

PLEA FOR HAITI

Thank you to everyone for your support and understanding following the disruption and school closures caused over the first fortnight of this term, and I'm delighted that we can now all get back to normal.

Although we have experienced inconveniences and disorder due to our extreme weather conditions it cannot begin to compare with the tragedy unfolding in Haiti following the catastrophic earthquake which struck on Tuesday 12th January. ***"Terrified Haitians slept outdoors for fear of being trapped in buildings brought down by further seismic activity. People trapped under rubble called out for help, as survivors tried to dig them out with their bare hands or with anything else they could find. Hospitals were overwhelmed by people needing treatment."***

All over Haiti, the atmosphere was - and continues to be - one of fear and uncertainty. The latest Haiti Earthquake news has the official death toll at over 70,000 and rising with the Haitian Interior Minister, Paul Antoine Bien-Aimé, anticipating on 15th January that the disaster would claim between 100,000 and 200,000 lives and the International Red Cross estimating that about three million people have been affected by the quake.

The level of destruction and death is on a scale that's just awfully incredible and, as a school, we would like to respond to the humanitarian needs of what is already the poorest country in the Western hemisphere by holding a **voluntary donation week commencing on Monday 25th January**. Student Leaders will be visiting tutor groups at tutor times or, if you would prefer, you are welcome to send cheques directly to the Finance Office (please make them payable to 'Ratton School Fund' and clearly mark 'Haiti appeal' on the reverse). I would urge everyone to respond generously to this appeal and will update you with the monies raised in the next issue of Gold Friday - thank you for your kindness and generosity.

Anne Wardle
Acting Headteacher

'EASTBOURNE SHOUT'

'Eastbourne Shout' is an exciting new project being organised by Ratton Community Arts in collaboration with Cavendish Community Arts that will be starting soon with the aim of encouraging all schools, community groups, youth centres and similar groups to have **'drop-in and sing'** sessions. We will help to establish the groups which will be all about taking part and having a good time, and are not only about being a good singer.

If you ever have the desire to break out into song -- in the shower, in the car, maybe at your neighbour's infamous karaoke night -- you should embrace it whole-heartedly. This ancient art not only feels good, it can enhance your well-being, reduce your feelings of pain and even prolong your life. Professor Graham Welch, Chair of Music Education at the Institute of Education, University of London, who has studied developmental and medical aspects of singing for 30 years says, "The health benefits of singing are both physical and psychological. Singing has physical benefits because it is an aerobic activity that increases oxygenation in the blood stream and exercises major muscle groups in the upper body, even when sitting. Singing has psychological benefits because of its normally positive effect in reducing stress levels through the action of the endocrine system which is linked to our sense of emotional well-being. Psychological benefits are also evident when people sing together as well as alone because of the increased sense of community, belonging and shared endeavour."

The Eastbourne Festival in April will include an Eastbourne Shout event when members of all the groups will assemble on the promenade and sing such rousing songs as **'Oh we do like to be beside the seaside'** and should be great fun.

Miz Wells, Ratton's Community Arts Officer, would love to hear from students and parents who would like to get involved in setting up and/or taking part in this project, and from students who would like to lead the 'drop in and sing' sessions. Please email Miz at m.wells@ratton.e-sussex.sch.uk if you would like to help, or for further details.

SNOW AND ICE

On behalf of the governors I would like to thank Mrs Wardle and the staff for the way the recent difficult weather conditions were handled. The news of school closures were posted early in the morning on the school website and local radio, and telephones were manned as early as possible. Staff coming in from long distances made heroic attempts to get to school, year 11 students (those who could) came to revise for their exams, and as soon as it was possible the school opened for all students.

Hopefully, the disruptions are now over and the students (and staff!) can get back to their normal routines.

Well done everyone!

*Mrs J Williams
Vice-Chair of Governors*

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**** EXTERNAL EXAMS TAKING PLACE****
(see website for full details)

Monday 25th January

Photographs for Years 8/9/10

Tuesday 26th January

Full Governors' Meeting 5pm

Friday 29th January

PFA Quiz Night 7pm (doors open at 6.30pm)

Tickets **£2 per person** (no more than 6 per team)
available in advance from the Finance Office.

Licensed bar.

SPORTS GRANT!



Top Sportswomen & Sportsmen read on

If you represent your county, region or country you could be rewarded a grant of between £50 - £100. All you need to do is see Mr Chaundy with written evidence that you compete at that level.

This is an opportunity to access valuable funding to help you pursue your sport. Your name will also be added to the Top Sporting Superstars list at Ratton. You could then be part of a group selected to take part in enrichment activities designed to support top athletes across the area.

See Mr Chaundy within the next week to be guaranteed a place or funding!

FREE COMPUTER WITH FREE BROADBAND ACCESS

The Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, and Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, Ed Balls, have announced a scheme to give 270,000 low income families a free computer and free broadband access. This is part of a drive to close the digital and educational divide between rich and poor and help keep parents in touch with their child's progress.

Families with children in Years 3 to 9 who are entitled to free schools meals, will be able to apply for a grant to buy a computer and broadband connection from an approved supplier, if they meet strict eligibility criteria. Looked after children up to the age of 18 will also receive laptops, and the scheme will offer bespoke packages to provide more support for children with special educational needs.

For an application go to:
<http://www.homeaccess.org.uk/Information-for-parents/>

IMPORTANT REMINDER REGARDING MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

A recent survey of students identified that 26% of students missed school due to medical reasons other than sickness. Please ensure that, wherever practically possible, medical and dental appointments are organised outside of school hours in order to ensure that your son/daughter attains the maximum attendance possible at Ratton School.

Many thanks for your continued support.

RECEIVING GOLD FRIDAY

'Gold Friday' will be sent home with students every gold Friday, and will also be posted on the school website:

http://rattonschool.co.uk/about_our_school/connections_e-newsletter/

In addition, we also email it to all parents who find this useful so if you would like to receive the newsletters by email please send your details to admin@ratton.e-sussex.sch.uk (putting 'newsletter' in the subject title) and we will be happy to arrange this for you.