

The LITCHFIELD PRIDE

WINTER 2022

Official Newsletter of Litchfield Public Schools

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2

CENTER SCHOOL • INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL • MIDDLE SCHOOL • HIGH SCHOOL

What Comes Next?

Dear Community,

I was recently asked – “What Comes Next?”

Upon hearing the question, I took a deep pause.

Did they mean COVID-19? Omicron? Is there another variant?

Maybe they meant budget season? Speculation about increased costs is found in nearly every place.

Possibly it was a question about a merger? A referendum?

In reality, no one, despite how much they may try and convince us, really knows what comes next. That is the beauty of the journey of life.

I reflect that this month, my oldest child will turn 17-years-old and is in the thick of college searches and visits. My youngest child turned 15-years-old last month and is in search of understanding high school. In my eyes, they are still sometimes in elementary school, sometimes in middle school, and the time has flashed before those same eyes.

While I have watched my children grow and develop, I am privileged and blessed, to watch all our students grow each day. It is a perfect reminder that amidst the noise, a day in the life of a child is precious, and not caught up in forecasting what comes next. Our focus, as parents and educators, is ensuring each day is an opportunity for tomorrow.

During this year, while many try to figure out or theorize, what comes next, I have come to find peace in enjoying the simple moments. I urge all to take the time to celebrate the achievement of our students, our children, and their progress. Let us all enjoy the journey of life and the many joys it brings.

Thank you for taking the journey with our students, our schools, and our communities.



Christopher Leone
Superintendent of Schools

Academic Office Updates

By: Pam Vecca, K-12 Humanities Coordinator

- **Interested in being on a committee for elementary (K-5) English language arts curriculum?** Parents and community members are encouraged to volunteer for this opportunity. Please email or call Pam Vecca, Humanities Coordinator: pvecca@rsd6.org; 860-567-6641
- **Promoting Language Development During The Winter Months**
- Engage in winter activities: play in the snow, build a snowman or go sledding. Go for a winter walk and talk about similarities and differences between winter and the other seasons: What do you see/hear/feel?
- Read winter- themed books
Work on predicting and inferencing skills by asking your child what they think will happen next in the story. Work on auditory memory and story retelling by having your child retell the story you read.
- Sing winter themed songs to build language skills
Repetitive lines of songs give children multiple opportunities to practice sentences of increasing length and complexity.
- Do winter crafts
Use playdoh while talking about colors, sizes, shapes and actions.
- **Read Across America Day**
Celebrated on or near March 2nd, the birthday of Dr. Seuss. This motivational and awareness day calls all children and youth in every community across the United States to celebrate reading. It encourages them to read wherever they are.
- **Women's History Month**
A declared month (March) that highlights the contributions of women to events in history and contemporary society. Encourages the study, observance and celebration of the vital role of women in history.



Litchfield Public Schools

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Winter Reading Challenge

By: Pam Vecca, K-12 Humanities Coordinator



The “Read for a Better World” Winter Reading Challenge offers everyone in our community - students, families, and citizens - a chance to grow as readers in addition to participating in random acts of kindness. Cozy up with a good book this winter and feel how good it is to do something kind for someone else.

We hope that everyone in our greater school community will start the new year by diving into a new book. Please complete this challenge and submit names/pictures to pvecca@rsd6.org for a chance to win prizes and recognition. The challenge will end on March 31, 2022.

Send someone a hand-written thank you note	Make someone laugh	Read 1 Book or 1 Hour
Read 1 Book or 1 Hour	Tell someone you appreciate them	Pass along a book to someone who may enjoy it
Donate to a food bank	Read 1 Book or 1 Hour	Pick up a piece of litter
Help make dinner	Compliment a friend	Read 1 Book or 1 Hour

Litchfield Intermediate School

LIS Participates in Pajama Day for CCMC

By: Kelly Leifert, 5th-grade teacher at LIS

This year, on December 10, 2021, Litchfield Intermediate School’s students and staff participated in our second annual PJ DAY FOR CCMC. We joined with many other schools and businesses across Connecticut and Massachusetts who wore their PJs to work and school to support The Connecticut Children’s Medical Center. This fundraiser benefits the children at CCMC. It is not only to raise money but to also honor the brave children who are fighting cancer and other illnesses at CCMC and must wear their PJs for days, weeks, or even longer. This was an online fundraiser this year where students, families, and staff were asked to donate \$1.00 and wear their PJs to school on Dec. 10th. Any amount was greatly appreciated. Last year we raised \$700 and we were hoping to raise \$701 this year. We are beyond grateful to all who donated this year. We are so proud to announce that our total this year was an amazing \$1335. The generosity of our families in our community is overwhelming. Students all looked cozy while showing their support for a very worthy cause. Thank you to all of the students and their families as well as our staff for their generosity. Our funds combined with those of all the other schools and businesses that participated across Connecticut and Massachusetts will surely make a difference in the lives of the children and their families at CCMC.



LIS students in festive pajamas on our CCMC PJ Day!

Food Drive for St. Michael’s Parish

By: Julie Rooney, 5th grade teacher at LIS

The Litchfield Intermediate School Community came together in a big way to support the St. Michael’s Parish Food Bank in Litchfield. In total 1,170 items were donated. Events like this are an important part of our mission of community engagement. The students and staff were happy to help those in need.

Students were involved in each step of the food drive, from donating items to counting and totaling to sorting and bagging. Students even helped the food bank to load the many donations into vehicles.

Ann Hodgman, a volunteer at the food bank, was overwhelmed with the school’s generosity. She stated, “Covid has dramatically expanded the demand for our food. Pre-Covid, we saw a high of 60+ households visiting the pantry each month. We now see many more. In October, we gave bags of food to 76 households, and we expect more visitors in November and December.”

Hodgman explained the distribution process, “Passing out identical bags to each car is the fairest system. Each month we try to provide non-perishable staples, some fresh produce, and perhaps a small “extra”--maybe cookies, jam, boxed cereal, or coffee. This means that each month we need 80 to 100 units of peanut butter, tuna, bread or crackers, canned soups, canned chili, pasta, pasta sauce, and other such items. If we don’t have 80 of a given item, it can’t go into the bags.”

The food bank can use donations at any time of year, but during the winter months, they’re especially welcome. Litchfield Intermediate School is glad that we could do our part to assist those struggling with food insecurity.



(From left to right) Leah O., Lily L., and Joseph A, fifth-graders from Mrs. Leifert’s class, help sort through the generous donations and help to tally the total number of items.



LIS Students help St. Michael’s load up the food drive donations.



Honoring Veterans

By: Danielle Eichman, Administrative Assistant at LIS

Litchfield Intermediate School celebrated veterans this year through a number of different displays both inside and outside the school. In lieu of our traditional assembly-style celebration, LIS asked families and staff members to contribute to our Veterans Day. We had an overwhelmingly positive response and our number of submissions tripled from previous years. We honored a total of 67 veterans this year!

Each veteran submitted by LIS families and staff members was honored on a Wall of Honor with a customized placard displaying their name, rank, 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 displayed upon our wall.

LIS also has a beautiful new American flag wall art piece that was donated by Joel Harber. Joel’s wife, Malissa Harber, is an Instructional Assistant at LIS. Joel crafts these beautiful pieces as a hobby and because the Harbers have many veterans in their own family. We are so thankful for his generous donation to our school.

LIS classrooms also partook in special activities creating cards and letters for local veterans. Katie Sullivan, reading specialist at LIS, delivered the cards, letters, and artwork.

LIS would like to extend a very special thank you to all the families and staff members who submitted a special veteran. We were honored to celebrate so many amazing men and women for their dedication, sacrifices, and service to our country.



LIS families and staff members submitted photos for the Wall of Honor at LIS. A special thank you to the Harber family who donated our beautiful American flag wall art.



Fifth-grader Sofia Cardwell proudly displays an American flag and placard to honor her grandfather, Donald Cardwell.



Students dressed in red, white, and blue gather outside LIS where special lawn flags and placards were placed for veterans.

Litchfield Center School

Center School Students Coding Across the Curriculum

By: Cristin Marshall, Joanne Moore and Kristina Olmstead

The students at Center School participated in many activities during Hour of Code. The activities took place in art, music, PE, library and science.

In music class students used the computer program Song Maker in Chrome music lab on their chromebooks to compose the song “Deck the Halls.” In grades 2 and 3 they were given step by step instructions on how to use the color coded blocks as pitches for the first phrase of the song and from there had to figure out the next steps to finish the song. Students in Kand 1 did this together on the smartboard with the teacher and then added hand bells to play along with their composition once it was finished. The students had so much fun with this activity many of them wanted to extend the lesson into composing more songs using Song Maker at home.

Cristin Marshall, Music teacher

Learning to code is an important skill for children, and the younger they start, the better! Studies have shown that young children are adaptable at learning new languages, and code language is a universal one. In the Center School Library and Information Technology Center, our students have embraced coding enthusiastically.

Students are able to use their devices independently to follow links to Mrs. Moore’s website. Within this website, students have the freedom to choose reference links, computer skills and coding activities, as well as links to the daily Student News broadcast and virtual learning.



LCS Sam Wilson, kindergarten, exploring the maze activity in PE during Hour of Code week with Mr. Parker.



LCS Science coding during Hour of Code week with Jaxson Neri (l) and Leo Rodriguez (r) - Grade 1 Mrs. Olmstead’s class

Problem solving and creative thinking are also skills that students develop here. They understand that their devices are machines, and they are the “commanders of their computers!”

All the while, enjoying the challenges of coding and their growth mindsets!

Joanne Moore, Library Media Specialists

During coding week, science classes focused on “unplugged” coding activities. We learned that communicating with a computer is a lot like communicating with a friend. When you teach a computer to do something you need to give specific, ordered instructions just like when you teach a friend to play a new game. Sometimes, if the computer makes a mistake, you have to go back and try to explain again just like you would to a friend. Students in all science classes took turns with a partner being either the coder or the computer. In our activities, we taught a gingerbread person to navigate through a maze, drove our race cars around obstacles to get to the finish line, and taught our robots how to replicate our lego creations! We learned that you need patience and perseverance when coding, and that coding is a lot of fun!

Third Grade Field Trip to the Institute for Native American Studies

By: Mira Moore, Grade 3 Student



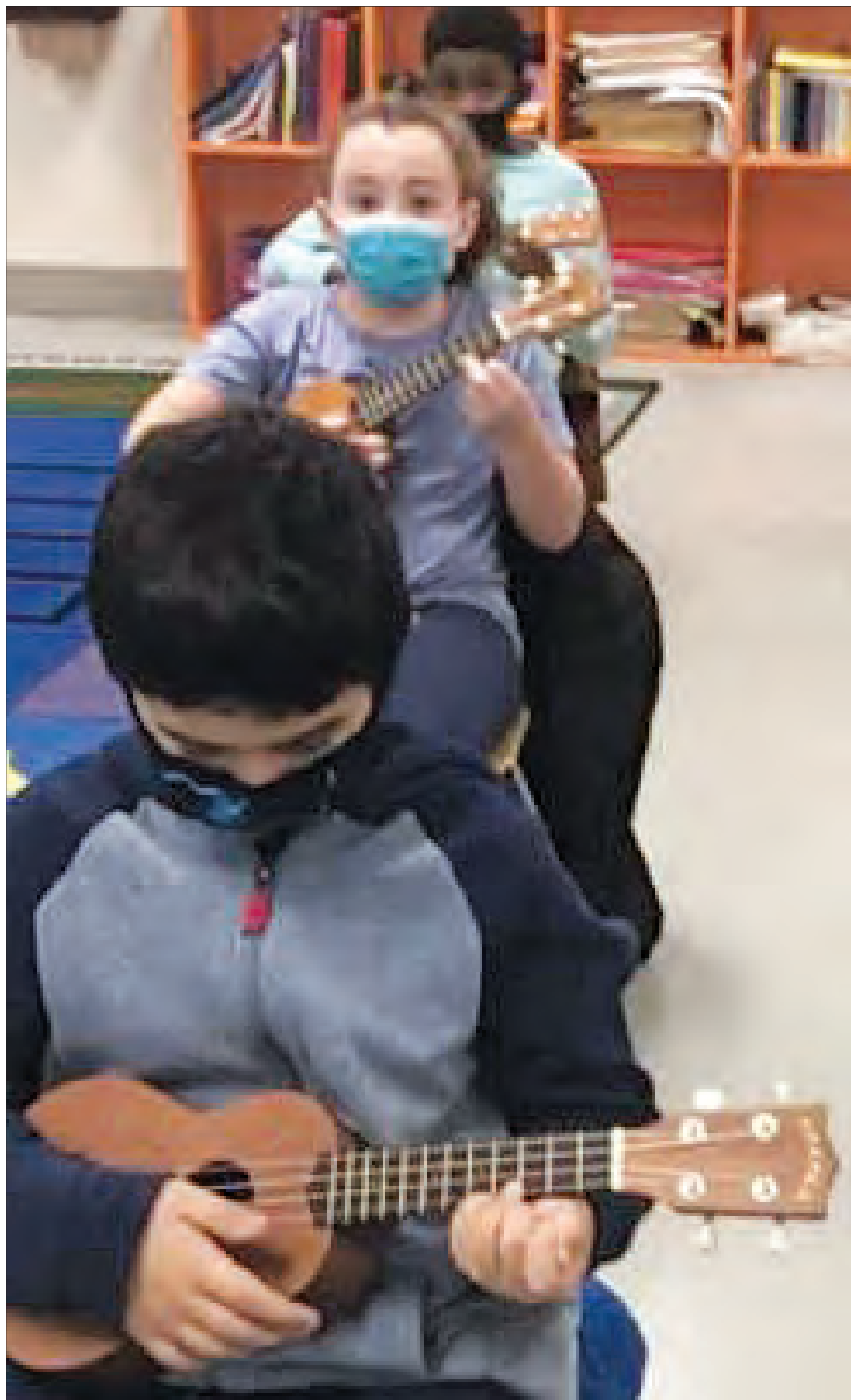
Mrs. Johnson’s Grade 3 students visiting the The Institute For American Indian Studies in Washington, CT.

We enjoyed our field trip to the Institute for Native American Studies because it taught us a lot about Native Americans and how they survived. It also taught us how they used what was around them to make a life for themselves and their families. It was amazing because the people who worked there were so nice and they had all these fun activities that kept us learning, but also having fun. We all enjoyed all of them but I liked a specific activity most of all. My friends and I made talking sticks, and we learned that when there was a meeting in a longhouse, whoever had the talking stick would be the one who was talking. After we made them, we had lots of fun using the talking sticks. We wanted to say thank you to Litchfield Education Foundation for paying for all of it so the third graders and I could have this wonderful experience.

LEF Supports Center School Music Program

By: Cristin Marshall

It has been a very exciting time for our 3rd grade students in music! Thanks to a grant from the LEF, Center School was able to purchase a classroom set of ukuleles for the students to play. In past years students have played the recorder in 3rd grade but because of Covid restrictions and masks we switched to ukuleles and the kids are loving it!



Third Graders Lucas Laskowitz (front) Emma McDevitt (middle) and Seth Harrison (back), playing the ukuleles with Mrs. Marshall.



LCS Leo Bernard in Mrs. Gangell's kindergarten class is enjoying the snowy activities during our Center School Winter Olympics.



Mrs. LaBonte and Mrs. Roe enjoying a "bobsled" ride during our Winter Olympics

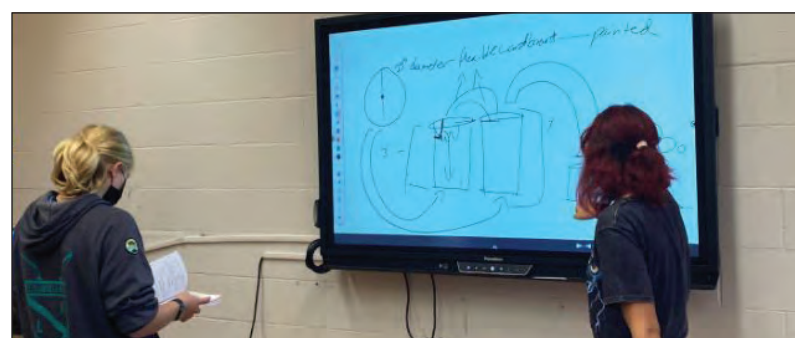
Litchfield Middle School

Art Club and STEM Club

By: Kyle Harris, Stem Advisor and Angela Plourde, MS Art Club Advisor

As we returned to school this fall, we were eager to restart some extracurricular activities that were not able to take place last year. Two of these extracurricular activities are Art Club and STEM club. Both clubs take place after school on Thursdays at LMS, and are fantastic opportunities for students to participate in the school community. Students are able to complete projects of interest at their own pace in a structured environment outside of the regular school hours.

In Art Club, students have been engaging in various tasks such as sharing their artwork with one another, taking part in drawing challenges like Inktober, and participating in digital art computer activities. Many students are working to build a portfolio of their artwork.



Students in STEM club, have a range of activities that they can complete including learning to code with Sphero robots, experimenting with erosion using a rock tumbler, designing and building props for the school play, or building and testing simple circuitry kits.

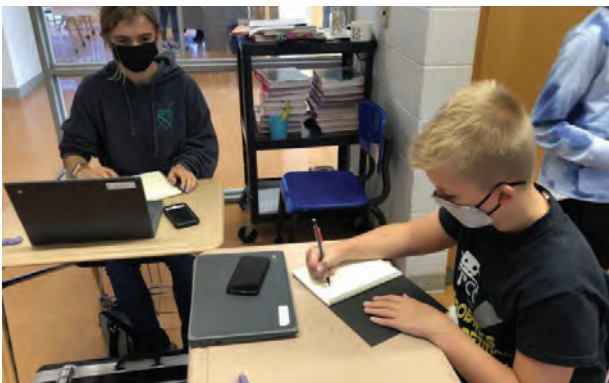
Link Crew Begins at LMS

By: Josh Orosz and Carrie Gibbs, Link Crew Advisors

Link Crew, made up of students in grades 7 & 8 work together to create a variety of service activities for their school community. Link Crew, an extracurricular activity was formed in 2022 and interested students completed an application and met eligibility requirements including; a desire to build leadership skills, creativity, communication & responsibility, and commitment as a volunteer in Link Crew.



8th graders, Dorothy Olmstead, Sophia Sedlak, Viola Middei, Anto Jurado, Jack Reynolds, and Willow Schulte work on a drawing in their sketchbooks.



Alana Budrewicz and Addie Williams-Ness design a prop that will be used for the school play.



Aubrey Duckworth ('26) works on building a robot that will be able to move items from one place to another while friends look on.

Middle School Swim Team Sets New Record

By: Trish Alber, LHS teacher and MS Swim Coach

The Litchfield and Wamogo Middle School swim team has a 2-2 record so far this season! All our swimmers have had personal best times in a variety of events. The Boys 4x100 Freestyle Relay composed of Tucker Marchand (W), Foley Santovasi (W), Nathaniel Stull (L), and Elias Krukar (W) set a new record this season with a time of 4:37.50. This beat the previous record, set in the 2018-2019 season by the Litchfield boys team, by over 14 seconds! The team still has two meets remaining in our season!

Litchfield High School

AOK Diabetes Awareness

By: Catherine Pennell, AOK Advisor

Litchfield High School's Acts of Kindness Club held a diabetes awareness day at LHS. During the event, all students and staff were asked to wear blue in honor of diabetes awareness. Many students and staff participated in the event. During advisory class, members of the Acts of Kindness Club went to each classroom to take photos of students and staff who wore blue in a diabetes photo booth circle. In addition to the photo booth, awareness was also generated throughout the building regarding the impacts of diabetes with daily morning announcements. Posters were hung throughout the building with facts about diabetes, how it is diagnosed, symptoms, and how to care for it. Students explored preventative measures through healthy eating, exercise, and research. This is just the start of our annual awareness efforts at LHS!



Sophomore, Gunnar Round in the photo circle for Diabetes Awareness.

Honoring Veterans

By: Sandy Carlson, NHS Advisor and ELA Teacher

Beyond the walls of LHS, NHS members have been honoring veterans by helping to host the monthly breakfast at the All Wars Memorial Hall in Bantam, and creating valentines for deployed soldiers. LHS/LMS students joined NHS members in learning how to fold the cards and then making about 100 cards that delivered them to the Trumbull-Porter Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (Watertown) for distribution to service personnel.



Origami Valentine's Day cards made by LHS students for deployed soldiers, a service project coordinated by NHS students and advisor Sandy Carlson.

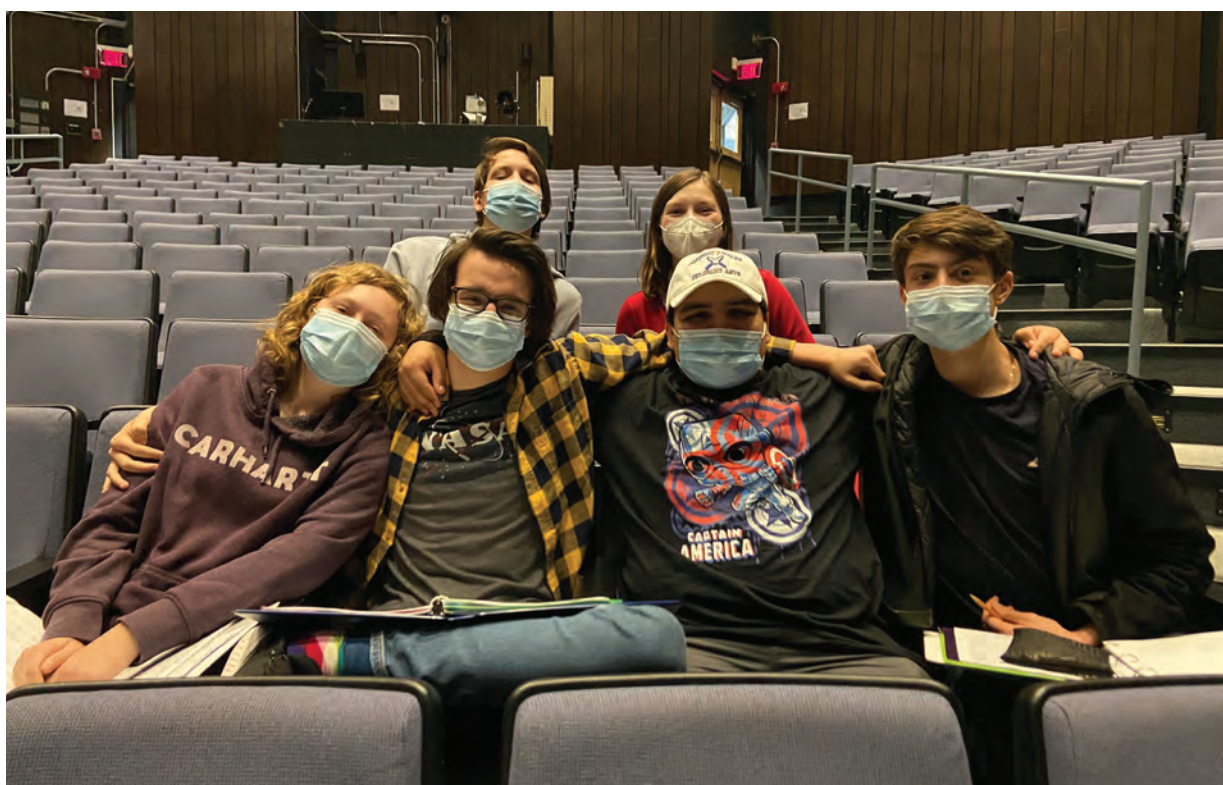
WORKING: A Musical

By: Tammy Knox, LHS Players Producer

Litchfield High School Players presented **WORKING: a Musical** at the beginning of March. Based on Studs Terkel's best-selling book of interviews with American workers, *Working* paints a vivid portrait of the workers that the world so often takes for granted: the waitress, the millworker, the mason, and the housewife, just to name a few. Nominated for six Tony Awards, this classic has been updated for a modern age, featuring new songs by Tony Award-winning Lin-Manuel Miranda, as well as favorites by Stephen Schwartz, Craig Carnelia, James Taylor, Micki Grant, and more.

This brand new "Localized" version of *Working* is a musical exploration of people from all walks of life. While most of the professions have been updated, the show's strengths are in the core truths that transcend specific professions; the key is how people's relationships to their work ultimately reveal essential aspects of their humanity, regardless of the trappings of the job itself. The show, still set in contemporary America, contains timeless truths. This new version of *Working* allows the audience to get a rare glimpse of the actors and technicians, working to put on a show. This raw adaptation only enhances the realistic and relatable nature of the subject matter.

With an extremely modest set, live pit band, universal subject matter, and an ensemble that featured members of Litchfield and Wamogo students, *Working* is one of the most accessible, relevant, and substantive musicals ever created.



Senior cast members of Working relax during rehearsal: Back row: C.J. Abbott (L), Isabella Czepiel (W), front row: Frances Jansky (W), Joel Osborne (L), Steven McCabe (L), and Gabe Stradtman (L)

Mashantucket Pequot Museum

By: Emily McAdam, U.S. History Teacher

LHS Juniors took a field trip to the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center to support their studies in English and U.S. History. In addition to exploring the regular museum exhibits, they spoke with Native museum educators on topics such as modern life on the reservation and the Thanksgiving holiday. Mrs. Scozzafava, Ms. McAdam, Mr. Birdsall, Ms. French, Mr. Mongeau, and Mr. Giroux gladly chaperoned the trip. The Junior class recommends a visit to the Pequot Museum, especially for anyone who has never been.

LHS Juniors visit the Mashantucket Pequot Museum.



Alumni Spotlight - Matt McCarthy

By: Lynn Rice Scozzafava, ELA teacher

As a sports fan growing up in Litchfield, Matt McCarthy couldn't imagine someday going to work at one of the country's most legendary ballparks. But that's exactly what McCarthy, LHS Class of 2015, does as Development and Partnerships Manager at the Red Sox Foundation in Boston, Massachusetts. According to McCarthy, "no two days are ever the same," and that's precisely what energizes him in his work.

McCarthy's path to the Red Sox Foundation was a relatively short one. He attended Boston College, majoring in Political Science and History, and "on a whim" interned with the Red Sox while at BC. He then worked as a member of the Sponsor Services team during his senior year of college, and following graduation, continued working part-time while commuting from Beverly, where he lived with his grandmother, whom he calls "a true saint." Soon, McCarthy was offered a full-time position with the Foundation, where he calls the team there "a second family of amazing and talented people."

As the nonprofit arm of the Boston Red Sox, the Foundation executes two of its own programs (Red Sox Scholars and RBI - Reviving Baseball and Softball in Inner Cities) and provides funding to mission-aligned organizations in New England and Southwest Florida. McCarthy focuses on the development side of the operation, which involves fundraising. His work on the development team primarily consists of marketing, communications, and grant-writing. Handling the Red Sox Foundation social media channels, which McCarthy says has been a "privilege to run for the last few years," is just one of his many duties, and one that may sound familiar to anyone who followed the Blue Crew when McCarthy was at LHS.

Working for the Red Sox Foundation comes with its challenges, too, according to McCarthy. He explains, "There are 162 games in a baseball season and countless events going on at Fenway Park all year round. There are long days, weeks, and months where you can get pretty worn down." But ultimately, working with his teammates to achieve the Foundation's mission of "making a difference in the lives of children, families, veterans, and our communities in need by improving their health, education, and recreational opportunities," McCarthy says, is "incredibly rewarding."

Matt McCarthy's Pride Five

What are you currently reading?

The Lemon Tree by Sandy Tolan

What's the thing that's changed the most since you graduated from high school?

I have gained a ton of perspective since graduating from Litchfield and I like to think I am a more pragmatic decision-maker!

What's your favorite thing about Litchfield?

The great fishing spots! And Arethusa ice cream.

What do you wish Litchfield had more (or less) of?

I think Litchfield is an incredible town filled with terrific people and I wish it opened itself up more to strangers and newcomers - that would make it even better!

In five words or fewer, what is your daily life philosophy?

Listen more, act with compassion.



*Matt McCarthy, LHS
Graduating Class of 2015*