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New Milford High School
 860-350-6647

Mr. Greg Shugrue, Principal
 Mr. Marc Balanda, Ass't. Principal
 Mrs. Liz Curtis, Ass't. Principal
 Dr. Christopher Longo, Ass't. Principal



Shaghticoke Middle School
 860-354-2204

Mrs. Dana Ford, Principal
 Mrs. Jennifer Chmielewski, Ass't. Principal
 Mrs. Emily Gervasio, Ass't. Principal
 Mrs. Suzi Greene, Ass't. Principal



Sarah Noble Intermediate School
 860-210-4020

Mrs. Anne Bilko, Principal
 Mrs. Emily Gervasio, Ass't. Principal
 Mrs. Jennifer Meyers, Ass't. Principal
 Mrs. Barbara Nanassy, Ass't. Principal



Hill & Plain Elementary School
 860-354-5430

Dr. Len Tomasello, Principal
 Mrs. Jennifer Hankla, Ass't. Principal



John Pettibone Elementary School
 860-354-3218

Mrs. Paula Kelleher, Principal
 Mrs. Jennifer Hankla, Ass't. Principal



Northville Elementary School
 860-355-3713

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Spotlight on New Milford Schools

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December 2014

Spotlight on Compassion

The New Milford Public Schools' Character Education Program spotlights a particular attribute each month. As befits the holiday season, December's character focus is on compassion. Students and staff participate in many initiatives, both large and small, that provide service to the community. Many events are long standing traditions. We spotlight just a few below.



JPS Principal Paula Kelleher says, "This is the 18th year our school has undertaken the Santa Fund project. Teachers Shelly Diana and Lauren Bergner champion the event. Students are asked to earn donation money through at-home chores. These donations go towards purchasing gifts for New Milford

children in need. We hold an all-school assembly so the students can see first-hand what they have accomplished. Each year we raise in the neighborhood of \$2000, so we are proud to say that we have given approximately \$36,000 to our community's children over time."

Another project with a long history is the Star Project. The New Milford High School French Honor Society started this community service project in December 1999. Advisor Barbara Polley says the project has evolved over the years, "The current practice of collecting books and boots started over 10 years ago when the group that helped Social Services collect boots dropped out. We were asked if we could fill the void, and have been doing books, because we felt that as an academic group we wanted to add books, and boots ever since." This year, the group is aiming to collect boots for 85 New Milford children.

Not to be outdone, many other clubs at NMHS make charitable contributions. The Key Club, in conjunction with the New Milford Police department, hosts "Stuff the Cruiser", collecting toys for needy children. Profits from the Art department's annual holiday sale go to Loaves and Fishes. The Dance Team even hosts a day where parents can drop off

children who spend their afternoon learning a dance routine while the parents shop (or wrap, or bake) in peace.



The Crane-a-Thon is another annual tradition. Schaghticoke Middle School's Art Club, along with many NMHS student alums, get together to make origami cranes as a decorative symbol of hope for patients at local area hospitals and cancer centers. Each year, students make over 3,000 cranes!

All district schools host food drives to help fill New Milford's Food Bank. At the high school, these drives are sponsored by various clubs throughout the year. One of the most successful takes place in November and is sponsored by the National Honor Society. The SMS Leo Club participated in the "walk a mile" for groceries for the Food Bank in November. While many drives take place around Thanksgiving and into December, others take place throughout the year. Hill and Plain School hosts the First Friday Food Drive. Principal Len Tomasello says this is a new monthly initiative for the school which has done food drives in the past. Per Dr. T, "In our first effort, we collected 247 food items that were brought to the local food bank. Several 3rd grade students volunteered to sort, count and package the items. They then returned to their classrooms and created a huge graph showing the many different kinds of food that were collected." The graph is displayed in the school's main lobby showcase along with a thank you letter from New Milford Social Services. Northville Elementary School will be holding its big food drive in February to coincide with the 100th day of school. Each classroom sets the goal to collect 100 food items by then. The bounty is then displayed in the cafeteria for all students to see before being transferred to the Food Bank.



Northville Elementary School also shows its compassion by "spreading warmth from head to toe". Principal Susan Murray sent this picture of hats, gloves, mittens and socks collected for distribution by New Milford Social Services. NES' Character Education Committee is hosting a toiletry drive in January for Social Services. Donations of toothpaste, soap, shampoo, and deodorant are welcome. NES will even gladly accept all those personal sized bottles from hotel stays that we all tend to collect!

Sometimes compassion is shown in simple acts of kindness. At Sarah Noble Intermediate School, kindness is in full bloom in the form of the Kindness Tree. According to teacher Kelly Harris, "The Kindness Tree is part of a small, proactive movement at SNIS to help raise awareness about the importance of kindness. It's a proven fact that kindness is contagious, so what better way to symbolically represent this than

watching a barren, lifeless tree made out of brown craft paper blossom with altruism?" If you were to stroll down the upstairs hall of SNIS you would see next to the tree: a basket of die-cut multi-colored construction paper hearts sitting on a small table with a container of thin crayola markers and a dispenser of tape. Above the supplies, taped on the wall is a sign with large, bright, neon yellow letters asking "Have you done something kind for someone today?" or "Has someone done something kind for you?" With each passing day new hearts imprinted with kind and thoughtful acts "bloom" on the tree; some labeled with names, but many remaining anonymous. As Mrs. Harris states, "The magic of the tree can give a voice to children (and adults) who may not want to be completely recognized for their benevolent deeds, but just want to spread their kindness in the hopes that it CAN change someone's day." [Click here](#) to see SNIS' kindness tree grow kinder each day.



The compassionate spirit of New Milford Public Schools students and staff won't end with the holiday season. Students and staff will continue to host events and initiatives throughout the year to provide service to the community.

Transition Update

At its December 9, 2014 regular meeting, the Board of Education formally approved the School Boundary Lines for 2015-2016 per refined Scenario B as recommended by Milone and MacBroom, Inc. at the November 18, 2014 Special Meeting of the Board of Education. Under the refined reconfiguration plan, the entirety of the Hill and Plain district will remain in Hill and Plain and the entirety of the Northville district will remain in Northville. The John Pettibone district will be split in the downtown area along the river. The November 18th presentation slides can be viewed on the [district website](#). An alphabetical directory by street can be found under the [Transportation tab](#).

Also at the December 9th meeting, Dr. Paddyfote gave an update to the Board on the transition process. She said the representatives from Arum & Associates were in the district during the first week of December visiting the five schools involved in the reconfiguration and spending time with each principal. The project managers looked at all building spaces including closet space, classroom space, etc. She noted that Arum & Associates has been impressed with the child-centered focus of each school.

Parents and interested community members are invited to attend focus group meetings during the month of January. Parent focus groups are offered both day and evening to fit all schedules. [The schedule can be found here](#). In addition, the project managers now have an email address to which questions and concerns can be sent. It is projectmanager@newmilfordps.org.

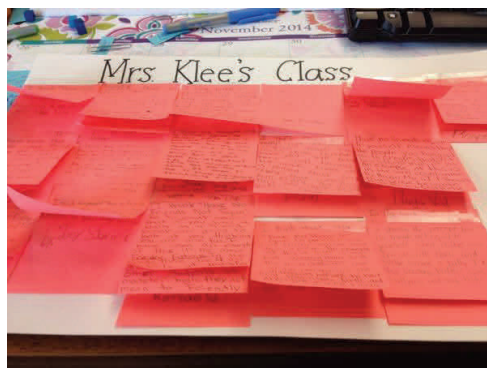
Updates will be posted under the Transition Year tab.

TRANSITION
YEAR

SNIS Wonder Wall

Wonder by R. J. Palacio is a read aloud novel shared with many of the 5th grade students at Sarah Noble Intermediate School. In the novel, Mr. Browne is an English teacher with a love of precepts. This year several 5th grade teachers got together to integrate Mr. Browne's precepts from the novel into their students' instruction. Participating teachers are Mrs. Klee, Mrs. Gray, Miss Da Ros, Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Holland.

As defined by Merriam Webster, a precept is "a command or principle intended especially as a general rule of action". Precepts as introduced to SNIS students use the *Wonder* definition of "Rules about really important things!" Each month the participating teachers introduce a new precept and students analyze the true meaning of these "words of wisdom". Students are asked to determine the theme or central idea that the author is trying to teach us through each precept, and trace that common theme across other fictional texts.



There have been three precepts introduced so far. In September, students reflected on the precept "When given the choice between being right or being kind, choose kind."

October's precept was "Your deeds are your monuments." In November, students pondered "Have no friends not equal to yourself." Each month students break apart the precept and determine what the quote or saying is really trying to tell them about life. Once students have a firm understanding of the precept, they reflect upon how this idea has been shown in other texts.



The result is the 5th grade "Wonder Wall" pictured above. It is an evolving work that shows the understanding of common themes across texts, including audio works, digital texts, and other print media. Class reflections form an interactive display that often leads to additional reflection.

According to Mrs. Klee, one of the participating teachers, "This work helps students appreciate our interconnectedness and reflect upon the human condition across cultures. The students have been working hard to determine central ideas that impact our understanding of other texts as well as the world we live in. The use of these precepts links with instruction beautifully." The teachers envision that the Wonder Wall will be a year long project. We'll plan to share a picture of the finished product in an end of year newsletter.

NMHS Students Learn "Names Can Really Hurt"



On December 2nd, New Milford High School 10th grade students were reminded that "Names Can Really Hurt Us." This dynamic day long NAMES program, presented by the Anti-Defamation League, is designed so that participants gain a working understanding of diversity issues, the harm caused by prejudice and discrimination, and their own power to have an impact on others.

Every day in schools across the country innocent sounding ethnic jokes, name-calling and harassing behaviors occur. Sometimes it goes unnoticed or unreported, but it always hurts and potentially harms the person at which these attacks are aimed. Students and staff at NMHS and several community members decided to work together to be trained to offer this moving program to examine difficult issues and effect positive change in our school community. Twelve years later, the program is still going strong at NMHS!

The NAMES program begins with an assembly for the entire 10th grade where students view a video about diversity, respect and intolerance. Students hear the stories of students who have had some difficult experiences in their school environment. They then hear stories of selected panelists from NMHS

regarding prejudice and name-calling. An ADL moderator leads a question and answer session in which audience members are encouraged to share their reactions to the panel, as well as their own stories. This is followed by small group breakout sessions co-facilitated by trained student/adult team members. The program culminates with small group representatives sharing "next step" ideas with the goal of creating a school community that is welcoming and supportive of all students. Junior and senior students participate in a finale that includes skits, poems, quotes and music encouraging peaceful co-existence and positive communication skills.

Program coordinator and NMHS teacher Lauren Iverson says "For this year's program there were over 70 junior and senior student volunteers who underwent three training days in the summer and fall evenings. These student volunteers helped to plan the assembly for their younger peers in an effort to raise awareness about the extreme power of words and actions and improve their school community. Two of our panelists also performed at a larger conference attended by twenty Connecticut towns and sponsored by the Connecticut Association of Schools." The article and video can be seen [here](#). NAMES student facilitators will continue training throughout the school year. They will visit Schaghticoke Middle School for a "Welcome to Our High School Community" program in May of 2015.



REMINDER:
The next
**Sit Down with
the Superintendent**



will be held on January 14th from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.
(Snow date February 4, 2015)
at 50 East Street

NMHS Athletics In Full Swing

Many of the student athletes at New Milford High School begin their training before the school year even starts. The fall teams took a moment to reflect on their season at the Fall Sports Awards Night on December 1st.

NMHS Athletic Director Keith Lipinsky hosted the evening and we wanted to share some of his remarks with you:

"A lot has happened since teams started practicing in late August. We had 367 student athletes (191 girls and 176 boys) participating in our 8 fall programs. Including the post season, our student-athletes competed in approximately 275 events while representing New Milford High School. There were a total of 18 levels of Fall Athletic Teams (8 Varsity, 5 JV, and 5 Freshman Teams).

This season, our varsity teams compiled an overall record of 76-32-7 for an overall winning percentage of .691. We had 7 teams qualify and compete in SWC Tournaments/Championships, and also had representation from 6 Varsity teams in the state tournament. We had 14 athletes selected to the first team all-conference teams in their sports and another 20 receiving All Colonial, 2nd team All -Conference, and honorable mention honors. We also had 3 teams win SWC Championships (Boys Cross Country, Girls Soccer, and Field Hockey), and 1 team win a State Championship (Boys Cross Country). We had one team win the SWC Sportsmanship Award for their sport (Girls Swimming) as well in which we are very proud. Last, but certainly not least, we had 30 Varsity student-athletes make the All-Conference All-Academic Team. Needless to say, it was a successful season.

One thing that really stood out to me this season was the feeling of unity within the Athletic Program. This was a focus area going into the season for the Athletic Department as many coaches and I had conversations about improving this area.

This season more than any I can remember in my 13 years at New Milford High School, there was such support from team to team and coach to coach within the Athletic Department. There were so many coaches and athletes from one team who went out and supported other teams in their events through attendance, or through messages sent through team twitter accounts, or through the retweeting of the Green Wave Twitter announcements and good luck wishes. Coaches in different programs supported one another as resources, mentors, and friends. We have started something really good this season, and it is our goal to make sure this feeling of Unity continues throughout this school year and that it becomes the norm for years to come."

Athletic Director Lipinsky reports that three Student-Athletes attended the high school's Early Signing Day as they will continue their athletic careers at the college level. They are Marisa McLaughlin (Girls Lacrosse), Blaine McMahon (Boys Lacrosse), and John Ceconi (Boys Lacrosse) who are pictured below signing their letters of intent.



The week of December 15th was the opening week for Winter Sport Competitions. NMHS has a total of 10 winter programs with 16 levels of Winter Teams (9 Varsity, 4 JV, 2 Freshman, and Dance) competing. This season also includes Cheerleading.

We look forward to reporting on all their success in a later issue.



**New Milford Public
Schools**

50 East Street
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Human Resources Director

Mr. John Calhoun
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Fiscal Services & Operations Director

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A New Year is Right Around the Corner

*In the spirit of the New Year we share some
traditions from around the world.*

Scotland is home to the custom of “first-footing”. This tradition says that the first foot to cross a home’s threshold after midnight on New Year’s Eve will predict the next year’s fortune. The ideal visitor should bring a gift: coal for the fire, a small treat, or a coin.

In Spain, the tradition is to eat twelve grapes at midnight to secure twelve happy months in the coming year.

In the Netherlands, bonfires and fireworks take center stage. The fire is believed to purge the old and make room for the new.

In the Philippines, wearing polka dots and eating round fruits ensures prosperity for the new year.

Tradition says that the Babylonians were the first to make New Year’s resolutions, as far back as 2600 B.C. People all over the world have been making and breaking them since!

**Whatever tradition you follow,
we want to take a moment
to wish all of you a
Happy and Healthy 2015!**

December

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.