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

Mr. Greg Shugrue, Principal  
 Mrs. Liz Curtis, Asst. Principal  
 Mrs. 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 8

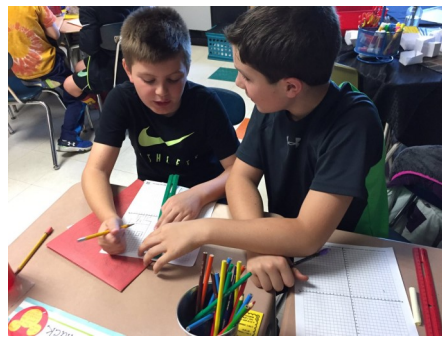
February 2017

## Students WIN at New Milford Public Schools

All New Milford Public Schools students in grades K-5 participate in the WIN program. WIN, which is an acronym for “What I Need”, is an intervention process used to improve student achievement and reduce instructional gaps through targeted re-teaching and enrichment. According to Assistant Superintendent Alisha DiCorpo,



“This type of intervention requires teachers to look closely at student skills in literacy and mathematics that need additional practice or enrichment based on student performance on, but not limited to, classroom work and student assessments. Once student work has been analyzed, teachers take time to plan for students by designing lessons that support growth and development of the skill or concept to incorporate in the upcoming WIN schedule. Teachers meet by grade level to determine what students need to know, which skill or concept to select and to determine how to present the skill or concept to students. Once that is determined, groups form and the WIN block plan is ready to implement.”

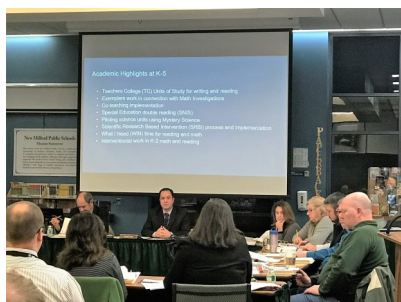


During the thirty to forty five minute blocks, groups of students work on the skills and concepts with the teachers and the selected group of students. Students watch and listen as the teacher demonstrates the lesson or introduces a project or problem. Students then apply the skill or concept by working with others or independently. Teachers check in with each student to determine progress throughout the lesson and support students as needed. They also assess student understanding again at the end of each lesson. The teacher takes the assessment information back with them to their grade level meetings to discuss, determine progress as a grade level, and regroup students as needed.



Says Ms. DiCorpo “The WIN program has been very successful in helping student growth and development over time. As a district, we are pleased with the impact and quality of both the intervention and the enrichment opportunities that students are receiving. The hard work of our dedicated staff and our students has led to WIN’s successful implementation and ongoing student growth.”

## Update on District Initiatives



The New Milford Board of Education held public meetings on four evenings in January to deliberate on the 2017-2018 Education budget. Their Adopted Budget was approved on January 26, 2017. The Superintendent’s Proposed Budget, BOE Adopted Budget, presentations and handouts, as well as video recordings of the evenings can be viewed on the district website under [Budget](#).

As part of these presentations, school and district administrators had a chance to talk about their schools and departments and to spotlight some of the district initiatives of which they are most proud. Following are some brief highlights. Some have been covered in depth in previous issues of *Spotlight on New Milford Schools*; others will be highlighted in issues to come.

### Northville and Hill and Plain Elementary, Sarah Noble Intermediate



SNIS Principal Anne Bilko spoke of the academic gains students are experiencing with the implementation of the Teachers College Units of Study in reading and writing and with the problem solving skills they are learning using the Math Investigations program. The Science curriculum has begun to utilize Mystery Science units that encourage hands-on learning. Students are benefiting from WIN (What I Need) time, an academic intervention available K-2 for additional help with math and reading.

NES Principal Susan Murray talked about the collaborative work of teachers and administrators to promote student learning. Professional development sessions are held the first Thursday of each



month. At the elementary level these typically focus on math and literacy study. Additional grade level meetings focus on such topics as preschool assessments or standards for unified arts, as a few examples. Other meetings occur among professional learning communities and at grade level to work on goals and standards. Math, literacy and data coaches also provide support to help inform the work in these meetings.

HPS Principal Paula Kelleher highlighted the social emotional supports available to students K-5 and said the schools are proud of their programs to teach problem solving and communication skills. Principals talked about the benefits of the character education program, the morning arrival recess for grades K-2 and the increased intramural and student activities. While these programs are showing signs of improvement, they have also been highlighted as areas that need to be further developed in the future.



Morning arrival recess happens even in the snow! HPS Principal Paula Kelleher says “Students love the opportunity for additional exercise and socialization. Teachers use the time to meet with parents or hold grade level and committee meetings, preserving valuable instructional time.”

### **Schaghticoke Middle School**

Principal Chris Longo echoed many of the academic themes touched upon by the K-5 administrators. He was pleased to see the proposed increased support of the World Language program at the middle school level as there is significant student interest. As the language arts program improves and more students are ready to learn a world language, the additional teacher will provide enough classes to accommodate their needs. He said middle school was also an important time to get involved in things other than academia so was proud to spotlight the multiple activities available to students beyond academics, ranging from sports to music to student government and publications. Dr. Longo said SMS is working hard to establish its own special identity so that students will feel connected to the school and to one another.

### **New Milford High School**

NMHS Principal Greg Shugrue focused on the recent curriculum writing efforts at the high school level. Several courses have been rewritten to update to current standards and new classes have been added. Older textbooks in all major academic areas have been replaced with up to date models. Mr. Shugrue said he was pleased with the district’s subsidy of AP tests to encourage student participation and with the decision to administer the PSAT during the school day. “New Milford was recognized by the College Board AP Honor Roll this year. We’ve had a 30% increase in AP enrollment and 80% of AP test scores were 3 or higher.”

## Mystery Science in Action

Students in Mrs. Gray's Grade 5 classroom at SNIS recently used a Mystery Science "Web of Life" unit on ecology to explore the role fungi plays in decomposing dead materials and in creating soil.

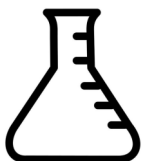
*Mrs. Gray explains:*

We planned for and conducted an experiment called Mold Terrariums where we explored at what rate different factors affect decomposition. We began this exploration by gathering various types of food like fruits, vegetables, and bread. Next, we discussed what factors, or conditions, could possibly influence the longevity of the food. Our class came up with five different conditions to experiment with: salt, hot sauce, sugar, heat, and darkness. Each group built a terrarium by placing the selected foods onto a paper plate, prepping the foods with a condition, and placing them into sealed plastic bags. All groups reinforced the seal with duct tape to avoid the rotting smells that were expected over the next twelve days of the experiment.



Each day we observed what condition was making the food decompose the fastest by noting the mold growth in each terrarium. After the twelfth day, our class concluded that the mold terrarium that was covered in salt preserved the food the best and had the least amount of mold on it. The mold terrarium that was kept in the dark decomposed the most. Furthermore, we made connections between both outcomes and how they relate to the real world. We had theoretical discussions about how we could store food in boxes of salt if we had no electricity or refrigeration and how this practice was once used in the past. Likewise, we made connections between the mold terrarium that was kept in the dark to the leaves that fall on forest floors every year. We concluded that the reason the leaves don't pile up is because they swiftly decompose from being shaded by the forest's canopy.

Mrs. Gray was happy to report that her group of budding scientists, pictured below striking a pose during Picture Day, really enjoyed the lesson.



## Math Games Inform Learning at HPS



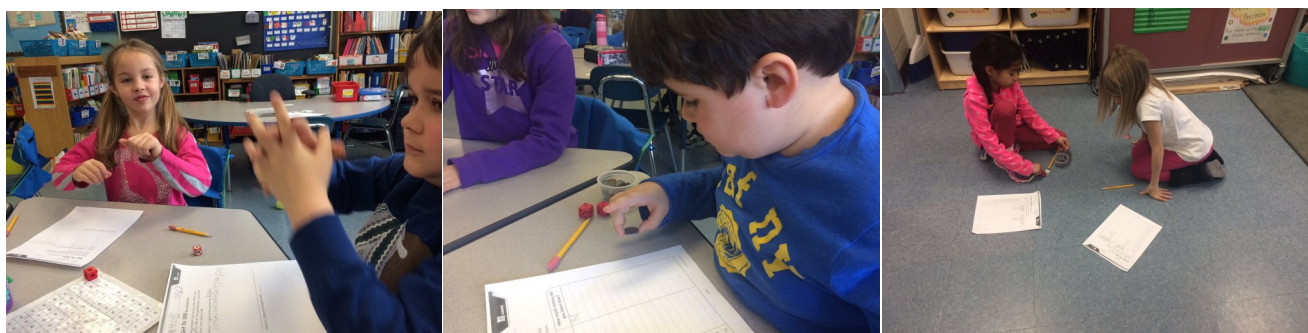
Math games are a critical component of the *Investigations* Math program used at the elementary level. The games allow our learners to practice skills and solve problems while being actively engaged with their peers in the play of the game. A good example of this is a Grade 2 level game called *Collect \$1.00* that involves multiple skills in the counting of money.

HPS Grade 2 teacher Mrs. Donna Nash describes the lesson:



In *Collect \$1.00*, second graders are provided with assorted coins (quarters, dimes, nickels, and pennies), two dice and a recording sheet for each player. They can play in pairs or small groups. On a player's turn, he/she rolls the dice and takes the amount of cents shown on the dice. For example if a player rolls a seven, he/she can take a nickel and two pennies. That player records the amount of money taken on the recording sheet.

Throughout the game, players roll the dice, take the appropriate amount of money, and keep a running total on their recording sheet. Players are also encouraged to exchange the coins in their possession for a fewer number of coins that have the same value. Pairs can be found assisting each other with coin counting and exchanging while they play. The game ends when both players have reached \$1.00. The game can be extended with a number of variations. Players can try to reach \$2.00, play the game with multiple of five dice, or try to collect exactly \$1.00 instead of at least \$1.00."



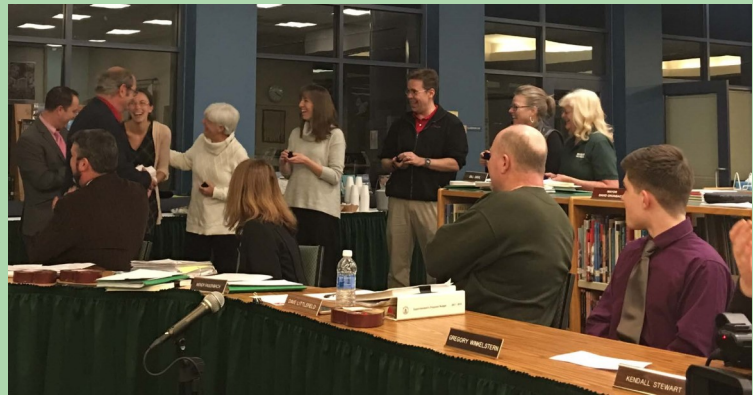
Mrs. Nash said her second graders were thoroughly engaged in learning while playing *Collect \$1.00*. They worked together to solve problems and kept their work organized. "The second graders in my class agreed that *Collect \$1.00* was definitely one of the more challenging, yet fun games they played this year."





## Congratulations to the New Milford Public School "Stars" for the month of February!

**Lorraine English  
Lauren Iverson  
Stephen Kern  
Kimberlee Lavallee  
Deborah Stephens  
Dana Wheeler**



Special congratulations to **Dana Wheeler** who will drive the Ingersoll Auto of Danbury NMPS courtesy car for the month.

Don't forget to visit the district website to [submit your staff nomination](#).

*The on-line form for NMPS staff member "Star" recognition includes a section where the person making the nomination is asked to "describe briefly why you are nominating this staff member". Mr. Smith shares these comments when announcing each recipient at the monthly Board meeting. With only six staff members chosen randomly each month, there are many more comments that could be shared. Here are just a few to give you a flavor of the many fine qualities of our much appreciated staff:*

This teacher encourages me to be the best person I can be and makes coming to school better.

Best teacher ever. I am a freshman and I feel like I have a friend at the school.

A warm and nurturing paraprofessional who is calm and good-hearted, maintaining poise and a smile with children of all needs.

A teacher for whom "above and beyond" is the norm. Even the students who are the hardest to reach feel valued, respected, and inspired.

This principal genuinely cares for staff, students, and families. Encourages parents to volunteer, listens, is honest and leads by example.

This secretary comes to work every day willing to work hard and to go the extra mile.

Coach as a role in school didn't even exist a few years ago but this person's work is so valuable, helping administrators, teachers, and ultimately students.

This teacher connects with students and their families and truly cares about each and every one of them.

All of the TLC that this custodian puts into taking care of my classroom shows great dedication to our school district and its children.

This teacher isn't just my teacher, but a friend, a mentor, and most of all, my motivation to strive in school.

A kind warmhearted teacher who proves time and time again to students that there is always someone who cares for them as well as someone who is going to push them to be the best students they can be.

## Recognition – Not Just for Staff

NMPS staff members are not the only ones receiving positive recognition. Throughout the year, all of our schools recognize students as part of our character education program. Sometimes this is through School Climate Committee initiatives; at other times, it is a more one-on-one recognition from individual staff to student.

New Milford High School Assistant Principal Linda Scoralick provided some examples of the many things NMHS does to promote good character and positive school culture. “We encourage staff to submit students for recognition whenever they think it is warranted. Administrators make phone calls home to share the good news and they meet with the student personally to offer congratulations. Character education letters are sent home monthly from Principal Greg Shugrue. These letters are given in recognition of the specific character trait for the month. Departments also recognize students monthly for excellence in a particular academic area.”



Teachers complete WAVE cards as part of an ongoing recognition program by the faculty, nominating New Milford High School students who exemplify the school’s Core Values and Beliefs: Work ~ Achieve ~ Value ~ Empower. Students are nominated by a teacher for civic responsibility, hard work, honest reflection, self-advocacy, peer collaboration, and/or demonstrating a passion for learning. The students are then entered into a drawing to win Green Wave gear. In January for example, award winners each received a New Milford Green Wave winter hat.

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The February Board of Education meeting brought recognition of another sort, this time to the NMHS literary magazine *The Piper*. The Board recognized faculty advisors and student staff members for their “superior” rating for Excellence in Student Literary Magazines from the National Council of Teachers of English for 2016; previous awards of “excellent” were received in 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015 but this is the first “superior” rating, one of only three awarded in the state. NMHS English Department Chair Kathy DelMonico said “We are so proud. We especially want to thank Technology Director Roberta Pratt and her staff who moved mountains so the students could have the software and equipment they needed to work on layout.”

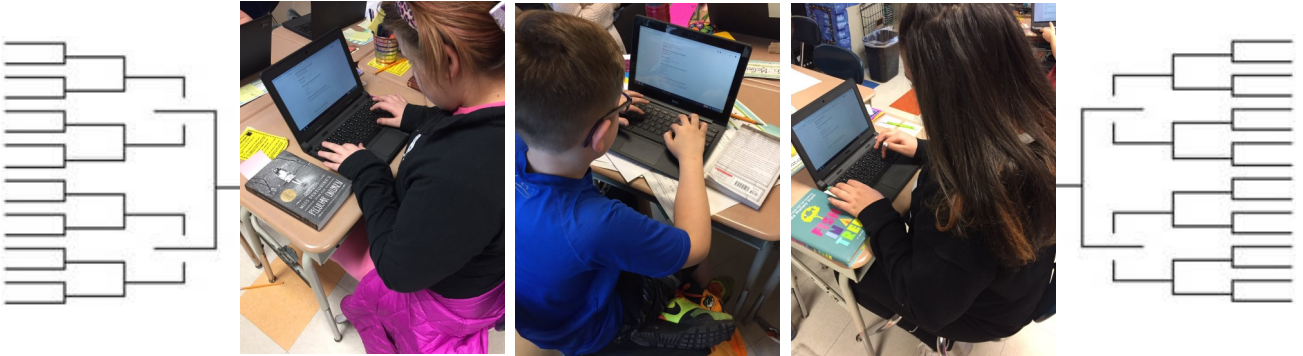


## SNIS Book Madness Tournament is Back for 2017

The SNIS Book Madness Tournament is up and running for 2017. This tournament runs just like the national college basketball tournament, with nominated books being voted on each week by staff and students and winning titles moving on until there is only one remaining champion.



According to tournament coordinator (and Grade 4 teacher) Mr. Justin Mack, “Students and staff used a link on the SNIS homepage to nominate books. The tournament roster is composed of a total of 64 titles across four different regions (Historical Fiction, Fantasy, Realistic Fiction and Picture) so staff took time to encourage students to reflect on the books they've read so far this year and nominate their favorites. Over 560 titles were nominated this year!”



From all the books nominated, a tournament bracket was created and the voting rounds began. This year you can follow the tournament on Twitter @SNISBookMadness.



### NMHS ALL SCHOOL MUSICAL

#### PERFORMANCES:

Friday, March 17—7:00 PM  
 Saturday, March 18—7:00 PM  
 Sunday, March 19—3:00 PM  
 Friday, March 24—7:00 PM  
 Saturday, March 25—2:00 PM  
 Saturday, March 25—7:00 PM

Visit the box office or  
 call 860-350-6647 ext 1552



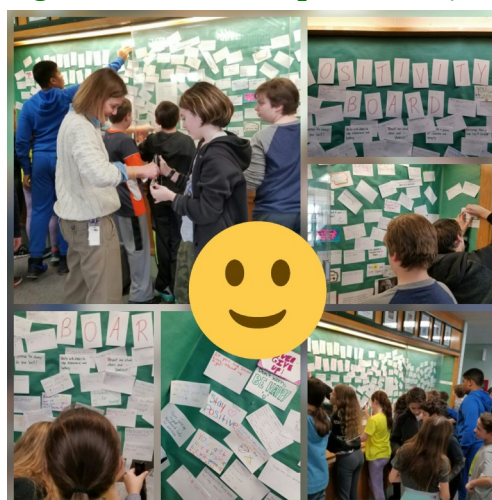
## Start With Hello

NMPS students and staff participated in *Start With Hello Week* from February 6-10. This initiative from [Sandy Hook Promise](#) was started by two parents who lost their children in the Sandy Hook tragedy. Its goal is to help raise awareness against social isolation and to empower young people to create a culture of inclusion and connectedness.



Sandy Hook Promise states “In every school and in every community there are young people who suffer silently because they feel left out, alone or invisible. Social isolation is a growing epidemic in the United States and within our schools. Excessive feelings of isolation can be associated with violent and suicidal behavior. In fact, one study reports that chronic loneliness increases our risk of an early death by 14%. Furthermore, young people who are isolated can become victims of bullying, violence and/or depression. As a result, many further pull away from society, struggle with learning and social development and/or choose to hurt themselves or others.”

Initiatives such as *Start With Hello Week* work on the premise that small gestures can create a real and lasting culture of kindness and inclusion. Here in New Milford, school climate committees initiated several small activities designed to build community. SMS students started the week wearing name tags so that students could greet *all* classmates by name. At SNIS, students and staff spread kindness by leaving a kind thought on the “Hello Board” for all to see. SMS built a positivity wall on which students wrote positive and encouraging notes.



Wednesday was “Make a New Friend Day” at Hill and Plain School. Principal Paula Kelleher says “The day was dedicated to showing the importance of making sure no one feels lonely or isolated. Students had the opportunity to sit with peers from other classrooms during lunch for the purpose of encouraging new friendships. Our guidance counselor Helieth Sanchez and Social Worker Julianne Morin numbered lunch room tables 1-14 and gave students in each class a number from 1 to 14 to help structure the unassigned seating. Ice breaker questions were also supplied. Being able to sit at a new table, and using ice breaker questions, provided each student with an opportunity to make a new friend or get reacquainted with an old friend.”





All schools reminded students and staff of the power of random acts of kindness and there were many visible examples witnessed throughout the week. Schools also encouraged "No One Eats Alone" as part of the week when students were encouraged to invite other students sitting alone in the cafeteria to join them at a table. As NMHS Principal Greg Shugrue says "Our students are a compassionate, caring group; sometimes we just need to remind them to show it."

The culminating activity of the week was to be a "Green Out" on Friday where students and staff wore the color green in support of the Newtown based initiative. Unfortunately the "green out" turned into a "white out" as school was canceled due to snow, and the event was moved to the following Friday. Hopefully, the students practiced many random acts of kindness at home in the meantime.

### NMHS Braves the Shave for Childhood Cancer Research

On March 16th from 4 to 6 p.m., New Milford High School students and staff will participate in a fundraising event in the gym where volunteers will have their heads shaved to stand in solidarity with children fighting cancer and raise money to support childhood cancer research. The event, called Brave the Shave, is a main fundraiser for the St. Baldrick's Foundation, a volunteer-powered charity that funds more in childhood cancer research grants than any organization except the U.S. government.

According to Key Club advisor Mrs. Danette Lambiase, whose group is sponsoring the event, "Shavees sign up on our website and collect donations from friends, family and coworkers and then take their turn in the barber chair at our event. It's fun, it's emotional, and it raises necessary funds for a crucially important cause."

The last NMHS Brave the Shave event was held in 2015 and raised over \$12,000! Good natured participants included NMHS English teacher Jeff Bronn, Assistant Principal Linda Scoralick (with a special green mop for the occasion), and many, many more staff and students. Mrs. Lambiase said the goal for this year is \$14,000. If you'd like more information go to <https://www.stbaldricks.org/events/newmilfordshaves> or contact Mrs. Lambiase at [lambiased@newmilfordps.org](mailto:lambiased@newmilfordps.org).







## New Milford Public Schools

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**Mr. Joshua Smith**  
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**Ms. Alisha DiCorpo**  
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**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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## National Tell A Fairy Tale Day February 26th



Once upon a time, someone unknown decided to designate February 26th as National Tell A Fairy Tale Day in the hopes that people who celebrate this unofficial annual holiday would live happily ever after. A form of folk tale, these stories of magical beings and lands were once oral histories, myths and legends told around the fire by traveling storytellers to pass the time. Before the 17th century, fairy tales often had gruesome themes unsuitable for children and were written mostly for adults. As the genre evolved, fairy tales stories were told as a way to teach a lesson or make children behave. Today, fairy tales are considered to be a genre of children's literature and the term fairy tale is used to refer to events and happenings with happy endings.

Many of the stories have some basis in truth. For example, some believe the story of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs is inspired by the real life of Margarete von Waldeck, the daughter of the 16th century Count of Waldeck. The area of Germany where the family lived was known for mining. Some of the tunnels were so tight they had to use children – or small people such as dwarfs – to work the mines. Still other stories show up in versions around the world. For example, over 500 different versions of Cinderella have been recorded!

In 1812, the Brothers Grimm published some of the more well-known tales we are familiar with today, preserving 86 tales at a time in history when the tradition of oral storytelling was fading. Their collection, titled *Household Tales*, consists of many of what are now classic stories including Rumpelstiltskin, Rapunzel, Hansel and Gretel, and Snow White, though not necessarily the versions we read now. The Brothers Grimm versions tended to be darker and often don't end as happily.

Hans Christian Anderson followed in 1829 with a collection of stories that includes the written versions of Princess and the Pea, The Ugly Duckling and Thumbelina. While the Grimm's tales were clearly written with adults in mind, Anderson's stories are much sweeter.

Why not give the day a try this year? The chilly New England winter provides a perfect excuse to snuggle up on the couch and share your favorite fairy tale with the family. Try relating one from memory as was the original tradition. Maybe add to the experience with some fairy tale themed food: pea salad for the Princess and the Pea, caramel apples in honor of Snow White, oatmeal for Goldilocks and the Three Bears, or a pumpkin soup for Cinderella.

Information gathered from [www.nationaldaycalendar.com](http://www.nationaldaycalendar.com) and [www.timeanddate.com](http://www.timeanddate.com)

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

February 26th