

# Good Works

## Catch the Cooperative Spirit!

by Cynthia Bugna

Over 50 years ago, a group of local parents got together and decided their children needed a place to learn and play together. This group founded a small charter school where parents are partners in their child's early years of education. This idea is the foundation of the philosophy of the *Ellenville Cooperative Nursery School*. Through much hard work, dedication, and the continued support of our parents and the community, the small school grew over the years for the benefit of the children.

In the beginning, the parents and children met at each other's homes. Years of fun and learning continued at the Slutsky Center. (The rent was \$65.00 a month!) But space and availability became an issue, and a piece of property was very generously donated and a brand new building erected. For the past 40 years, the nursery school has been conveniently tucked away on Washington Avenue.

Finding the "spirit of cooperation" is not always easy in our everyday lives. Day-to-day challenges can distract us from the beauty that surrounds us. Choosing a nursery school where you, as a parent, can be involved in every aspect of your child's first educational experience puts you in touch with that spirit.

The school is owned and operated by the parent body. The executive board, elected by the parents, tends to daily operations and keeps things running smoothly. Monthly parent meetings keep the parents informed of upcoming events and school happenings.

The children are offered many opportunities to grow and discover during the school day. The nursery school environment offers children and their families a safe, comfortable place to make new friends and freely explore new situations. Our school offers free play, arts & crafts, circle time, story time and outside playtime. Our program is an introduction to basic concepts and skills and provides a solid foundation for kindergarten.

The *Ellenville Cooperative Nursery School* was founded because of a necessity to give children and their parents a place to learn and grow together. The current parent body has recently voted to acknowledge a need and offer full-day, half-day, and extended-day programs beginning in September. Necessity has made us adjust and make changes along the way, but the philosophy remains constant: parents taking an active role in their child's early education. It's a rare opportunity to catch the cooperative spirit! ☆



## Ellenville Run Like the Wind!

On May 18, 2003, the *Ellenville Run Like the Wind* will celebrate its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The original 10-kilometer race, which was started in 1984 by Robert Berger and Elliott Auerbach, was organized as a way to raise money for the *Ellenville First Aid & Rescue Squad*. Through the years, the 5-kilometer race and 5-kilometer fitness walk were added. In 2001, the 10-kilometer race became part of the Hudson Valley Grand Prix Circuit. The *Ellenville Cooperative Nursery School* has joined in and hosts races for youth as one of their major fundraisers.

Over the past 19 years, we have been able to raise over \$95,500 for the *Rescue Squad*. The *Rescue Squad* has used the money to purchase radios, to provide rescue training, and to purchase rescue equipment, among other things. This has helped the *Rescue Squad* in its goal of providing quality emergency services to the residents of the Village of Ellenville, Town of Wawarsing, and surrounding communities.

Whether by participating in the race, by volunteering time to make the race a success, or by cheering the runners along the sidelines, the members of our community have always been great supporters of the race. The actions of the community have always set the *Run Like the Wind* race apart from other races, as everyone bands together to partake in this great community event.

We encourage other non-profit organizations to take advantage of this great event. By taking pledges for every kilometer walked or run, members of a non-profit organization can collect the pledges for their own fundraiser. Or, we invite you to set up a booth in **Liberty Square** to display information about your organization.

On **May 18<sup>th</sup>**, at **9:30 AM**, the event will kick off with the start of the 5-kilometer run and walk, with the 10-kilometer run starting at **9:45 AM**. This all takes place right in the heart of Ellenville, in **Liberty Square**. To run, to volunteer, or to find out how to involve your non-profit organization in this great event, please contact Race Director T.J. Briggs at **647-3256**. ☆

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