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Sarah Noble Intermediate School
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Mrs. Jennifer Meyers, Asst. Principal



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Spotlight on New Milford Schools

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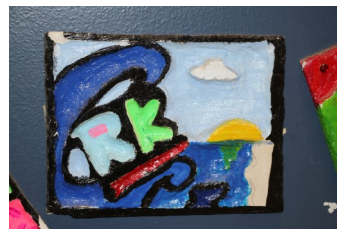
SNIS Legacy Projects Create Lasting Imprint

Visitors to Sarah Noble Intermediate School can't help but be drawn to the beautiful student artwork on display. Of special note are the large Legacy Projects posted throughout the school which are created by the class promoting on to the next school. Art teachers



Jenny Amodeo, Sue Sullivan and Susan Ceglio-Tresca oversee the year-long projects as a joint effort because as Mrs. Amodeo says "without the three of us working together, the large scale projects would never get done".

The inspiration for the projects came from former principal Dr. Len Tomasello. Dr. T says "I first introduced the concept over 10 years ago when I was working in Weston. I wanted to create something permanent that every student could contribute to so that they would always have something to come back to see. I guess I was hoping that every student who contributed to this legacy project would feel that he/she left a part of him/herself at the school." Mrs. Amodeo agrees that is part of the project's charm. "They leave us a creative 'fingerprint'. While the focus changes from year to year, so there's never a duplicate, one is just as meaningful as the next."



Close ups of the first SNIS legacy project in 2013. Wonder who that last tile is from?

Dr. T. says the first legacy project in Weston was a hallway of ceramic fish. Parent volunteers actually helped drill holes into the walls to screw in the fish for display. There has been similar involvement here in New Milford and Mrs. Amodeo says the PTO and current principal, Mrs. Anne Bilko, have offered tremendous support over the years. Looking at the images to follow I am sure you will agree the effort is worth it.

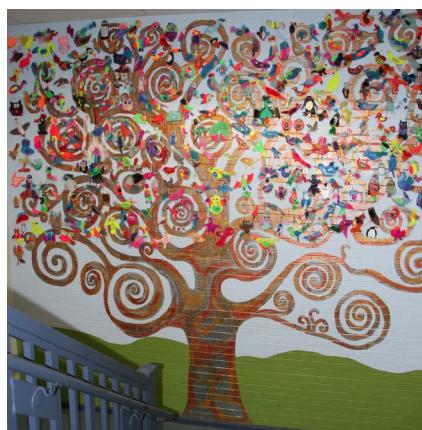
The first Legacy Project at SNIS, pictured on page 1, was created in 2013. Every student in the promoting class carved a piece of sheetrock with their initials. They then painted their own creative designs to be added to the overall display.



Mrs. Amodeo said the group worked with a company called ArtWare in 2014 to create the tiles pictured above. Students were instructed to design a paper square with something that brought meaning to their lives. ArtWare turned the paper squares into ceramic tiles. As a fundraiser, students also could choose to have the image added to other merchandise for their personal use.



SNIS did two Legacy Projects in 2015 due to the district's reconfiguration. Both 5th grade and 6th grade classes did their own creations. Mrs. Amodeo says "Fifth graders made adorable self-portraits that hang on our pillars in the main office area. Sixth grade students made circular designs on cardboard disks that glimmer and shine like stained glass. We hung them with old CD's letting more light play together with the art. The reflections are beautiful!"



In 2016, the Legacy Project paid homage to Gustav Klimt and his "Tree of Life" painting. The class created a gigantic "Klimt tree" on a stairwell wall. Each student made a bird out of clay, painted and decorated it any way they wanted. I think you'll agree, that it certainly brings the stairwell to life!



As far as this year's project goes, Mrs. Amodeo says, "We are still in the planning stages for this year, so I don't want to reveal too much, except it has to do with handprints."

Character Education in Action

The district's Character Education Program is alive and well in our schools and students continue to practice the 10 identified common core character attributes of Respect, Responsibility, Honesty, Compassion, Perseverance, Citizenship, Integrity, Loyalty, Courage and Cooperation. Oftentimes, these are evidenced in service to the community. A few examples from the last month are shown below.



Making a Difference at HPS, wearing pink in support of Breast Cancer Awareness Month at SNIS, and helping to Stuff the Gazebo at SMS.

Several other projects will take place throughout the year. Thank you to our New Milford Public Schools families and staff for your continued generosity.

"I Matter, You Matter, School Matters"

HPS Principal Mrs. Paula Kelleher says that Hill and Plain is focusing on a school-wide character education initiative this year to provide all classroom teachers and students with a common understanding of expected behavior using common language. The program emphasizes the importance of the school motto, "I Matter, You Matter, School Matters".

According to Mrs. Kelleher, "Our school counselor Heliett Sanchez and our school social worker Julianne Morin are heading up this initiative. We use Barkley, our school mascot, to help catch students' interest. During our first assembly we touched upon the importance of being respectful citizens by using manners throughout the building and at home. The theme of this new initiative is repeated daily in various ways and it reminds students that they are valued people at our school and in their classroom. We believe in all our students and our hope is that they will believe in themselves to excel and be good community members in their classroom and at Hill and Plain."



Evolving Curriculum



The development and revision of curriculum continues to be a primary focus for New Milford Public Schools as it guides the future direction of the teaching and learning in our district. This school year is no exception as evidenced by presentations at the October Committee on Learning meeting. Assistant Superintendent Alisha DiCorpo told the Committee that between 30-35 curriculum were revised and written over the summer.

They are being brought forward for approval over a series of meetings. The October meeting featured presentations on:

Sixth Grade Health

Health teacher Mrs. Mariann Schirizzo said this course includes topics on decision making, emotional health, self-esteem, stress management, and staying safe on social media while showing respect for others. It includes a unit on the six pillars of character that dovetails with the district's character education program. A drug abuse education unit includes the topics of inhalant and alcohol abuse and a refusal skills portion where students learn eight different ways to say no. Later in the year, students do a unit on nutrition and on the components of fitness. They study environmental health in the spring and end with a unit on sexuality which focuses on puberty.

Health II

This course was summarized by NMHS Health teacher Mrs. Denise Duggan who said this option is offered to juniors and seniors who were not able to get their needed graduation credit from Health I. As part of the course, students take CPR training which is mandated by the state. Mrs. Duggan said New Milford has been ahead of the curve in this area as our students actually receive certification by trained instructors. A nutrition unit focuses on wellness goals, including a lesson on apps for nutrition consumers and food choices, especially important for students as they move on to post-secondary life. There is also a unit on physical fitness for a healthy person. Other units focus on mental health which includes resources for people in crisis, anger management and conflict resolution, and substance abuse prevention. Sexuality is discussed at this level, as in the Sixth Grade Health course, but here the emphasis is on healthy relationships and boundary setting.

Introduction to Video Production & Advanced Video Production

These courses were proposed last year as a split out from the original Video Production course. The split has allowed an increase in student enrollment from about a dozen last year to over 60 total this year.

NMHS English teachers Mr. Jeffrey Bronn and Mr. Alessandro Amenta summarized the courses. Mr. Bronn said the Introductory course is focused on the technical aspects of film

making, including equipment use and the elements of photography. The class also discusses the ethical nature of film making including the appropriate use of music and humor. Mr. Amenta said they stress to the students that video is a craft, not just turning on a camera to record. The idea of film as motion pictures is explored through photography. This is used to begin the students' introduction to the complex software they will use in the course. In the Advanced course, students take their learned skills and move to production, including pre and post editing and script writing. Students create product for a variety of purposes and for a variety of audiences. This is the course which produces Green Wave TV. The course culminates in the creation of a long term individual video project by each student.

Grade 6 and Grade 7 Mathematics and Grade 7 Pre-Algebra

Mrs. Cortni Muir, District Math Coach, said the Grade 6 and 7 Mathematics courses use the Connected Math series as the vehicle to teach the major areas. The focus is on common core standards and math practices with some emphasis on standardized testing. The Grade 7 Pre-Algebra course pulls important units from the Connected Math series for 7th and 8th grade that would best prepare the students for Algebra and combines them into one condensed course. There are required performance tasks for each marking period and common end of unit assessments align to standards.

Algebra 1 Honors

NMHS Mathematics teacher Mr. Ryan Fitzsimmons said this course has been fully aligned with common core with assessments correlated to hit all standards. It has an Honors level pace.

Practical Math: Applications of Probability, Applications of Statistics, Applications of Percents and Applications of Measurement

Mr. Fitzsimmons said these Practical Math courses are designed to help with the increased credit requirement for math and to reach the group of students who may struggle in other math courses. These courses stress real world applications to teach theory. Topics may include baking using a recipe, buying a car, using a credit card, budgeting for clothes and food, or playing the stock market. Students learn skills that they will be able to use across a number of courses and in their post-secondary life.



Revisions such as these are reviewed by the Committee on Learning before going to the full Board of Education for final approval. In this case, the formal approval took place at the Board's November 8, 2016 meeting. Ms. DiCorpo said several more curriculum revisions will be presented at the November Committee on Learning meeting. We will keep you updated in future issues of Spotlight.

Idiom Day at SNIS

Every language has its own collection of wise sayings which are used to illustrate some underlying idea or value of the society. These expressions if taken literally would often not make much sense, but for those who are familiar with their figurative nature they paint a very clear picture of the intended meaning. Such is the case with idioms. The idiom (as defined by Merriam-Webster) is an expression that cannot be understood from the meanings of its separate words but that has a separate meaning of its own. Ever heard the expression “biting off more than you can chew” or “hitting the nail on the head”? How about “once in a blue moon” or “take it with a grain of salt”? These idioms and others like it are an annual source of study for SNIS Grade 4 students.

The third annual Idiom Day took place at Sarah Noble Intermediate School on October 31st. SNIS Grade 4 teacher Mrs. Stacey Haleks says “Idiom Day was created to embrace the spirit of the time of year and give the students a creative outlet to explore figurative language. Students are exposed to activities in class around figurative language and, more specifically, idioms throughout the month of October. Students are expected to not only read and understand figurative language, but also be able to use it in their written expression. The students are also encouraged to have discussions with their families about the idioms they use in their everyday lives. In no time at all, the students pick up how often we use figurative language to express our thoughts and feelings.”

The month’s study culminates in Idiom Day when students dress up to illustrate a favorite idiom. According to Mrs. Haleks “Everyone in fourth grade participates including students, teachers, paras, and the assistant principal! Many classes begin their day sharing and guessing each other’s idioms. Each year the idioms chosen are more diverse, and the costumes are more inventive. The best part of Idiom Day is appreciating everyone’s creativity and guessing each other’s idiom.” A sample of that inventiveness is pictured below. Can you guess what idiom is represented?

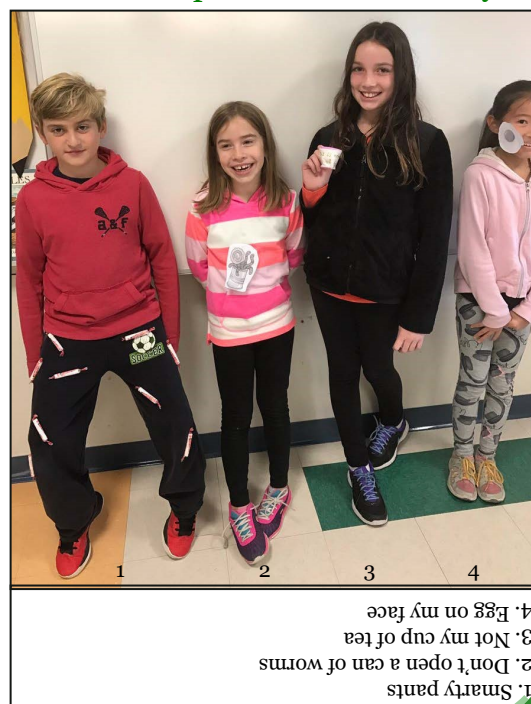


1. Grass is greener on the other side
2. Break a leg
3. Raining cats and dogs
4. Penny for your thoughts
5. X marks the spot

Want to see more
idioms in action?

Visit the SNIS
Twitter feed

@SNIS_CT



1. Smarty pants
2. Don't open a can of worms
3. Not my cup of tea
4. Eggs on my face

Say Something Week at SMS

From October 24th-28th, SMS students and staff participated in “Say Something Week”. This initiative, developed by the national non-profit organization Sandy Hook Promise, teaches students how to look for warning signs, signals and threats, especially in social media, of an individual who may be a threat to themselves or others and to say something to a trusted adult to get help.



In its planning guide for the event, Sandy Hook Promise states “Too often after an act of youth violence, facts come out that friends suspected or knew something was going to happen, but didn’t know what to do with that information. In fact, in 7 out of 10 acts of gun violence, at least one other person knew of the shooter’s intent, but said nothing. Additionally, 7 out of 10 people who commit suicide told someone of their plans or gave some type of warning or indication. Imagine how much tragedy could be averted if these individuals said something?” The organization hopes that “by building a culture of looking out for one another and reporting possible

threats of violence when someone sees, reads or hears something, entire communities will become safer and lives will be saved.”

SMS promoted the event throughout the week starting with morning announcements such as this one from Day 3:

“It’s day 3 of Say Something week, a week inspired around the Sandy Hook Promise. Today, we’d like to address the correlation between the Say Something initiative and SMS’s own character initiatives, specifically honesty, compassion, and courage. You may not think these attributes have much in common but they are actually tied very closely together. Many acts of courage are the result of a person’s compassion toward another. If you know a friend is in trouble and feel compelled to help them, you are exhibiting compassion. You need to step up and speak to someone. This demonstrates courage and also allows you to be honest with yourself. Be part of the SMS Say Something Community – be an “upstander”, not a bystander. We can all help each other.”

Individual teachers used the packet of resources from the Sandy Hook Promise page to reinforce the theme in their classes. Technology teacher Jennifer Morrison’s classes worked on SMS-taggrams on the subject which were posted in the hallway for all to see.

The SMS PTO contributed by funding the purchase of “Say Something” wristbands to provide a visible reminder to all students of the importance of speaking up.

SMS Principal Dr. Chris Longo said the event was a big success, “I think it really hit home and affected our students in a positive and reflective way.”





Honoring Our Veterans



All of our schools participated in activities surrounding Veterans Day. Staff and students took time to acknowledge and honor all those who have served in the military, whether in wartime or peacetime, and to show appreciation for their contributions to our national security. Events included assemblies, visits to classrooms by veterans, and special displays. The New Milford High School Marching Band even marched in the Veterans Day parade in New York City! To see (and hear) clips from the event, visit @NewMilfordBands on twitter.





New Milford Public Schools

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Director

Mrs. Laura Olson
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Special Services Director

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Technology Director

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Holiday Stress!

The holidays can be a wonderful time to reconnect with family and friends, but there's no denying that the "fun" of holiday parties, family get-togethers, and other holiday activities can also be a perfect recipe for stress and anxiety. In fact, the month between Thanksgiving and Christmas is cited as being the most stress-filled time of the year. In response, December has been named National Stress-Free Family Holidays Month to increase awareness. Here are a few tips to help prevent holiday stress and anxiety in children courtesy of the website www.verywell.com:

- ◆ **Set a calm example.** The most important way parents can help ease anxiety in children during the holidays is by trying to keep things relaxed as much as possible. As with so many situations, the way parents handle an issue can set the tone for how their kids will behave.
- ◆ **Set up conditions for good behavior.** Avoid taking your child to places such as the mall or holiday gatherings when he or she is hungry or tired. It's hard even for grown-ups to deal with noise and lots of stimulation when they're not feeling their best; kids get hungry more often and become tired more easily, and may understandably have a tough time being on their best behavior.
- ◆ **Remember the importance of routines.** The holidays can throw a big wrench into household routines, and that can play a role in anxiety in children. To minimize holiday stress in your kids, try to get routines back on track once an event or party is over. For instance, if an event goes past your child's bedtime, try to stick to quiet, calm activities the next day and get your child to bed on time the next night.
- ◆ **Watch what they're eating.** Another thing that can fall by the wayside amidst the holiday hubbub is healthy eating. Try packing healthy snacks when you have to go shopping or run other holiday errands with your children and try to minimize the amount of sweet treats at home.
- ◆ **Schedule some quiet time.** Having some peace and quiet with your child is more important than ever during the busy holiday season. Find a quiet corner and read a book with your child or create holiday pictures for grandma and grandpa. Better yet, take a walk outside in nature, away from noise and crowds and obligations.

Looking for stress reducing ideas for yourself? Click here to see [10 Ways to Combat Holiday Stress](#).

November can bring

The mission of the New Milford Public Schools, a collaborative partnership of students, educators, family and community, is to prepare each and every student to compete and excel in an ever-changing world, embrace challenges with vigor, respect and appreciate the worth of every human being, and contribute to society by providing effective instruction and dynamic curriculum, offering a wide range of valuable experiences, and inspiring students to pursue their dreams and aspirations.