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The LITCHFIELD PRIDE

FALL 2022

Official Newsletter of Litchfield Public Schools

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1

CENTER SCHOOL • INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL • MIDDLE SCHOOL • HIGH SCHOOL

Holiday Thanks

Dear Community,

The holiday season is upon us and the calendar approaches 2023.

It has been truly an amazing year with many milestones. As I reflect on the year a simple word comes to mind – thankful.

It has been a true honor to lead two districts, our staff, students, parents, and the community through the end of a pandemic. I am thankful for the collaboration as we approach education with an unwavering student-centered focus. I am thankful in a divided world that locally we are able to acknowledge differences of opinion but never forget our purpose in education.

I am most thankful for the ability to work with everyone, who brings various viewpoints, to build something for the future. That diversity of thought makes these four towns beautiful. As we look to a new year we will continue down a path to a new regional school district. There is understandable anxiety found in that work and the future, but that work is also historic. If we stay focused on our children, I believe that the future will be thankful for the work of the present.

In closing wishing everyone the best for this holiday season and the coming new year.



Christopher Leone
Superintendent of Schools



Stay engaged in local education: www.litchfieldschools.org

Litchfield Intermediate School

Litchfield Public Schools

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PTO Event Brings Students, Parents, and School Staff Together

By: Danielle Eichman, LIS Administrative Assistant

On October 14, the Litchfield PTO held its Fall Festival at the Litchfield Intermediate School. LIS was so excited to welcome the PTO's fundraiser back into our beautiful halls once again. The PTO's goal behind this event was to start rebuilding the community after a few years of missed opportunities for big, community fun - and they certainly did not disappoint! The event was really a fall spectacular complete with hayrides, games, crafts, raffles, pizza, popcorn, donuts, apple cider, bounce houses, and even a performance by a faculty band! A special thank you to the PTO for all they do for our school community!

Members of the LIS staff "donated" prizes for the PTO raffle. These prizes were special events or opportunities that staff members could offer to students as an extra special treat! Congratulations to all of the LIS Winners!

Mrs. McDevitt Bot Build Afternoon - Nora Celella

Ms. Trocchio 4th Grade Lunch - Phoebe Szwed

Ms. Kraut 4th Grade Lunch - Felicity Scott

Mrs. Harber's Book Club - Sunny Federovich

Mr. Kidd and Mr. Moe 2 on 2 Basketball -
Isaac DeHippolytis and Abel Gilbert

5th Grade 4-Square with 5 Friends - Darwin Villa

Ms. Hill 6th Grade Lunch - Elian Gerena

Ms. Sullivan: Book a Lunch - Isaac DeHippolytis

Lunch with the Principal - Samantha Ugurlu

Principal for a Day - Elena Marcinko

Photo Opp with Mr. Valerio's Motorcycle -
Charlie-Harper Brennan

Charlie-Harper B. poses on Mr. Valerio's motorcycle! This photo-op was one of the prizes from the PTO's Fall Festival Fundraiser. This prize was in HIGH demand!



Fourth-grader Elena M. got to be principal for the day, another great prize from the PTO raffle. Elena helped with bus duty and got to have lunch with Mr. Valerio!



Fifth-grader Nora C. was the winner of Mrs. McDevitt's BattleBot raffle prize. Nora and some friends got to spend extra time in the media center after school with Mrs. McDevitt working on Battle Bots!

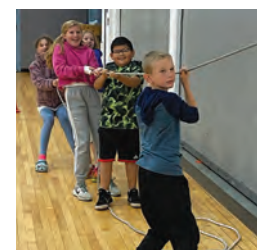


Community Outreaches

By: Danielle Eichman, LIS Administrative Assistant

LIS has been very fortunate to be the recipient of amazing events held by different members of our community. On Wednesday, October 5, LIS partook in the annual Fire Prevention Day. This is a wonderful day that students look forward to every year. Inclement weather did not prevent first-responder volunteers from hosting a wonderful indoor event for LIS. Students participated in several different indoor stations and learned all about fire prevention and ambulance safety. John Pudlinski of Litchfield Ambulance handed out fun goodie bags to students as parting gifts for their participation in Fire Prevention Day. A special thank you to Litchfield Fire Marshal Chris Wilcox for organizing this year's event, all of the volunteer fire departments, and Litchfield Ambulance for their outstanding work with our students. We had a blast!

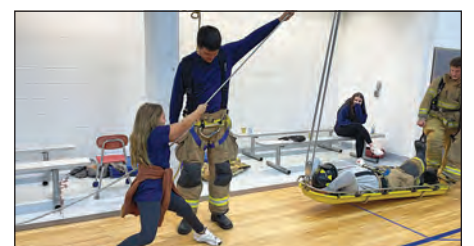
LIS was also very fortunate to host the Litchfield Lions Club which offered free vision screenings to LIS students. The Lions Club volunteers were able to screen ninety-one students in less than two hours!



Fifth-graders from Mrs. Rooney's class practice lifting with a pulley system with the volunteer fire fighters.



Sixth-graders (left to right) Chloe J., Lars J.C., Justin J, and Grant P learn how to properly secure someone to a stretcher.



Hailey W. practices hoisting with a pulley in the LIS gym. Hailey's dad was one of the firefighters who volunteered on Fire Prevention Day!

More News from Litchfield Intermediate School

Fall Spirit Days at LIS

By: Danielle Eichman, LIS Administrative Assistant

Litchfield Intermediate School has had an amazing first couple of months back to school for the 2022-2023 school year. So far this school year, LIS has posted several “Spirit Days” encouraging school spirit, camaraderie, and community. Some of the spirit days held this fall were Pink Out Day on October 28, Black and Orange Day on October 31, and Red, White, and Blue Day on November 10.

Pink Out Day was held in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Students and staff did not disappoint with their showing of pink outfits, accessories, and even pink hair! As fun as it was to deck out in all pink, our pink outfits were more importantly a tribute to all affected by breast cancer. A special thank you to fifth-grade teacher, Kelly Leifert, who took the lead in arranging a collection amongst the staff. Ms. Leifert personally collected and delivered the donations to Smilow Cancer Hospital Care Center in Torrington.

On November 10, students and staff came together as a school community to wear our best red, white, and blue in honor of Veterans Day. While no thank you could ever be enough, LIS did our best to honor veterans with different displays throughout the school featuring military family members of students and staff.

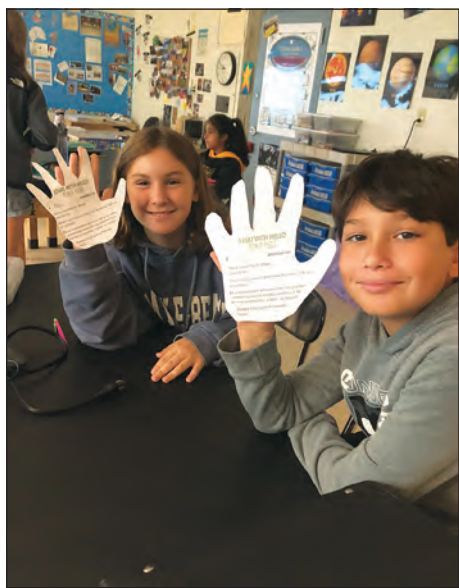


LIS students wearing their best pink on Pink Out Day for Breast Cancer Awareness.

It Starts With “Hello” at Litchfield Intermediate School

By: Danielle Eichman (LIS Administrative Assistant) with contribution from Malissa Harber (LIS Instructional Assistant)

Litchfield Intermediate School participated in an exceptional week of celebrating kindness and inclusion and making meaningful connections with peers. “Start With Hello Week” is a nationwide effort that was started by the Sandy Hook Promise. Thousands of schools and youth organizations took part in this special movement from September 19 to 23. The call-to-action helps raise awareness about social isolation while teaching our students how to prevent feelings of isolation and exclusion from happening. Each day presented a different initiative. Our students signed a “Start with Hello” pledge, learned how to say “hello” in many different languages, crafted sticky notes with beautiful sentiments to hand out to trusted adults or hang on classroom doors, went all out and dressed in green in support of inclusion, sat with new friends at lunch, and enjoyed connecting with new students! There is so much importance behind inclusion and our students did a fantastic job helping all students realize they are a part of our wonderful school community.



Sixth-graders Maya M. (left) and Christian M. (right) sign the Start With Hello Promise Pledge. The pledge reads, “I promise to have empathy for those around me; reach out to peers who may be alone, left out, or isolated; be an upstander who uses my voice when something seems wrong, whether it be for my community, a peer, or myself; always start with a friendly ‘hello’”

A special thank you to Malissa Harber, Instructional Assistant at LIS, who took the lead on introducing LIS to “Start With Hello Week” and to all the LIS staff who every day, but especially during this wonderful week, really lead by example promoting inclusion and kindness. It is amazing how just saying “hello” can change someone’s entire day!



LIS Staff wears green to show support for inclusion during Start With Hello Week. Front row, left to right, Mrs. McDevitt, Mrs. Lemnotis, Ms. Leifert, Ms. Sullivan, Mrs. Nicholson, Mrs. Michaud, Ms. Eichman. Back row, left to right, Mr. Moe, Mrs. Harber, Ms. McDevitt, Mrs. Thompson, Mrs. Rooney, Ms. D’Amore, Mr. Kidd, Mrs. Johnson, Ms. McCane, Ms. Behmke, Mr. Valerio



Friends Chloe J. (left) and Matilda M. (right) wear green and share bright smiles during Start With Hello Week!

Litchfield Center School

Scarecrows in the Meadow

By: Lisa Deltano, Principal

Second-grade classes created their own scarecrows to be displayed at the Litchfield Historical Society’s Scarecrows in the Meadow display in the Tapping Reeve Meadow behind the Tapping Reeve Law School. The students worked with their classmates and teachers to design, gather materials and build their scarecrows for the display. Students

Felix is a Center School second-grade boy who is ready to learn. He has his backpack, water bottle, and “School Rocks” hat. He is just as excited for school as the students in Mrs. Sage’s class who created him!

Mrs. Olmstead was brought to life as a scarecrow by Mrs. O’Leary’s class. Mrs. Olmstead is our science teacher, ready to do experiments in her lab coat with her clipboard and safety goggles.

Stella is a Center School second-grade girl who enjoys reading and making new friends. Stella is just like the students in Mrs. Abraham’s class.

Mr. Parker is ready for class with his sneakers, class roster and video for Simon Says. Mr. Clark’s class enjoys PE so much that they wanted to honor Mr. Parker with his look alike.



Scarecrow Felix by Mrs. Sage’s second grade class.

Scarecrow Mrs. Olmstead by Mrs. O’Leary’s second grade class.

Scarecrow Mr. Parker by Mr. Clark’s second grade class.

Scarecrow Stella by Mrs. Abraham’s second grade class.



Author Cristina Geist shares her latest book, *Buddy’s New Buddy* with the Center School students.

More News from Litchfield Center School

International Dot Day Celebration

By: Mrs. Jennifer Johnson, Mrs. Nadene Stevenson-McDermott, Mrs. Marni Smith, Ms. Shannon Dieck

Center School third graders celebrated International Dot Day in September. Peter H. Reynolds’ book *The Dot* inspired this yearly celebration to embrace creativity, courage, and collaboration. The celebration is easily one of the most fun days of the year! Celebrated by both children and adults, International Dot Day is a day to connect, collaborate, and create. It’s also a great day to foster self-expression. Our third graders read stories, participated in collaborative stem projects, and created artwork to demonstrate their perseverance, growth mindset, and creativity. We look forward to next year’s celebration!



Grade 3 Teachers (l-r) Jennifer Johnson, Nadene McDermott-Stevenson, Marni Smith, Shannon Dieck show their Dot Day spirit



Grade 3 students (l-r) Aria Angueira, Elliot White, Bennett Schuch share their Dot Day creation.



Grade 3 students (l-r) Carter Ulrich-Trozzi, Gregory Youmans, Emma Casanova, Madeline McDonnell show their Dot Day creation.

Mystery Skype

By: Mia Perugini & Raylee Chase - Mrs. Smith’s 3rd Grade Class

Mystery Skype is a game that you and your class play with a class from a different state. You have certain jobs for the class. For example, the greeter. The greeter is a job where they play one round of “Rock, Paper, Scissors, Shoot”. Whoever wins will ask the first question. Your class will ask questions back and forth to each other about which state they are in. Eventually, they will find out which state you are in, and your class will find out which state they are in. Then your class will give facts about Connecticut, and they will give facts about their state. We played against a class from Massachusetts! This is what we learned about Massachusetts:

- They invented basketball
- Their state capital is Boston
- Boston Terrier is their state dog
- They invented chocolate chip cookies by accident
- Their school colors are purple and white
- Their town name is Norton
- A historical landmark is Plymouth Rock
- Their school is named J.C. Solmonese Elementary School

Mystery Skype is so fun! We can’t wait to do the next one!

Mia Perugini & Raylee Chase

Mrs. Smith’s 3rd Grade Class



Robots have arrived at Center School!

By: Kristina Olmstead, LCS Science Teacher

All Center School students in pre-K through Grade 3 will be building their 21st Century Skills in a new and exciting way this school year by learning to program robots! Early exposure to computer science and programming is a wonderful way to keep students engaged in STEM, and we are so excited to bring this opportunity to our students!

Center School will be celebrating Computer Science all December long in the science room and will have a Coding Week in all Specials classes from December 5th-9th. All Center School students will have the opportunity to program and solve challenges using TTS Blue-Bots and Sphero Indi. We are sure to have a lot of fun as we collaborate, problem-solve, and learn how to communicate with our robot friends! As the year progresses, students will have more opportunities to use this technology to expand their learning and make connections across the curriculum.

Mrs. Gangell’s AM pre-K class and a few lucky students earning STEM ticket rewards were among the first to try their hand at programming the Blue-Bots and Sphero Indi. We can’t wait for more students to give it a try!

Litchfield Middle School

LMS Celebrates Red Ribbon Week

By: Carrie Gibbs, LMS School Counselor

Litchfield Middle School students celebrated Red Ribbon Week at the end of the month. 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. The week ended “Spooktacular,” as students engaged in various challenges in the gym and the classroom. Ms. Groves advisory class was awarded the “Most Spirited” for its participation throughout the week.

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.



LMS Link Crew Joins the Fun at Halloween on the Hill

By: Carrie Gibbs, LMS School Counselor

The Litchfield Middle School Link Crew participated in “Halloween on the Hill” at Wamogo Regional High School. The jointly sponsored event entertained hundreds of kids throughout the community. Link Crew members made up of students in 7th and 8th grade dressed up and created a themed display for trick-or-treaters to enjoy and be spooked!



Litchfield High School

LHS Students and Faculty Join to Create a Mural for Community Art Project

By: LHS Students in Mrs. Hogan’s AP Spanish Class, Copy Editor: Tammy Knox, LMS/LHS Admin Assistant

Sustainable Litchfield was given a brief by the State of Connecticut to encourage more Public Art to be installed in the community and enhance the quality of our local culture for residents and visitors. With this in mind, LHS Art teacher Michelle Murelli, along with Jayne Laphear, owner of @ The Corner Taco Bar in Litchfield, collaborated to create a Mexican folk art mural with LMS/LHS art students.

Mrs. Hogan, an LHS Spanish teacher, joined the project to make it an interdisciplinary lesson with her AP Spanish students doing the research piece, and art students creating the mural. LHS Graphic Design students will have an opportunity to design a brochure for the opening once the mural is completed, and will be displayed at the restaurant in Litchfield.

The mural depicts Alebrijes which are imaginary Mexican figures that have become a part of popular art. These figures combine physiognomic elements of real or imaginary animals. Alebrijes are symbols of good luck. In Mexico, there is a belief that Alebrijes help to ward off evil spirits from houses. According to Zapotec mythology, each person is born accompanied by a spirit that becomes an animal called Nahual, which guides this person throughout their life. Like humans, each Alebrije is unique.

Colors have meaning and have a characteristic of their own: Green, for example, represents nature and empathy; pink symbolizes love; orange releases negative emotions; yellow represents the expression of feelings and luxury; blue tranquility; and brown represents the earth and animals.

In Oaxaca, Mexico, artisans are dedicated to creating Alebrijes. It has reinvigorated the local economy, creating a sustainable source of income.

The idea that the Alebrijes are spirits that guide humans from birth is found in other Cultures. For example, in Catholicism, it is believed that humans have a patron Saint or a Guardian Angel, who will protect them from danger. The Celts, Indigenous North Americans, and Australian Aborigines, all have a tradition that pairs a protective animal spirit guide with a human.

Today, in our pop culture environment, we can find Alebrijes in the animated film, “Coco”, which tells the story of a Mexican boy struggling to be who he is in the face of family objections.



Colorful Alebrijes depicted on art mural:



Art Students, Jenna Sobek ('24) and Reese Morgan ('25) working on community mural



Evelyn Klug ('27) adds details to the mural



LHS Art students working on the community mural

Doctora Caballero Roca shares life experiences with students on growing up in Cuba

By: Jasmina Guaman, Olivia Kracht, Pierce Lougheed, and Owen Ryan; students in Mrs. Maria Hogan’s AP Spanish Class.

Dr. Caballero Roca came to visit the Spanish students at LHS to share her life experiences. Dr. Caballero Roca was born in Cuba and lived there for thirty years. Her life in Cuba was very hard as she had to face poverty, live in a very small hotel room with her mother and three siblings, and have neither water nor electricity. She and her siblings had to climb many flights of stairs to fill up buckets of water every day. A chicken, the family’s only pet, ended up on their plates to satisfy their hunger. To study, Dr. Caballero Roca would have to read under candlelight, because electricity was not available to her.

We learned from the professor that the education system in Cuba is different from that of the United States. In Cuba, at 12 years old, students are taken to fields where they have to work cultivating the land with their hands for six months. Only after these six months, would they be allowed to return to the city to continue their education. In addition, when a student asked a question, Caballero Roca explained that Cuban families face many challenges to this day. Cuban families struggle with a lack of work, a lack of food, and political oppression, as a result of the economic embargo imposed by the United States.

Despite the problems that Professor Caballero Roca faced throughout her life, she made it to the other side, with a family and two doctorates. She explained the significance of education and emphasized the importance of conquering life’s problems and becoming an important part of a community for the good of all.

The professor’s message had a profound impact on the students. She highlighted the qualities of resilience, patience, and ambition, in addition to the merits of a strong education. One student commented “the speech made me truly realize how much Spanish I already know”, and another said that “it was very inspirational”.



Dr. Caballero Roca enjoys her morning speaking with LHS Students.

Litchfield High School

AOK Club Supports Fire Prevention Day

By: Catherine Pennell, AOK Club Advisor

LHS students John Shook ('24) and Reide Augustyn ('26), members of the AOK club at LHS, attended the Fire Prevention activity at Center School at the start of October. Dressed in character costumes John and Reide greeted students in each grade as they made the rounds through six stations of demonstrations with specific equipment relating to an ambulance and fire trucks that we see in our community.



AOK club member John Shook ('24) greets students at Center School for Fire Prevention Day.



AOK club member Reide Augustyn ('26) jumps in with Fire Prevention Day at LCS.

College Fair Attended by over 60 Schools

By: Kerri Petti, LHS School Counselor

Litchfield and Wamogo High Schools' Counseling departments co-hosted the college fair after a two-year hiatus. Over sixty-five colleges were represented from New England as well as PA, NY, and NJ. Six branches of the military were also present. There was a great showing of LHS and WAM students and parents and visitors from other high schools from the northwest corner. Additional colleges will be visiting with interested students during the advisory period throughout the school year.



LHS student volunteers greet college representatives.

American Experience in Concord and Salem for Juniors

By: Emily McAdam, LHS Social Studies Teacher

LHS Juniors took a field trip to Massachusetts to support their English and U.S. History studies. In Concord, they learned about Henry David Thoreau's antislavery activism and hiked around Walden Pond. In Salem, they visited the House of the Seven Gables, which inspired Nathaniel Hawthorne's book of the same name. Then, they attended an interactive Cry Innocent show, participating as a Puritan jury in a witchcraft hearing against Bridget Bishop in 1692. Mrs. Scozzafava, Ms. McAdam, Ms. French, Mr. Mongeau, Mrs. Heuschkel, and Mr. Giroux gladly chaperoned.



LHS Class of 2024 enjoying time around Walden Pond