



New Milford Public Schools  
50 East Street  
New Milford, CT 06776  
860-355-8406  
[www.newmilfordps.org](http://www.newmilfordps.org)



**New Milford High School**  
860-350-6647

Mr. Greg Shugrue, Principal  
Mrs. Liz Curtis, Asst. Principal  
Ms. Linda Scoralick, Asst. Principal  
Mr. Eric Williams, Asst. Principal



**Schaghticoke Middle School**  
860-354-2204

Dr. Christopher Longo, Principal  
Mrs. Kerri Adakonis, Asst. Principal  
Mrs. Jennifer Chmielewski, Asst. Principal  
Mrs. Barbara Nanassy, Asst. Principal  
Dr. Len Tomasello, Transition Admin.



**Sarah Noble Intermediate School**  
860-210-4020

Mrs. Anne Bilko, Principal  
Mrs. Emily Gervasio, Asst. Principal  
Mrs. Jennifer Hankla, Asst. Principal  
Mrs. Jennifer Meyers, Asst. Principal



**Hill & Plain Elementary School**  
860-354-5430

Mrs. Paula Kelleher, Principal  
Mrs. Jennifer Hankla, Asst. Principal



**Northville Elementary School**  
860-355-3713

Mrs. Susan Murray, Principal  
Mrs. Barbara Nanassy, Asst. Principal

# Spotlight on New Milford Schools

Volume 7, Issue 3

September 2016

## Introducing New Milford's 2016-2017 Teacher of the Year...



**Roxanne Kraft**

Each year, parents, students and fellow staff members are invited to nominate a teacher for selection as New Milford's Teacher of the Year. The nominee must have taught in the district for five or more years and have demonstrated continued excellence of performance during his/her tenure. A Selection Committee then considers all the nominees based on the following guidelines:

- ◆ *Demonstrated ability to inspire enthusiasm and motivation for learning in students.*
- ◆ *Demonstrated use of effective teaching techniques, flexibility of style, innovation, and creativity.*
- ◆ *Caring relationships with students.*
- ◆ *Demonstrated commitment to continuing professional growth and development.*
- ◆ *Respect and admiration of students, colleagues, parents, and administration.*
- ◆ *Personal philosophy and goals.*
- ◆ *Ability to articulate ideas clearly.*

The Committee was pleased to select **Mrs. Roxanne Kraft** as this year's New Milford Teacher of the Year. Mrs. Kraft has been a special education teacher in New Milford since 1987 when she joined the Hill and Plain Elementary School teaching staff. In 1998, Mrs. Kraft moved to Northville Elementary School. This year she is starting a new assignment with the district working as a transition teacher for the Litchfield Hills Transition Center, a special education program for students who are aged 18 to 21.

Mrs. Kraft was nominated by both parents and fellow educators who praised her positive attitude, caring touch and calm demeanor. She was lauded as a gifted teacher who is extremely dedicated to her profession, her colleagues, and most importantly, her parents and students. One nomination described Mrs. Kraft's work with students saying "Roxanne's students not only have helpful opportunities to learn, but they feel happy, safe, and are emotionally available for learning due to Roxanne's happy, welcoming attitude." Others talked about her ability to build confidence in every single student. One parent described Mrs. Kraft as one of her child's biggest cheerleaders and said that "her positive attitude and joy for life is infectious, making everyone's day brighter, happier and better".

Other nominations talk about Roxanne's willingness to share her time and expertise, both as an official and unofficial mentor, and as a professional development leader who stays up to date on current literature on best teaching practices. As one teacher states, Roxanne has "made me a better teacher". Still another states that Roxanne "demonstrates daily what it means to reach excellence in the teaching profession". Parents agree, stating that Mrs. Kraft "uses every opportunity in the classroom as a teaching moment" and "makes learning fun, memorable and relevant".

Following her announcement as New Milford's Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Kraft spoke to the assembled staff at convocation. Roxanne said in preparing her speech, she reflected back on her many years of teaching and thought about why she decided to become a teacher. "I realized it wasn't about me choosing to become a teacher but about teaching choosing me."

She shared words written to her from former NES principal, Thomas Atticks, who said "I have come to understand that the art of great teaching lies within the human heart and soul. Good teachers can be trained but great teachers are born. It is their humanity that distinguishes them from the others, not so much their intellect or education, but what lies within."

Mrs. Kraft shared that she feels "Being chosen to be a teacher is a wonderful gift but it comes with a huge responsibility and many challenges." Some people may view the word challenge in a negative fashion but Roxanne is not a negative person. "I view challenges as positives. I'm always thinking of what I can do to turn an undesirable behavior or a learning difficulty into a positive experience or outcome. How can I make a difference?"

She reminded her colleagues that "As teachers we have the power to turn each challenge into an opportunity for success. It is when we look hard, search deeply, and collaborate with colleagues that we begin to understand the underlying causes or reasons. When I look at challenge from a positive viewpoint, I see hope, I see success."

Mrs. Connie Williams, New Milford's Teacher of the Year in 2014-15, echoes the thoughts of many when she states "Roxanne always does what's best for her students. Her enthusiasm is contagious, and no matter where she goes, she spreads this infectious feeling that, simply put, life is good." Certainly a wonderful role model for our students!

**Congratulations to Mrs. Roxanne Kraft,  
New Milford's 2016-2017 Teacher of the Year!**

## Celebrating NMPS Staff

Throughout the 2016-17 school year, we will be publicly recognizing NMPS staff members for the good work they do to positively impact our students and/or the community of New Milford and we would like you to help! Parents, students and fellow staff members are invited to [complete a short online form](#) to nominate a NMPS staff member: whether it be a teacher, guidance counselor, nurse, paraeducator, school psychologist, secretary, social worker, administrator, cafeteria worker, custodian, coach or other support person of your choice. You are welcome to make a nomination at any time and for as many deserving staff members as you wish.



From all the forms submitted, six honorees will be selected each month, one from each school and one non-school specific honoree. All honorees will be invited to attend the Board of Education monthly meeting for public congratulations where they will receive a star lapel pin as a small symbol in recognition of their “star” qualities. In addition, thanks to a new partnership with Ingersoll Automotive of Danbury, one lucky honoree each month will be gifted at random with a brand new car to drive for the month!



Superintendent Joshua Smith and BOE Vice Chair Bill Dahl present Mrs. Roxanne Kraft with her star lapel pin as a picture of her new transportation for the month is displayed on screen in the background.

To kick-off the program this month we are celebrating a single, most deserving honoree, Teacher of the Year Roxanne Kraft. Congratulations to Roxanne who will be driving back and forth to school this month in a brand new 2016 Chevrolet Equinox.

We will be sure to keep you updated on the winners in future issues of *Spotlight on New Milford Schools* as we celebrate the stars among us.



## NMPS Summer Bridge Program

For three weeks this summer beginning on July 25th and ending August 11th, over 50 select students in grades three through five took part in the new SNIS Summer Bridge Program held at Sarah Noble Intermediate School. The program served as an opportunity for students to accelerate student achievement toward district standards in Language Arts and Mathematics.

The program allowed students to be deeply engaged in learning. Activities ranged from whole group learning to individual practice. There were also plenty of opportunities for students to receive individualized instruction from their teachers in order to improve specific areas of weaknesses.

Incoming third grade students focused on identifying main ideas and supporting details in reading non-fiction articles. In math, they practiced several strategies for solving complex addition and subtraction problems.

Incoming fourth grade students wrote detailed summaries of non-fiction texts including the main idea and supporting details. In math, students practiced strategies to solve word problems that included both multiplication and division.

Incoming fifth graders studied the function of evidence and author's choice within non-fiction texts. In math, students practiced strategies for solving equations in multiplication and division using double and triple digit numbers.

The feedback from both students and staff was overwhelmingly positive. The students enjoyed the teachers, content, and structure of the Summer Bridge Program. "It was fun and learning" remarked a fourth grader. "I liked using the programs on the Chromebooks" commented a third grader. A fifth grader in the program said she enjoyed reading the non-fiction articles because they were interesting and relevant. "We read articles about the *Dory* movie and the Olympics."

Lisa Montemurro, who taught the class of incoming fifth graders, was thoroughly pleased with her students in the program. "Every day they came ready to work and had such a great attitude. They worked hard and had fun doing it."

All students took a pre and post-assessment to measure growth in the reading and math focus areas. Almost all students experienced growth in one or both areas. Overall, 95% of students improved their reading comprehension by at least one point on a five-point scale and 98% of students improved in their percent mastery of equations in their respective grade levels. Attendance levels were also high, averaging over 80% for these three weeks during the summer season.





# WELCOME NEW STAFF

## **Mr. Kevin Best**

*Mathematics teacher, New Milford High School*

Mr. Best's educational background includes a BS in Applied Mathematics from the University of CT and an MS in Secondary Mathematics and 6<sup>th</sup> year in Educational Leadership from the University of Bridgeport. He previously taught Mathematics for 18 years in the Danbury schools, including one year as the Mathematics department head. Mr. Best also worked at EASTCONN for three years as their Math coordinator.



## **Ms. Amy Brazauski**

*English teacher, New Milford High School*

Ms. Brazauski is a recent graduate of Quinnipiac University where she earned her BA in English and her MA in Teaching. She has interned and substitute taught in the Wallingford schools.

## **Mr. Evan Cassells**

*Paraeducator, Schaghticoke Middle School*

Mr. Cassells earned his BS in Physical Education at Plymouth State University (NH). He is a graduate of New Milford High School and has worked previously for New Milford Public Schools as a student care worker. He is also the coach of the NMHS Varsity Lacrosse team.



## **Mrs. Jenifer Cramer**

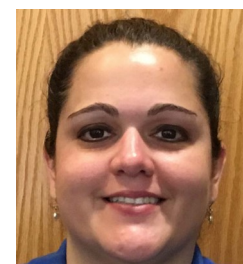
*Lab Assistant, New Milford High School*

Mrs. Cramer holds a BA in Chemistry from Smith College (MA) and a Masters in Chemical Engineering from the University of California, Davis. She has previously worked as a teaching/research assistant for UC Davis and as a processing engineer for Nestle R&D.

## **Mrs. Alicia Daley**

*Art teacher, New Milford High School*

Mrs. Daley earned her BS in Graphic Design at WCSU and holds her MS in Education from the University of Bridgeport. Mrs. Daley has taught art in Redding, Danbury, Ridgefield and New Milford schools.



### **Ms. Anastasia Damalas**

*Paraeducator, Hill and Plain Elementary School*

Ms. Damalas has her BA in Elementary Education from Queens College (NY). She has previously taught in private schools and has been an owner/director of a private learning center for seven years.



### **Mr. Joseph DiFabbio**

*English teacher, New Milford High School*

Mr. DiFabbio is a recent graduate of the University of Bridgeport where he earned his MS in Education, Secondary English. He holds a BA in English from Manhattan College (NY). He completed his teaching internship at Wolcott High School and has substitute taught in North Salem, NY and New Milford schools.

### **Mrs. Amy D'Orio**

*Grade 6 English teacher, Schaghticoke Middle School*

Mrs. D'Orio earned her BS in English, Secondary Education at WCSU. She has worked previously in Region 15 as a SRBI Writing Tutor and in the New Fairfield schools as an English/Language Arts teacher.



### **Mr. Ryan Eberts**

*Social Studies teacher, New Milford High School*

Mr. Eberts earned his MA in Teaching at Sacred Heart University in 2015. He also has a BA in Economics from Dickinson College (PA). He completed his student teaching in the Newtown school district where he then worked as a long term substitute.

### **Mr. Segundo Encalada**

*Custodian, Schaghticoke Middle School*

Mr. Encalada worked as a substitute custodian for New Milford schools before being hired full time. He has worked previously in hospital house-keeping and landscaping.



### **Mr. Jonathan Fermo**

*Mathematics teacher, New Milford High School*

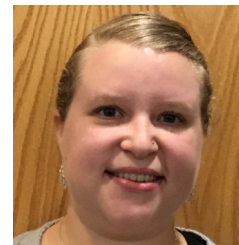
Mr. Fermo, who worked previously in New York schools, earned his MA in Math Education at City University of New York. He also holds a BE in

Mechanical Engineering from Vanderbilt University (TN).

**Ms. Katherine Fossi**

*Paraeducator, New Milford High School*

Ms. Fossi attended WCSU and has worked previously as head teacher in a child care center.



**Mrs. Kimberly Ginn**

*Special Education teacher, New Milford High School*

Mrs. Ginn earned her MPS in Childhood and Special Education at Manhattanville College (NY) in 2016. She has worked in the New Milford schools previously as a paraeducator and substitute teacher.

**Mrs. Marni Gross**

*Speech Language Pathologist, Northville Elementary School*

Mrs. Gross earned her BA in Speech/Hearing Language Disorders from SUNY New Paltz and her MS in Speech and Language Pathology from Nova Southeastern University (FL). She has worked for private agencies in NY state as a speech language pathologist for over seventeen years.



**Mrs. Marianne Hinz**

*Receptionist, New Milford High School*

Mrs. Hinz is a familiar face as she has worked as a paraeducator in the New Milford schools for over nine years, spending time at SNIS, SMS and NMHS. She attended the Berkeley School of Business.

**Mrs. Meredith Jaskolka**

*Reading/Math Interventionist, Northville Elementary School*

Mrs. Jaskolka earned her BS in Elementary Education and MS in School Counseling at WCSU. She has worked for 15 years in the Brookfield schools. During that time, she held the positions of Kindergarten teacher, Reading Specialist and Grade 6 teacher.



**Mrs. Jessica Knowlen**

*Special Education teacher, Northville Elementary School*

Mrs. Knowlen earned her BS in Elementary and Special Education at the University of Hartford. She has an MS in Reading and Language Arts from



Central CT State University. Previously she worked as a Kindergarten teacher in the Waterbury schools and as an ELL tutor here in New Milford.

### **Mrs. Kim Lail**

*Special Education teacher, Schaghticoke Middle School*

Mrs. Lail has her BSW in Social Work from the College of St. Benedict (MN), her MSW in Clinical Social Work from Florida State University, and Special Education Certification work from Jacksonville University (FL). She has previously worked in schools in Bethel and in Florida as a special education teacher.



### **Ms. Leah Lalama**

*Mathematics teacher, New Milford High School*

Ms. Lalama is a recent graduate of WCSU where she earned her BS in Secondary Education, Mathematics. She worked as a math teaching assistant while attending WCSU.

### **Ms. Michelle Lamorte**

*Paraeducator, New Milford High School*

Ms. Lamorte has worked as a substitute for the New Milford schools for the past two years, both as a paraeducator and secretary.



### **Ms. Tracy Law**

*Secretary to Assistant Principal, Schaghticoke Middle School*

Ms. Law previously worked as a senior administrative assistant for CIGNA and as a school secretary in Winsted and Region 10.

### **Mrs. Mercedes Lopez-Morgan**

*Computer Scheduler, Schaghticoke Middle School*

Mrs. Lopez-Morgan has previous public school experience having worked in the Ridgefield and Greenwich schools as a paraprofessional in the areas of special education, technology and science.





### **Ms. Jennifer Merriam**

*Special Education teacher, New Milford High School*

Ms. Merriam earned her MS in Special Education at St. Joseph College. She has worked previously for twelve years in the Canton schools and for one year in the state of Maine.



### **Mrs. Barbara Morris**

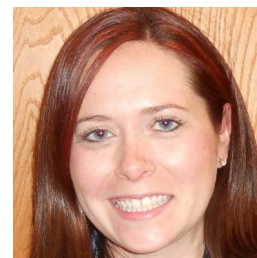
*Family and Consumer Science teacher, Schaghticoke Middle School*

Mrs. Morris has been a Family and Consumer Science teacher for over 30 years, working in the East Hartford, Wallingford, Bristol and Torrington schools. She has a BS in Home Economics from Baldwin-Wallace College (OH), an MA in Liberal Arts from Wesleyan University and an MA in Early Childhood and Special Education from St. Joseph College.

### **Mrs. Michelle Mott-Saldana**

*Paraeducator, Hill and Plain Elementary School*

Mrs. Mott-Saldana has worked as a paraeducator previously in New Milford schools. She has also worked for Ed Advance as a student care worker and for New Milford Parks and Recreation as a special education camp counselor.



### **Ms. Laura O'Reilly**

*Spanish teacher, Schaghticoke Middle School*

Ms. O'Reilly holds a BA in Spanish from WCSU. She has previously worked as a bilingual researcher, medical interpreter, a tutor/translator, and for Americorps. Most recently she worked as a Spanish teacher for a magnet school middle school in Hamden.

### **Mrs. Susanne Quattro**

*Computer Tech, Northville Elementary School*

Mrs. Quattro developed her information technology skills through training hours at Ridley-Lowell Business and Technical Institute. She previously worked at Scholastic Books.



### **Mrs. Olga Rella**

*Secretary to Assistant Principal, Schaghticoke Middle School*

Mrs. Rella previously worked as a substitute for the New Milford schools before being hired as a paraeducator. She has also worked in the Danbury

schools as a tutor. She attended the College of New Rochelle (NY) where she earned her BS in Business.

### **Mrs. Sherri Ruffler**

*Paraeducator, Schaghticoke Middle School*

Mrs. Ruffler holds a BA in Speech Communications/Theater Arts from Old Dominion University (VA) and an MS in Elementary Education from Mount Saint Mary College (NY). Previously, Mrs. Ruffler has worked as a classroom teacher in NY state and for the Sylvan Learning Center.



### **Mrs. Carolyn Saitta**

*Grade 2 teacher, Northville Elementary School*

Mrs. Saitta earned her MA in Elementary Education at Sacred Heart University. She is a seasoned educator, having previously taught seventeen years in the Stratford schools.

### **Mrs. Giovanna Scala**

*Guidance counselor, Schaghticoke Middle School*

Mrs. Scala is a recent graduate of Fairfield University where she earned her MA in School Counseling. She earned her BA in Psychology at WCSU. Mrs. Scala completed a four-month practicum at New Milford High School before interning at Whisconier Middle School in Brookfield. She previously worked as an interim school counselor for the Watertown schools.



### **Mrs. Candice Schiesel**

*Social Studies teacher, New Milford High School*

Mrs. Schiesel earned her BA in History at WCSU and her MA in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of CT. She was a Social Studies teacher in Region 1 for four years previously.

### **Ms. Caitlyn Schneider**

*Special Education teacher, New Milford High School*

Ms. Schneider earned her MS in Education at Manhattanville College (NY). She also holds a BA in History from the MA College of Liberal Arts. She previously worked at Our Lady of Fatima School as a Social Studies teacher.





**Ms. Jennifer Smith**

*Paraeducator, Schaghticoke Middle School*

Ms. Smith has worked previously for fourteen years at Ability Beyond as a support professional.

**Mrs. Laurie St. Germain**

*Remedial Reading teacher, Schaghticoke Middle School*

Mrs. St. Germain holds a BS and MS in Education from SUNY New Paltz and a 6<sup>th</sup> year degree in Reading from SCSU. She has previously worked as a special education teacher in Plainfield, Waterbury and Ansonia schools.



**Ms. Sarah Swann**

*Physical Education teacher, New Milford High School*

Ms. Swann has her MS in Elementary Education from the University of Bridgeport and additional graduate work for certification in Health from SCSU. She previously taught Health and PE at Seymour High School.

**Ms. Marnie Taylor**

*Chemistry teacher, New Milford High School*

Ms. Taylor is a recent graduate of the University of CT where she earned her MA in Education. She also holds a BA in Biology from Trinity College. She worked as a teaching assistant while at Trinity and has also worked as a tutor and substitute teacher.



**Mrs. Betsey Thibodeau**

*Nurse, Sarah Noble Intermediate School*

Mrs. Thibodeau worked as a nurse for New Milford Public Schools from 1999-2004 and again from 2011-2015. She has past experience working at New Milford Visiting Nurse Association, New Milford Hospital, the Pomperaug District Department of Health and in a private school.

**Mr. Kevin Tolman**

*Custodian, New Milford High School*

Mr. Tolman worked as a substitute custodian for New Milford Public Schools before being hired full time.







### **Mrs. Angela Tufts**

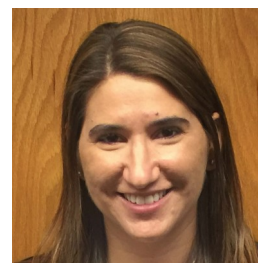
*Grade 2 teacher, Northville Elementary School*

Mrs. Tufts holds an MAT in Elementary Education and a BS in Psychology from Sacred Heart University. She is a veteran teacher, having taught ten years at the elementary level for Bridgeport schools.

### **Mrs. Jenilee Valencia**

*Special Education teacher, New Milford High School*

Mrs. Valencia holds a BS in Elementary Education from WCSU and a MS in Special Education from Fairfield University. She has worked previously for Stamford schools as a Language Arts teacher, and has been a tutor and long term substitute for New Milford Public Schools.



### **Ms. Sarah Wainshal**

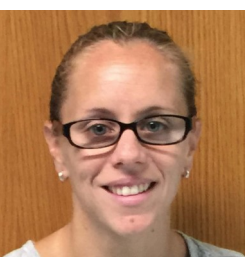
*French teacher, New Milford High School*

Ms. Wainshal is a recent graduate of Bates College (ME) where she earned a BA in French and Francophone Studies. She completed her student teaching at Oak Hill High School in Maine.

### **Mrs. Mary Warren**

*Paraeducator, Schaghticoke Middle School*

Mrs. Warren has previously worked for five years in Region 1 as a para professional.



### **Mrs. Adrienne Williams**

*Nurse, Schaghticoke Middle School*

Mrs. Williams attended St. Joseph's School of Nursing and has a BA in Psychology from Providence College (RI). She has been a substitute nurse for New Milford Public Schools and has worked as a nurse at New Milford Hospital.

*Please join us in welcoming these new staff members to the New Milford community.*


**New Milford Public Schools**

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

**Mr. Joshua Smith**  
Superintendent

**Ms. Alisha DiCorpo**  
Assistant Superintendent

**Ms. Ellamae Baldelli**  
Human Resources Director

**Mr. Kevin Munrett**  
Facilities Manager

**Mr. Anthony Giovannone**  
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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**Mrs. Wendy Faulenbach**  
Secretary

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Assistant Secretary

**Mrs. Angela C. Chastain**

**Mr. Robert Coppola**

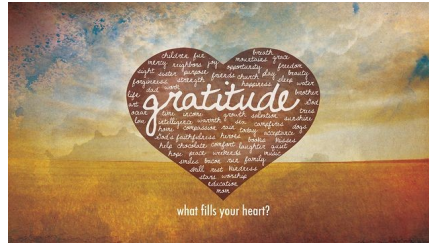
**Mr. Dave Littlefield**

**Mr. Brian McCauley**

**Mr. J.T. Schemm**

## World Gratitude Day

### September 21, 2016



World Gratitude Day began in 1965, when meditation guru Sri Chinmoy was sitting at a Thanksgiving dinner table in Hawaii and invited those assembled to acknowledge their blessings. They agreed to do so each year on this day. Twelve years later, the United Nations Meditation Group officially designated the day as well, declaring it as a “holiday for all peoples, a day of meditation for all religions, a day of celebration for all humanity, united by knowledge of simultaneously shared emotion, a day when triumph of the spirit can make a world community.”

The benefits of positivity (which can be expressed as gratitude) are tremendous – not only can an attitude of gratitude make one a happier person, it can also make you healthier. [An article in the Wall Street Journal](#) addressed the research in a 2010 study that indicated people who expressed gratitude were, in fact, happier and healthier because of the reduced stress they faced in their life. Additional research concluded that those who felt more grateful had more energy, were more optimistic, maintained more social connections, and were more content than those who did not practice thankfulness and gratitude.

So, think about it – why wait until Thanksgiving rolls around? If you had to think of one thing you were grateful for today, what would it be?

Looking for more insight? [Click here for an article summarizing “The Habits of Supremely Happy People”](#).

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.

September 21st