

# Friends & Family

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**NEW HORIZON SCHOOL**  
1111 South Carr Road  
Renton WA 98055  
OFFICE:  
(425) 226-3717  
www.new-horizon-school.org

**NEW HORIZON SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
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**NHS VISION**  
New Horizon School seeks to develop an environment of trust and acceptance for each individual member of the NHS community. We seek to provide an environment that is physically and emotionally safe so that individuals can reach their potential with self worth and confidence. When graduates leave the school they will have experienced an educational program that prepares them to be contributing members of society and life long learners.

**NHS MISSION**  
New Horizon School exists to provide a successful learning environment for students with learning disabilities, attention deficits, or other learning differences so that those students are able to maximize their individual academic, social, emotional, and behavioral potentials.

include linkages, partnerships, and collaboration with other programs. The NHS staff and faculty found it very affirming that these two local programs take the same approach that we are planning. Later, the NHS staff and faculty met together to discuss things that we feel may impede our progress in formalizing a secondary transition program: limited resources (money, time, and training). We shared concerns about taking on "one more thing", possible burn-out, being overscheduled, and our ability to be innovative. The NHS staff and faculty identified components of a secondary transition program that we can do with limited resources, such as having a school theme that would emphasize secondary transition skills and standardizing the program to include a grade by grade scope and sequence of skills to be covered.

In May of 2006, **Vera DiTuri, NHS Parent Booster Club chair**, invited **Joanne O'Neill of Arc of King County** to speak on the topic of secondary transition. Joanne's talk, titled "Are You Ready?", provided a great deal of information to NHS families about various government agencies (e.g. DDD, DVR, and SSI), employment or day services, residential services, and respite or Family Care services available to families with a disabled child or adult. Additionally she shared her personal story as a parent of two children with disabilities. NHS families found this workshop to be very valuable. For some NHS students, secondary transition planning may include 18-21 programming in the student's home school district, connecting with the Department of Developmental Disabilities, supported living, or working with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation to pursue technical/vocational training to support a goal of competitive employment. For some students at NHS, secondary transition planning may include a post-secondary education in a 2 year or a 4 year college leading toward competitive employment in a career field.

Also in May of 2006, **John Jarrett** developed a draft

document that included suggestions for the organization, look, and feel of such a handbook and presented it to the Board in May, 2006. This draft included a proposed Transition Mission Statement as follows:

*New Horizon School is committed to providing a set of activities, curricula, and other experiences that promote the positive transition of students from school to post-school settings including post-secondary education, vocational training, independent or supported employment, adult services and community participation. These transition plans should be based on an individual student's needs, strengths and interests. Although these plans are developed by a team, including but not limited to, the student, parent/guardian, teachers, administrators, counselors, and other care providers, the ultimate responsibility for the implementation of post-secondary transition plans belongs to students and their families.*

We still have many tasks left to accomplish before we reach our goal of formalizing a Transition Program for students. Our ultimate goal is that all students completing their senior year at NHS will have an appropriate post-secondary plan in place as they leave us. Now that we have researched secondary transition programs and decided what fits best for our students, we need to write a handbook for families, develop goals and objectives for our program, continue to create opportunities for students that connect school to careers, continue to refine our homeroom model with an emphasis on social, self-advocacy, and transition skills, and continue to expand our elective offerings with an emphasis on the use of community experts to facilitate school to work skills. We also want to assure that all voices are heard as we develop policies and programs. Working together, we hope to accomplish these tasks over the next two years. **Many thanks to John Jarrett for his dedication and effort toward the realization of this dream!**

## Lou Tice on Being a Wizard of Oz

In February, **Lou Tice of The Pacific Institute** responded to NHS parent Nancy Rice's enthusiasm and invited **Nancy and John Russell** to attend TPI's "Investment in Leadership Seminar for Non-Profits." These free seminars are part of Lou's "A Better Seattle" vision, an effort to revitalize the non-profit community in Seattle with TPI's approach to leadership thinking.

Toward the end of the two days, Lou talked about the importance of one-time affirmations. His example was the Wizard of Oz. "Oz gave each a prize and told them to 'go out and act like it'" noted Lou. This pretty well describes how our faculty at NHS affirms positive student behavior, and so it was only fitting that the Wizard of Oz was already under production for the Spring Performance at New Horizon School.

In addition Lou donated a four-day seminar to the entire NHS Board, faculty, and staff. **Thank you Lou, and thank you to everyone at The Pacific Institute!**

## The Maloneys Bring Karma Theory Films to the Land of Oz at NHS

In May, NHS parents **Dennis and Debbie Maloney** brought in **Sabina Shamdasani's Karma Theory Films** to spend a week filming a promotional and documentary movie of NHS. **KTF's film makers, Omi Vaidy and Carmen Isom** got to see the NHS wizards accepting our kids for who they are, giving

them opportunities they couldn't get anywhere else, and watching the crowning achievement of the Spring Performance. "We didn't want to just give a donation," said Debbie, "we wanted to give NHS a tool they could leverage to bring in support from the community and foundations."

In addition to KTF, Dennis and Debbie also brought in Dennis' sister, **Nancy Maloney, and her husband, Joe Whipp, a Hollywood actor**. Nancy spent hours on the phone with media resulting in film crews from TV Washington and Access Puget Sound visiting and taping footage at NHS. Nancy also generated interest for articles by the King County Journal and the Renton Reporter. **Thank you Dennis and Debbie, Joe and Nancy, Sabina Shamdasani, and Omi and Carmen for your bringing NHS to a wider audience!**

## The Fine Arts Department Reveals NHS as the Land of Oz

Dorothy (**Stephanie Salcedo**), displaced by a tornado to Oz from Kansas and Uncle Henry (**Jordan Yousef**), leads her group of seekers past the machinations of the Wicked Witch of the West (**Lauren O'Connor**) in search of magic gifts to make them whole. The Scarecrow (**Tanner Bartlein**) wants a brain, The Cowardly Lion (**Patrick Maloney**) wants courage, and The Tin Man (**Sebastian Lindsay**) wants a heart. Along the way they get help from Glinda the Good Witch (**Nicole Reuben**). In the end, they find that the Great Oz (**Jason Wolf**) has no magic, just affirmations that the scarecrow has brains enough, the Lion has shown his bravery, and the Tin Man has demonstrated his good heart.



# New Horizon School

“Where Children Come First”

“These kids are so amazing,” said drama director and choreographer Elena Tsaregordtseva (Miss T). “They get opportunities here that they wouldn’t get anywhere else, and they really show what they can do. They work very hard. Some enjoy performing and have a real love for being on stage. Others are very shy and show a lot of courage in taking a part. I’m very proud of them.”

The show opened with “The Tornado”, composed with a sampler by Gam Moore. A thirty foot video projection of the sun, earth, and stars lit the stage as Nathan Read improvised a piano solo over Gam’s live remix. Fatalistic samples of monastery bells transitioned in Arcade Fire’s upbeat “Wake Up”, a song about growing up. The play closed with a reggae version of “Ding-Dong the Witch Be Toast”, morphing into actors dancing on-stage and the choir and audience singing the Nylon’s “Na-Na, Hey-Hey, Goodbye”. It was hard to say goodbye to this energetic and creative production.

## Archery News

**Timm Hines**, NHS PE teacher and archery coach, went to Spokane in June, where he entered a qualifying tournament for the Archery Team USA. Being on the national team would

bring Timm equipment, tournament sponsorships, and access to the national training center in Chula Vista, California. Timm is looking forward to entering the Olympic team trials beginning May 2007.

NHS student **Shaelie McGrath** left in late June for the Junior Nationals in Ohio. This is her second tournament. She finished fourth in Las Vegas last February. She finished second in the junior national event, first in the team event, and second in the Olympic round. Shaelie shoots in the Freestyle Limited Recurve Girls Division (aka the Cub Olympic Recurve). **She is the reigning champion in the five-state Pacific Northwest Region.**

This spring the NHS archery team constructed the perpetual trophy for the first Washington State high school championship. This competition is sponsored by the Washington State Archery Association as part of the National Archery in Schools Program.

The trophy stands about 30 inches high. Mr. Hines and the team made it from a surplus trophy cup and archer-figures. The team built a two-tiered base from pine, stained and finished it, and added brass accents and name plaques. The Wolf Cup is now the tournament trophy. Although NHS was not able to make the trip to Yakima this past spring, their trophy will bring NHS to archery teams around the state.

## ADMINISTRATOR’S CORNER

By **Marla Veliz**

### Life After NHS High School?

For many years, the NHS Board, faculty, and staff have discussed and dreamed about having a secondary transition program for students with learning disabilities and attention deficits that would consist of creating teams made up of teachers, administrators, parents/guardians, and students working together to plan for life after high school. We envision this program as having flexible board policies in place to support relationships with various job sites and collaboration between NHS and other programs and agencies. We want to help students with disabilities learn how to transition into other settings away from NHS after the senior year. We want to provide the information and documents that families need to make effective and appropriate plans with and for their special needs children. Creating a secondary transition program at NHS was identified as a high priority goal in our School Improvement Plan, written in 2003 as part of our continuing accreditation with the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools. It was also identified as the top goal in

the school’s Strategic Plan, revised in 2006.

One of the first steps that the NHS faculty and staff took to address the secondary transition needs of students was to develop a wide range of elective classes from which students could choose. From 1996 to the present we have offered classes emphasizing both the fine arts as well as technical skills: Spanish, Home Ec., Woodshop, Dance Team, Outdoor Education, Service & Smiles, Wind Band, Fable, Fantasy, & Film, Introduction to Art, Art & World Cultures, Studio Art, 3-D Art, Elements of Design, Model Building, Weight Training, Personal Conditioning, Fabric & Leather Arts, Money Smart, Yearbook, Modern Japan, Video Design, Music History, Crime & Punishment, Criminalistics, Business Management, Russian, Theatre Production, American Sign Language, Knitting & Crocheting, Keyboarding, Keyboarding/Yearbook/Photography, Drama, Live Electronic Performance, and Music Performance Lab.

The Board, faculty, and staff have worked hard over the past few years to formalize a secondary transition program at NHS. We have made much progress toward accomplishing this goal:

- Formed a task force to study our high school homeroom model,



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“Where Children Come First”

## Life After NHS High School cont.

which involved high school homeroom teachers moving up through the grade levels with homeroom students and then looping back down after four years.

- Initiated a gradual change of the high school homeroom model to one which will involve high school homeroom teachers teaching the same grade level each year, allowing students the opportunity to learn from a variety of homeroom teachers over the course of 4 years and allowing teachers the opportunity to become experts at the scope and sequence of transition skills taught at a specific grade level.

- Provided a teacher with a free class period to meet with students and families regarding transition plans and to begin the development of a transition handbook for NHS families.

- Invited guest speakers to speak with NHS students about various career areas.

- Hired Christopher Evans, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, part-time to work with NHS students on skills needed for a successful transition (emotional coping, social, and self-advocacy skills).

- Offered many new high school elective courses with an emphasis on independent living and transition skills: Adaptive English Decoding, Life Skills Math, Adaptive English Comprehension, Business Management, Employment and Independent Living, Women in Society, Write to Work, Employment Skills, Consumer Math, and Marketing.

In the fall of 2005, NHS invited **Maureen Roberts, Vocational Rehabilitation Lead Counselor, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation**, to speak to NHS families about linkages with various government agencies and services that are available to children and adults with disabilities. NHS parents/guardians found this information to be very helpful.

In early 2006, **John Jarrett, NHS High School Teacher and Department Head**, researched the many secondary transition programs for special needs students around the country and analyzed what we are doing at NHS in light of this research. He identified the need for NHS to:

- Offer curriculum and instructional methods in relation to the concept of school to work.
- Strengthen the transition component in our Math and English programs.
- Strengthen our electives in terms of teaching job skills.

- Allocate more funding to secondary transition programming.
- Use outside resources more.
- Access agency linkages more.
- Include a parent education component to our secondary transition program.

Recently, Mr. Jarrett presented his findings and proposal to the NHS Education Committee (Faculty and Administrator) and the Board. This proposal outlined a program for secondary transition planning for NHS students which would take student needs and preferences into consideration, would be outcome oriented, includes a coordinated set of activities, and would promote movement to postsecondary environments. The program would focus on community participation, daily living, employment, financial/income management, health, independent living, leisure, postsecondary education, relationship/social skills, transportation/mobility, and vocational training. At the high school level, the program would focus on career exploration, transition, and overlaps into postsecondary environments desired by the student. Students would participate in career interest and skills surveys, school-based activities, and home-based activities. School-based activities would include attending college fairs, attending on-campus events with career speakers, participation in on or off-campus extracurricular events, participation in on-campus volunteer experience activities, skill-grouped core academic classes, elective classes relevant to independent living, and instructional methods and materials that support essential learning strategies. Home-based activities would include discussion for re-evaluation to develop appropriate accommodations for a 504 Plan, meetings with teachers to determine appropriate post-high school programming, and developing a plan to increase independent living skills. Where to begin? Although many of these things are already taking place in NHS classrooms, we determined that the best first step would be to develop a Transition Handbook for the Board, faculty, staff, families, and students of NHS.

In April of 2006 NHS faculty and staff met with **Rosalyn Robinson, Director of Special Education, Renton School District, and Lisa Turner, Director of the ACHIEVE Bridge Project at Highline Community College**. We learned that both of these programs are community based, focus on job skills, are well-organized and structured, include social and leisure opportunities for students, and emphasize self-advocacy and teaching students to take care of themselves. Both programs work with parents on their responsibility to develop an independent adult as well and

*continued on back ...*