Singing Out, Together!

This year’s Hootenanny was truly a night to remember.

It was standing-room-only on May 29 as the Key Elementary School Chorus took the stage for the third annual Hootenanny. This year’s performance included a tribute to Pete Seeger, the American folk movement pioneer who passed away this year at the age of 94.

“Seeger’s message is a perfect one for our community,” says chorus director and Key parent Ann Roddy. “He was a famous performer, of course, but most of all he wanted people to share in the joy of singing together.”

Singing together was a highlight for many at this year’s concert. The entire audience joined in for a rousing—and moving—rendition of “This Land is Your Land” as well as Key Chorus favorite “Will the Circle Be Unbroken?”

The Key Chorus, which meets weekly for most of the school year, is a unique extracurricular offering subsidized by the PTA. Students learn traditional American music ranging from bluegrass to African-American spirituals.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

DCPS LOOKS AT SCHOOL BOUNDARIES

It’s time to make your voice heard in the process.

For the first time in about 45 years, the District of Columbia is undergoing a review of student assignment policies, including DCPS school attendance boundaries and feeder patterns. Much has changed in DC during the last four decades in terms of demography, economy, infrastructure, and the emergence of charter schools. Some recently built schools are practically empty, while others are overcrowded or at maximum capacity. Therefore, few would disagree that it makes sense to reevaluate the match-up between schools and students.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

INSIDE
Science Fair, Book Fair, Auction, World Family Day, Grounds Cleanup, PTA budget update, the Key 7, and much more!
Committee Reports: We’ve Been Busy!

BOOK FAIR At the annual book fair, parents, children and adults alike relished the large selection of quality books, and the event grossed $13,600. Our children’s classrooms received 311 titles, and 40 new books were added to the Library collection. In addition, families purchased 23 books for pediatric patients at Georgetown’s Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center. A huge thank you to all our parent volunteers, and to the children, parents, grandparents, caregivers and teachers who came out to support Key and champion the importance of books and reading!

—Carolyn Butler, Book Fair committee

COMMUNITY SERVICE This spring saw a bevy of exciting community service projects at Key. The towel and blanket collection for Washington Animal Rescue League netted two completely full carloads of used blankets and towels. Hundreds of pairs of adults’ and children’s shoes were donated and then transported, with the help of Marilyn Nowalk, to St. Etienne, Haiti, where a lack of shoes was prohibiting children from attending school. We had a Potomac Watershed cleanup day where parents and students helped the Potomac Conservancy clean up at Fletcher’s Cove. And our wildly popular community E-cycling event, organized by Dirk Joldersma and Marcy Oppenheim, allowed people to conveniently do some spring cleaning: swap or safely recycle electronics, old paint, and other chemicals, and shred their documents. Our neighbors were grateful!—Laura Amodei, community service committee

GROUNDS CLEANUP DAY The April grounds cleanup day saw great attendance, with more than 25 parents and kids. We cleaned up the blacktop, the playground, and other parts of the campus. Another team, under the guidance of science teacher Amy Johnson, worked on the flower beds and planted various plants and herbs. We all had a good time!—Kivanc Kirgiz, grounds committee

RETAIL REBATE We raised almost $5,000 through retail programs this year! Let’s keep that growing this summer. Make sure your Safeway card is registered with eScrip and shop with your debit card or cash. Do your summer shopping on Amazon.com using the Key School link. If you have a Target Red card, link that to Key School. And please continue to save your Box Tops over the summer. The retail programs are getting more restrictive so it is more important than ever to keep up our activity and add new families to the biggest programs (Safeway and Amazon). Questions? E-mail AWHorrigan@aol.com.—Abby Horrigan, Retail Rebate committee

Call for PTA Volunteers

It’s not too early to get involved for 2014-15!

Thanks to all of our amazing parent volunteers, the PTA is able to enrich our children’s lives at school. As children graduate and their parents leave the PTA, we need new members to step up and join in. We have room for anyone and everyone who wants to help. Here are some important openings we have for co-chairs and volunteers next year. Please contact Co-President Tricia Braun (tdbraun@mindspring.com) ASAP if you are interested and/or want to learn more!

July 4th Parade One of the highlights of the year! We are still looking for a parent or parents to help orchestrate our participation in the Palisades 4th of July parade. This is great fun for adults and children alike, as you get to toss candy to your classmates, friends, and admirers as you parade down MacArthur Boulevard, representing the mighty Key School Penguins!

Key School Directory How many times a week do you reach for that Key School directory? Whether it is for arranging playdates, e-mailing other parents, or having your child call a classmate to get a copy of the homework he or she left at school, we all use that directory. We need a chair to help compile, design, print, and distribute our school directory and handbook. The data input can be done from home or work, so this is a great opportunity for parents who work in or out of the home.

Directory Ads It used to be that the PTA had to devote significant money to put out the directory. Now that we have ads in our directory, that revenue pays for the directory itself. We need someone to organize and coordinate ads from parents and local businesses. This is a chance to provide a great service both to our school and to the local business community.

Arts Committee Would you like to see more arts at Key School? Then maybe you should step up to chair the arts committee. Traditionally, this committee has developed Key’s on-site arts programs, including assemblies, the Family Arts program, and visiting artists. Previous projects have included printing notecards designed by Key students, decorating the cafeteria with student artwork, and arranging for music during lunch time. This is a committee where you can truly innovate and bring your ideas to fruition.

If you would like to head up any of these committees, or become involved with the PTA in other ways, please contact me at tdbraun@mindspring.com.

—Tricia Braun, PTA co-president
As a first-time participant on the PTA executive committee this school year, I feel very fortunate to be a part of such a dedicated group of parents and teachers with a common goal: to help support our children’s education and development. Every year we strive to sustain people and events that are critical to keeping Key Elementary a school of choice for parents in our neighborhood and beyond. The PTA executive committee meets monthly throughout the year to ensure that the larger organization continues to move forward and that we concentrate our resources on those areas of greatest need and importance as agreed upon by our members. I am continually impressed with the professionalism, insight, and thoughtfulness of this group. I cannot imagine that there is a better PTA executive committee anywhere.

This past year, Virginia Gorsevski has served as our PTA president, and we were so lucky to have her at the helm. Virginia is smart, funny, and warm, and working with her has been an absolute pleasure. She genuinely enjoys people and is patient and approachable. These qualities made her a very effective PTA president, especially with the unusual challenges that arose for the PTA this year. We started the school year out while our playground renovation was still underway, and we had no blacktop available for drop-off and pick-up, not to mention for recess or for the original Harvest Festival date. She managed to work with parents, staff, and neighbors to help ease us through that trying time and helped to keep all parties happy. Additionally, when we ended up without a chair for the auction committee, she stepped up and headed the auction super committee, coordinating the many parents who helped make the auction a great success. She

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

A Very Fond Farewell
And a very big thank you to our outgoing executive committee members

A highlight of every year is the Key School Science Fair and Family Science Night, inspiring our students and showcasing their hard work.

This year’s events were held on Friday, March 7th. While only 3rd-5th graders are required to participate, many younger students also joined in. Altogether there were 180 projects. Judges from around our community evaluated the 3rd-5th grade projects. Over a lunch prepared by our volunteers they deliberated and determined which students would go on to participate in the citywide fair.

That evening there was a huge turnout for Family Science Night, with many interactive booths, pizza, and the announcement of the winners. “I’d like to thank my hard-working committee who help make the event happen,” says Science Fair committee chair Tricia Duncan: “Caominhe Dardis, Linda Fit-tante, Ines Roque, Celia Bowker, Anjna Kirpalani, Marilina Vilimaa von Uexkull, Eavan O’Hollaram, Hendi Crosby, and Christine Lehman.” Duncan and her team worked with teachers Ms. Johnson, Mr. Weatherald, Ms. Houston, Ms. Jones, Ms. Pizzo and Mr. Riley.

Eight projects (ten students) went on to the city-wide DC Elementary Stem Fair held in June at Takoma Education Center. The students that went on to city-wide were: 5th graders Kelsey Frederick, Eleanor Downing, Max Dupin, and Sasha Collier; 4th graders Alex and Brendan Kirk (team) and Annabelle Harbold; and 3rd Graders James (Kai) Setty and Gordon and Duncan Taylor (team).

Kelsey took 3rd place overall and first place in Microbiology; Annabelle got 1st place in Animal Sciences; Max placed 2nd in Environmental Management, and Eleanor took 2nd place in Medicine and Health. Sasha placed 3rd for Plant Sciences, and Kai won 3rd for Physics. “All students did a fantastic job representing Key School at the city-wide!” reported Ms. Johnson.
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

in an effort to ensure that all children in the DCPS system have access to high quality education.

The lines that have been drawn in DC to pair students with schools have a significant impact on where people choose to live. School boundaries impact real estate markets and influence where economic development happens. Public schools often act as the heart of a community around which families gather and grow. In short, boundaries matter—just ask any political geographer or historian.

So it is not surprising that the announcement of a dramatic overhaul to DC school feeder patterns and boundaries caused an uproar across the city among parents who feared they might lose access to their neighborhood school or be forced to change their commuting patterns. Key School is no exception. The Palisades has long attracted young families in search of a child-friendly environment that includes a thriving public elementary school. So how do the proposed changes potentially affect Key students and future Penguins?

Last week, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME) issued a draft Student Assignment Policy Proposal in which they propose a “core system of zoned schools and geographically based feeder patterns from elementary through high school.” The Key School feeder pattern—Hardy Middle School and Wilson High School—remains unchanged. However, the study identified Key School as one of several that deserves additional study to add capacity or shrink boundaries based on the criteria that the school has been “utilized at 90 percent or more and has had an in-boundary percentage of the enrollment greater than 75 percent for three years.” The full recommendation as well as all supporting materials can be found on the DME website at http://dme.dc.gov/

The full recommendation as well as all supporting materials can be found on the Key School website at www.keyschooldc.org. The full letter can be found on the Key School website.

Recently, the Key School PTA held a meeting to hear concerns from neighbors, which was attended by Matt Frumin, the Ward 3 representative on the DME’s working group and Laura Slover, Key School parent and Ward 3 representative on the DC Board of Education. We also discussed the issue at the May general PTA meeting. At that meeting, PTA members unanimously approved a motion that the Key School PTA should submit a unified position to the DME that supports neighborhood schools, includes an OOB set-aside of 10%, and opposes any changes in boundaries until further data are gathered, options are examined, and school stakeholders consulted. The full letter can be found on the Key School website at www.keyschooldc.org.

We thank all parents for their continued support for Key School. If you haven’t already provided input, please do so. Attend upcoming meetings to discuss the proposed draft plan. Learn what mayoral candidates are saying about this plan and the boundaries/feeder school issue in general. If you would like more information on how best to provide your feedback to the Mayor, the DME, the City Council and others, please contact Key parent Colleen Crino (constincrino@yahoo.com), who will be updating parents over the summer. This is your school and your community and every voice counts.

—Virginia Gorsevski, PTA co-president

The Key School PTA has been working with Ward 3 leaders to better understand the process and proposed options in order to pass this information along to parents and to provide input on behalf of the school. The DME’s office has held numerous community working group meetings and more are scheduled for this week. The DME is actively soliciting input through the www.engagedc.org website.

Thank you, volunteers!

Key School wouldn’t be the same without the time and effort given by so many parent volunteers. We are deeply grateful! Special thanks to those who ran major events this winter and spring and their armies of helpers (too many to list here)

**After School Enrichment Program:** Romina Cohen, Janet Carter  **Auction:** Maria Garcia, Maria Emmanuel, Darcy Langdon, Kim Christo  **Book Fair:** Polly Johnson, Jamie Edwards, Carolyn Butler  **Chorus:** Ann Roddy  **E-Cycling Event:** Dirk Joldersma, Romina Oppenheimer, Joe Neale, Abby Horrigan, George Beronio  **Get Smart Raffle:** Claire Swift and the PR&D Team  **Grounds:** Kivanc Kirgiz  **Keynotes:** Sara Sklaroff, Linda Fittante  **Science Fair:** Tricia Duncan  **Spring Open House:** Lauren Regardie, Caoimhe Dardis  **World Family Day:** Romina Cohen, Henna Raza

And for those tireless volunteers who support the many ongoing PTA activities throughout the year—thank you!

**Arts:** Traci Femister  **Bulk Supplies:** Megan Holdren, Mari Bailey  **Bylaws:** Jared Freedman  **Community Service:** Romina Oppenheimer, Laura Amodei  **Green:** Dirk Joldersma  **Healthy Eating:** Ingrid Bush, Christy Ross  **Library:** Claire Swift and the PR&D Team  **Volunteer Coordinator:** Lori Donovan and all the volunteers  **Fillmore:** Tilman Wuerschmidt  **Foreign Language Program:** Caroline Wolverton, Ximena Ortiz  **Playground:** Julie Scott, Jennifer Felten  **PR&D:** Claire Swift, Chris Magerl  **Retail Rebate:** Abby Horrigan  **Room Parent Coordinator:** Cameron Taylor and all the room parents  **Webmaster:** Tom Gimer
INTRODUCING YOUR NEW PTA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Thanks to the 2013-2014 nominating committee—Virginia Gorsevski, Maria Garcia, and Tilman Wuerschmidt—we have an experienced and dedicated group of parents to serve on the executive committee for the coming school year who were voted into office at our last PTA general meeting.

Ashby Mims will be serving as our new co-president. Ashby is a stay-at-home parent and a graduate of the College of Charleston. She and her husband, John, are both originally from South Carolina and moved to DC in August 2011. Before having children, Ashby worked for 10 years in the nonprofit world, in a direct service role at Communities in Schools and The Parkinson Association of the Carolinas, as well as behind the scenes in development and strategic planning for local and national nonprofits. She has also served on the board of two nonprofit organizations and currently enjoys volunteering for the MOMS Club of NW DC.

Prior to serving as co-president, Ashby co-chaired the Harvest Festival and worked on the Key auction for the last 2 years. She and John have two sons, John Henry, who will be in first grade in the fall, and Roland, who will start Pre-K next fall.

Stephanie Curcuru will be serving as our new(ish) co-treasurer. Stephanie actually began as a co-treasurer during the 2013-2014 school year to ease the transition since our 2013-2014 co-treasurers, Maria Acebal and Adriana Elwood, were finishing out terms simultaneously.

Stephanie has been a Key School parent since 2007. She and her husband, Jim Mello, are the parents of Maddy (2nd grade), Jackson (K) and a former student, Valerie. She is an economist at the Federal Reserve, and has been involved in several non-profit organizations, most recently serving as president of the board of directors of the St. Alban's Early Childhood Center.

Bryan Lake will be serving as our new co-treasurer. Bryan is a graduate of Miami University and Northwestern University. He is the founder and managing member of the tax and accounting firm Shoreline Tax and Accounting Services LLC. The firm provides individuals and businesses assistance with a broad range of US tax compliance, financial accounting and bookkeeping services. He is an enrolled agent with the Internal Revenue Service.

Bryan has 25 years of experience in tax accounting, 15 of which were with the big four public accounting firms, specializing in the taxation of US citizens and resident aliens abroad and foreign nationals in the US. He and his wife Lisa Racioppi are the parents of rising 3rd graders Emma and Simon Lake.

Our new officers join the current executive committee: Kathy Hoganbruen, recording secretary, Meredith Sumner, corresponding secretary, and yours truly as co-president. We all look forward to a productive and exciting year for the PTA!—Tricia Braun, PTA co-president

The Key School 7
A student initiative brings out the best in everyone

The Key Student Council is in charge of the Key School Character Education Program, which encourages students to be nice, share, help, and be good examples around the school. The Key School 7, which includes Kindness, Sharing, Honesty, Confidence, Patience, Acceptance, and Encouragement, helps students know what they are supposed to do and how they are supposed to act in and out of school. We want to encourage everyone to be good students, but also good people!

Students have been striving to earn positive notes for showing the Key School 7. Teachers and staff have been “catching fish” being good around the school, and posting these positive fish in the main stairwell. This helps kids who are good get recognized, and other students work towards behaving better, so that they can get recognized too! We hope that this program will show Key School’s spirit and encourage us to help one another, and the community, be good people!—Sarah Ettinger, student council secretary
Moving and Learning
A season of fun with Girls on the Run

This spring, 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade girls completed another successful season of Girls on the Run. We started in March with a full team of 40 girls. Over the eight week period, girls participated in after-school practice two days a week. They made new friends, built confidence, and had fun together. The Girls on the Run program fosters positive social, emotional and physical health through discussions, activities, and exercise. The program helps girls better understand who they are and how to build healthy relationships, as well as become equipped with skills and strategies for navigating life experiences. Physical activity is also part of every practice to inspire girls to be active and to work together as a team. The season ended in a 5k Fun Run on Saturday, May 16th, at Anacostia Park. Each girl did an amazing job, ran hard, and had much to celebrate and to be proud of. Thank you to all the running buddies and families who came out to run and support the program. The Girls on the Run coaches—Ms. Flaherty, Ms. Van Hook, Ms. Penfield, and Ms. Williams—congratulate each Girls on the Run girl and thank you for another wonderful season!

Great Time, Great Cause
Annual auction raises money for vital items

Key’s 2014 “Roman Holiday” themed auction was a tremendous success. Parents, teachers, and staff rallied to the cause and grossed nearly $160,000 for the school. This year’s committee used 501 Auctions’ software platform, which streamlined registration, item donations, and mobile bidding. With a gobo-lit venue, Mediterranean fare and a full premium bar, everyone enjoyed bidding at the silent auction and viewing the class projects. An online silent auction from March 1 to 15 raised over $42,000. A total of $9,825 was raised in sign-up parties. A big thanks to parents who hosted Moms & Margaritas, Trivia Night, the Key School Keg Party, and the Year-End Garden Party. A total of $44,000 was raised in the live auction for Teacher Features and Class Projects. Donations for this year’s Fund-An-Item, the mobile computer carts, topped a new high at an incredible $44,950! But it didn’t end there—the fun continued with the after auction party with a live band: The Fuzz. Thank you to all of the parents, teachers, and students who helped put this event together and for making this year’s auction a huge success.—Maria Emanuel and Maria Garcia, auction committee

This year, the newly formed PR and development committee launched a “Smart Raffle,” with the help of the room parents and the auction committee. A whopping 379 raffle tickets were sold for the opportunity to win a Smart Car or cash. In total we raised $24,000 for the general fund. We are truly grateful for all the “smart” support—large and small. Be on the lookout for future PR&D opportunities next year.—Claire Swift, PR&D committee
What a Wonderful World!

Parents, students, staff, and friends all came out on May 9 to share their heritage and culture with the students of Key Elementary. Each class got to visit booths representing Korea, Guyana, Lebanon, China, Ecuador, Ireland, India, Morocco, Kenya, Brazil, Denmark and Sweden. Thanks to organizers Romina Cohen and Henna Raza and all the other volunteers for making this amazing day happen!

Chorus teacher Ann Roddy with choristers at the May Hootenanny

HOOTENANNNY, FROM PAGE 1 to country pop favorites. Roddy, an experienced singer and guitar player with a specialty in traditional music, uses the songs to teach lessons about history and culture, too.

Working with other professional musicians in the studio, Roddy creates original recordings of the music to accompany the chorus at this special end-of-year performance. She also credits her team of parent volunteers who come together to make the Hootenanny a success, including Linda Fittante Fabbri, Anjna Kirpalani, Ximena Ortiz DeFilippes, Adriana Elwood, Celia Bowker, Lisa Sterling, Margaret Taylor, Cameron Taylor, Romina Cohen, Lori Donovan, Meredith Sumner, Emily Henderson, Catherine Smith, Susan Kaminskas, Jennifer Meuwissen-Rose, Anne Ourand, Ece and Tom Gimer, Mike Shapiro, and Sara Sklaroff.

But of course the real stars of the show are our children, who every year inspire the rest of us with their love of the music.
### PTA Budget for 2014-2015 Year

Here is the new budget that PTA members voted to approve for the 2014-2015 school year.

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**FAREWELL, FROM PAGE 3**

ended up the year guiding us through DC’s student assignment and boundaries process. All of these things were unexpected and new challenges for the PTA, and she was unflappable, handling them all with incredible energy, leadership, and a sense of humor. She is a natural leader and we were very fortunate to have her at the helm.

Prior to serving as co-president, Virginia contributed tremendously to Key School over the last several years, in varied roles. She served as co-chair of the community service committee, the Harvest Festival, and finally as PTA president—all while earning her PhD in Geography! Her energy, engaging personality, and “can do” spirit were the perfect fit for our community and enabled her to get so much done for our school. We are all in her debt.

Throughout this year Virginia managed to oversee all PTA activities while simultaneously caring for three children in three different schools, undertaking a renovation on her house, and holding down a new full-time job as a consultant for the GEF Scientific and Technical Panel of the UNEP. I know I speak for the entire Executive Committee when I say that we will miss Virginia’s leadership in the coming year. But we will all get to see her and her family for years to come, as her youngest son, Theo, will start Pre-K next year!

I would also like to extend a huge thank you to our outgoing co-treasurers, Maria Acebal and Adriana Elwood. They have both been amazing with all matters financial for the PTA for the past two years. In addition to their work as co-treasurers, they both contributed sage advice and valued insight at executive committee meetings, and we will all miss their contributions as well.

Maria’s family came to Key in 2011, and she wasted no time volunteering to become co-treasurer. I have known her for 20 years, since we were in law school together, and she has always shown exceptional mastery of all she undertakes and a wisdom and calm beyond her years. She has been no different in her role as co-treasurer, and she will be missed. Maria won’t be leaving Key or even the PTA leadership, though. She has already volunteered to co-chair the Book Fair committee next year, when her daughter, Daniella will be in 5th grade, and her son, Mateo, will join Key as a kindergartener.

Adriana has been an incredible supporter of the Key PTA for many years. I first met her when she hosted the new parents coffee at her house three years ago. It was my first day as a Key parent and her friendly, welcoming manner immediately put me at ease. Adriana is gracious and kind, and always willing to help. She is calm and resourceful in approaching every issue, and absolutely great to work with. Over the years, she has done incredibly valuable work for Key. In addition to opening her home to host numerous new parent receptions and sign up parties, she has served as co-chair of the open house committee and the world family committee. She has also been a room parent and a Spanish language teacher in our FLES program. We will miss her as an officer, but I know that with her two youngest children, Victoria and Alec, still at Key, she will continue to be involved in many ways. Thank you so much, Adriana!

And thank you to all of our other committee co-chairs and volunteers for all your time and effort, and to our outgoing LSAT reps, Claire Swift and Tilman Wuerschmidt, who served two-year terms supporting Mr. Landeryou in allocating the Key budget. We couldn’t do it without you!—Tricia Braun, PTA Co-President