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# The LITCHFIELD PRIDE

WINTER 2023

Official Newsletter of Litchfield Public Schools

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 2

CENTER SCHOOL • INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL • MIDDLE SCHOOL • HIGH SCHOOL

## A New Year - A New Era

Dear Community,

As I turned the calendar, there was this realization that in less than 18 months, a new district – Region 20 – will be created. This got me thinking about other things that have been created in our recent memory.

Things that didn't exist 20 years ago:

YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, Tik Tok, Gmail, Netflix, Google Maps, iPhone, Facebook, Android, Bitcoin, Tesla, iPad, Chrome, Zoom, Skype, Amazon Prime.

While some would say not all of these creations were positive, the list shows how much we, as a society, have changed over time.

In thinking of our regional future, we must think of what can be created, honor the past, and build forward with an expectation of limitless potential. As I have told multiple people, this is not about creating a "WAMOGLI" but rather about an opportunity to build an educational structure that surpasses our current expectations.

My hope and goal are that the future of education for Goshen, Litchfield, Morris, and Warren, is one day looked upon as the greatest accomplishment for our children. This is not a small task, will require everyone in our community, and has the potential to be something special. We have a blank canvas, a clean slate, and now is the year, the time, to move forward with an innovative spirit.

In this new year, 2023, there is something beyond hope of a new year but a more significant challenge to design educational greatness. I hope you will join me, as our students, and their future, deserve the very best in all of our endeavors



Christopher Leone  
Superintendent of Schools



Stay engaged in local education: [www.litchfieldschools.org](http://www.litchfieldschools.org)

## Litchfield Public Schools

### Board of Education

Matthew Terzian, Chairman  
terzianm@lpsect.org

Daniel Clock, Vice Chairman  
clockd@lpsect.org

Steve Malo, Secretary  
malos@lpsect.org

Tim Breslin  
breslint@lpsect.org

John Morosani  
morosanj@lpsect.org

Lynn Murphy  
murphy@lpsect.org

Tina Reardon  
reardont@lpsect.org

Wayne Shuhi

Lynn Stone  
stonel@lpsect.org

### District Office

Superintendent of Schools  
Christopher Leone  
860-361-9033 • leonec@lpsect.org

Assistant Superintendent of Schools  
Kristen Della Volpe  
860-361-9033 • dellavolpek@lpsect.org

Director of Pupil Services  
Julie Haggard  
860-567-7505 • haggardj@lpsect.org

Accounting Manager  
Craig Robillard  
860-361-6409 • robillardc@lpsect.org

Human Resource Manager  
Debbie DeLisle  
860-361-9022 • delislede@lpsect.org

Administrative Assistant  
Christine Escobar  
860-361-9012 • escobar@lpsect.org

District Liaison/Administrative Assistant  
Debbie Hodges  
860-361-9694 • hodgesd@lpsect.org

### Litchfield Middle/High School

Principal: Dr. Michael Pascento  
860-567-7530 • pascentom@lpsect.org

### Litchfield Intermediate School

Principal: Michael Valerio  
860-567-7520 • valeriom@lpsect.org

### Litchfield Center School

Principal: Lisa Deltano  
860-567-7510 • deltanol@lpsect.org

# Litchfield Intermediate School

## Little School, Big Heart!

By: Danielle Eichman, Administrative Assistant at LIS

Litchfield Intermediate School's students and staff participated in our third annual PJ DAY FOR CCMC. The event seems to grow and grow each year and it was very special to learn that every single town/city in Connecticut participated in PJ Day on December 9! Students and staff wore their PJs to school to honor the brave children who are fighting cancer and other illnesses at The Connecticut Children's Medical Center who sometimes, because of their illness, treatments, and long hospital stays, must wear their PJs for days, weeks, or even longer.

Fifth-grade teacher Kelly Leifert has organized the event at LIS for the past three years. In 2019, Center School Principal Lisa Deltano asked the third-grade teachers and students to help organize the first-ever PJ Day at the school and Mrs. Leifert was a third-grade teacher at the time. Ms. Leifert was inspired to bring PJ Day to LIS when she moved from third to fourth grade three years ago. "I saw the enthusiasm in the students who were so eager to take on a leadership role within the school by making signs and doing morning announcements," Ms. Leifert said. Mrs. Leifert said she is thankful for Dr. Pascento, who fully supported bringing PJ Day to LIS, and to Mr. Valerio, who was immediately on board to continue the fundraiser at LIS when he became LIS principal. "It was so much fun to see everyone wearing their PJs and supporting such a wonderful cause," said Leifert.

Besides wearing PJs, parents and staff were able to donate online. Any amount was greatly appreciated. During our first year, we raised a little over \$700, and this year, we were so amazed to collect \$1,084! "The generosity was overwhelming," Ms. Leifert said "and my heart was overflowing with pride and gratitude." Every dollar helps the families with children at CCMC and our donations go directly to the hospital.

Ms. Leifert said, "I would like to extend a Great Big THANK YOU to our LIS community, students, families, faculty, and staff for their support of this wonderful hospital for children. I am grateful to be a part of such a wonderful place." Ms. Leifert said it best, LIS is truly a Little School, with a BIG heart!



Fifth-graders are decked out in festive PJs for LIS's PJ Day for Connecticut Children's Medical Center.



Students in Ms. Behmke's fourth-grade class get nice and cozy with a book on PJ Day.



Who says PJs don't make lunch taste even better?

## Food Drive Gives Back to Community

By: Danielle Eichman, Administrative Assistant at LIS

The Litchfield Intermediate School Community came together once again to organize a successful food drive for the community. All items collected were donated to the Litchfield Food Pantry. In total 972 items were donated. Events like this are an important part of our mission of community engagement. The students and staff are also so eager and happy to help those in need.

Julie Rooney, fifth-grade teacher, spearheads the food drive and she said LIS has been doing this for many years, as long as she can remember.

Mrs. Rooney said, "The food bank was overwhelmed by our donation." When asked how it felt to see so many donations coming into the school, Mrs. Rooney said, "With times being so tough for many families, it was heartwarming to see our school come together to help those in need."

The food bank can use donations at any time of year, but during the winter months, they're especially welcome. They often need hundreds of units to ensure that all those who are in need are able to receive the help they need. Litchfield Intermediate School is glad that we could do our part to assist those struggling with food insecurity.



LIS students count and sort items for the LIS food drive. The school collected 972 items for donation to the Litchfield Food Pantry

## Honoring Our Veterans

By: Danielle Eichman, Administrative Assistant at LIS

While no “thank you” can ever be enough, Litchfield Intermediate School makes it a top priority to honor veterans each and every year. Again this year, veterans were recognized through many different displays both inside and outside of the school. LIS asked families and staff members to contribute to our Veterans Day Wall of Honor and outdoor flag display. Last year we celebrated a total of 67 veterans, and this year, we were honored and ecstatic to honor over 100 veterans! Every year, the response from our LIS community gets bigger and bigger, and to see the number of families and staff members who have veterans in their families is very humbling and very special.

Malissa Harber, LIS Instructional Assistant, headed the Veterans Day displays and celebrations this year. Harber comes from a military family and said there are so many things that drive her to support the veteran community. “I’ve seen my brothers fight for this country, here and overseas,” Mrs. Harber said. “I’ve seen the struggles they’ve gone through to assimilate back into their civilian lives and I find it important to honor their bravery and dedication.” Mrs. Harber said that all veterans deserve to be honored and thanked and it was important to her to make sure the veterans of our LIS families were recognized and thanked.

Each veteran submitted by LIS families and staff members was honored on a Wall of Honor with a customized placard displaying their name, branch of service, and the student, family, or staff member that nominated them. American flags were also placed outside, one for each veteran, with the same information displayed on a card. Many beautiful photos were submitted and displayed upon our wall. The newly-revived LIS student council, also headed by Mrs. Harber, helped to make posters and worked hard to hang up all the placards and photos throughout the building, even staying after school to help.

Mrs. Harber would like to thank the entire LIS staff for their support, and LIS would like to extend a very special thank you to all the families and staff members who submitted a special veteran. The amazing turnout was quite humbling and we were honored to celebrate so many amazing men and women for their dedication, sacrifices, and service to our country.



The LIS lobby was adorned with a beautiful display of flags from each branch of the armed forces. Students pictured (left to right): Audrey Pickert, Anthony Mauro, Grant Parker, Danika Crapo.



Mrs. Rooney's class salutes with veteran Tom Rooney, Mrs. Rooney's husband.



Members of the LIS student council helped to set up indoor and outdoor displays honoring veterans.



LIS families and staff were invited to send photos of their veterans to include in our Wall of Honor display. The display grows every year!

## McCormick Mile - Remembering JoAnne McCormick

By: Danielle Eichman, Administrative Assistant at LIS

On November 22, students and staff at LIS participated in the McCormick Mile on the Plumb Hill track. The McCormick Mile is an annual tradition at LIS that takes place right before Thanksgiving Break. The very first McCormick Mile took place in 2009 and students and staff have held this very special event every year since! The outdoor event honors our beloved former school nurse and community member, JoAnne McCormick, who passed away from pancreatic cancer in 2010. The event also brings awareness to pancreatic cancer research and promotes a healthy lifestyle and coming together as a community.

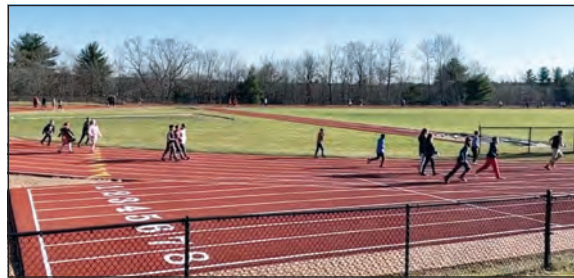
Participants are welcome to walk, jog, or run a mile around Plumb Hill track. The track was filled with smiles, laughs, and friendships. Students and staff were decked out in purple, the official color of pancreatic cancer awareness.

This year, we were even honored to have JoAnne McCormick's family attend the event. We would like to thank the McCormick family for attending - it was very special for LIS to have you present.

We are also very thankful to Stop & Shop of Litchfield who generously donated apples for our students and staff to enjoy after the event. The entire LIS community was grateful for the opportunity to come together to celebrate friendship and good health!



Members of the McCormick family joined LIS in honoring the late JoAnne McCormick.



Students and staff could walk, jog, or run a mile on the Plumb Hill track during the McCormick Mile.



The McCormick Mile also promotes happiness, healthiness, and friendship!

# Litchfield Center School

## Kindergarten and Preschool Registration

By: Lisa Deltano, Principal

Center School is accepting Preschool and Kindergarten registrations starting in January.

Students who will be 3 or 4 years of age by January 1, 2024 are welcome to apply for the Preschool Program. Registrations will be accepted until February 28th. Students will be chosen by a lottery. Our Preschool Program is 3 hours a day (am or pm) for 5 days a week. The program is designed around the developmental needs of typical and developmentally delayed children living in the towns of Litchfield, Bantam and Northfield. For more information about our Preschool Program and registration requirements, please visit the Center School page on the Litchfield Public Schools website or call the Center School office.

Students who will be 5 years of age by January 1, 2024 are eligible to attend our Kindergarten starting in the Fall of 2023. Parents and guardians of children living in the towns of Litchfield, Bantam and Northfield are encouraged to begin the registration process in January. For more information about our Kindergarten Program and registration requirements, please visit the Center School page on the Litchfield Public Schools website or call the Center School office.



Kindergarteners Vahnellope Santos(l) and Maria Montijo(r) learn about different types of weather in science class with Mrs. Olmstead.



Mrs. Gangell's Preschoolers are Learning how to draw a person, while strengthening our core! Preschool students (from left to right) Andrew Philips and Zoey Gangell share their Mat Men.



PE teacher Andy Parker explains the process of doing a cartwheel to Mrs. Celentano's Kindergarten class.



Mrs. Gangell's Preschoolers are Learning how to draw a person, while strengthening our core! Preschool students (from left to right) Miracle Santos, Charlie Eucalitto and Waylan Green show their work.

## Mystery Skype with Missouri

By: Bria Langill & Lily Derkatch, Student Reporters, Mrs. Smith's 3rd Grade Class

Our fourth Mystery Skype was with Ms. Cassidy's third grade class in Columbia, Missouri. They go to school at Cedar Ridge, which goes from Kindergarten through fifth grade. We learned that: their state mammal is a mule, their state bird is a bluebird, and their state capital is Jefferson City, named after Thomas Jefferson. Wow! We think that is very interesting. We learned that they play Mystery Skype a little differently than us because they only played with one person in front of the camera, and it seemed like they might not have had jobs. We play where everyone gets an individual job, and gets to pick it themselves. We like the way we play better because it gives us an opportunity to do different things. We found out that they live in Missouri because, when we were down to the last 2 states, we asked, "Do you border the Mississippi River?" Since they said yes, we knew they were in Missouri, and not Kansas. Our favorite part was learning about their state. We are very excited for our next one!

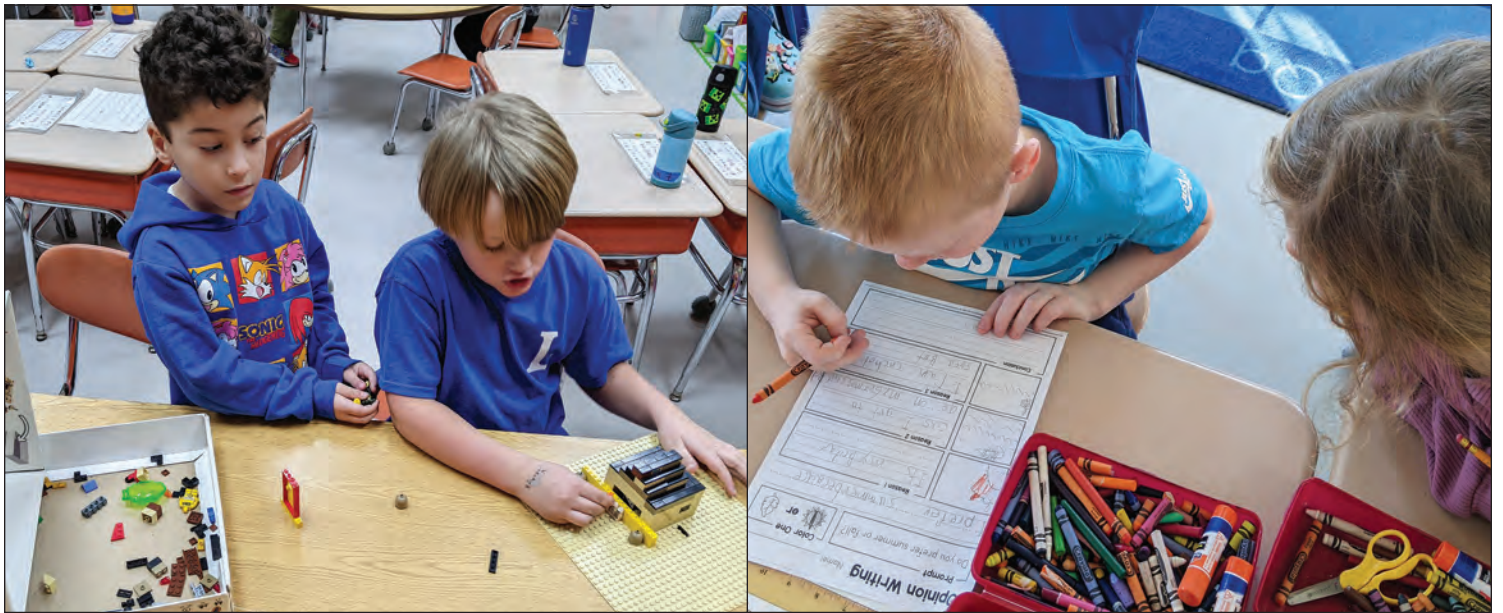
## Fantastic FriYay

By: Lisa Deltano, Principal

The students at Center School are excited to demonstrate their exceptional behavior and ability to be Ready to Learn, Responsible and Respectful. Students earn tickets when they go above and beyond our school expectations. Monthly, during our Town Meetings, students are recognized for their achievements and redeem their tickets for special prizes and experiences.

Mrs. Rachel Caporuscio, our School Counselor, has helped to create our new Fantastic FriYay program. In the cafeteria, students receive tickets for exceptional behavior. At the end of the week, the tickets are tallied and one class each in Grade Kindergarten through Grade 2 are chosen to participate in our FriYay activities. Students in Grade 3 need to earn the reward as a grade level.

Third graders Madeline McDonnell, Dylan Peck, Sasha Polozov, and Elliott Hunter shared about the program. Dylan explained that “Fantastic FriYay is a fun time to play at extra recess with the whole grade.” Madeline said that, “We earn tickets at lunch by being good. The tickets are collected for the week. If we meet our goal, we have a bonus recess on Friday. We set the goal as a grade level. We take our last week’s total and add a little more the following week.” Third grader Elliott Hunter agreed, “It is a good way to end the day. It has helped us to behave better. Each person who earns a ticket at lunch puts their name on their ticket. Mrs. Caporuscio pulls two tickets from the container for each grade level and those students win a prize.” Sasha explained that the special activity takes place outside on our playground when the weather is good. If the weather is not good, we do a fun activity in the cafeteria or in our classrooms.”



First Graders Ibrahim Belica(l) and Greydee Gagnon(r) work together to build a lego creation during recess.

First graders Johnny Doherty(l) and Amanda Kennedy(r) confer on their writing pieces about their favorite seasons.

## New SSP at Center School

By: Lisa Deltano, Principal

We are happy to welcome Mr. Bryan Failla to Center School. Mr. Failla is our new School Security Person (SSP). He has 5 years of direct child care experience between coaching/volunteering with Torrington Police Athletic League and working as a Youth Counselor at the Connecticut Junior Republic. He also has 6 years of law enforcement experience.

Mr. Failla supports the students and families during arrivals and dismissal. He has been enjoying getting to know our students and spending time with them during lunch and recess. He has even been known to do the sensory stations in the hallway with students. He is getting to know the students at LMS and LHS while providing security at evening events throughout the district.

We are happy to have Mr. Failla join our Center School family.



SSP Bryan Failla enjoys some time getting to know second graders (L-R) Thoren Gagnon, Peter Kertis, Samuel Archibald, Colin DelaRosa and Harrison Terzian.

# Litchfield Middle School

## Hour of Code Celebrated During Computer Science Education Week

By: Brendan Eckert, Library Media Specialist at LMS/LHS

Litchfield Middle and High School students joined K-12 students in the two districts and across the world in celebrating Computer Science Education Week by participating in the Hour of Code. The purpose of the Hour of Code is to raise awareness about the importance of technology education in preparing our youth for the future and to provide exposure to computer science skills, even in schools that do not offer full CS courses. Students were provided coding options that incorporate a variety of interests and talents while accommodating different levels of prior experience. Some students played games and solved puzzles, while others designed custom programs.



7th Grader Zach Stowe builds a pop-up store in Scratch



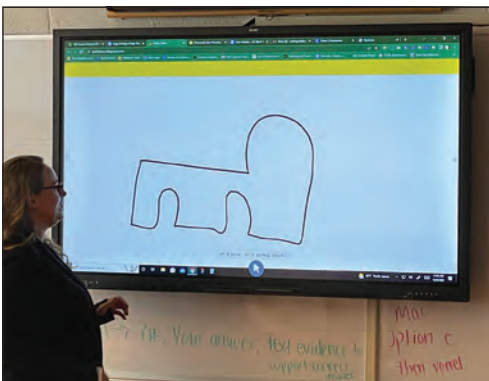
Charlie Jenkins ('28) proudly displays her work



A couple of besties having a good time, Will Acerbi and Jackson Bates ('27)



8th grader Victoria Green shows off her progress in a music/dance-themed coding game



Spanish teacher Mrs. Santiago, plays Quick, Draw, a game where AI tries to guess what you are doodling



...an end of building an animation

## The Crafty OWL Delivers Fun and Creativity with Middle School Students

By: Brendan Eckert, Library Media Specialist Copy Editor: Tammy Knox, LMS/LHS Admin Assistant

Ms. Tricia Moore from Litchfield’s Oliver Wolcott Library visits with students in the Litchfield Middle School library, and runs a craft workshop during the advisory period. Students enjoy spending time together outside of the classroom, and working with their hands on a variety of creative projects.



Tricia Moore from Oliver Wolcott Library, shares materials and instructions with 8th grade student Dakota Bottass



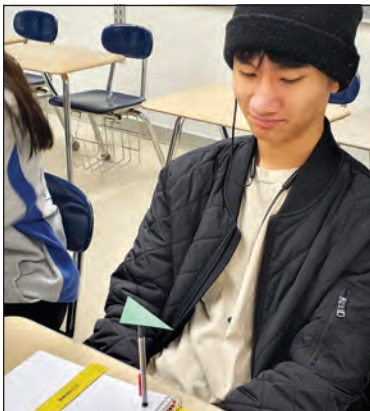
Litchfield Middle School students enjoy hanging out and working together on crafts

# Litchfield High School

## Geometry Honors Class Finds The Centroid

By: Kristle Rodriguez, LHS Math teacher

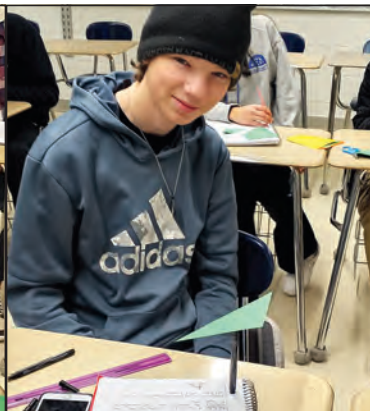
Geometry Honors students cut out triangles, found the centroid (the point of concurrency of the medians of a triangle), and attempted to balance their triangle on the centroid. The centroid is the center of gravity of the triangle. In addition to accurately finding the centroid of the triangle, a steadiness of hand and other factors come into play in order to successfully balance the triangle. The following sophomores were successful in their attempts: Curtis Andersen, Ben Muecke, Sam Quigley, Vincent Salvietti and Ailyn Tiul.



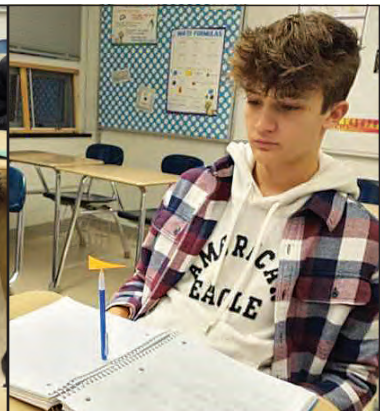
Curtis Andersen focuses on his triangle and keeping it balanced.



Ben Muecke looks very pleased with his results.



Sam Quigley is confident with his balancing triangle.



Vincent Savietti shows great focus in finding the centroid.

# Litchfield High School

## Students Encourage Others Through Artwork

By: Tammy Knox, LMS/ LHS Administrative Assistant

Litchfield High School students in Ms. Fearon's and Ms. Murelli's art classes took part in Litchfield Prevention Council's (LPC) series of art contests to encourage citizens throughout our community to live a healthy, balanced lifestyle. While themes and mediums will change throughout the series, artwork will be created to spread the message to all corners and populations of our school community. The first in the series focuses on the theme of kindness. Both kindness to self and others. The medium and assignment was to create a poster that can be displayed in a publicly visible space and to encourage kindness towards one another.

To make the contest connected to classwork, Ms. Fearon and Ms. Murelli styled a lesson plan called "Working with a Client", to simulate how a graphic designer would approach such a project with a prospective client. The Prevention Council's tentative plan for the next assignment and medium use, will be "media" by creating a video. The LPC contest is open to all LHS students.



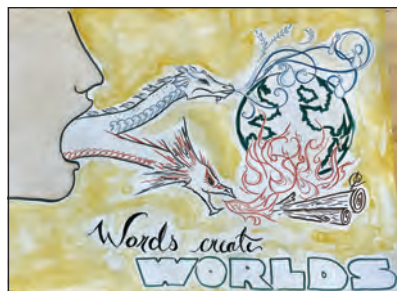
Artwork created by freshman, Brooke Bouffard took first place in the poster art contest.



9th grader Viola Middei, delivers her message in a graphic design poster.



Freshman Quinn Stickney's artwork shares an important message on spreading kindness.



Junior Jenna Sobek's fiery dragons are colorful in their message to all.



Julen Murkland's submission to the poster contest with a heartfelt message.

## Exciting Initiatives Implemented by Students

By: Kyle Harris, LHS Science Teacher

Students at Litchfield High School have been engaged in a variety of projects to improve the sustainability practices in the building. AP Environmental Science students began collaborating with the Litchfield SMART Task Force, First Selectwoman Denise Rapp, and school personnel at the beginning of the school year to plan and implement a district-wide composting program through our cafeterias. In November, all students at LMS/LHS took part in a week-long composting pilot which led to 54 pounds of compostable food scraps being diverted to the Litchfield Recycling Center to be turned into nutrient-rich soil. The students are eager to finalize an official composting program at the middle/high school in the near future, and then expand this program into other district schools. The goal of this program is to reduce the amount of waste produced, which has both economic and environmental benefits to our local community.

In addition to composting, the LHS Environmental Club began an initiative to recycle K-cups. In November, students placed small buckets next to all of the Keurig machines in the school and asked school staff to assist by simply placing their K-cups in the buckets rather than the garbage. Twice a week, students collect the K-cups. In order to recycle a K-cup, the aluminum lids are removed, the used coffee grounds and filters are poured into a bucket to be composted, and the plastic containers are rinsed. To date, the Environmental Club has recycled over 600 K-cups and in doing so composted over 35 pounds of used coffee grounds.



Composting in the cafeteria with LHS Environmental Club