Dear Southdown Families,

Welcome back to Southdown. We have had an exciting opening to school thus far. From the Block Party, to the Kindergarten Social, to Meet the Teacher Night, our events have been well attended by parents, teachers, and students. I have enjoyed visiting each and every classroom. The positive attitudes and smiling faces of our students light up our building every day.

This edition of the Southdown Stuff will be the first of three publications for the 2015-2016 school year. The Southdown staff will work to put together curricular, classroom, and departmental highlights to support one of our building goals; to engage Southdown families in our school. I also encourage you to check the school district website for other news articles that pertain to Southdown and the district. It is an excellent resource for the community.

I want you all to know that my door is always open. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. Being principal of Southdown is a privilege that I feel thankful for every day. Thank you all for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Scott Oshrin
Kindergarten Happenings!

We kicked off the school year meeting our new students and friends at the Huntington Firehouse. Our students received a book, pencil and a backpack courtesy of the Huntington Associated Teachers Union. Excitement was in the air on the first day of school as the children eagerly entered their new classrooms. They’ve been making new friends, learning routines and using their school supplies.

Southdown families were invited to the Second Annual Block Party. It was great to see friendships blossom between students and their families. Friendships continued to grow as we gathered together for the Kindergarten Social. Fun was had by all!

Recently, the kindergartners had a special author visit complements of our wonderful PTA. Tracey Delio engaged the students with a presentation of her book Louie V which is based upon her real life cat. All students received a Frisbee with a picture of Louie V.

Here's to a new year of learning and fun!

First Grade

1st Graders Get Independent!

Upon walking through the doors on September 2nd, first graders have been up to the challenge of becoming independent learners and members of Southdown’s community. Students have been practicing important social and academic behaviors that will foster independence.

In first grade, students independently...

- Pack and unpack belongings
- Follow daily routines
- Retrieve homework/notices from assigned mailboxes
- Organize desk materials (notebooks & supplies)
- Prepare materials for each lesson/activity

What our Families can do from home to help our maturing first graders...

Model! Show them ways you organize materials at home.

Talk about it! Ask them questions (Where do you keep your folder? How many pencils are in your work box? Etc.)

Encourage! Have your child be responsible for putting all materials back into their backpacks so they are ready for the school day.
Third Grade

We are off to a great start in third grade. Our students are adjusting nicely. We have welcomed a new colleague, Mrs. Amanda Osorio to the grade. Prior to joining us, she taught Spanish in Queens, NY after completing a three-year term of service in the Peace Corp in Ecuador. She has had a wonderful first month at Southdown and is excited to be a member of our community. Speaking of communities, we have finished our first unit in Social Studies which was a review. We are moving on to our first science unit, the study of matter. We have been working with our Chrome books as well. This has been an exciting experience for our students. In math, we are completing our first module that focuses on multiplication and division. In reading, our focus has been on higher-level thinking strategies, such as main idea and cause and effect. Looking forward to a great year!

Second Grade

Southdown’s Second Graders have been learning so much. We are off to an amazing start!

We have already completed the first 2 Math Modules - Sums and Differences to 100, and Addition and Subtraction of Length Units. The children have also been concentrating on mastering the BASIC FACTS of addition: adding and subtracting numbers from 1-20. You can be a great help in assisting your child with this practice. Flash cards and computer games can be a great help!

Our reading Unit 1 in Treasures is based on Friends and Family. We are reviewing our long and short vowel sounds. The classes are finding the main idea and details, practicing identifying the story structure (beginning, middle and end), and we are concentrating on answering text-based questions. Can you find the text-based clues an author places in a story that can help prove your answer?

Social Studies has us learning about communities and map skills. On that note, we are starting a “Flat Stanley” project that will have our own, personal Flat Stanleys to visit communities around us! Maybe on your next trip to visit Grandma, you can bring Flat Stanley along for the ride! Take a picture and write about his adventures with you!
Fourth grade has had a great start to the new school year. We welcomed Mrs. Myers to our fourth grade team. She will be a tremendous asset to our group. All of our students have been provided with a chrome book to use within the classroom. They are eager to participate in the google classroom world. In math we began with place value using module one. The students are using math language efficiently. In social studies we have completed our unit on New York State. Students created maps that were on display in the hallway. We are very much looking forward to our trip to Sagamore Hill in November and our Halloween dance in October. We are well on our way to an academically successful year!

Ms. Giorgos is excited to be working full-time in Huntington again! She is teaching English as a New Language (ENL; formerly called ESL), and is split between Southdown and Jack Abrams Schools. Ms. Giorgos helps to make the curriculum more comprehensible for ENL students in order for them to succeed academically. Through a variety of techniques, students are encouraged to increase their use of English in speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

Previously, Ms. Giorgos taught ENL and reading in the district. In addition, she has taught Saturday, after school, summer, and parent programs at Huntington. Prior to joining Huntington, Ms. Giorgos taught third and sixth grades and middle school Reading in other districts.

Ms. Giorgos is already enjoying being part of the Southdown family, and is looking forward to getting to know the students and their families.
Computer Lab

My name is Anna Constantine, I will be your child’s Teaching Assistant of Instructional Technology this school year! After spending the past ten years in the Huntington Public School District, I am very excited to work with all of the new and familiar faces of Southdown Primary’s stellar student body.

Students from kindergarten to second grade will benefit from lessons on the laptops while third and fourth graders will explore our new chrome books! Living in a world where technology is at the forefront of innovation, my goal for this year is to collaborate with classroom teachers to make learning about this important topic both enjoyable and informative.

Library

Welcome back to another book filled year in the Southdown Library. Please note that all K & 1st grade students visit the library every other week. All other classes are scheduled weekly. If your child forgets their book on library day, open book exchange will take place on Thursday and Friday, from 9:20-9:35. We encourage children to read for information and for pleasure. Feel free to contact me for appropriate book selections.

In library we explore:
- Library Citizenship – How to be a responsible patron
- Genres – Fairy Tales, Folktales, Fiction, Nonfiction (informational), Poetry, Graphic Novels, Periodicals, Reference Books...
- Authors & Illustrators – Author studies, Illustrating techniques
- Book Awards – Caldecott, Newbery, Coretta Scott King, Dr. Seuss, etc.
- Dewey Decimal System – Navigating the library independently
- Evaluation of Internet Sources – What constitutes a reliable website?
- Internet Safety – How to be safe online.
- Remember to take advantage of Bookflix, an online program that matches fiction and nonfiction books. Many selections are available in Spanish.
- Username: Southdown  Password: bookflix
- Keep on reading...

Mrs. Tietjen, SLMS

*** Materials are purchased to align with the curriculum and support the Common Core Learning Standards.
Hello parents, guardians and students,

My name is Adam Sherrard and I am a new Physical Education teacher at Southdown Primary School. I spent the last two school years teaching at Huntington High School. Prior to that I taught at Smithtown Elementary School in the Smithtown School District for seven years. I am extremely excited to be working with Mrs. Hefele, Mr. Oshrin and all of the faculty and staff here at Southdown. The theme in the gymnasium this year is superheroes. Mrs. Hefele and I have superpowers that align with the New York State teaching standards and we are looking forward to teaching all of the students to use their super powers to obtain Physical and Health Literacy. I am also very motivated to begin the introduction of a new part of our curriculum called Blue Devil Fitness in which students will begin learning a variety of body weight and resistance exercises to help increase muscular strength, muscular endurance, cardiovascular endurance and flexibility. All of the students, faculty, staff and parents have made me feel tremendously welcomed so far this school year. I anticipate a fun and active school year for myself and more importantly for all of the students here at Southdown Primary School. Please check out our website at lhefelesherrard.huntington.site.eboard.com or through the district website via the eboards tab.

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"Unplugging" Technology and Communication Skills

Shelley Stockner, MA, CCC/SLP and Sarah Macaluso, MA, CCC/SLP

Technology is everywhere and is being used by younger and younger children. Most children today have been using technology almost since birth. Recently, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), polled parents of children under the age of eight regarding their daily use of technology. Parents reported that 62% use tablets, 59% use smartphones, and 44% use game consoles.

Technology has an impact on communication development in young children. Human interaction is essential for speech and language development. Technology use can limit conversation and interaction that is crucial for vocabulary growth in young children. Studies have proven that there is a link between the number and variety of words a child hears and later success in school.

Watching a lot of television can lead to weaker language skills. Screen time, especially before bedtime, can interfere with sleep. Relying on technology for entertainment limits time for important creative play which has a crucial role in language and brain development.

ASHA suggests these tips to manage your child’s use of technology and create meaningful alternatives to screen time:

1. Choose toys that inspire creativity. Age-appropriate craft supplies, dress-up props. Keep children busy and engage them in make-believe play.
2. Include your child in daily chores. Young children readily imitate adults. Offer your child opportunities to participate in daily tasks such as sorting laundry, setting the table, or watering plants.
3. Reading and sharing stories is not just for bedtime. Shared stories help children learn early sequencing, vocabulary, and grammar skills.
4. Play board games, cards, etc. with your child. Children learn important social skills such as turn taking, sharing, and conversation from joint play activities. Playing with your child also gives you the opportunity to communicate with your child and model good language skills.
Helping with Math at Home - Mrs. Cicco

**Keep a positive attitude.** Many parents are anxious about math themselves. Children can pick up on these emotions easily, so keep your tone and attitude positive.

**Explore math in your day to day routines** Elementary school children are well aware of their daily routines, and it is easy to incorporate it into their everyday lives. For example, you can use the minutes left on the clock until lunchtime as an exercise for subtraction, or multiplying the number of boys and girls in the class.

**Explain math as a way to solve problems.** While math does utilize the methods of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, it is also so much more than these concepts. It can be used to solve problems. Explain to your child how math works to solve different problems, such as knowing how many pieces of cake you need to cut. This will demonstrate the value of math in their everyday lives.

**Get the kids talking.** Ask your child to complete math problems by talking through the steps. This will allow you to see exactly where his or her train of thought is and where there might be confusion.

**Teach money skills.** Get them a piggy bank, you can use money as a way to teach counting, addition, and subtraction skills. Older kids can even use fractions and percentages when trying to determine how much money they have saved up towards a desired item.

**Teach time.** Both digital and analog clocks can be useful tools for teaching your child time. Discuss seconds, minutes, hours, and days.

**Make math fun.** Play games with flash cards that use different math skills as a way to help your student practice.

**Computers make useful tools.** There are a variety of computer games that incorporate math skills.

Parents and teachers should maintain communication. Teaching math relies on both the teacher and the parents to help the students learn the skills that they need.

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**Art**

“Every child is an artist.” -Picasso

Hello from the art room! This year we are off to a great start making self-portraits. While creating our masterpieces, students had the pleasure of meeting Vincent Van Gogh who also made self-portraits. Students in Mrs. Morea’s classes have been starting lessons on colors and color mixing, lines and starting to discuss still life drawing. We are busy and learning a lot!

Please remember not to wear your favorite shirt the day you have art because we have a lot of fun using different materials. This fall enjoy the weather and go to the park and draw! Have fun!

Artfully yours,

Mrs. Plesent & Mrs. Morea
**Reading**

Over the summer the students were given a challenge to complete a summer reading log. We had an excellent response with twenty-three students participating. All of the students who participated will be recognized at the first Splash assembly in October, and will be given a prize and certificate. Congratulations and thanks for all your effort!

Tips for Parents:

- **Create a quiet area where your child can complete their homework.**
- **Encourage your child to read every day.** Plan regular trips to the Huntington Public Library to select all the latest books your child will be sure to enjoy.
- **Have books, and magazines around the house—non-fiction, fiction, joke books, comics, and children’s plays.**
- **Let your child see you reading.**
- **Read environmental print while you are on your way to a soccer game, dance class or trip to the city.**
- **Children feel confident and comfortable when they read books that are “just right.”** In order to find the “just right” book have your child read the back and front cover, and the first page of the book. If there are more than five words your child can’t pronounce or understand, the book might be too challenging. Be supportive about finding a more “perfect fit.” Choosing the right book will help your child feel successful.

**Music**

The band and orchestra program is up and running for our fourth graders at Southdown School. Our lessons began the week of September 28. Band lessons are on Monday and Friday, and orchestra lessons are on Tuesdays.

Mrs. Graber is excited to engage the students in reading and performing music at Southdown! Here are some ways in which you can encourage your child to be musical at home:

- **Set aside a daily or weekly time for music activities or practice.** We schedule sports, dance, and even play dates into our children’s schedules, but sometimes we forget to pencil in time for music. If your child plays an instrument, have them practice for 20 to 30 minutes at the same time each day, so it becomes more routine. Motivate them with a ‘recital’ at the end of each week in which the family gathers on the couch to hear a performance of the child’s hard work!
- **Use days off from school or ‘rainy days’ for musical creativity.** Do you have paper plates and bottle caps or paper towel rolls at home? Help your child make a tambourine or a rain stick! There are plenty of resources on the web that guide you through DIY instrument creations. Check out nphilkids.org for starters!
- **Tunes in the Truck** – Change up what you listen to in the car. Turn off that station that plays the same top 10 songs over and over, and instead listen to a bigger variety of music. Have theme days! Listen to Jazz on Monday, Country on Tuesday, Folk on Wednesday… you get the picture. You have a captive audience in your car so make this time count! You’ll quickly develop your child’s appreciation for music of all genres.
Who is your Mental Health Team????

We wanted to start the year off by introducing ourselves and our roles at Southdown to each student.

Ms. Renick, School Psychologist, and Ms. Kohan, Bilingual School Social Worker, visited each classroom with our “School Counselor Toolbox” to explain our roles at Southdown. We explained our jobs through symbols, such as a puzzle, heart, and magic wand. Older students were asked to work together to guess what the symbols mean, while the younger students were guided through the process. Our goal was to make sure that every student knows who we are, where they can find us, and have them feel comfortable to discuss any concerns they may have; whether it be at home or in school. We shared ways to be happy at school, problem solving skills, and various feelings students may have, just to name a few examples of what we discussed. We are very happy that your children now know what mental health supports are available to them in school. They are in good hands at Southdown Primary!!

Submitted by: Linda Kohan, LMSW and Melody Renick, MS Ed.

I hope you enjoyed reading

the Southdown Stuff!