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Mr. Marc Balanda, Ass't. Principal
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Schaghticoke Middle School
860-354-2204

Mrs. Dana Ford, Principal
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Mrs. Emily Gervasio, Ass't. Principal
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Mrs. Emily Gervasio, Ass't. Principal
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Mrs. Barbara Nanassy, Ass't. Principal



Hill & Plain Elementary School
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John Pettibone Elementary School
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Mrs. Paula Kelleher, Principal
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Northville Elementary School
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Spotlight on New Milford Schools

Volume 5, Issue 10

April 2015

Spotlight on School Counseling

*Children require guidance and sympathy
far more than instruction.*

~ Anne Sullivan

In the New Milford Public Schools, counselors interact and deliver instruction to students at all levels. The manner of delivery varies according to developmental appropriateness. Elementary counselors interact with young students, either individually or in small groups, often acting as a sounding board for all of their day-to-day activities. School counselors in later grades have similar responsibilities and also ultimately help teens transition from secondary school into the workforce or collegiate life.

At the elementary level, counselors are involved with behavioral issues and overall student health and safety. The focus is on helping students develop an understanding of self and others and of their place in the school environment. Counselors help students develop decision making and problem solving skills. Lessons also focus on the district's character education traits of expected behaviors.

In March, performers from the Women's Center of Greater Danbury presented puppet plays and did role playing with NES students. Students at JPS were treated to the same presentations earlier in the school year. School counselor for NES and JPS, Mrs. Lisa Tarsa, says the presentations dovetailed nicely with her regular counseling lessons. "The focus of the PK-1 puppet shows was care and kindness and taught the difference between respect and unkind behaviors. The second and third grade presentations focused on conflict resolution and included a skit designed to teach the importance of respecting others and the difference between joking and teasing."



Mrs. Helieth Sanchez, Counselor at HPS, says she focuses her lessons on the character education traits each month, using literature and having students reflect by discussing it, writing about it or acting out different scenarios. Ms. Sanchez often writes skits that deal with the character trait being studied and she gives several students the opportunity to read. She finds the group usually reads the skit several times as the students love being "on stage". Mrs. Sanchez says "One of my favorite activities this year is reading *Thank You Mr. Falker* by Patricia Pollacco. In this story, Patricia writes about how her 4th grade teacher helped her tremendously and gave her the courage and inspiration to succeed by teaching her how to read. The children then write a letter to someone who has impacted their lives and thanks them."

Developmental lessons at SNIS continue the focus on age appropriate social/emotional growth. This was on display during a special 4th and 5th grade program presented by school counselors Mrs. Jane Danish and Mr. Joe Dragone in March where SNIS students learned to ask "Is it true? Is it necessary? and Is it kind?"



According to Mrs. Danish, "The answers to these three important questions can help students decide that what they are about to say or do is a positive or negative action. As part of the lesson, students were asked to identify if a series of statements sent a positive or negative message. Later the same statements were read using a different tone of voice and different body language to change the meaning of the statement. The message to students was that words and actions have an impact either helpful/caring or hurtful. How we say or do something can change the meaning. The students were then given a formula for testing out their words before they speak. For example, 'I don't think you are a very good singer!' Is this TRUE? Maybe. Is it NECESSARY? No, not really. Is it KIND? No. Unless you can answer YES to all three testers (TRUE < NECESSARY < KIND) it should not be spoken. Finally, the students were given buzz words that are often used to try and mask unkind behavior; what to say if you are unsure of the meaning; why it is important to stand up for yourself and others, and when it is a must to tell a trusted adult." To finish the lesson, students designed posters highlighting the theme for display around the school.

At the middle school level, counseling services are broken down into developmental lessons and high school planning. Counselors work with students on social skills and study skills as they make the sometimes difficult transition from youth to young adult. This is

the time when most students first begin to consider their future goals and their place in the world and the school counselor provides guidance in what opportunities are to come. SMS Counselor Jill Strub says “In Grade 7, developmental lessons focus on the topics of Academic Goal Setting; Introduction to High School Options; Bully Awareness which includes lessons devoted to [Cyber-Bullying](#); Sexual Harassment; and Becoming an Upstander. Grade 8 developmental lessons are given in Cyber-Safety and Sexting; Career Awareness where lessons focus on students exploring careers based on their interests and personality type and a Review of High School Options which includes assisting with the high school application and course selection process.” Other pertinent information is shared in [seasonal newsletters](#) emailed home to all parents.

The main focus on high school planning takes place in Grade 8 when students hear presentations from the NMHS School Counseling Department on course selection and high school expectations and extra-curricular opportunities, as well as presentations from Henry Abbott Technical High School and Nonnewaug High School. This year, SMS counselors held an [inaugural evening event](#) for interested students and parents titled “SURGE Ahead to Student Success: A High School Fair” which included tips on organization, time management, homework and developing student connections. Students also learned about private schools in the area.

At the high school level, the school counseling mission is to provide leadership, advocacy and support for student achievement. The curriculum provides developmental and sequential lessons and activities delivered through advisory classes that address student development in academic, career, and personal/social domains. The Student Success Plan (SSP) consists of activities that focus on assisting each student to develop, analyze and evaluate his or her education, career and personal/social goals. The scheduling process is a vital piece of this plan and is a cooperative effort among students, parents, teachers, and counselors. Courses are selected to support the individual student’s post high school goals. A student’s interests, academic abilities, motivation, and goals are carefully considered as part of the course selection process.

Head counselor Mrs. Danette Lambiase says, “All students meet with counselors to discuss their course selection and update their Student Success Plan (SSP). In freshman and sophomore year, counselors meet with students in advisory to explore career interests, review and finalize their course requests and review credit requirements. Students in their sophomore and junior years receive assistance in deciphering their PSAT scores. In the junior year, counselors hold individual student/parent meetings to review and finalize course requests, review credits and graduation requirements and discuss post-secondary plans for college and career. Counselors visit advisories along with current seniors who share their college application experience and provide tips. Besides helping to finalize the college application process, counselors offer the Senior Workshop during the senior year. Senior students can stop in without an appointment during that time with college related questions or if they need help with an application.”

NMHS counselors offer special programs throughout the year for parents. These programs include "Coffee and Conversation" with parents of incoming freshmen and with sophomores, a college fair and college planning night, a financial aid night and the senior parent workshop. Parents can also stay informed by reading the Counseling newsletter, [*The Grapevine*](#).

All students are encouraged to use the Career Center which has information about occupations, vocational/technical schools, colleges and other related subjects. The Career Center is equipped with computer terminals that allow students to electronically access information regarding occupations, military careers, colleges, professional schools, and scholarships. Other resources include numerous college reference guides and hundreds of college view-books and catalogs.

Whatever the age group, whichever the school, the NMPS counselors' goal is to help students achieve success at all levels while helping them gain a stronger understanding of themselves and their future potential.

NMHS Counseling Department presents the First Annual College and Post-Secondary Options Fair



**Thursday, April 30
New Milford High School Arena
6:30 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.**

**Meet and talk to representatives from more than 90 Colleges
and Universities including Business, Technology, Cosmetology,
Culinary and the Military!**

**All interested students and parents, any grades,
are welcome...Admission is free!**

SNIS American Sign Language Club Creates Music Video

Members of the Sarah Noble Intermediate School American Sign Language (ASL) Club recently starred in their own music video. Special education teacher Ms. Julia Silvestri says “Deaf students at SNIS and at Hill and Plain School receive ASL lessons in classrooms during the day. The programs are taught by two deaf teachers. In addition, ASL programs at SNIS are open to 4th grade students. These programs were started in 2013 at Hill and Plain School with the support of the PTO and now include a monthly club for advanced signers and a weekly class for new signers. I advise the SNIS ASL club along with Mrs. Zina Smith, a deaf parent of a deaf student in the district.”

The music video, entitled *Let It Go*, was created by Stephanie Bryant, a deaf 4th grader at SNIS who communicates using American Sign Language. After producing several [Deaf Awareness videos](#) in the fall with her classmates, Stephanie was inspired to make an ASL music video. The ASL music video [HAPPY](#) by Deaf Film Camp was another source of inspiration. Stephanie wanted to express herself artistically and share the beauty of ASL with her friends and community.



To prepare, Stephanie wrote an essay about Elsa from the movie *Frozen* for a character analysis unit, then translated the song *Let It Go* from English into ASL. The essay and Stephanie’s film design were both about the power of love to overcome fear. Stephanie and other ASL students then reviewed the signs for feelings, weather, and energy words during study hall and in the after-school ASL programs.

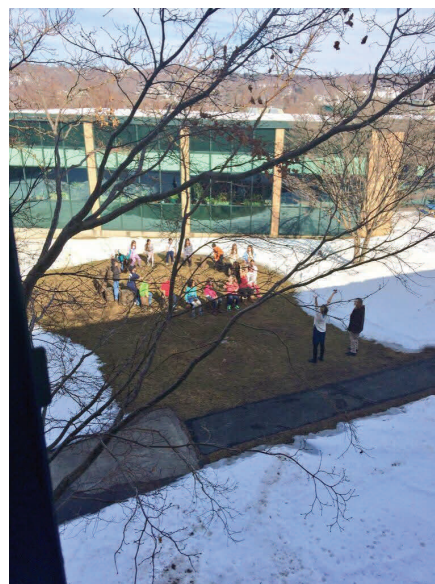


Once the translation was nearly complete, Stephanie used a storyboard to design the shot sequence. Her classmates and other ASL students joined in translating and filming parts of the song around the beautiful SNIS campus during the winter. Ms. Silvestri did the filming using an iPhone/iPad and then edited it on the computer using iMovie.

The final film was edited by feedback from the students in Ms. Livingstone's class. Ms. Silvestri says “More than five classes participated and almost all the teachers and administrators joined in! It was a very fun project.”

The finished product is uploaded here:

[LET IT GO](#). Enjoy!

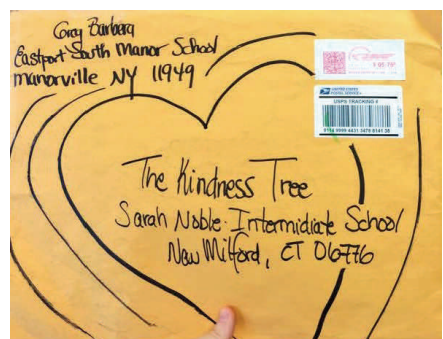
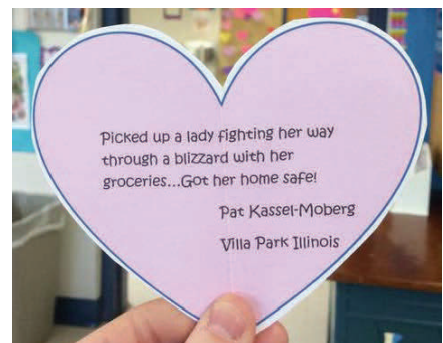


Did you know?

- ◆ Sign language is the fourth most-used language in the United States.
- ◆ American Sign Language (ASL) is the language used by deaf people in North America. There are hundreds of sign language dialects in use around the world. Each culture has developed its own form of sign language to be compatible with the language spoken in that country.
- ◆ A form of ASL has been used in the U.S. for over two hundred years.
- ◆ ASL is a visual-spatial language that uses handshapes, movements and expressions to communicate words, ideas and feelings.
- ◆ For over 100 years, film has been used to preserve and celebrate ASL.

SNIS' Kindness Tree Returns with Spring Weather

Spring-like weather has finally returned and lawns and gardens are showing the effects of warmer weather and plentiful sunshine. The SNIS Kindness Tree is also back in bloom! Mrs. Harris says the tree was reopened for the month of April in recognition of [Pay it Forward Day](#) on April 30th. As you can see from the pictures, it didn't take long to sprout an abundance of "leaves". In fact, word of the tree has spread and "leaves" are coming from other schools in New Milford and from other states as well!



Classroom Learning Leads to Competition

Through membership in school sponsored clubs, some students at New Milford High School have taken their classroom learning and turned it into competitive success. Student members of the Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA), Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) and Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) have demonstrated success at state-wide competitions, often times leading to opportunities for national achievement. Throughout the experience, students have an opportunity to apply knowledge in a different setting from the traditional classroom, an important skill for future professionals to master.

DECA

The Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) is an integral part of the Marketing course at New Milford High School which is designed to provide an understanding of the business world and develop students' knowledge and ability in the marketing field. As DECA members, Business students participate in state level competition against other students to demonstrate their skills on business topics. Students who qualify at the state level move on to national competition.

NMHS Business teacher and club advisor Mrs. Deb Knipple says, "The competitions enhance the preparation for college and careers by providing programs that integrate into the classroom. Students use skills and applications learned in the classroom to demonstrate their knowledge of the subject and show their skills in communication, interviewing, and interpersonal relations. Students also network with students from other schools as well as professionals outside of the classroom, and earn college scholarship opportunities." There are currently 75 students in DECA of which 48 members participated in state competition. Eight students qualified to travel to the national competition in Orlando this year.



In addition to competition activities, DECA members participate in community service fundraising and in fundraising to support national competition expenses. They encourage school spirit through school-wide events such as a "Friendly Feud Game" and school Handball Tournament open to all grades.

FBLA

Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), one of the largest student vocational educational organizations, is open to students currently enrolled in a Business course at NMHS and/or to those students who have successfully completed a Business course previously.

FBLA is dedicated to preparing students for careers in business and business-related fields. NMHS Business teacher and advisor Mrs. Janice Perrone says the New Milford High School chapter generally consists of 35-45 student members per year. During the year, students organize several fundraising and community service events. "This year, we hosted a basketball exhibition game featuring NMHS Faculty vs. the New Milford Police Department which was very well attended and enabled us to make a sizable donation to Sherman based Matthew's Hearts of Hope. We also hosted three Family Movie Nights where we invited elementary school children and their families to enjoy a night out with a free movie showing in the high school cafeteria."



FBLA's National Awards Program recognizes and rewards excellence in a broad range of business and career-related areas. Through state-based competition at spring State Leadership Conferences, students compete in events testing their business knowledge and skills. Top state winners then are eligible to compete for honors at the National Leadership Conference each summer.

Mrs. Perrone says, "At the CT State Leadership Conference this year, ten New Milford students qualified to compete nationally by winning top awards in events such as Banking & Financial Systems, Desktop Publishing, Computer Problem Solving, Future Business Leaders, Health Care Administration, Mobile Application Development and Web Site Development."

HOSA

Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) is a national student organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Health Science Education (HSE) Division of ACTE. HOSA's two-fold mission is to promote career opportunities in the health care industry and to enhance the delivery of quality health care to all people.

HOSA provides a unique program of leadership development, motivation, and recognition exclusively for secondary, postsecondary, adult, and collegiate students enrolled in health science education and biomedical science programs who have interests in pursuing careers in health professions. HOSA is 100% health care. The rapidly changing health care system needs dedicated workers who, in addition to their technical skills, are people-oriented and capable of playing a leadership or followership role as a member of a health care team. HOSA's mission is especially critical when considering the acute shortage of qualified workers for the health care industry.

NMHS Health teacher and HOSA advisor Mrs. Denise Duggan says, "All health related courses that teach knowledge and skills about health topics are able to have their students join HOSA. The career and health classes at New Milford High that have had members of



HOSA include students from Medical Technology, EMT, Sports Medicine and Forensic Medicine.”

This year 13 students were members of HOSA. Ten of those students attended the state competition at Gateway Community College in Hartford. There were over 200 students from area schools at the competition. Currently six categories are offered in which students can compete and these categories are broken down into different health-related events. The categories include events

in: Health Science, Health Professions, Emergency Preparedness, Leadership, Teamwork and Recognition. Mrs. Duggan said “New Milford had eight out of ten students receive medals in their event. We hope to increase membership next year and include interdisciplinary collaboration to have students enter competitions in such events as Medical Math and Public Speaking.”



Transition Update

Here's just a little bit of what's been happening since our last issue of *Spotlight*:

- ⇒ The parent advisory committee is now meeting both on-site and online each month. The March meeting was on-site in the evening and the day meeting was online. This month the meetings were reversed with the on-site meeting during the day. Many of the ideas and suggestions from the advisory committee are being included in planning for upcoming welcoming events.
- ⇒ The Pods were delivered the first week of April to each of the affected schools and will function as staging areas for all packed materials. The objective is to keep the schools clear of packing materials so as not to impact the instructional day.
- ⇒ Poster size maps showing the 2015-2016 room layout for the transitioning schools are now on display in each of the schools.
- ⇒ **Welcome Events** have been scheduled for April and May. Students and parents of newly enrolled kindergarteners and students transitioning to new schools are invited to attend these evening events at their new schools. **A schedule by current grade is listed on the next page.**

The evening will provide an opportunity for parents and students to learn about their new school and tour the building. Principals will be emailing invitations to families for their specific date as we get closer to each event.

Schedule of Welcome Events

Current Grade	Place	Date	Time
Grade 5	SMS	April 27, 2015	6:00 p.m. - 7:15 p.m.
NES Grade 2	SNIS	April 28, 2015	6:00 p.m. - 7:15 p.m.
HPS Grade 3	SNIS	April 29, 2015	6:00 p.m. - 7:15 p.m.
JPS Grades K-1 assigned to HPS next year & newly registered HPS kindergarteners	HPS	April 30, 2015	6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
JPS Grades K-1 assigned to NES next year & newly registered NES kindergarteners	NES	April 30, 2015	6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Grade 5	SMS	May 4, 2015	6:00 p.m. - 7:15 p.m.
Grade 5	SMS	May 5, 2015	6:00 p.m. - 7:15 p.m.
JPS Grade 2	SNIS	May 6, 2015	6:00 p.m. - 7:15 p.m.
JPS Grade 3	SNIS	May 7, 2015	6:00 p.m. - 7:15 p.m.
Grade 6	SMS	May 11, 2015	6:00 p.m. - 7:15 p.m.
Grade 5	SMS	May 12, 2015	6:00 p.m. - 7:15 p.m.
HPS Grade 2	SNIS	May 13, 2015	6:00 p.m. - 7:15 p.m.
NES Grade 3	SNIS	May 14, 2015	6:00 p.m. - 7:15 p.m.
Grade 6	SMS	May 20, 2015	6:00 p.m. - 7:15 p.m.
Grade 6	SMS	May 26, 2015	6:00 p.m. - 7:15 p.m.
Grade 6	SMS	May 27, 2015	6:00 p.m. - 7:15 p.m.



REMINDER:

The last scheduled

Sit Down with the Superintendent

for 2014-15 will be held on May 20th from 7:30 a.m. to 8:15 a.m.
at the Lillis Administration Building, 50 East Street



NMHS Winter Athletics Wrap-Up

New Milford High School's winter athletes and teams were honored at an awards ceremony on April 6th. NMHS Athletic Director Keith Lipinsky hosted the event and we share some of his remarks from that evening with you:

"A lot has happened since teams started practicing in early December. We had a great turnout for our ten Winter programs and for that we are very thankful. We had 288 student-athletes (143 girls and 145 boys) participate. Including the post season, our student-athletes competed in approximately 250 events while representing New Milford High School. As I visited the practices and attended many of these events, it was clear that our students were participating because they think it is fun, because they love the sport, because they love the competition, and because of the relationships they have made with their coaches and teammates. I would bet that most adults including myself who played high school sports would say that some of the best memories and friendships they have from growing up were from playing sports.

This season, our varsity teams compiled an overall regular season record of 60-39-2 for an overall winning percentage of .605. We had all ten teams qualify and compete for the SWC tournaments/championships with the Gymnastics team winning the SWC Championship, the Wrestling team winning the Class L State Championship, the Ice Hockey Team finishing as runner-up in the SCC/SWC League Championship, and had representation from all ten Varsity teams in the State tournament. New Milford High School had fifteen athletes selected to the First Team All-Conference teams in their sports and another twenty five receiving All Colonial, 2nd team All-Conference and honorable mention honors. We had six athletes selected to the First Team All-State Team in their sports and an additional eight athletes selected to the 2nd Team All-State Team. We also had five student athletes who earned the title of All-American in their sports, an incredible accomplishment! Last, but certainly not least, we had eleven student-athletes make the All-Conference All-Academic Team. Needless to say, it was a successful season in many regards. The overall attitudes, work ethic, and levels of sportsmanship of our athletes are to be commended."



Spring sports teams are already in full swing and should show similar success. AD Lipinsky is looking forward to reporting on their season in an end of year issue of *Spotlight*.



**New Milford Public
Schools**

50 East Street
New Milford, CT 06776
860-355-8406

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Superintendent

Mr. Joshua Smith
Assistant Superintendent

Ms. Ellamae Baldelli
Human Resources Director

Mr. John Calhoun
Facilities Manager

Mr. Jay Hubelbank
Fiscal Services & Operations Director

Mrs. Laura Olson
Pupil Personnel & Special Services
Director

Ms. Roberta Pratt
Technology Director

Mrs. Sandra Sullivan
Food Services Director

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Mr. David R. Shaffer

Mrs. Daniele Shook

Mr. John W. Spatola

Mrs. Theresa Volinski

Volunteer Appreciation Month

And a time to say
THANK YOU

to all the individuals and groups that support
our students and staff in ways big and small.

THANK YOU:



Parents
Grandparents
Retirees
PTOs



Band Parents
Athletic Boosters
NMHS Grad Party
Adult and Student Mentors
John J. McCarthy Observatory
Kiwanis, Lions, and Rotary Clubs
Literacy on the Green
Internship providers
Scholarship donors
Community and corporate partners
and guest lecturers

**Your contributions are
truly appreciated!!**

*Too often we underestimate the power of a
touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear,
an honest compliment, or the smallest act of
caring, all of which have the potential to
turn a life around.*

~Leo Buscaglia

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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.