



Important dates to note

Monday, Feb. 11, 2:30-4:30 and 5:30-7:30 p.m. - Charles Olbon Parent/Teacher Conferences

Tuesday, Feb. 12, 2-4 and 5-7 p.m. - Beatrice Gilmore Parent/Teacher Conferences

Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2:30-4:30 p.m. and 5:30-7:30 p.m. - Memorial School Parent/Teacher Conferences

Welcome to the Woodland Park School District e-Newsletter, which will be sent out weekly when school is in session. This will serve as a glimpse of some of the wonderful things going on in our schools and with our students, as well as a point of reference for upcoming events.

Your Partner in Education,
Michele R. Pillari, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

STEAM program encourages teamwork to build playing card bridges

As part of the STEAM indoor recess program, Beatrice Gilmore students were very excited and proud to build a bridge that extended the length of the media center. Mrs. Seavy and Mrs. D'Amico's class were the only classes to collaborate as an entire indoor recess unit. Also, they utilized multiplication skills in order to get the length of the bridge (number of yardsticks times the length of each yard stick) = 1,045 inches!



School Climate Teams work to ensure safe, welcoming environment

All three District schools have a School Safety and School Climate Team (SS-SCT), which is a committee of school professionals that meets throughout the year to discuss strategies to keep the school environment as safe and welcoming as possible. Parents/guardians are always welcome to suggest methods for keeping our schools safe.

Charles Olbon Guidance Counselor Danielle Indri and Beatrice Gilmore Guidance Counselor Donna Farraye recently provided a presentation on what the teams do at the last Home & School Association meeting for the elementary schools.

School climate refers to the quality and feel of the school, Indri said. It's important as research shows that there is a substantial connection between school climate and student achievement.

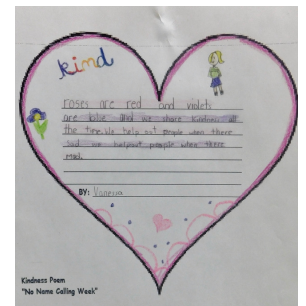
Charles Olbon and Beatrice Gilmore take part in No Name-Calling Week

Last week, both Charles Olbon and Beatrice Gilmore Schools took part in No Name-Calling Week.

At Charles Olbon, Guidance Counselor Miss Indri made daily announcements to the students and visited every class for a "Wrinkled Heart" lesson. She also put up a bulletin board that showcases the main takeaway of the lesson, which is, "Before you speak, think and be smart. It is hard to fix and wrinkled heart."

At Beatrice Gilmore, students each completed one of the following: a kindness quote, kindness poem, kindness picture or a compliment puzzle. Their creations line the school halls as well as their signed Kindness Pledges and Jargon, which is paper cut-outs similar to Charles Olbon's "Wrinkled Heart." Guidance Counselor Mrs. Farraye also made daily announcements.

During physical education, Mr. Pomante incorporated "stomping out name calling." Last Thursday during recess, the students played a "hot potato" type game with yarn. The students had to think of nice words/names to pass the yarn. Mrs. Farraye aimed to reinforce two things with the students: 1) kind words are easier to say than unkind words, and 2) the more you say kind words, the easier it is to say them (like a habit.)



School district joins with the library for community service project

Do you crochet? Do you like giving back to the community? We need your help!

The Alfred H. Baumann Free Public Library, in partnership with Mayor Keith Kazmark, Passaic County Senior Services, Passaic Valley High School and the Woodland Park School District, have launched a community service project to provide persons experiencing homelessness in Passaic County with "Dream Mats" (portable sleeping mats) to help protect them from the elements and serve as a cushion on hard surfaces.

"Dream Mats" are portable sleeping mats crocheted using plarn - yarn made from recyclable plastic bags. Standard grocery plastic bags are cut into strips, looped together, and then crocheted into an approximate 3 by 6 foot mat with a carrying handle.

We are seeking individuals or groups to help in a number of ways: collect bags, sort/separate bags; flatten and cut bags; loop the cut strips together; and crochet the mats.

You can help us from the comfort of your own home or join in with a local group that is participating in this project. If you know of a group that may be interested please share this information. In addition, the Alfred H. Baumann will be hosting a "Day of Service, A Day of Love" at the Library on Feb. 14 where stations will be set up to learn how to make a Dream Mat. You are welcome to join us at 7 Brophy Lane, Woodland Park. Call 973-345-8120 or visit www.abwplibrary.org for additional info.



Animal Club donations of food, shelters delivered to St. Hubert's

Memorial School's Animal Club presented St. Hubert's Animal Welfare Center in Madison with a supply of cat food collected by the members.

Mrs. Lynne Donato, Memorial math and science teacher and advisor of the club, also presented individual winterized cat shelters to St. Hubert's, which house feral cats in inclement winter. Shelters were made and donated by club members: Bruno Recupero, Lindsay Hewitt, Maite Olivera, and Adriana Gonzalez. They are easy and inexpensive to make. Three materials are needed which can all be purchased at Home Depot: a Rubbermaid bin with top, foam board for insulation, and hay for bedding. Anyone interested in building a shelter can see Mrs. Donato for details.

St. Hubert's is one of the many local shelters the club works with. Club members take quite an interest in ensuring that all animals are well cared for, housed properly to keep them warm, and fed a nutritious diet. "It was a wonderful exercise in kindness, empathy, and working together as a team," said Mrs. Donato.



Pictured is Karen Potocek, educational director at St. Hubert's, and Mrs. Donato. Mrs. Potocek visited Memorial School last month and gave a presentation on humane education. Students presented her with hand-made toys for the cats to play with while they are waiting for their forever homes.

To learn more about St. Hubert's, the animals available for adoption, the volunteer programs they offer, and the other various programs for all animal owners, such as obedience and low cost spay & neuter, visit sthuberts.org.

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School climate also relates to Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB). The climate of a school can positively or negatively affect bullying behavior in schools. The SS-SCT teams review bullying behavior trends and come up with ideas for improvements as appropriate.

Farraye noted the differences between a conflict and bullying. A conflict is a disagreement or argument in which both sides exchange words and/or actions. Bullying is a targeted act where there is an imbalance of power. The schools work to address both – and teach students how to best resolve conflicts.

Parental involvement is crucial to promote a positive school climate, Indri said. Communication is key, as the staff cannot address issues they are unaware of.

"As adults we all know what words we should not use," Farraye said. "Unfortunately some of our children are not aware of that. It's really important for parents to help children understand what words and phrases are demeaning or derogatory."

Parents/guardians with concerns or suggestions can contact the schools at any time. Miss Indri can be reached at dindri@wpschools.org or 973-317-7783. Mrs. Farraye can be reached at dfarraye@wpschools.org or 973-317-7787. Memorial School Guidance Counselor Mrs. Kerry McGlame can be reached at kmcglame@wpschools.org or 973-317-7786.