

The Link Letter



Informing Pennsylvania Cyber School's Family Link members of the latest events

Kids brandish beautiful beads

Like a bright, jeweled bead on a chain, a single family Link event represents different things to different people.

The event, which took place at Beads Everywhere in Beaver, represented two extremes. It was both a first, and very possibly a last for those involved.

Not that Family Link won't hold another event there, but it just won't have the same meaning. For the Hartman family, it was their very first Family Link event, despite the fact they have been in PA Cyber for four years. But for Ashley O'Toole, the beads could be her last outing with PA Cyber staff, not counting graduation if she chooses.

See Beads Pg. 2



WHICH ONE? - The Hartmans have to search and search through a myriad of beads to find that one special bead to add to their creation.

Family Link now collecting box tops

So, you like the skiing, bowling, concerts, and the myriad of other

activities Family Link plans? Well, now you can help those activities.

Family Link is participating in the Box Tops for Education Program. All of the proceeds generated by the box top program will go to supplementing Family Link events.

So, if you use items such as Pillsbury, Betty Crocker, General Mills, Juicy Juice, Huggies, Kleenex or Hefty, clip the box top coupons

and save them. Then, you can either bring the coupons to and Family Link event or mail them to Sarah McDermott, PA Cyber Charter School, 229 State Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101.

For a complete list of products that are included in the Box Tops for Education program, visit <http://www.box-tops4education.com/downloads/coordinator/clip/participating-productsflyer2008.pdf>.

Volume 2 -- Issue 4 -- Jan. 30, 2009

- ☞ Small sacrifice made for large, Page 2
- ☞ Kids strike early and often, Page 3
- ☞ Cyber readers move beyond books, Page 3
- ☞ Snakes are just misunderstood, Page 4
- ☞ A tour that's great for the tummy, Page 4
- ☞ Kids skate through the Link, Page 5
- ☞ Students cook up a little science, Page 5

The Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School is the premier on-line K-12 educational provider for students and their families in combining the best technology, personal instruction and rigorous curriculum with highly qualified teachers.

Small sacrifice made for large

Pa Cyber students sacrificed a small portion of their time to show their appreciation for the ultimate sacrifice and gift which has been given to them.

The Family Link faithful turned out in droves to create, in the words of Student Services Coordinator Cindy Socko, "the most beautiful thank you cards I've ever seen."

The cards were made to support wounded veterans.

The American Legion visits the hospitals of wounded soldiers several times a week and plans to send the student's cards with them. Socko said Family Link decided this would be the best way



CARD CREATORS - The beauty of the cards created for veterans was outmatched only by the beautiful hearts of the children who donated their time to make them.

possible to offer their support.

Socko said she want-

ed to thank PA Cyber parent Karen Johnson

and the South New Mil-

ford Baptist Church for offering the use of their facility.

Beads

O'Toole has been with PA Cyber since it began. She was one of the first to decide cyber school was the ticket for her.

O'Toole said she was drawn to cyber because her former bricks and mortar school's pacing was too slow for her. She has since found other reasons to love cyber school.

This cyber pioneer is now a senior, an academically-enhanced senior, who had started the year with a plan to graduate in January. O'Toole has even obtained 46 college credits by taking advantage of PA Cyber's early college program.

So, when she transfers to

Geneva College soon, she said she will basically be starting as a second-semester sophomore and will study computer science, communications or writing.

As for the Hartmans, Mrs. Hartman said, "They have a neat store, and I always wanted to come in."

"My sister loves beads," added her son.

But, now that they have started attending Family Link events, the family said they are planning to make up for lost time and attend more events.

Student services coordinators said they had never held an event at Beads Everywhere.

So, family link decided to hold two time periods for the beads, just to make sure no one missed out.

The event occurred just before Christmas, which proved to be quite advantageous to those looking for a quick gift from the heart. The students simply made their loved ones presents this year.

Some students made themed works of art, carefully choosing similar colors and shapes of beads and combining them in symmetrical creations. Others were more free-form, and made bracelets which included multiple bead styles and colors.

From Pg. 1

Kids strike early and often

Bowling has become a regular occurrence at PA Cyber, but it's hard to beat the value at some events.

At the Palace Bowl in Downingtown, just \$30 gets you unlimited bowling for a few hours for five plus a large pizza and a pitcher of pop. Not only that, but it worked out perfectly for students who attended bowling on Oct. 30.

"I often receive e-mails from mom's asking, 'Are there any student's my son's age going to the 'blank' event,'" said Cindy Socko, student services coordinator. "This was my lucky day! Four high school boys, a small group of middle school and then elementary students had all four lanes booming."

On September 24, a tradition was started.

A group of approximately 20 took to the lanes at Pleasant



READY TO STRIKE - A PA Cyber student carefully selects his bowling ball as he prepares to wreak havoc on some pins in Washington on Nov. 10.

Bowling in Mt. Pleasant. After some discussions, parents decided to make the bowling activity a weekly event.

Barbara Havey, students services coordinator said bumpers sprang to life as the young bowlers took to their lanes, but most weren't needed as the participants were quite skilled.

In Washington, at Alpine

Lanes, parents scored in more ways than one.

Moms, Renee Harris and Deborah Dye knocked down plenty of pins on Nov. 10, but they also had a chance to meet and discuss plans for junior high school events. The mom's bowled so well, that others had a hard time keeping up with them. The pizza gave the kids energy to complete several games.

Nesbit Lanes in Plum is a little off the beaten path and tough to find.

But once families were able to locate it, coordinators said everyone had a great time. With approximately 45 people attending, the lanes were humming.

Kaitlyn Henry discovered she could do really well using the aluminum ramp and a bit of help from the bumpers. Some of the older kids looked on with a little envy at this.

Cyber readers move Beyond Books

The Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School is now launching Beyond Books, a reading enrichment program.

"This is an optional program, but one from which all elementary children would benefit," said Lauren Bensink, director of elementary education.

The students will be able to access a list of pre-designated, reading-level books at <http://www.pacyber.org/beyondbooks>. They

can also use this web site to get announcements about book-related field trips and access online resources. The program separates students into three different levels. These will be just suggestions and students will be able to choose books at, or above, their level depending on reading ability.

Bensink said those participating in the program will be awarded

points for the number and level of books they read. Those points will translate into prizes, such as pencils, shirts and more, and certificates based on their efforts.

In order to get points, kids will have to complete a book report activity sheet found at the web site under the Captain's Log and then e-mail the sheet to elementarydept@pacyber.org. Also, if the book

is featured on the site www.bookadventure.org, the student can take the online quiz at that site in lieu of the book report activity sheet.

After your student has taken the quiz you can print out the graded results and send them to PA Cyber via e-mail or U.S. mail.

"We hope this program will launch a lifetime love of reading for your child," said Bensink.

Snakes are just misunderstood

After visiting the Peter J. McGovern Little League Museum for a field trip, eight students and their families went on a Family Link exploration of Clyde Peeling's Reptiland.

Reptiland is a specialized zoo that introduces visitors to the less-loved members of the animal kingdom in a safe, entertaining format. Students were given time to explore the zoo area, and then, they watched a presentation.

During the show, the group watched a video about endangered reptiles and the differences between the families of reptiles. One of the surprises of the trip was when the students were given the chance to touch a four-

month-old alligator and a fifteen-foot-long boa constrictor.

"Students were surprised at how soft both these animals were," said Sarah McDermott, student services coordinator.

After a question and answer session for the boa and baby alligator, the group moved on to "bigger" things, namely the alligator pit. At the pit, the guide stood next to the two enormous alligators and everyone was encouraged to ask questions about them.

The two alligators, as they learned, were named Rocky and Adrienne and were put together to mate. Unfortunately, the pair were unwilling because they were

in their dormant state.

The zoo has been renovated recently and the indoor exhibits allow comfortable viewing of more than 40 species in recreated natural habitats. During summer months tortoises and aquatic turtles live in outdoor habitats among lush gardens where ornamental grasses, bamboo and flowering perennials abound.

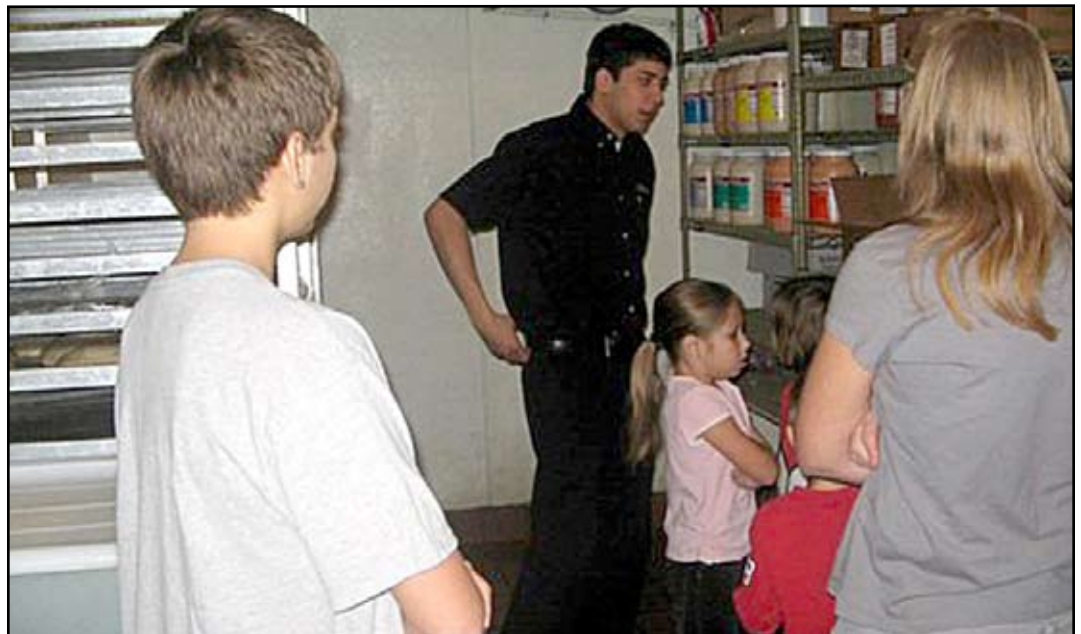
One of the goals of Reptiland is to debunk common myths and inspire scientific curiosity. In that spirit, the group watched a monitor lizard being fed. Their guide said feedings offer a glimpse of natural behaviors. All animals in Reptiland are fed humanely, so it was very entertaining for them.

A tour that's great for the tummy

Trips to Pizza Hut and Cici's Pizza are a great opportunity for young entrepreneurs to get a glimpse into the inner workings of a high-volume business, but really, the kids just like pizza.

During the beginning of December, more than 75 students and parents traveled to either Cici's Pizza in Washington or Pizza Hut in Chippewa to go behind the scenes and see what it is really like to make some of America's favorite food.

"After a tour of the facility by the manager, the families mingled and conversation was heard on a variety of subjects," said Barbara Havey, student services coordina-



RUNNING THE PLACE - The manager of CiCi's Pizza in Washington showed PA Cyber students how to make some dough in the restaurant industry.

tor.

In fact, the tours are meant as a way for families to network with oth-

ers in their area. After all, everyone likes pizza.

Both Cici's Pizza and Pizza Hut provided the

students and parents a wonderful buffet of pizzas, salad, pastas and drinks.

Kids skate through the Link

Skating is fun, but in cyber school, pure fun can be used for physical education.

Students have to get their gym credits somewhere. So, why not get them skating and having fun with a ton of their friends. In fact, the Big Wheel Roller Rink lived up to its name as more than 100 PA Cyber students and parents swarmed the event.

Cindy Socko, student services coordinator, said the group did more than just skate around in a circle.

"We had skate races, the chicken dance, and even the cha-cha slide, if you can imagine that on roller skates," said Socko.

Besides the skating, one mom met with every family and managed to form a Bowling group to be held at West End Lanes in Brodheadsville. The bowling group will begin this spring.

Then on Nov. 17, another large group of more than 75 traveled to Leisenring and Divito Park for skating, but were divided on what kind of skating to do.

That's because Divito Park has a regulation ice-skating rink on one side of the facility and a huge roller skating rink on the



SKATING BIG - A big location was filled to the brim with PA Cyber skaters of all ages at the Big Wheel Roller Rink.

other side. Fortunately, those with differing opinions were able to "meet in the middle," because there was a great snack bar area between the two where students and parents met to converse and exchange contact information.

All ages participated, from pre-school to high school, and even the parents got into the act. Some of the amateur skaters on both rinks looked almost professional.

On Dec. 15, skaters discovered how messy their activity can be.

While the rain didn't dampen the spirits of the nearly 50 Family Link students and parents that

came to PPG to ice skate and enjoy the holiday sights, it did dampen their clothes.

As usual, the Wintergarden at PPG was resplendent in holiday decorations and it was hard to decide which was more popular, the Santas from around the world or the gingerbread buildings displayed there. Students from the Frick School Steel Drum Band gave an outstanding performance that thrilled everyone.

Those few brave souls who decided to take to the rink and face the drizzle coming down, found themselves soaked should they be unfortunate enough to fall.

Students cook up a little science

Learning about molecules and what becomes of them when they are sped up or slowed down makes for a great science lesson, but it can also create a wonderful treat.

Young PA Cyber scientists learned first-hand the science behind ice cream at the Adam's Memorial Library in Latrobe.

Family Link sponsored this event after it was suggested by two PA Cyber parents. Family Link

supplied the ingredients and the rest was up to the scientists.

The students measured and mixed milk, sugar and vanilla into a small bag. Then, those bags were surrounded by a larger bag filled with ice.

Student services coordinators said there was quite a commotion as the students shook and tossed their bags. In a short time, voila, delicious ice cream that partici-

pants enjoyed plain, with chocolate or with sprinkles.

After the ice cream, the activity of the day changed and students carefully crafted thank you cards which were sent to Iraq troops.

"Everyone really got into the spirit of the event and we had some terrific artwork and sentiments that should be inspirational to the soldiers," said Barbara Havey, students services coordinator.