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Mr. Marc Balanda, Ass't. Principal
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Schaghticoke Middle School
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Mrs. Jennifer Chmielewski, Ass't. Principal
Mrs. Suzi Greene, Ass't. Principal



Sarah Noble Intermediate School
860-210-4020
Dr. Len Tomasello, Principal

Mrs. Anne Bilko, Ass't. Principal
Mrs. Joan Kick, Ass't. Principal
Mrs. Jennifer Meyers, Ass't. Principal
Dr. Don Naiman, Ass't. Principal



Hill & Plain 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

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Character Education in Our Schools

This issue of the *Spotlight* focuses on the **Character Education** programs in our schools. Developed as part of the district's Strategic Plan, the Character Education Program consists of six action plans:

- ◆ Establish common core character education attributes to be integrated into our schools, families and community.
- ◆ Promote a school culture and climate that reinforces positive character attributes.
- ◆ Ensure that the specific attributes are understood and integrated within the curriculum at each grade level.
- ◆ Build a strong partnership with families to engage with their children in promoting positive character attributes.
- ◆ Promote strong partnerships with community organizations to endorse positive character attributes.
- ◆ Integrate the character attributes into the curriculum review cycle.

A district-wide Character Education Committee was established to oversee and assist in the implementation of the action plans at each school. The team set common core character attributes to be spotlighted monthly. Each school strives to embed these attributes into its curriculum and culture.

While each school spotlights the same attribute as all the other schools each month, every school has a special personality and chooses different means of expression. To see how each one incorporates Character Education into their daily, weekly, and monthly school routines take a peek inside...



Character Attributes

September	RESPECT
October	RESPONSIBILITY
November	HONESTY
December	COMPASSION
January	PERSEVERANCE
February	CITIZENSHIP
March	INTEGRITY
April	LOYALTY
May	COURAGE
June	COOPERATION

Character Education Takes Many Forms

There are **Visual Reminders**:

At Sarah Noble Intermediate School, character education is spotlighted before you even enter the building. As Principal Len Tomasello says “This past summer, with the support of a PTO grant, we had the district’s ten character traits displayed on columns leading to the main entrance of the school. We also had four character traits (Respect, Responsibility, Honesty and Safety) displayed on the four



“canopies” that are in front of the school. These traits are part of our Noble Pledge, which is recited daily as part of our morning announcements. These traits are also part of our character hand which is displayed on most of the student lockers throughout the school. Character words are also displayed over most of the door frames inside SNIS.”

At the elementary level, students, staff and visitors will notice flags, street signs and posters at each school that name and talk about the ten character attributes. At John Pettibone School, for example, each of the corridors is labeled with names pertaining to the ten character traits. At Northville Elementary School, a school-wide Character Education poster is displayed in every classroom and in the halls. Principal Susan Murray says “the poster provides developmentally appropriate examples of each character trait, making abstract concepts relevant for young children. The poster has also been printed on a magnet for families. This important home-school connection enables

parents to refer to the traits and use the examples and language used at school.” JPS and HPS have similar displays for student reference.

At Schaghticoke Middle School, departments create bulletin boards which allow students to be recognized for actions which are examples of the monthly trait and at New Milford High School, you can see character education attributes on everything from hallway banners to staff IDs.

New Milford Schools' Character Traits									
Northville Elementary School's Expectations for Behavior									
September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
Respect	Responsibility	Honesty	Compassion	Perseverance	Citizenship	Integrity	Loyalty	Courage	Cooperation
I take turns talking.	I am in charge of what I do.	I tell the truth.	I care about other people's feelings.	I keep trying, especially when things are hard to do.	I take care of the school's property.	I keep my word.	I am a good friend.	I do what is right, even if it feels scary.	I get along with other people.
I use kind words.	I do my assigned work at school and home.	I ask permission before using someone else's property.	I treat others with kindness.	I take a break sometimes so I can work better.	I tell an adult when I see something is wrong.	I do what is right, even if no one is watching.	I speak kindly about my family, friends, and teachers.	I share what I am thinking in class.	I work with others so we can learn together.
I keep my hands to myself.	I keep my work space clean and neat.							I try new ways of learning.	
I follow the teachers' directions.									



Oftentimes the monthly character education trait is illustrated in student work as in the examples below from Northville Elementary School showing Respect in action.



There are **Written and Oral Reminders:**

Each school's Character Education Committee chooses quotes to highlight the monthly theme. They may display these quotes on their school websites, on their monthly calendars and/or in their daily bulletins. In many cases, students and staff share the quote during daily announcements. Sometimes a story is read to give an example of the theme. At Schaghticoke Middle School, Principal Dana Ford says "each department is responsible for one character trait during the year. In September,

An example from the Northville Elementary School website:
The Character Trait for the month of November is **HONESTY**.
"When truth is divided, errors multiply."
~Eli Siegel

administration took charge of Respect. We chose morning music that had the theme of respect at its core and made announcements about the importance of respect." Every caller to Northville Elementary School hears their automated greeting which starts with an announcement of that month's character trait. Hill and Plain Elementary Principal Anne Stuhlman says "In addition to spotlighting the character trait during morning announcements, each classroom starts the day with a special character message during their morning meeting."

An example from New Milford High School's monthly calendar:
Spotlight: **COOPERATION**.
"He that does good to another does good also to himself."
~Lucius Annaeus Seneca

Student and Staff Recognition:

Schaghticoke Middle School acknowledges students of good character on a monthly basis with its Student of the Month program. Representatives are chosen from each team and from special areas. The 8th grade recipients for September are pictured at the right.

At New Milford High School, staff members nominate students who they feel embody the character trait for that month and an NMHS Student Character Recognition letter is mailed home to parents. Parents and students can return the favor through a link on the high school's website which invites them to nominate a staff member for a job well done. Part of



the form requires checking off which character traits the recognition is for. Another recognition method used by NMHS is the Positive Principal telephone call form. Principal Greg Shugrue says “staff members who see students exhibiting a character trait in action fill out this brief form which administrators then use as a conversation starter for a phone call home to parents. It’s a nice opportunity to make a positive connection in an informal way.”

At Sarah Noble Intermediate School, students hope to get an OSCAR (Outstanding Student Character Award Recognition). Per Dr. Tomasello, “During the school year, staff members watch to catch someone performing actions that relate to our character traits.

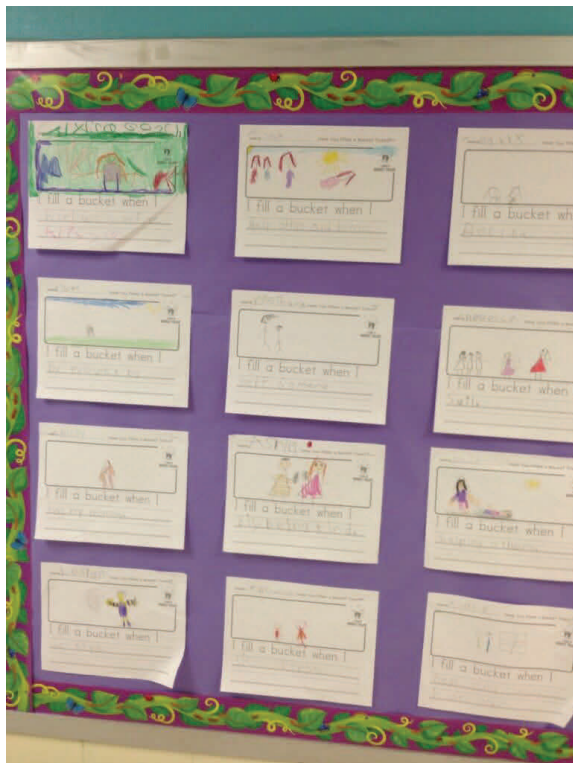
Every “nominated” student is publicly recognized during each lunch wave.

Students’ names and their positive actions are announced and the group is invited to the stage for a photo. Once all students are on the stage, one of the names is randomly selected to receive an OSCAR medallion.” Pictured to the right are some of the grade 4 OSCAR winners. Following the recognition ceremony, letters from the principal are sent to the parents of all OSCAR recipients.

Nomination “ballots” are proudly displayed in the Library/Media Center for all to see. OSCARS went to nearly 200 students in October alone!



Special Initiatives and Events:



Students at the elementary level are being taught to be “bucket fillers”. Using the books *How Full is Your Bucket?* by Tom Rath and Mary Reckmeyer and *Have You Filled a Bucket Today?* by Carol McCloud, staff remind students that every behavior exemplifying a character trait “puts a drop in someone else’s bucket” helping to make the school environment warm and friendly. John Pettibone School also uses this bucket filling analogy. Per Principal Paula Kelleher: “Our school has come up with a bucket symbol to remind us of the four areas we need to take care of every day: Belongings, Feelings, Bodies, Food. The basic concept is that everyone carries around an invisible bucket. When you say or do something kind to another person, you fill that person’s bucket with warm and happy feelings. You fill your own bucket too! When you say or do mean things that make others feel bad, you dip into their buckets.” Every week, student and

staff “bucket fillers” are awarded with G.E.O.R.G.E. Awards in honor of George, the school’s dinosaur mascot. This year, Principal Kelleher and her staff are looking at ways of helping students become informed media consumers by spotting examples of “bucket filling” and “bucket dipping” behaviors in the media.



SMS students wear orange in a show of unity on Anti-Bullying Day



Other special events spotlight good character or a good cause. These events may include grade level



or all-school assemblies during the year like a recent anti-bullying presentation at



SNIS, spotlight days (like Anti-Bullying Day at SMS and Make a Difference Day at HPS) or Pink Day at SNIS in support of the New Milford Hospital Cancer Awareness Program. Students even fundraise for a good cause as in this example of the New Milford High School’s National Honor Society Cystic Fibrosis pumpkin fundraiser, one of many such initiatives that happen throughout the year in all our schools.

Character, in the long run, is the decisive factor in the life of an individual and of nations alike.
~Theodore Roosevelt



New Milford Public Schools

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Veterans

Who provides a better example of character in action for our students than our country's veterans? November 11th is specially designated as Veterans Day in the United States and our schools participate in this recognition with assemblies, special guests etc.



A proud NES first grader poses with her father, a retired Marine gunnery sergeant.

Origins of Veterans Day*

Raymond Weeks of Birmingham, Alabama, organized a Veterans Day parade for that city on November 11, 1947, to honor all of America's Veterans for their loyal service. Later, U.S. Representative Edward H. Rees of Kansas proposed legislation changing the name of Armistice Day to Veterans Day to honor all who have served in America's Armed Forces.

In 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed a bill proclaiming November 11th as Veterans Day and called upon Americans everywhere to rededicate themselves to the cause of peace. He issued a Presidential Order directing the head of the

Veterans Administration, now the Department of Veterans Affairs, to form a Veterans Day National Committee to organize and oversee the national observance of Veterans Day.

Many people confuse Memorial Day and Veterans Day. Both holidays were established to recognize and honor the men and women who have worn the uniform of the United States Armed Forces. But Memorial Day, which is observed on the last Monday in May, was originally set aside as a day for remembering and honoring military personnel who died in the service of their country, particularly those who died in battle or as a result of wounds sustained in battle.

While those who died are also remembered on Veterans Day, the day is intended to thank and honor all those who served honorably in the military, in wartime or peacetime. In fact, Veterans Day is largely intended to thank living Veterans for their service, to acknowledge that their contributions to our national security are appreciated, and to underscore the fact that all those who served have sacrificed and done their duty.

*Information taken from <http://www.va.gov/opa/vetsday/index.asp>

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.

November Honors