



Important dates to note

Tuesday, Sept. 25, 6:30 p.m. -
BG Back to School Night

Wednesday, Sept. 26, 6:30 p.m. -
CO Back to School Night

Thursday, Sept. 27, 6:30 p.m. -
Memorial Back to School Night

Monday, Oct. 1 -
Memorial Picture Day

Friday, Oct. 5, 7 p.m. - BGHSA
Paint Night fundraiser at
Arts & Creations Poetry Studio

Monday, Oct. 8 - District schools
are closed for Columbus Day

Wednesday, Oct. 10 -
CO Picture Day

Monday, Oct. 15, 7 p.m. -
Board of Education
workshop meeting at BG

Friday, Oct. 19 - Memorial
HSA Harvest Fest/Tricky Tray

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

NED Show returns to CO with kindness adventure

Last spring, Charles Olbon School hosted a school-wide character education assembly called The NED Show. NED is a cartoon character whose name is an acronym for Never give up, Encourage others, and Do your best. The program used humor, audience participation, yo-yo and magic tricks to bring forth its message.

NED, and his human friend Kazmo, returned to CO on Monday to share details of their kindness adventure to Kenya, Africa with the students.

Kazmo sang a song for the students, "You Have a Superpower When You Smile," before he shared details of the African trip to visit the Bidii Primary School in Kenya, where 59 students share a classroom.

NED and Kazmo learned about their new friends – how they are unbreakable, "like sticks in a bundle."



As the story progresses, the students learn that it's the differences that make experiences and new friendships so great. The themes brought forth were: Caring is cool; Include others; I can make friends anywhere; Each person matters a lot; and Different can be good.

The NED Show came to CO at no cost both times. The school make NED-messaged items available for purchase during the week, which reinforce multi-sensory learning and are tangible reminders that increase the students' ability to retain NED's message long after the assembly. The proceeds from CO's sale will allow another school to benefit from the program. With the Kenyan treasures the students purchased this week, they also learned that in addition to paying it forward to another school, proceeds benefit artisans in Africa and help provide clean drinking water to residents there.

Find out more about the program at www.thenedshow.com or www.kindnessadventure.com. The sites offer resources for teachers and parents.

District welcomes third guidance counselor, Donnamarie Scarpa Farraye

After receiving an unexpected increase in state aid last spring, one of the items the Board of Education decided to utilize funds on was to add an additional full-time guidance counselor to the district.

Previously, guidance counselor Danielle Indri split her time between Charles Olbon and Beatrice Gilmore and Kerry Mc Glame handled the needs of Memorial School. The district's new addition, Donnamarie Scarpa Farraye, will work full-time managing the needs of Beatrice Gilmore as well as the fifth grade at Memorial School.

"This has always been my dream," Farraye said. "I've always wanted to be a school counselor."

The Little Falls resident, who was born and raised in Jersey City, is married and has two children, ages 14 and 17. She comes to the Woodland Park School District from Mountainside Hospital, where she worked in emergency psychiatry. Farraye is also a licensed professional counselor.

"It's been non-stop already," she said about her time in the district. "Having a full-time counselor in each building allows someone to be available constantly for the students and the teachers. It's a 100 percent benefit for the students."

Just over two weeks in to the new school year, Farraye said she has seen some needs already within the school community, such as the need for education on family dynamics and differences and awareness of disabilities.

"The kids have all been really open and receptive with what I've approached them with," she said. "Parents have been amazing so far and the support has been amazing. I couldn't ask for a better support system that what we have here."

BG Principal Sharon Tomback said she is thrilled to have a full-time counselor working with grades 3-5.

"The consistency and availability of Mrs. Farraye will help students and families receive the guidance and assistance they require in a more timely manner," Tomback said. "In addition, Mrs. Farraye will be able to dedicate time to providing programs to the students in their classrooms, as well as during selected indoor recess periods. All of these programs will focus on our students' well-being and providing them with the skills necessary to feel empowered and to advocate for themselves."

The three counselors will communicate regularly and provide students with seamless support and services. Farraye will uniquely be able to help transition an entire class from BG to Memorial, addressing the specific needs of a new middle school student and easing the workload on McGlame.

"These kids experience shifts in behaviors, clothing and attitudes as they get into middle school," Farraye said. "It's a challenge sometimes understanding the difference between the two schools."

Over at CO, guidance counselor Danielle Indri will be in the building full-time now. "Having a full-time guidance counselor ensures the children and teachers are getting consistent support. The guidance counselor is readily available for students to access daily if they need help with emotional or social problems," said CO Principal Giovanna Irizarry. "Having a full-time guidance counselor also allows for essential school-wide programs, that address critical self-regulation and friendship skills, to be implemented with fidelity and followed-up with on a regular basis."

Indri said that there are many benefits for the CO community now that she has the ability to be full-time at the school. She is able to be more present in the building and consistent with counseling interventions and guidance programs. "This leads to increased rapport with the students and parents," she said. "When they know me, they trust me and I am better able to help them. It also means the interventions and program have more of a lasting impact."

More so, she said that she can expand upon the guidance program by having more groups, events and teaching more classroom guidance lessons. Indri already has plans to start Rainbows groups which aim to support students who are going through grief and family changes.

"Ultimately, being full-time at Charles Olbon allows me to help my students be even more successful academically, socially, and emotionally in and outside of the classroom which is my goal as their school counselor," she said.

