Dear Parents,

Tis the season for thankfulness, fun and great joy in the Lower School! Our holiday season was kicked off by our incredible Thanksgiving Show performed by the Lower School Band and Drama Club, Pie Day, Thanksgiving feasts, Apple Day, and orchestra concerts. Thanks to the innovations of our teachers and the help and support of our moms, dads and grandparents, our festivities have been memorable and fun for all our students.

We are truly grateful for the Faculty and Staff Appreciation Coffee provided by our Parents’ Association. “A Mad Hatter Tea Party” theme “wowed” us all with amazing décor and unbelievably delicious taste treats, all provided by our wonderful Pine Crest families. The notes of appreciation that accompanied each dish made everything all the more special. Thank you PA for making us feel so great!

You are cordially invited to attend our Choral Concert, "A Winter Concert - Songs of the Season". The concert will be in the Parents’ Association Performing Arts Center on Wednesday, December 12 at 7:00 p.m. The performance will run about one hour and will be directly followed by a dessert reception in the courtyard. Singers in grades 2-8 will perform in Latin, German, French, Italian, Hebrew, and Hindi. Program highlights include choral works, "Gloria in excelsis deo" by Antonio Vivaldi from Gloria, "Hallelujah Chorus" by George Frideric Handel from Messiah; texts by Shakespeare, Frost, and Wylie; ancient carols and folk songs from around the world, and American holiday favorites. All our families are invited to this great holiday event that is sure to warm our tummies with hot chocolate and our souls with fellowship and good cheer.

The Barnes & Noble Book Fair is on December 13 from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. All Pine Crest families and friends are invited out for a great time! There will be fun activities for kids, teacher appearances, storytelling, musical entertainment and raffles. A percentage of purchases will come back to our school. We thank our Parent’s Association, Debbie Prevor, Stacy Halpern, and Connie Smith for coordinating this great event.

Our curriculum focus in this month’s newsletter is keyboarding skills as they relate to a new generation of technology and QwertyTown keyboarding home practice. This practice is an essential prerequisite to the skills our intermediate students attain through lessons in producing word documents, Powerpoint presentations, and Excel spreadsheets. See page 3 for more details.

Vacation begins December 24, 2012 and continues through to January 7, 2013. The Lower School office wishes you and yours safe travels, joyous times with friends and family and a healthy, prosperous, happy new year.

Warm regards,

Sharon P. Schmidt
Head of Lower School
We will also begin our Winter Camp registration on December 3. Please look for the Winter Programs module on Black Board. These programs are available to Pine Crest students and siblings ages 5-12. You may choose from Sports, Swim, or Theatre Camp. All programs will operate in the mornings from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (no lunch) during the Winter Vacation with no camps offered on December 25 or January 1. If you have any questions, please contact the Summer & After-School Programs office at 852-2823.

**Winter Camp!**

Registration for Session 2 of our After-School Programs will begin starting December 3, at 4:00 p.m. Registration forms for Enrichment and Drama classes will be available on Black Board. Please note that you must re-enroll for the second session since not all classes will carry over into the new session. If you are currently enrolled in Dance, Tennis, Swim, or Road Runners after school; you do not need to make any changes.

**After-School Session 2!**

We’re Doing Good Things!

Food For Families: Students in the Lower School at Pine Crest truly know what it means to give. As a school we were able to collect a record-setting three tons of boxed and canned items for Food for Families. Thank you for your support!

PC Green Team: We are doing our part to help save the earth! Will you join us? Look for information about our new student club, the PC Green Team, that will begin meeting in January with Mrs. Sungenis!

**Artist of the Month: Lily Rivere!**

Fourth grader Lily Rivere earned the honor of having her artwork displayed outside Mrs. Schmidt office in the Lower School administration building. Lily’s artwork features a beautiful piece of pottery and equally stunning sketches. Please stop by to see Lily’s amazing talent brightening our office with her colorful and skillful drawings! Great work, Lily!

Cold Weather Dress Code

On cold weather days, boys and girls may wear uniform slacks or sweatpants, and approved outerwear (which is part of the required uniform program). Ugg-style boots and tall lace-up Converse sneakers are not permitted.

All sweatshirts and sweatpants with the Pine Crest logo are permitted and may be purchased at the Spirit Store.

**Spirit Store Hours:**
7:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
2:30 p.m.– 3:45 p.m.
At Pine Crest School, the teaching-method of formal keyboard instruction has been adjusted with a “flipped classroom” instructional approach using a game-based learning platform, and an integrated model through project based learning opportunities.

Pine Crest School Typing Benchmarks:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Accuracy</th>
<th>Words per Minute</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>20</td>
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</tbody>
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A New Generation of Typers

As many of us remember, we received keyboard instruction in a formal classroom setting, using the standard QWERTY fingering. While instruction through QwertyTown does reinforce those skills, students are learning how to keyboard in different ways. For example, with the increased use of mobile devices, such as cell phones and tablets, students are now learning how to keyboard using their thumbs, while maintaining speed and accuracy. Because of this, we can no longer assume there is only “one correct way” to teach keyboarding. Furthermore, typing is a motor skill acquired through repetition, and the original QWERTY keyboarding method was designed for adult fingers, on typewriters.

One piece of data does remain consistent when assessing typing skills, and that is the level of accuracy and speed. No matter how a student decides to type, students are no longer graded based on their finger placement, but on their overall performance. The only measurement of performance that Pine Crest School is assessing is the speed and accuracy of a student.

With the ability to practice through a cloud-based system, students can access their instruction anytime, anywhere.

Since moving to an online platform for keyboarding instruction, there is clear evidence that there has been an increase of at home practice, which will in time lead to the mastery of skills. While it is still too soon to accurately calculate data over time, The Department of Educational Technology will continue to track the results and data for the remainder of this school year. After reviewing the data we can make adjustments, as needed, to ensure students are graduating from their grade level with completing their benchmark in keyboarding, as we have always done in the past.

Low School News

“One piece of data does remain consistent when assessing typing skills, and that is the level of accuracy and speed.”

~Bryan Miller
Director of Educational Technology