



New Milford Public Schools
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www.newmilfordps.org



New Milford High School
860-350-6647

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



Shaghticoke Middle School
860-354-2204

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



Sarah Noble Intermediate School
860-210-4020

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



Hill & Plain Elementary School
860-354-5430

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



John Pettibone Elementary School
860-354-3218

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



Northville Elementary School
860-355-3713

Mrs. Susan Murray, Principal
Mrs. Jennifer Chmielewski, Ass't. Principal

Spotlight on New Milford Schools

Volume 5, Issue 7

January 2015

NMHS' Project Lead the Way Program Recommended for National Certification

Project Lead the Way Inc. (PLTW) is a national program designed to increase the quantity and quality of engineers and engineering technologists graduating from our education system. The program offers a hands-on, project-based approach to learning that incorporates science, technology skills, engineering and math. Currently PLTW is offered in 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The University of New Haven is the affiliate university for PLTW in the state of Connecticut and provides PLTW certification for Connecticut schools that meet required standards. New Milford High School's PLTW program recently completed its certification review. On December 18th, a team from the University of New Haven visited NMHS for several hours.

They interviewed PLTW teachers, students, guidance counselors, school and district administrators and members of the PLTW community partnership team. They also reviewed current and past student portfolios and engineering notebooks, toured PLTW facilities, and observed PLTW classes in progress.

We are happy to report that the PLTW program has been recommended for full national certification! Full certification means that students in all PLTW courses will have the potential of earning college credit from more than 60 colleges and universities across the nation including University of New Haven, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and Rochester Institute of Technology, to name a few. Many universities also award PLTW students financial scholarships upon entering their engineering programs.

New Milford High School introduced the PLTW program to its students in September 2012. Now in its third year, the program is going stronger than ever with a total of four courses offered presently. In November,



NMHS Science Chair Sara Del Mastro speaks with Dr. Ali Golbazi of the University of New Haven during the certification visit.

the Board of Education approved the addition of a fifth course to the program: Engineering Design and Development (EDD). This succession course for PLTW is a capstone course which requires the student to apply knowledge from other courses in the program in order to complete a culminating project. Students enrolling in the course must have taken at least two prior PLTW courses. However, the majority of the students enrolling in EDD next year will have been enrolled in PLTW their entire career at NMHS.

Science teacher Erin Lucia says “Students in EDD will be immersed in a long term capstone design project in which they apply the knowledge and skills that they acquired throughout their PLTW career. Students will identify an issue, research, design, test solutions and ultimately present their solutions to their peers, teachers and possibly engineers in the community. Students will also apply the professional skills they have developed to document the design process to standards that will ready them for a post-secondary program or career.”

Mrs. Lucia goes on to say that “The successful certification was truly a collaborative effort. It is due to the dedication of the PLTW teachers, enthusiasm and excellent work from PLTW students, the support from NMHS and NMPS administration and Board of Education, and the ongoing efforts by the PLTW community partnership team. The addition of Engineering Design and Development, along with full certification, will undoubtedly further the growth of the program as well as prepare students for pursuing STEM courses and careers.”

SMS Crane-a-Thon Spreads Hope



The SMS Crane-a-Thon took place on December 18, 2014 this year. At this annual event participants create paper cranes, universal symbols of hope and healing, for distribution to patients and visitors at New Milford and Danbury hospitals and cancer care centers. Current students, SMS alums, and staff set a new record this year by far, creating 6,840 cranes.

Now that's a lot of hope!

To see just how quickly some students worked their magic, visit the SMS technology classes' [twitter feed](#) @SMS_TechClass to see a few time lapse videos of the creation in progress.

Hill and Plain - a Kind School

Principal Len Tomasello tells us that Hill and Plain Elementary officially became a “Kind” School in November of this year. The school’s Character Education Committee recommended this initiative which they felt blended very well with the personality of the school already in evidence.

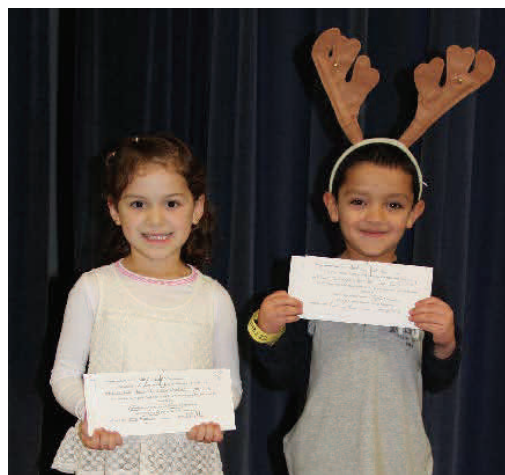


Committee member and Grade 3 teacher Meg Jones says HPS became a Kind School by joining the Ben's Bells Kind Campus program. According to Ms. Jones, “Ben's Bells began in Tuscon, Arizona in 2002. Ben was a two year old child who died unexpectedly. To help her deal with his loss, Ben's mother began crafting ceramic wind chimes to distribute in Ben's honor along with a note about being kind. This began a movement that has spread across the country. Two years ago this month, the Tucson organization came to Sandy Hook and hung 1,000 bells in honor of the victims of the Sandy Hook shooting. A Ben's Bells studio was opened in Newtown and to this date 3,600 bells have been created locally and hung in our area. If you find a bell, you bring it home as a reminder of this simple message: BE KIND.”

The Kind Campus school program is an off-shoot of the organization. It provides a mech-

anism for building positive leaders at every level of education. It is designed to inspire students and adults to recognize and reward good in one another through intentional acts of kindness. Ben's Bells Kindness Education Programs are based on the belief that everyone has the capacity to be kind, and that kindness can be cultivated through intentional practice.

Each classroom at Hill and Plain displays a “Ben’s Bell” along with a monthly poster with a kindness theme. Dr. Tomasello says, “Once or twice a month during lunch, students are called to the stage where they are recognized for modeling one or more of the school’s character traits. Their parents also receive letters notifying them of their child’s recognition.”



Ms. Jones says that Hill and Plain is excited to be a part of this amazing program. She echoes the thoughts of NMHS student G. Kovalenko, who wrote in a guest editorial for the newspaper that “If every one of us would do at least one really good thing to assist someone or to spread kindness, imagine how our world would instantly become a better place.”

Hour of Code 2014



Organized by Code.org, a public 501c3 non-profit dedicated to expanding participation in computer science, the Hour of Code is a one-hour introduction to computer science, designed to demystify code and show that anybody can learn the basics. The grassroots campaign goal this year was for tens of millions of students to try an Hour of Code during December 8-14, 2014, in celebration of Computer Science Education Week.

We first reported on the Hour of Code in [last February's edition](#) of the *Spotlight*. New Milford students at several district schools took part in this worthwhile event. By all accounts the program was a success. The website www.hourofcode.com reports incredible statistics from last year's Hour of Code. In one week alone more than 15 million students worldwide learned an Hour of Code and more girls tried computer science than in the last 70 years.

Anyone who couldn't participate that week was encouraged to try an hour any time that worked. To date, the site reports that 90,468,302 participants have tried an Hour of Code!

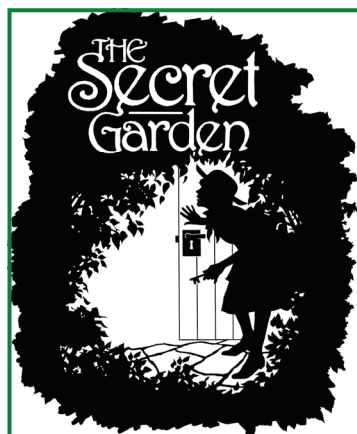
SMS Computer Education teacher Jennifer Morrison says all SMS technology classes participated in this year's event. "This year's program provided new options for learning a little bit about coding. Some of the most popular were *Create Your Own Flappy Bird Game*, which was a winner from last year, and *Made with Code – Light Up a Christmas Tree*. Students who followed this particular tutorial learned that their code would appear at a specific day and time on one of the 56 trees displayed on the mall outside the White House this year. They were also able to save a .gif (animated image) of their lighting design." Pictured below is just one version of the CT tree in action in Washington.



To see more about this program sponsored by Google, go to www.madewithcode.com.

After completing the project, students in the SMS technology classes took a short survey and 70% of them said they would like to learn more about coding. You can view their survey results in an infographic [here](#).

Mark Your Calendars!



“**The Secret Garden**” will be coming to New Milford High School in March. This is the 34th year that NMHS has presented its All School Musical and this year’s production is sure to please. Evening performances will be presented on March 20, 21, 27, and 28 at 7 p.m. in the NMHS theatre. Matinees will be offered on March 22 at 3 p.m. and on March 28 at 2 p.m. All seating at \$10 per person is reserved. Tickets can be purchased by visiting the high school box office Mondays through Fridays from 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. and Mondays through Thursdays from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Tickets are also available by calling the box office at 860-350-6647 ext. 1552.

Senior citizen passes are available that provide FREE admission to the musical and other school events. Please call the Central Office at 860-355-8406 for more information.

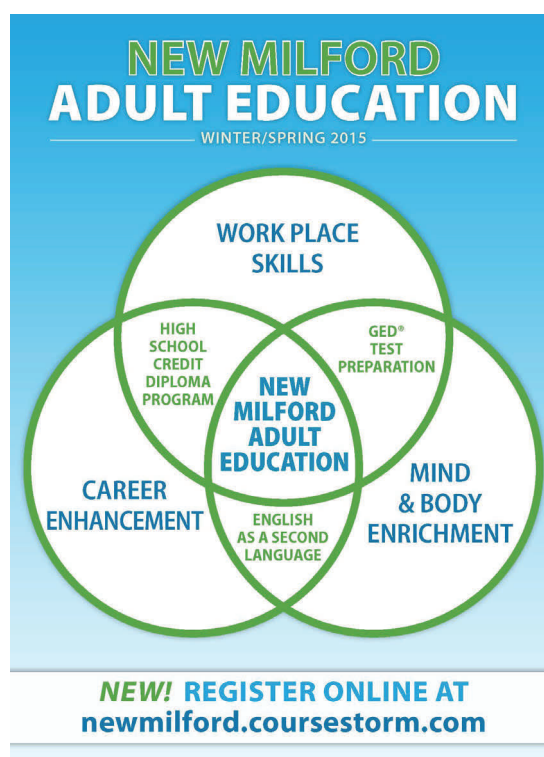


New Milford Adult Education Now Offers Online Registration

Registration for the New Milford Adult Education Winter/Spring 2015 semester is now available online at

newmilford.coursestorm.com

If you’ve been thinking about taking a class or two now might be the perfect time to visit the site and see the variety of classes being offered.



Food Services Department News of Note

♦ ***NMPS Food Services Department Chosen for Pilot Program***

The New Milford Public Schools was notified that it is one of 15 districts in the state of Connecticut whose Food Services department will participate in a pilot program backed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture designed to increase farm-to-school produce sales. Connecticut was one of only eight states chosen for the pilot. The program will enable participants to increase their purchases of locally-grown fruits and vegetables for their school meal programs. More information can be found [here](#).

Food Services Director Mrs. Sandra Sullivan says that she is excited to be a part of this pilot program, "For many years the district has proudly participated in the *CT Grown for CT Kids Week* which highlights several Connecticut grown items as part of National Farm to School Month. This program will be a natural outgrowth of that partnership."

♦ ***Food Services Department Wins Recognition for Healthier US Schools***

New Milford schools K-6 recently joined an elite group of healthier schools, receiving a bronze award from the U.S. Department of Agriculture as part of its HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSSC). Only about 7 percent of 101,000 schools in the nation have achieved this status. The challenge is a key component of First Lady Michelle Obama's *Let's Move!* initiative to end childhood obesity within a generation. Schools participating in the Challenge voluntarily adopt USDA standards for food they serve at their schools, agree to

provide nutrition education and provide opportunities for physical activity. The certification also included a \$2000 monetary incentive for use by Food Services. Click [here](#) for more information about the Challenge.

♦ ***School Cafeterias to Sport New Look***

Our district school cafeterias will be sporting a new look in the new year thanks to the *Love Your Lunchroom* cafeteria design project. Spaces will sport new painted murals and/or nutritional signage designed to enhance the overall look and feel of the cafeterias as well as entrance space function. The new designs will be both functional and bright as shown by the sample for Northville Elementary School's cafeteria that is shown below.



Mrs. Sullivan says the design themes, which were chosen with the input of the different building principals, will create a more welcoming environment for students. There will also be educational signage regarding nutrition. The projects should be completed in the early spring of 2015.

Mrs. Sullivan says, "The Food Services program has made significant cost saving measures in food and paper buying, equipment and in government commodities. As a result we have accumulated savings which we can now spend for the benefit of the lunch program. We are pleased to have already made investments in the breakfast program and in the kitchen renovation at SMS. This project will be another improvement that benefits all schools."

Transition Update

Arum and Associates project managers held focus group meetings during the month of January. They met with interested parents at each of the affected schools during the January 6th -14th timeframe and held a community meeting on January 15th. Participants had an opportunity to share thoughts, ideas, suggestions, and concerns about transition topics.

In addition, they met with district staff to hear their thoughts and suggestions as well. They are sharing the information with central administration so that it can be taken into account when finalizing transition plans.

Project Manager Ed Arum says “We had over 100 participants in the parent/community focus groups. The groups provided many useful suggestions and ‘think abouts’ that will be very helpful in planning a smooth transition.”

Project Manager Jeff Olefson agrees the groups provided valued input. “All of the questions, comments, and suggestions from the focus groups are being typed and assembled. Once this is complete, we will prepare a Question and Answer (Q&A) document to provide clarification and answer questions generated from the focus groups. Both documents will be posted on the Transition Year tab on the district website in mid-February.”

The project managers highlighted just a few of the activities being scheduled based upon suggestions from parents:

- ♦ Project managers will be scheduling a meeting with current fifth grade students to hear their thoughts on the transition. Teachers will be doing the same thing with current second grade students.

- ♦ A parent transition committee is being created from a list of parents who signed up at one of the focus group meetings. This committee will explore ways to make the transition smooth and positive for students and parents.
- ♦ Evening welcome events will take place in late April at Hill and Plain, Northville, Sarah Noble, and Schaghticoke schools. This event will be for parents and entering students and will provide an opportunity to tour their new school and ask questions of building administrators.

The project managers report that there is much work going on behind the scenes as well. Mr. Olefson says that “School library media specialists have been meeting regularly to develop a plan for managing the transfer of portions of their collections to the appropriate schools so that students will have the books and other library resources they need when the school year begins in September.” The district has retained a moving company that specializes in moving school library books to handle that portion of the move.

Mr. Arum says staff planning is really gearing up too, “Third and sixth grade instructional planning teams have begun their work. The teams will be meeting monthly to share ideas and suggestions and plan effectively for next year. Moving plans and procedures are also in the works and will be shared with staff in late February. Input from faculty focus groups significantly informed many aspects of the plan.”

TRANSITION
YEAR

Remember to check the district website's [Transition Year](#) button for frequent updates.



**New Milford Public
Schools**

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

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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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National Hobby Month



The New Year is a perfect time to begin new traditions and explore new interests. Hobbies, by their very definition, are something we do just because we like them. Did you know that practicing a hobby can lead you to live a happier, healthier and more meaningful life? Hobbies have been known to decrease anxiety and provide increased concentration levels over time. To celebrate this month, try a new hobby or take your current hobby to the next level. Looking for ideas?

Are you an outdoors person?
Interested in starting a blog?

Looking at that miscellaneous drawer at home and thinking maybe it is time to start a collection? Curious about that strange bird in your backyard? Wondering just how the magician really does that trick?

There is a hobby for everyone! A great website for ideas is www.findmeahobby.com.

Take a look and get started on something fun for you or the whole family.

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REMINDER:

The next
**Sit Down with
the Superintendent**

will be held on March 18th from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m.
at the Lillis Administration Building, 50 East Street



January is

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.