities, and fun! A special thanks to everyone who volunteered their time, and to those whose personal contributions made the party a little more special for all. Flyers went out and a great response was received for the Santa Letter Program. Our special friend in the North Pole had a wonderful time writing personalized Santa letters to his "good list" children of Brick. Don't forget to sprinkle your reindeer food out on Christmas Eve!! We are planning an ice-cream social and magic show starring Magician Bruce Bray. Please don't miss it! Flyers with details will be sent home in backpacks, and we will also list the information on our PTA website. If anyone would like to hear a lecture on a specific topic of interest regarding special education services, please contact me at [bricksepta@aol.com](mailto:bricksepta@aol.com). I am still in the process of setting up speakers for the rest of the year. Have a safe and happy holiday!

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## Services for Children with Special Needs

**Brick Special Services**-732-785-3080

**Challenger/Brick Recreation** - 732-262-1165

**POAC** - Parents of Autistic Children - 732-888-1000

### New Programs:

**Hands 4 Talking:** Sign Lang. Interpreters/instructors have started a sign-story time at local libraries will offer a parent workshop to learn sign language if there are enough parents interested. If you are interested Please call: Lisa A. Glassford at (732)458-5813 or Judy Halleata at (732) 905-5406

**Georgian Court College** is now offering tutoring on Tuesdays and Thursdays to students with disabilities. Contact: Mary Siringo @ 732-987-2716

**DDD** - Division of Developmental Disabilities - 609-943-5960

**COSAC** - 1-800-4Autism

**Family Support Center of NJ** - 1-800-FSC-NJ10

**Special Thanks:** SEPTA would like to give a special thank you to our guest speakers for October and November. John Mercurio, Health and Wellness Consultant and Sarah Logan from ARC of Monmouth.

## What's happening in Special Education - From Trenton and Washington D.C.

### The NJ Board of Education is considering

changes to the state special education code in response to changes in the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Parents have a chance to make sure that parents and children with disabilities in New Jersey don't lose critical protections, such as short-term objectives; stayput for students involved in discipline issues; having team members at IEP meetings and making sure changes aren't made without a meeting; etc.

Dec.19: Draft state special education code changes published in NJ Register

Dec.21: Public hearing on proposed regulations, 100 Riverview Plaza, Trenton. 3pm.

March 15: Final public hearing on proposed regulations, 100 Riverview

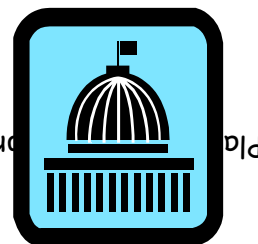
### Supreme Court decision regarding Special Education

When parents and school officials cannot agree on an IEP, federal and state laws provide for a "due process hearing" before an administrative law judge or other impartial decision maker. When the evidence on each side is roughly equal, the allocation of the burden of proof can make all the difference in the outcome of the hearing.

The [US Supreme Court](#) ruled November 14, 2005 that parents who challenge special education programs for not meeting their children's needs must bear the burden of proving the programs' inadequacies, and not school officials. The case, [Schaffer v. Weast](#) is a loss for a Maryland family that challenged a special education program for their son who is afflicted with ADHD.

This case required the court to interpret the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which does not specifically say whether parents or schools have the burden of proof in disputes.

In NJ, the NJ Supreme Court decision of Lascari allocated the burden of proof to school districts, so it is possible that decision does not affect NJ. However, child advocates are going to seek to ensure a clear understanding of this by asking New Jersey to clearly set forth the allocation of the burden of proof to districts.





2005-2006

### Challenger Activities Schedule

Nov. 12 - Dec. 17 (Saturdays 9am)  
Basketball

Jan. 7 - Mar. 4 (Saturdays 11am)  
Bowling

## Brick Challenger by Dan Santaniello

The Challenger Program is open to children ages five and older to engage in several different activities and events throughout the year, where they might not have done so otherwise. This program gives children a chance to participate in activities and sports with others their own age and on the same playing level. Challenger has a year round schedule for the children of Brick Township: fall soccer, winter basketball and bowling, spring baseball and summer horseback riding. The cost is \$5.00 per program and all participants will receive a trophy at the end of each season. For more information on the Challenger Program, please call Dan Santaniello or Don Warn @732-262-1165 or stop by the Recreation Office located in the Civic Plaza on Chambers Bridge Road.

## Dates to Remember:

### SEPTA Meeting Schedule 2005/2006

Held at the EEC at 7:30pm

January 23  
February 27  
March 27  
April 24  
May 29  
June 12

Check out our new website:

[www.bricksepta.org](http://www.bricksepta.org)



### SEPTA Events Schedule

Through June: Calendar Fundraiser

December

Letters to Santa

January

Ice-cream Social

March 26

Gift Auction

### Editor's Note:

The SEPTA Newsletter welcomes your input. If you have a story or information pertaining to special education and/or special needs, please contact me at:

[bjcal513@verizon.net](mailto:bjcal513@verizon.net) or

(732)785-1253

Happy Holidays!

Brenda Calderone