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The LITCHFIELD PRIDE

FALL 2021

Official Newsletter of Litchfield Public Schools

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1

CENTER SCHOOL • INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL • MIDDLE SCHOOL • HIGH SCHOOL

The Journey Forward

What a great fall it has been for our schools.

Yes, there have been day-to-day interruptions with a pandemic. Yes, nothing is perfect and requires continuous adjustments. However, students learning in school, athletes competing on fields, performances, concerts, field trips, After School Enrichment, and we are only getting started.

This year is about the journey. It is not a sprint. It is not a marathon. It is finding success with each marker passed during the school year. The journey is also about the long-term view.

Over the coming months, the Temporary Regional School Study Committee, as appointed through public meetings, will review the future of the two districts. This group will make a recommendation to the Connecticut State Board of Education on the feasibility of the creation of a new, shared district. If deemed feasible, then the voters of Goshen, Litchfield, Morris, and Warren will have an important say about the future.

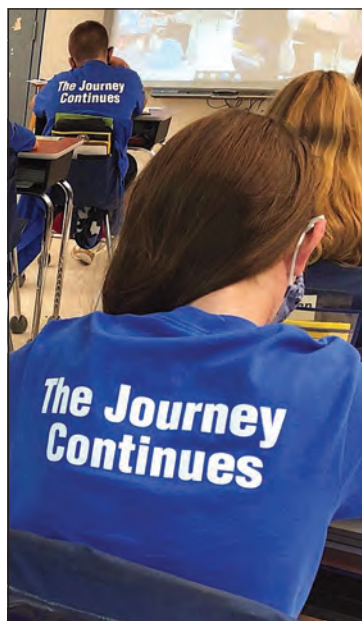
For nearly seventy years, the four towns across two school districts have shared many great events. At the same time, it has remained two separate districts – one being regional (RSD6) and one municipal (Litchfield). There is a concept that something greater could be achieved for the benefit of the students, and just as important, to allow the public to have a choice in the process.

The district goal, during the potential merger, will be to ensure that the community receives timely, informative communications. We want the community to make an educated decision based on facts (not just history or myth).

We welcome everyone along on the journey, that is the 2021-2022 school year. Each day our students, our district, and our communities create new history.



Christopher Leone
Superintendent of Schools



New Website and App

By: Andrew Buckle and Pam Vecca

At the beginning of the school year, Regional School District 6 and Litchfield Public Schools launched our new district Aptegey website along with its companion Thrillshare App. Just like before, the website contains a lot of detailed information about RSD6 and LPS. Registration forms, documents and handbooks are all conveniently located on the site, whereas the app tends to have important updates, delivered in a *social media* style to your phone. The website still houses everything pushed out by the app and is convenient for a quick check on a menu, school news, and alerts.

Once you download the app, you can choose to view updates from any of the districts' schools. Features such as a news feed, events calendar, dining, athletics, and staff directory, make the app a simple and convenient way to stay connected to our schools.

Check out the school district websites at www.rsd6.org and www.litchfieldschools.org - and don't forget to download the LPS-RSD6 app at the Apple Store or on Google Play.

We invite all community members to download this App and stay connected to the school community.

Scan the QR code for an app video "How To"



Left to Right – Grayson Crossman, Danika Crapo, Scarlett Murphy, Samuel Worden (5th graders)

Stay engaged in local education: www.litchfieldschools.org

Litchfield Public Schools

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Litchfield Center School

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Litchfield Intermediate School

Breakout in the LIS Library

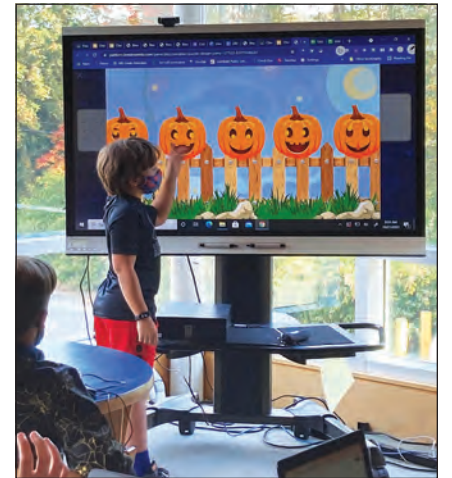
By: Jamie McDevitt, LIS ITL Teacher

Students at the Litchfield Intermediate School library have been actively challenging their problem-solving skills through the Breakout EDU experience! Breakout EDU is a collaborative, standards-aligned puzzle and gaming platform that requires students to think critically, think creatively, collaborate, and communicate in order to “breakout” of a series of puzzle locks. The Breakout experience is both in-person and digital; regardless of the platform, students must count on their content knowledge and problem-solving strategies to be successful. Each breakout puzzle begins with a backstory to engage students in a real-life or fictional problem to be solved. All puzzle locks include a picture or video clue. Students have the opportunity to explain “how” to “breakout” of each lock by presenting their strategies to the class. Students also have the opportunity to debrief after participating in a Breakout in order to make connections to the content area. Content areas include mathematics, language arts, social studies, science, computer science, library, physical education, art,

music, social-emotional, and team building (to name a few). Students reinforce subject-specific content knowledge while focusing on building both critical thinking and social-emotional skills during each game. Breakouts test the resilience of our students and they always persevere!

This fall, Breakout EDU introduced “Locktober,” a Lock of the Day Event. All students in grades 4-6 were engaged and thinking creatively with a Breakout puzzle during the first few minutes of every library session. Students worked collaboratively to solve each puzzle and ultimately designed their own Breakout game components by the end of the event. Students in grades 4-6 developed their own storyline, artwork, clues, locks, as well as lock explanations on paper and submitted their ideas to be part of a global community game build! The artwork from three of our students was selected and featured on the Breakout EDU community game page!

Students will continue to build their confidence with Breakout EDU as they are introduced



Grant Parker, Grade 5, Litchfield Intermediate School, explains the strategy needed to solve the Breakout EDU pumpkin puzzle lock during ITL class.

to the in-person lockbox as well as work to develop 21st-century technology skills when designing individual digital games. Digital game design will begin on templates within Breakout but build in complexity and creativity as students learn how to use Google Sites, Google Forms, and Google Drawings to build their own games in 6th grade. Ultimately, students will be teaching each other content by building it into the ultimate breakout experience! Do you think you have what it takes to Breakout? Ask your 4th, 5th, or 6th grader at LIS to give it a try!

LIS Specials Team and Music Update

By: Alex Kidd, LIS General Music Teacher & Band Director

The special's team at LIS put on the first Friday Fun Day of the 2021-22 school year! The purpose of these days or events is to improve our school culture, build current relationships, and encourage new relationships between students. In October, students enjoyed a kickball tournament with all classes in their grade. We are looking forward to our next Friday Fun Day in November!

The LIS band and chorus completed a pie fundraiser with proceeds going towards a festival and trip to Six Flags New England as well as LIS Music Department t-shirts for all students involved in band and chorus to wear during the spring concert. Students sold 614 pies for a total of \$11,666! The music department will be getting back \$5,000 which will go back into the music program. Thank you to all who sold and bought pies from a band or chorus member!

In music class, students took the spooky stories they wrote for their classroom teacher and added sound effects to make their story as descriptive and spooky as possible. We will be working with and talking about more movie-style music and how it is different from other types of music until we reach winter break. Students will also get the opportunity to create their own movie music!

Band students have been working extremely hard at the beginning of the school year. Fifth and sixth grade students have been working on music for their winter concert. Fourth grade students have gotten into the swing of beginning band and all students adapted to learning a new instrument. Seeing the excitement and enthusiasm from all band students is something I love seeing and makes me extremely happy and thankful to have the job that I do!

I hope everyone has a happy and healthy holiday season!

The LITCHFIELD PRIDE

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We Learn with Rhythm

By: Señor Ruiz, LIS & LCS Spanish Teacher

This year at Center School and Intermediate School we are learning Spanish with typical Colombian instruments and accessories particularly from the North Coast of the city of Valledupar which are the guacharaca, vallenato accordion, cumbia drums, guache, acoustic guitar, arguaca backpack, coastal hat, and spinning top.

Recently, at LIS, we also held in-class spelling bees where students demonstrated their abilities to spell numbers in Spanish. Winners from each class had the chance to wear special celebratory sombreros throughout the school day.

This is one of the most beautiful experiences of my professional life to be able to transmit Spanish to our students. Observing the joy in each student's eyes and hearing the beautiful voices singing in Spanish and playing these instruments highlights the potential and curiosity of childhood. Having the opportunity to learn a new language such as Spanish at an early age is very important in our community to project greater opportunities in the future. I want to congratulate the administrative staff, teachers, and parents for the great support of this new program. I wish you a spectacular fall and winter.



Spanish Spelling Bee winners. (from L to R) Travis P.B., Ben M., Tristan P., J.P. Malik, Casper K., Timothy H., Joe A., Anthony M., Justin J.



Spanish Spelling Bee winners. (Front row, left to right) Sophie R., Lillian L., Matilda M. (Back from left to right) Evelyn A., Tori G.



Special instruments in Señor Ruiz's Spanish Classroom at LIS

What's Happening in LIS Physical Education

By: James Rosa, PE Teacher at LIS

Hello Litchfield families! We have had an incredible start to our school year in physical education. We recently completed a wonderful Olympics unit where students were learning and competing in various running events anywhere from short distance sprints, such as the 100-meter run, all the way to the 1-mile. We have been able to enjoy our beautiful outdoor space and the Plumb Hill track. This unit was also helpful in getting students ready to complete their CT Physical Fitness Assessment which in part measures their cardiovascular endurance through either the mile run and or the PACER test. Students will also be completing various physical fitness events that measure their flexibility, muscular endurance, and muscular strength. This is done through a sit and reach, curl-up, and push-up test.

Currently, students are learning about American Football including how to throw and catch. These skills will lead to a completely non-contact version of the sport called Ultimate Football. Students are learning the progressions of throwing, including all of the important cues needed to be successful in the game. In our time together, we will learn how to create and defend space, move to open space, and catch a thrown ball. Students will also learn how to throw to a moving target.

I am so very excited to see our students continue to have success with each lesson and to watch their skills improve and grow. Improved skills build self-confidence which in turn leads to student engagement and enjoyment. Students who have never picked up a football are now throwing and catching at recess and telling me that they have been going outside at home to play. The more opportunities students are given to be successful in movement and activity, the more likely they are to be active outside of physical education, helping to create lifelong physically active young adults.



Students in Ms. Hill's 6th grade class practice throwing and catching skills during PE class.



Ali L. and Charlie J. enjoy a lesson on catching and throwing skills.

Litchfield Center School

Exploring Litchfield and Our History

By: Joanne Moore



Scarecrows at Tapping Reeve

This fall has been busy for our second and third grade students at Center School! As part of our Social Studies and Library and Information Technology lessons, every class in these two grades took walking field trips to the Litchfield Historical Society. At both the Museum and at the Tapping Reeve Meadow, students enjoyed activities that children in Litchfield experienced before and during the colonial period.

“Best day ever!” and “Can we do this again next week?” were students’ comments as we walked back to school. That is certainly proof of time well spent with our students. Some of their best learning experiences are immersive and hands-on, just like these!

Second grade students participated in the very popular “Scarecrows in the Meadow,” project as well! They created scarecrows that represented a boy and a girl from Litchfield long ago, and a boy and a girl from Litchfield today. This activity helped students gain a deeper understanding of our historical timeline in Litchfield.

Community collaboration was in full force during this project, and it will continue throughout the school year and in years to come!

Improvements in the outdoor activities for students at LCS

By: Lisa Deltano

In the spring, a committee of parents, teachers and administration began planning for improvements in our outdoor space at Center School. Previously, the fencing around the play area had been removed to give students a larger space. The next phase was to replace the existing playscape to give all students more opportunities to engage in physical activities. The committee chose a playscape that is appropriate for all Kindergarten through third grade students. A rock wall was also added for students to improve their upper body strength. An additional climbing structure will also be added soon. The blacktop has been improved with multiple games and activities like a running track, 4 square and hopscotch. The students have been very happy with the new structures and are excited to be active outdoors with their friends.



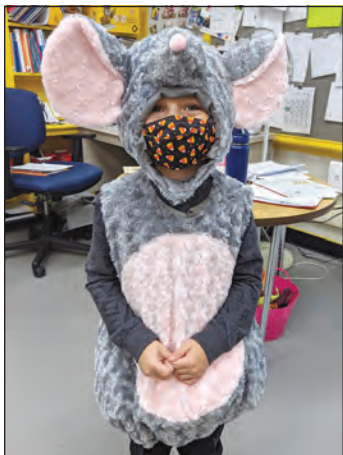
Aaron Harris, Kindergarten

Autumn White, Third Grade

Fall Spirit Week at LCS

By: Lisa Deltano

Leading up to the fall holidays, Center School students participated in a schoolwide Spirit Week. The students and staff enjoyed dressing up and demonstrating their school spirit. Monday we wore our favorite colors. On Tuesday, we wore costumes or dressed as our favorite SuperHero. Wacky Wednesday had us showing up in mismatched outfits complete with different shoes on our feet. On Thursday, all the silliness went to our heads as we had crazy hair and crazy hats. Friday brought us to our traditional Orange and Black day. The students at Center School enjoyed being silly and creating memories with their classmates.



Emmett Napychank, LCS Spirit Week costume day



Harper Currula, LCS Spirit Week costume day



Madelyn Meleski, Fire Prevention Day with our local First Responders



Jesse Acosta, Fire Prevention Day with our local First Responders

Litchfield Middle School

MS Celebrates Red-Ribbon Week

By: Carrie Gibbs, School Counselor 7, 8

Litchfield Middle School student's celebrated Red Ribbon Week, October 25-29. The week was filled with a variety of educational and virtually interactive activities, such as daily themed dress days and listening to influential *Storytellers*®. Storytellers is a video series sponsored by a national nonprofit organization called Natural High, whose mission is to inspire youth to discover, amplify and pursue their goals so they have a reason to say no to drugs and alcohol. At the end of the week, students had a chance to test their knowledge in several Kahoots sponsored by the National Institute of Health (NIH) along with some Spooktacular Advisory Challenges for some give-a-ways.

To learn more about **Red Ribbon Week**® and get tips for talking to your kids about drugs, visit www.redribbon.org.

Natural High®, is a national 501(c)3 nonprofit organization inspiring youth to discover, amplify and pursue their natural high so they have a reason to say no to drugs and alcohol. For more information and resources visit www.naturalhigh.org.



left to right;
Zoe Pisarki (8) Maggie Titus (8)

left to right: 8th graders, Will Acerbi, Edward Allen, Alex Dorne, Caroline Donnelly, Lillian Perkel.



Mr. Orosz' 8th grade Advisory

Fun Bunch of 8th graders

Middle School Co-Op X-Country a Success!

By: Carmela Wescott, Health Sciences teacher, MS Cross Country Coach



Front row left to right: Cole Marcinko-L-7, Evan Anderson-L-7, Luke Lacilla-L-7, Lily Markavich-W-7, Vincent Gagnon-W-7, Russell Kracht-L-7
Isaac Carlson-L-7, Luca Deveax-L-7, Quinn Ebner-W-7; Row 2 left to right: Reide Augustyn-L-8, Luke Adams-L-7, Curry Nye-L-8, April Knowles-W-6
Finn Outwater-L-8, Kerra Kennedy-L-7; Back row left to right: Eleanor Klug-L-8, Clarissa Tranquillo-L-8, Aidan Oullette-W-8

The Litchfield-Wamogo Middle School Co-op Cross Country team had an excellent 2021 season. Cross country training is a process that starts in the warmth of early September and ends in the cold and dark of late October. It is both a team and individual sport that challenges the runner to be motivated even when they are having an off day or when the weather is not cooperating.

All athletes have a goal to run their own personal best, whether they place first, last or somewhere in between. Congratulations to all team members for working hard to achieve their personal running goals.

Congratulations to Evan Anderson and Isaac Carlson who ran top 10 in their races. Special thanks to Clarissa Tranquillo, Curry Nye and Reide Augustyn who also ran top 10 and provided positive leadership for our team.

Litchfield's Luke Lacilla had a standout season with only one runner from Woodbury beating him to the finish line all year. Congratulations to Wamogo's Lily Markavich for remaining undefeated in each meet for the entire season. Looking forward to next year!

Litchfield High School

LHS Spirit Week Events

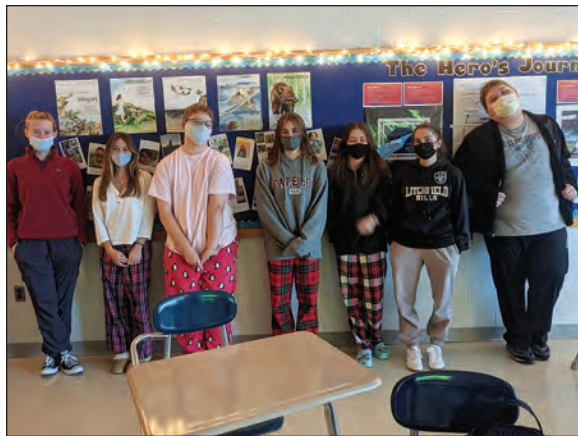
By: Patti O'Neill, Math Teacher and Student Council Advisor

This year to celebrate the Under the Lights games against Wamogo the LHS student body participated in several theme days during Spirit Week! Students and staff joined in on the fun leading up to the games by participating in Pajama Day, Flannel Day, Costume Day, Class Color Day, and Blue and White Day.

Spirit Week this year was also the kick-off of Class Spirit Contests. Each day students who participated checked in with one of the Class Advisors (Mrs. Carlson, Mr. Zeyte, Mrs. Simaitis, Mr. Parker, or Mrs. O'Neill) to help earn points for their Class. The Class with the highest percentage of participation earned 20 points in their Class Contest "Bank". The 2nd place class earned 15 points, 3rd place received 10 points and 4th place took home 5 points. The Class with the most points at the end of the week was recognized as the Spirit Week champion. Currently, the Senior Class holds the lead! Class Contests will continue throughout the year and the ultimate Class Champion will be crowned at Spring Fling in June.



Pictured left to right: Sophomores: Clair Olmstead, Sophie Perkel, Catherine Acerbi, and Bailey Pesce.



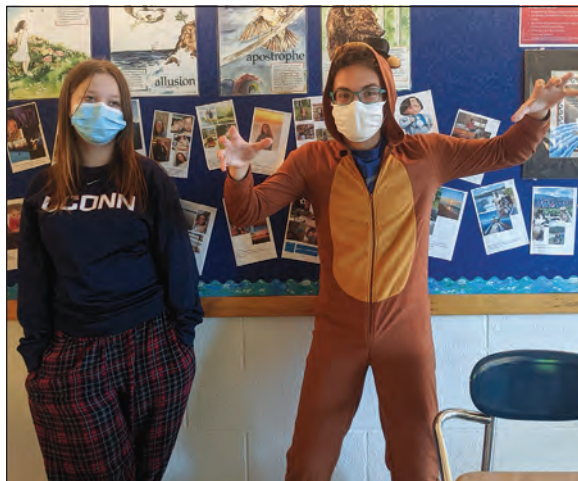
Pictured left to right: Sophomores; Jenna Sobek, Brooke Lacilla, John Shook, Kaleigh Hotchkiss, Peyton Weik, Reily Southard, Andrew Shook



Pictured: Kaylee McCoombs (10) as a spirited dinosaur!



Pictured left to right: Kathy Johnson, Tammy Knox, and Sue Leigh, school staff enjoyed "comfy day" as part of Spirit Week.



Pictured left to right: Freshmen, Ava Melko and Luke Pesce

Book Club Reads Carnegie Medal Winner

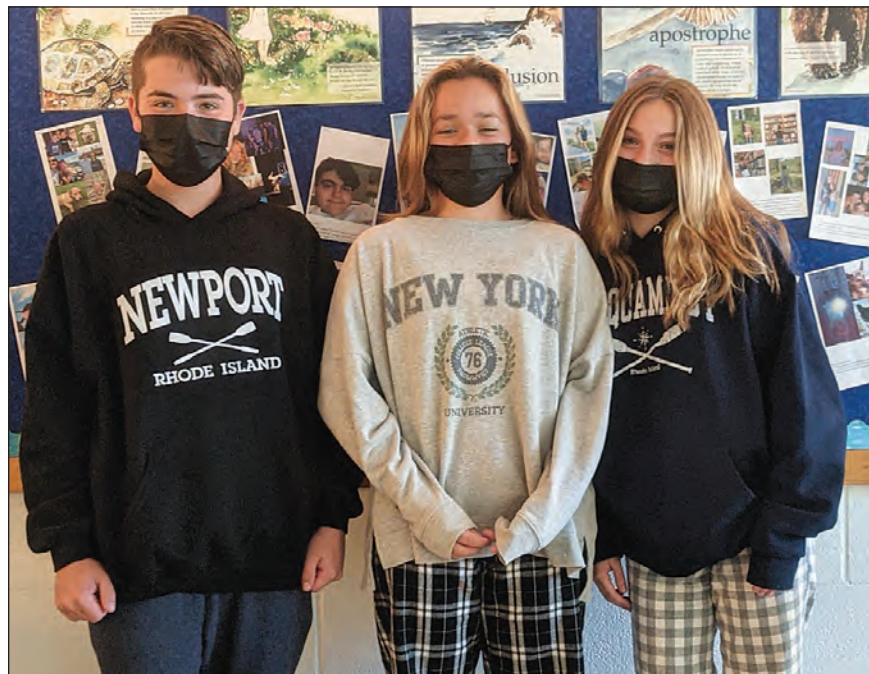
By: Kate Crowe, LHS Social Studies Teacher, Book Club Advisor

The LHS Book Club is reading Ruta Sepetys' Salt to the Sea, winner of the Carnegie Medal. Set during the end of World War II, this historical novel recounts the harrowing tale of four refugees aboard the German

military transport ship, the Wilhelm Gustloff. Thanks to Mr. Eckert, Library Media Teacher for securing enough copies for all of us. Book Club meets twice a month to read and discuss literature.



Pictured left to right: Sophomores, Alyssa DiLeone, Celia Stowe, and Sophia Gabriele



Pictured left to right: Freshmen, Joshua White, Reese Morgan, Madison Lacilla

Enslavement and Freedom Walking Tour

By: Emily McAdam, LHS Social Studies Teacher



Kate Zullo from Litchfield Historical Society

Ms. McAdam’s Black and Latino History class enjoyed a field trip to the center of town in early October. Kate Zullo, Head of Education at the Litchfield Historical Society, led a walking tour about enslavement and freedom in Litchfield. Stops on the tour included the Deming House, where two young women named Vira and Candace were enslaved before they escaped, and the Union Savings Bank Wealth Management building on West Street, which had been the site of the home and shop of William Grimes, who

had escaped enslavement and become a successful businessman only to be forced out of Litchfield and made to sell his property to buy his freedom. Students read passages from Grimes’s autobiography, the first fugitive slave narrative in American history, along the way. Black and Latino History is a new elective course established by the Connecticut General Assembly. Litchfield High School is among a number of other schools piloting the course this year; next year it will be offered at all public high schools in Connecticut.

Berkshire League Champions!

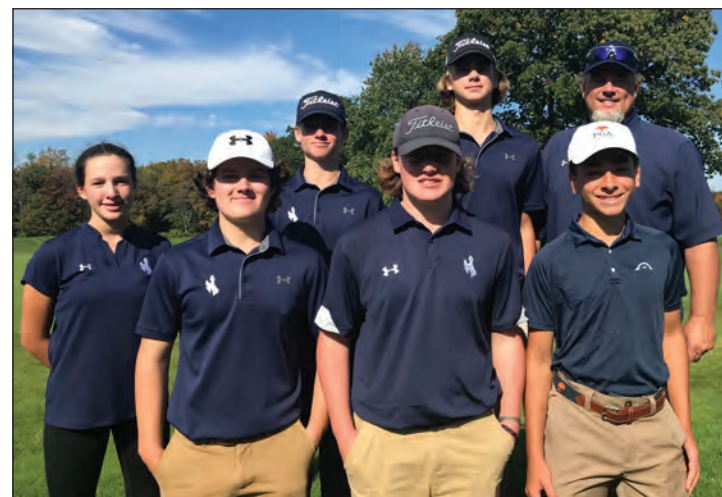
By: Rob Gollow, LHS Social Studies Teacher and Golf Coach

The fall 2021 athletic season saw the LHS Golf Team repeat as Berkshire League Champions. Led by two time BL All Star, Spencer White as well as first time All Stars, Haydn Marriott and Christian Prindle, the team completed its second straight undefeated season (14-0) Additional team members, Tom Valionis, Ben Muecke, and Grace Thompson were also major varsity contributors. Season highlights included Spencer White earning medalist honors in all but 2 matches while also earning All

State honors; the first Litchfield Golfer to earn All State recognition over the past 20 years! Tom Valionis recorded a rare hole-in-one while Grace Thompson participated in the Girl’s New England Tournament.

Expectations will be very high again next fall as the team has no seniors on the current roster.

Pictured from left to right: Grace Thompson (9), Haydn Marriott (11), Christian Prindle (11), Spencer White (11), Tom Vailionis (11), Ben Muecke (9), and coach Rob Gollow.



LPS and RSD6 Summer Learning Celebration “2 Districts, 1 Summer”

By: Pam Vecca, K-12 Humanities Coordinator

The Curriculum Office is pleased to share student participation and engagement in summer learning. Litchfield and Region 6 students in grades Pre-K to 12 were invited to participate in a number of summer learning activities that were posted on the Extended Learning Opportunities website. This website was created as a way of encouraging our students and families to remain engaged in reading and math during the summer months. Various resources, both digital and print, were made available in order to reach all students at both the elementary and secondary grade levels.

Upon return to school in September, students and families provided input via a cross-district survey on their participation and engagement. The feedback collected was outstanding! Our students collectively read over 8,000 books this summer!

Raffle tickets provided a great incentive for students to continue their participation. Tickets were awarded for each reading and/or math activity participated in; for each picture of summer reading and math that was sent in or shared on social media; and for completing the district survey. Local businesses that generously donated to our raffle baskets and gifts were: Hickory Stick Bookshop, Toast & Co., Hometown Pizza in Litchfield, and Arethusa Dairy.

To recognize and celebrate this success, a drive-thru event was held at Litchfield High School. This event was made possible by the efforts of the Joint Event Planning Committee. Students and families registered to attend



where they received a prize bag filled with goodies, an awards certificate, pencils, book marks, and a cupcake truck from Hardcore Sweet Cupcakes. Student volunteers from both Wamogo and Litchfield High School were also at the event to cheer on the participants as they drove through. We are proud of the students and families in our communities for all of their efforts and commitment to learning.



Shamel Silver and Isabelle Sideris
Litchfield Center School



Raylee Chase, Gillian Masi
Goshen Center School



Wamogo High School / Middle School

Academic Office Updates

November is Family Literacy Month

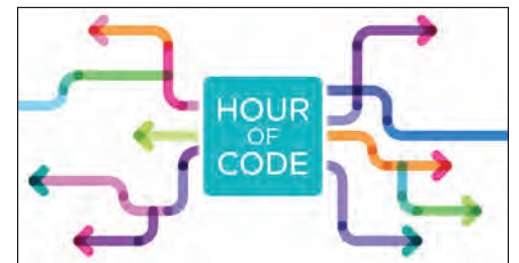
Here are ways you can promote family literacy at home:

- Set aside time each day for reading
- Keep books visible around the house
- Make regular visits to the library
- Read the book version of your child’s favorite movie
- Create pen pal connections - write letters to friends or family members
- Find a newspaper article or book about someone who lives in a different part of the world. Discuss as a family: What do they wear? What do they eat? What games do they play? Learning to understand and respect cultural differences is important in our ever-growing diverse world.



Celebrate Computer Science Week, December 6-11

- Children who study computer science perform better in other subjects, excel at problem-solving, and are **17% more likely to enroll in college.**
- Celebrate computer science everywhere by participating in the Hour of Code.
- All students in Region 6 and Litchfield will participate in an Hour of Code during this week.
- The Hour of Code is simple to run - even for beginners. You don’t need experience in computer science or teaching in order to facilitate a fun activity for your children that will get them both learning and laughing.
- You can try the Hour of Code with a computer, a tablet, a smartphone, or completely unplugged!
- For tips and tricks to do your own hour of code, check out hourofcode.com/us/how-to/parents



Update on Litchfield School’s facilities work:

We had a great summer preparing for the school year to begin. The buildings were all prepared / cleaned and arranged and so many projects were completed between the (3) buildings. Special thanks go out to all of our Custodians and Maintenance staff! We are so thankful for this group and all their hard work to prepare and to keep the buildings running!

Capital Projects completed this summer include:

- New Flooring in classrooms at LCS
- New Sidewalks / curbing at LHS
- New Playground Equipment at LCS

Capital Project completed in October:

- The Tennis courts at LHS have all been resurfaced/ resealed and repainted so they are ready to go for the Spring Tennis season!

Upcoming Capital Projects (December 2021) include:

- New Servers for Boiler Operation
- New Key Fob entry system at LCS
- New Key Fob entry system at LIS
- New Elevator mechanicals at LCS



Northwest Community Foundation Awards Letters are Characters Grant

By: Pam Vecca, K-12 Humanities Coordinator

The Northwest Community Foundation, in collaboration with the Oliver Wolcott Library, has funded 50 parent kits for the Letters Are Characters program. Region 6 and Litchfield Public Schools have partnered with this local community-based organization to support early literacy.

Letters are Characters empowers and links librarians, educators, and parents/caregivers to form literacy networks using a play-based reading program for emerging readers, coupled with an essential reading curriculum for adults.

The Academic Office is offering these free kits to the parents of LPS and Region 6 preschool and kindergarten students via a home communication and sign-up form. If parents/guardians choose to sign up, they will get supplies as well as weekly emails from the founder, Dr. Caroline Wilcox-Ugurlu, about ways to support letter study at home. The weekly emails will align to the order of letters that our school’s PreK programs follow. The kit includes a hardcover book that families can use to support letter study, a children’s workbook, ingredients to make homemade letter dough, and rock crayons.

Families can contact the Academic Office Humanities Coordinator, Pam Vecca, (pvecca@rsd6.org) to sign up for a free kit.

