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The LITCHFIELD PRIDE

SUMMER 2021

Official Newsletter of Litchfield Public Schools

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4

CENTER SCHOOL • INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL • MIDDLE SCHOOL • HIGH SCHOOL

Letter from the Superintendent

Dear School Community,

Tonight, with the completion of the LHS graduation, we completed 11 promotion and graduation ceremonies across both districts. It was truly a week of celebration after a historic year.

As the 2020-2021 school year closes, I am reminded of the many that made this year possible. There are not enough ways, or enough words, to thank our students, staff, parents, and community.

I have recently thought, “How did we reach today?”

The answer is that “We did this together!”

There were many shared and mixed emotions on this journey that included happiness, joy, sadness, and anxiety. We laughed at times and cried at others. At times we drained all of our energy but found just a little more to carry on and live forward. We have been mentally and physically exhausted, but resilient for our children. We have experienced significant loss and also celebrated life.

Through this year, I have learned valuable lessons from everyone and everything. It centers around taking in life one day at a time. This lesson has helped me to savor the good, learn from the mistakes, a bad event is not eternal, and find at least one positive in every day.

I have been humbled and honored to lead these two districts through a historic year. I am blessed to work with amazing students, staff, parents, and the community. I am thankful for each and every person that made this year possible.

May you all enjoy the start of your summer, find new positives every day, and celebrate as much as possible.

As we close the year, I believe now, more than ever, that our best days are still found in our future.

Christopher Leone
Superintendent of Schools



Litchfield Public Schools

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Litchfield Center School

Principal: Lisa Deltano
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Litchfield Intermediate School

Spring Book Fair Finds Success at LIS

By: Jamie McDevitt

The Spring Virtual Book Fair held this past May was a total success! “The virtual book fairs were a new platform for us this year,” said Jaime McDevitt, library media specialist at LIS, “but we were determined to offer the opportunity for students to be connected to new books, favorite characters, complete series, and value packs.” McDevitt explained that there were many benefits to the online fairs this year, especially that families had access to over 6,000 items, including new releases and best sellers and were able to enjoy author interviews and book-previews through the interactive book flyers and bookshelves.

All purchases benefited our school and connected kids with new books, favorite characters, complete series, and more! LIS earned 25% of all sales in rewards for our school and we can’t thank you enough for your participation and support!

Tower Garden Flourishes at LIS

By: Danielle Eichman

Litchfield Intermediate School was excited to be one of the area schools to welcome a hydroponic growing system gifted by UConn 4-H. The “Tower Garden” gift included curriculum and support for schools to help teach students about the importance of agriculture, growing your own food sustainably, and incorporating STEM concepts related to food production.

Mrs. Brutting’s 6th grade class took the lead in taking care of the Tower Garden including watering, harvesting, and monitoring the growth of the plants. “They really took over and planted all of the seeds and were in charge of the water refills and the harvesting,” Mrs. Brutting said. “The kids loved watching the lettuce and herbs grow and they really loved when it came time to harvest. They couldn’t believe how great everything tasted!”



Sixth grader Leah Daley stands next to a fully stocked Tower Garden full of fresh herbs and plants ready for harvest.



Charles and Lily from Mrs. Brutting’s sixth grade class with the Tower Garden after harvest and watering.

UConn 4-H is the nation’s largest youth development organization that prides itself on growing confident young people who are empowered for life today and prepare for a career tomorrow.

“The students also thought it was really ‘cool’ that the Tower Garden utilizes aeroponic technology. The same stuff used by NASA,” Brutting said.



Sophie Reynolds (left) and Kamilah Keneshbaeva (right) proudly display their awards from the 2 Districts, 1 Bee competition. Reynolds was named LIS champion and the overall champion of the 2 Districts, 1 Bee. Keneshbaeva was LIS’s runner-up. Congratulations!

Litchfield Center School

A Look Back

By: Donna Maraia

This year I am retiring from the Litchfield school system.

I have been an educator for forty years. Thirty-one of these years have been at Center School. Center School is my touchstone, a place where I have grown as an educator, established wonderful friendships and watched so many children grow and succeed. In 1989, I was hired to teach second grade and then moved to kindergarten. In 2007, the district offered me the opportunity to design and implement an elementary science program. With the support of my administrators, colleagues and parents the program blossomed and grew.

My vision as a teacher has been to be supportive and compassionate, and to instill a desire for all students to work to their potential by using their individual talents in a positive way. In the science lab, I display a quote that reads "The object of teaching a child is to enable the child to get along without the teacher." I designed the science lab with this quote in mind, guiding the students to make scientific discoveries and develop an understanding of concepts on their own.

Each year a new group of kindergarten students enter the science room. I have watched these wonderful scientists grow from a kindergartener to a third grader. Then, with a heavy heart, I said good-bye as they moved up to Litchfield Intermediate School. In fact last year's graduating seniors were my first group of kindergarten science students. I am grateful to have had this experience. My years at Center have been so rewarding. It has been exciting to watch the Center School Science Program grow with such strong community support.

I will miss my dear students, my fabulous colleagues and administrators. Have a wonderful summer, enjoy your family and friends.

Best Regards,
Donna Maraia

A Look Ahead

By: Jenna Raymond

My first year of teaching is coming to a close. This has been a year like no other, never had I imagined that my first-year teaching would be in a pandemic and that I would be lucky enough to teach almost entirely in person with my students. I feel very blessed to have ended up at Litchfield Center School, it has reminded me every day why I became a teacher in the first place. I am constantly surrounded by students who want to learn and are interested in expanding their knowledge and creativity. It has been a joy to see these children grow throughout the year, not just academically but also in their own interests, in their own skills, and in the way, they treat themselves and others around them. I am also

surrounded by staff members who are extremely supportive, understanding and kind and have the students' best interest in their hearts. I come to work and I have fun because I enjoy what I do and the people I'm surrounded by each day make it easy.

As I mentioned before this school year has not been an ordinary one, with many people and districts having to be remote, we have been lucky to be in person with each other, to create connections and be there for one another through these difficult times. I have been teaching art this year from a cart, and while it is not my ideal situation and there have been challenges,

I would teach these students every day from a cart year after year if that means that I get to see them in person, help them in person, and create with them knowing they have what they need to express themselves and let their creativity flourish. Throughout this year I have had a range of feelings, joy, sadness, understanding, frustration, happiness, and pride, but I think what I feel the most is luck. Lucky to be where I am, lucky to have such amazing students, lucky to have a great school, lucky to be able to do what I love, teach.

Jenna Raymond
Art Teacher

Summer Reading Partnership

By: Joanne Moore

Our students have worked hard this academic year and we are so proud of all their successes. We are grateful to our families for your strong support. Let's keep the enthusiastic learning going strong this summer with our Summer Reading Challenge! Center School students are invited to complete an outer space themed SUMMER READING CHALLENGE and return it in the fall to their new classroom teachers.

As a community connection, we have partnered with the Oliver Wolcott Library's Summer Reading Program called Summer of Space. Registration for summer reading and information about children's programming can be found at the website.

Students have also received a copy of the Governor's Summer Reading Challenge Journal to record the titles of the books they read over the summer. Reading and writing are important skills for all our students, and through these activities, our students will return to school in the fall ready for new learning adventures!

Joanne Moore
Library Media Specialist



Second grade SuperHero students



Grade 3 students participating in a Mystery Meet with students from Kansas.



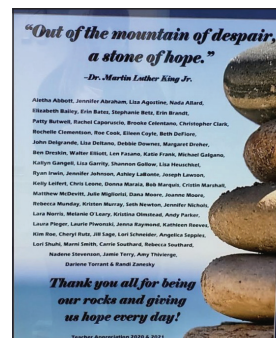
Grow Tower from Litchfield County UConn 4-H



Getting ready for our butterfly release.



Kindergarten students playing at recess.



Tribute to all staff from the Litchfield PTO

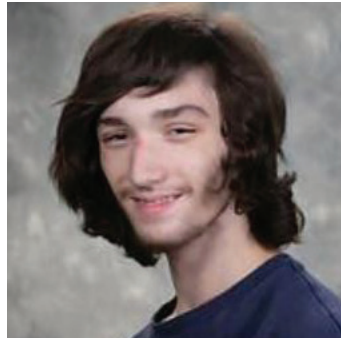


Sam, Sam, Laszlo and Colin enjoy some time at recess.

Litchfield High School – Class of 2021



Colin Acerbi



Charles Austin



Charles Baker



Kyla Bennett



Karis Bongiolatti



Dylan Brocar



Olivia Bryant



Ori Busel



Isabella Campanelli



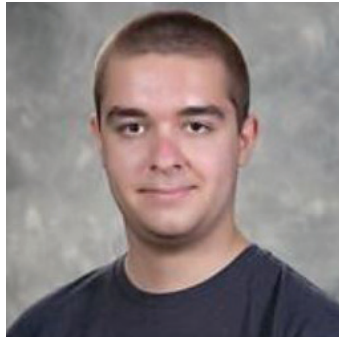
Madison Carr



Anthony Caselas



Julia Cheung



Eric Cowette



Zajans Crapo



Meghan DeLong



Ella Demers



Kaylee Dileo



Aidan Donohue



Timothy Donovan



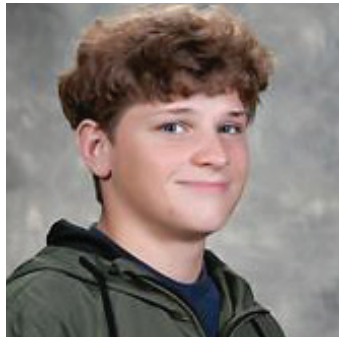
Ethan Dyer



Kyleigh Dyer



Christopher Elmendorf



James Errichetti



Alexis Gagnon



Madison Gillette



Amelia Girardin



Michael Gola



Jacalyn Goulet



Danielle Guillet



Thomas Graveline



Luis Hurtado



Michael Kelleher



Olivia Kennedy



Madelyn Kerins



Amanda King

Litchfield High School – Class of 2021



Olivia Laprise



Adam Larrabee



Robert MacDonald



Nicolas Main



Katherine Marola



Lauren Mazaik



Natalie McDermott



John Morgan



Owen Morse



Quinn Morse



Michael Neary



Caitlin Orsino



Kyleigh Osborne



Aidan Parilla



Noah Parilla



Samuel Richardson



Matthew Rousseau



Audrey Ryan



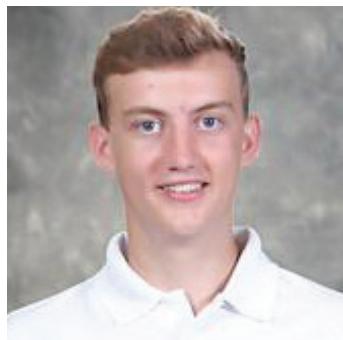
Jacob Sanzone



Logan Saunders



Julianna Sigut



Sage Sobek



Hayden Southard



Brody Stevenson



Ronan Tenney



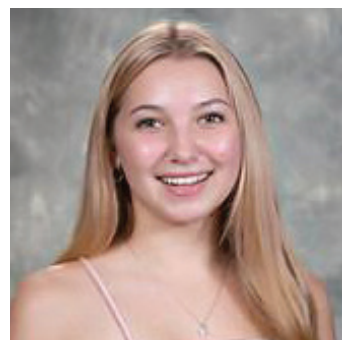
Jason Thompson



Erik Tieman



Hailey White



Sophia Williams



Victoria Woolsey



Anthony Zuffelato

Litchfield Middle School

LMS Students Collaborate and Problem-Solve During Advisory Community Activities

By: Kyle Harris, 7th-grade Team Leader

Litchfield Middle School's Advisory Program is designed to provide students with social and emotional learning (SEL) that addresses the unique needs of middle school students. One component of this program is our "Advisory Community Activities". This year, each advisory planned and implemented two community activities that all students took part in. These activities required students to collaborate as a cohesive group. Two activities recently completed were planned by Mrs. Smith's Advisory and Ms. Nolan's Advisory. Mrs. Smith's advisory planned a scavenger hunt which had students finding clues that were spread throughout the LMS/LHS campus. Ms. Nolan's advisory planned an activity called "All Hands In" where each advisory was tasked with using chalk to draw an image that was representative of their group, unique, and included outlines of each student in that advisory. Problem solving, group decision-making, cooperation, and other interpersonal skills were employed often when working through these challenges.



LMS Students Selected for ASAP! 16th Annual Celebration of Young Writers

By: Melissa Swanson, 8th-grade Team Leader

Out of over 150 submissions of poetry and prose by K-12 public, private, and homeschooled students from across Connecticut, the poems of four Litchfield Middle School students were announced as top selected Young Writers for ASAP!'s 16th annual Celebration of Young Writers. These students are:

Ailyn Tiul, 8th grade

Alana Budrewicz, 7th grade

James Lunt, 7th grade

Lillian Perkel, 7th grade

LMS ELA teachers Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Swanson encouraged all middle school students to participate. Works were submitted to a panel of judges and selected through a blind process. Top selected works will be presented at a live, private event on July 23rd, of which a recording will be made available to the public; details will be announced on ASAP!'s social media and website.

ASAP! is an independent non-profit organization based in Washington Depot, CT. Their mission is to foster creative, hands-on learning through the arts. The Celebration of Young Writers was established with the help of Ellen and Frank McCourt, Ann and Denis Leary, and Susanna Salk. This year's Celebration of Young Writers event host is The Maurice Sendak Foundation.



LMS Students Alana Budrewicz, Lillian Perkel, James Lunt, and Ailyn Tiul recognized by ASAP!

Litchfield High School

LHS Outdoor Adventure and Recreation Class Supports Life-Long Fitness

By: Kyle Weaver and Brian Mongeau, Physical Education Teachers

In 2017, a curriculum review of the exercise science courses at Litchfield High School provided an opportunity to develop our course offerings to reflect more than the traditional team-sport model. As a department, we designed new courses that aligned more directly with our stated mission, which was to develop in our students a passion for life-long fitness. We added several new course electives, including what is now known as our Outdoor Adventure & Recreation course.



Students learn to pitch a tent.

The Outdoor Adventure and Recreation course curriculum is not a traditional physical education course. The course is designed to expose students to the many great opportunities the outdoors has to offer. This program allows students to explore and learn about the outdoors through a variety of non-competitive activities, which include but are not limited to orienteering, hiking/backpacking, survival techniques, camping, fishing, snow-shoeing, and biking. This course focuses on the outdoors as not only a vehicle for fitness, but a way to develop your sense of place, manage stress, and learn life-time outdoor activities which are available year-round in one's community.



Students learn to fix a mountain bike.

The goal of the course Outdoor Adventure & Recreation is for students to make physical activity a part of their lives beyond high school. As students acquire and perfect the knowledge and outdoor skills, they establish more self-confidence and self-reliance, a foundation for enjoyment, continued social development through physical activity, and access to a physically active lifestyle. This course provides students with the knowledge and ability to construct and implement a lifelong plan for physical activity. The course is available to all students in grades 9-12 as an elective credit.

Students Support Area Residents Through Afghan Project

By: Sandy Carlson, Class of 2024 Advisor

The Class of 2024 hosted Sewing Bee, one of those good, old-fashioned, time-with-your-friends after school activities, to stitch together afghan squares for three blankets while enjoying some music, snacks, and socially-distanced fun and conversation. One blanket will go to classmate Kaylee McCombs, who was diagnosed with cancer earlier this year; the other two will be given to area shelters for those in need.

Since the project began during the spring 2020 semester, the LHS community has assembled more than 100 afghans, which have been delivered to the St. Vincent DePaul Society and Safe Haven of Greater Waterbury, both



Class of '24 Afghan Project



Class of '24 advisor, Ray Zetye, works with a student on an afghan

in Waterbury, as well as to Friends in Service to Humanity in Torrington.

The afghan project began last year when Sam Brown of Cheshire offered the project to the district. Originally, squares were stitched and sent to Mexico to be assembled and then distributed to young people who participated in Project Amigo's program, which supports children of west-central Mexico by providing access to health care, education, and other resources. When COVID-related travel restrictions made it impossible to get the afghan kits to Mexico, Mr. Brown decided to redirect the resources to meet the needs of the local community.

There are still plenty of afghans awaiting assembly. Members of the school community can request a kit from Class Advisors Sandy Carlson (carlsons@lpsct.org) or Ray Zetye (zetyer@lpsct.org), and they will get one (or more!) to you.

LHS Alumni Spotlight

COREY CREEDON

Corey is a Litchfield High School (LHS) graduate (2008) and is grateful for his education and experiences at LHS. Coursework in Environmental Science and participation in the Forman School Rainforest Project and trip to Costa Rica were foundational to inspiring and cultivating his interests at the intersection of environment and society. His academic and professional pursuits post-LHS have centered on integrating social and ecological solutions for conservation and sustainable development, with an emphasis on environmental and social justice.

After LHS, Corey received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Environmental Studies from Bates College. He spent a semester studying abroad in Ecuador through a program focused on conservation and ecology, featuring field visits to the Amazon Rainforest, Andes Mountains, and Galápagos Islands. This inspired his undergraduate thesis which explored an Andean community's resistance to a controversial mining project.

Following his undergraduate degree, Corey returned to Costa Rica to work with Rustic Pathways, leading environmentally themed service-learning trips abroad for high school students and partnering local counterparts on sea turtle conservation. He then went on to serve three years as an Environmental Conservation Specialist in Paraguay with the United States Peace Corps, where he worked in environmental youth education and leadership. He extended his service for a third year to work with World Wildlife Fund/Paraguay, helping to support a project related to climate change, forest conservation, and sustainable livelihoods.

Returning to the United States, Corey received his master's degree in Environmental Management from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and worked with the Urban Resources Initiative in New Haven, supporting community groups to restore and maintain urban greenspaces.

Corey recently completed a post-master's fellowship with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in Washington, D.C., where he conducted research on the drivers of coastal wetland loss in the Southeast United States and co-coordinated an interagency workgroup on coastal wetlands conservation. He also engaged in efforts to integrate environmental justice more significantly into water quality and climate change work at the EPA.

Currently, Corey is working with the United Nations Development Programme to co-lead a project that seeks to analyze and craft solutions to issues of water resources, climate change, and peace in Latin America's Tropical Andean region (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Perú). Corey also holds a position as an Adjunct Faculty Instructor in Environmental Policy with the University of Maryland Global Campus where he teaches online courses in Environmental Policy.



TYLER GREEN



Photo courtesy of: Anthony Videria

Tyler is one of the most inspiring, innovative and outside-of-box thinkers you'll ever meet. With an intuitive and innovative approach to the creative process, he uses his artistic ability and skills to work within a variety of industries requiring his expertise in SFX makeup and education.

Tyler is an educator. He teaches students of all ages in his studio located in Winsted, CT. He travels all around the country training the next generation of makeup artist.

Tyler believes that in within each of us there is an ability to think beyond the obvious if we expand our minds.

"I believe if you have the drive, determination, and creativity, you might be pleasantly surprised with what you can do" - Tyler Green

He is the owner of Creative Genius LLC, and is an inventor of consumer gadgets and accessories. Among many other products, Tyler conceptualized and developed the Wonderband Systems™, an intricate intelligent concept for gripping items, with applications in multiple industries. He also launched a new children's DIY activity kit called Monster Kidz Box™ that includes everything you need to create your own one of a kind monster mask!

Tyler's incredible and unique talents and achievements have been featured over the years in newspapers, magazines, and on radio and television.

MARIA LITTLEFIELD

Maria Littlefield is the Co-Founder and COO of Owl's Brew. Owl's Brew crafts a line of Hard Tea Seltzers made from 100% real ingredients. Maria is a tea expert, with a background in marketing and psychology. She has been selected by Forbes for "30 Under 30", and is a Forbes Mentor. Maria is a graduate of Skidmore College and Litchfield High School. She resides in New York City.

