

► Connections

Community and Staff Newsletter - December 2015



Ask anyone what they most expect from their local school district and a safe school will certainly be one of the most common responses. We are so fortunate here in Neenah to live in such a wonderful community and our schools have remained safe due to the attentiveness of staff and students.

With recent incidents around the country of school violence and threats that have resulted in school closings, this is certainly a frightening topic for all of us. We've experienced incidents in our own community over the past year as a reminder that these events can happen anywhere.

This fall we experienced secure school situations and lockdowns in a few of our schools both during and after the school day. Fortunately none of these situations have been serious and I have been incredibly impressed with how the events have been handled by staff, students and families. We've done extensive training to prepare for these events and, while nobody can ever be fully prepared for unexpected acts, our staff and students have responded with an exceptional sense of calmness during tense moments.

School safety is one of those things that is a priority for all of us and continues to evolve. New threats emerge regularly and it's why we practice in our schools. We rehearse our responses so that they're almost "second nature" when an actual incident occurs.

While we wish these incidents never happen, we need to continue to be vigilant and remember safety is everyone's responsibility. Keep up the great work in ensuring the safety of our children and our staff members.

Thank you to everyone for a great first semester and I wish you all a happy and safe winter break!

Dr. Mary Pfeiffer
Superintendent of Schools

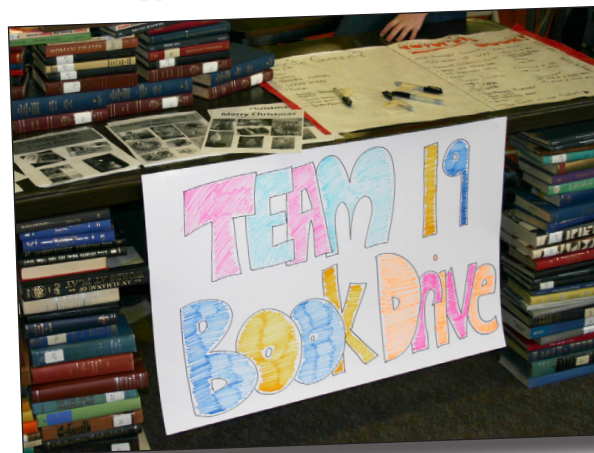
► Freshman Seminar Benefits Community

Ninth grade students at Neenah High School performed numerous acts of community service this fall as part of the Freshman Seminar program, benefitting individuals and organizations throughout the local area.

The class is in its fifth year and was designed as a way to help acclimate incoming students to Neenah High School. Each class is led by a staff member and upperclass students. One aspect of the class is to create and execute a community service project.

Each of the 23 classes had a different service project and displayed them at a "Community Service Fair" on Nov. 25.

The fair provided each group a way to present the details of their project to other students and staff. Members of local charitable community groups also attended the fair to show students additional volunteer opportunities that are available.



Many classes donated their time by raking leaves for neighbors or in local parks. Two groups spent time with special needs students at the high school and two groups worked with elementary students, building relationships and tutoring after school. A class did random acts of kindness for other students in the high school and another is in the process of writing personal notes to

every member of the class of 2019. One group provided thank you gifts and messages to neighbors of the high school, while another assisted with set up and clean up for the Helping Hands Craft Fair.

Two groups helped benefit Children's Hospitals as one provided tie-blankets for the patients and another participated in the crayon initiative by collecting used crayons that are made into new crayons. Other groups raised money to benefit local charities, including a tie-blanket fundraiser for the Fox Valley Humane Society that raised \$400, a Relay for Life that brought in \$243 and a food fair that raised \$237 for breast cancer research. Another group donated socks to the Fox Valley Emergency Shelter and one group coordinated a used book sale that raised \$630 for the Neenah High School Orbit, which benefits families of students in need.

► *Around the District*

► *Shattuck Library Earns State “Library of the Month” Honor*

Shattuck Middle School’s library has been named the Wisconsin Library of the Month by the Wisconsin Division for Libraries and Technology. The Wisconsin Libraries Division is part of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Over the summer, Library Media Specialist Teresa Slivinski began to implement her vision of transforming the library into a learning commons. She painted walls, reupholstered furniture, added lighting and moved furniture to make flexible work spaces.

Students now have comfortable, colorful and inspiring spaces to read, study and work with their District-issued Chromebooks. Booth seating provides spaces for small group collaboration, and a tech bar allows students a place to plug in and use their devices in the library.

Another change this year is Shattuck’s partnership with literacy staff to facilitate a new “literacy block,” a daily 30-minute reading workshop in which all students read fiction of their choice three days per week and nonfiction articles the remaining two days. During the fiction days, students read novels, eBooks, literary nonfiction and graphic novels of their choice. Coming soon, the literacy block will offer book clubs in which students select a book to read with their peers.

“The literacy block has meant a tremendous boost in library visits,” said Slivinski. “Our previous circulation records have been shattered. November’s statistics are projected to be up by 65 percent over last year.”



Military personnel who are overseas for the holidays will receive a special message from Lakeview kindergarten and third grade students who created ornaments and cards. The students wrote sweet messages inside the cards and put extra special touches on the ornaments.

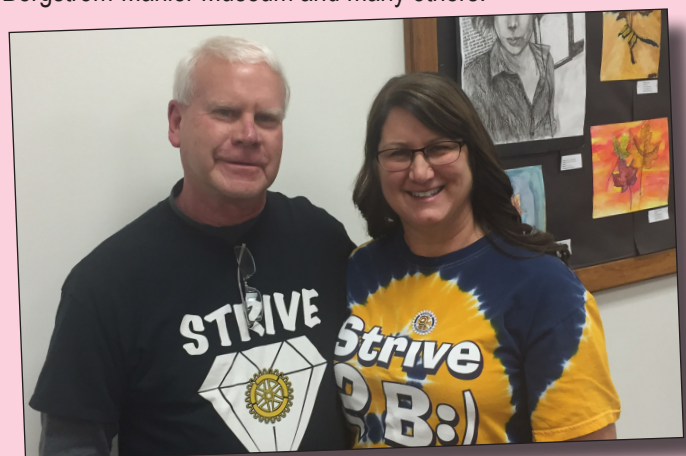
► *Kohlmeyers Earn Passion for Excellence Award*

Having coordinated numerous activities to assist students at Shattuck Middle School, Dave and Dana Kohlmeyer have been selected as recipients of the Passion for Excellence Award. The award is presented by the Board of Education to individuals or organizations who exemplify a commitment to excellence in our public schools.

The Kohlmeyers received their award in recognition of their work with Shattuck’s STRIVE 2B program. Under their assistance, the program that teaches service and leadership inside and outside of school has grown from a once-a-year program to a once-a-month program. As influential members of the Neenah Rotary, they have helped organize Habitat for Humanity shed builds, diversity presentations and family dinner events. They also help coordinate community partnerships with the YMCA, Valley VNA, Bergstrom-Mahler Museum and many others.



Neenah High School’s Special Olympics basketball team was featured in a prime time game in the Ron Einerson Fieldhouse for the second straight year following the boys basketball team’s “Meet the Rockets” night. The Special Olympians took part in a skills competition and played a game against a team of high school staff members in a unique event titled “Phase 2.3.”



► School-by-School



Neenah's Special Olympics basketball team participated in a unified 3-on-3 tournament on Dec. 12 in Appleton, featuring Special Olympics athletes playing on the same teams as their peers. The Special Olympics team will host a tournament on Jan. 9 in the fieldhouse. The Special Olympics team also benefitted from a recent Key Club shoe drive. Shoes were collected at two varsity basketball games and funds raised from the collection were given to Special Olympics.



The annual Shattuck dodgeball tournament was held on Dec. 18 after school. The event featured both students and staff members. Each participant brought canned goods that are donated to a local food pantry.



The first online edition of our Horace Mann's school newspaper, *The Rocket Blast*, has been posted. The paper may be accessed by checking out the link on the Horace Mann Rocket News Schoology page.



Alliance is again collecting old or broken holiday lights and extension cords to raise money for the school and keep them out of the landfill. The items may be placed in a box at the school through Jan. 17.



Clayton held its annual "Give a Kid a Book" campaign on Dec. 11. Clayton families and staff provide new books and money to purchase books for the Salvation Army and Boys and Girls Brigade.



Coolidge students worked together in multi-age groups on the character trait of kindness during November. In all character education groups, older students have been working as mentors to the younger students and are creating bonds beyond just their regular classroom peers.



Hoover students are participating in an all-school read-in and pajama day on Dec. 22 as part of a winter break celebration to honor the hard work of all the students and staff over the first semester.



Lakeview Elementary fourth and fifth grade students closed their holiday concert with the song "Socks for Christmas" and organized a sock drive that collected 1,400 pairs of socks and money. The donations were given to the Boys and Girls Brigade to assist local families in need.



Roosevelt and Alliance students held a food drive during December to benefit the St. Joseph's Food Pantry.



Spring Road was selected for a \$500 grant from the Educational Alliance Math and Science Grant through Exxon Mobil and Van Zeeland Oil Co. The school will purchase magformers, which manipulate shapes from 2D to 3D and support student learning in geometry.



All Taft kindergarten through fifth grade students participated in the "Hour of Code," which is a worldwide effort to get kids interested in computer programming. Students worked on interactive websites and specifically designed apps.



Students in grades K-2 learned about responsibility, while students in grades 3-5 discussed kindness as character traits for November. Students worked to show kindness and responsibility to peers, adults, the building and themselves.



Washington students and families took part in a dinosaur-themed family event on Dec. 19 at the Neenah Public Library. The day featured a lego build, face painting and a short film with prehistoric treats.



Wilson fifth graders who showed diligence with homework responsibilities during the first quarter were treated to an event with Steve Keller, the "Snake Man." Keller allowed the students to handle about 20 different types of snakes.

► *What's Happening*

► *Neenah Teams Fare Well at Culinary Throw Down Event*



Two pairs of Neenah High School students were among the top competitors at the Fox Valley Technical College High School Culinary Throw Down on Dec. 5. Ksenya Seager and Jacob Solis took fourth out of 18 teams, while Emma Dorin and Hunter Kron placed seventh overall.

The students were given one hour to prepare two identical chicken entree dishes. They were judged on the following criteria: knife skills, organization, sanitation, presentation and taste.

Upcoming Events

- Dec. 24-Jan. 3.....No School (Winter Break)
- Jan. 14.....Horace Mann Choir Concert, 7 p.m. (Gymnasium)
- 15.....Early Dismissal - All Levels (End of First Semester)
- 15.....No School 4K and Early Childhood
- 16.....NHS "Cotton Club" and Jazz Dinner, 6 p.m. (Cafeteria)



Shattuck wellness education students took part in activities along with SSG Nathan Preder of the Wisconsin National Guard. The students participated in a fitness circuit, obstacle course and some team building activities.

► *Swimming Lessons Begin in January at High School Pool*

Swimming lessons will be offered on Saturdays at the Neenah High School pool from Jan. 23-April 30. All classes are a half hour in length. There will be 11 sessions with no classes held on Feb. 13, March 26 and April 2.

Cost for the sessions will be \$22 for District residents and \$44 for non-residents. Lessons are open to all ages. Registration will begin in early January and information will be posted on the District website when registration opens.

Classes will be offered as follows:

- 8:30 a.m.-9 a.m.** - Parent/Child, Minnows, Level 1, Level 2, Level 3
- 9:05 a.m.-9:35 a.m.** - Minnows, Level 1, Level 2, Level 4A, Level 5
- 9:40 a.m.-10:10 a.m.** - Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, Level 4B, Level 6
- 10:15 a.m.-10:45 a.m.** - Minnows, Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, Level 4, Diving
- 10:50 a.m.-11:20 a.m.** - Parent/Child, Minnows, Level 1, Level 2, Level 4B

Outlet Shoppes of Oshkosh General Manager Keith Holschbach presented Neenah High School teacher Brenda Mullard with \$500 for the art department after the Art 4 and Drawing and Painting 2 students won first place in the Shoppes' High School Art Cards contest.

