



# Washington Township Schools "Making a Difference"

## Clubs - The After School Event!

The students at Brass Castle are currently exploring a variety of interests at after school clubs led by our staff. Recently we checked in with our advisors to get their comments:

- After School Sports (Mr. Hornyak) - "Students are putting in excellent effort in many different types of sports and physical activities!"
- Book Club (Mrs. Casserly) - "Reading 'Cinder' is a fairytale with a science-fiction spin! Students in the club are very engrossed in the story!"
- Drama Club (Mrs. Watters) - "Our crew is working hard on the holiday presentation which will be presented to the school body on Friday, December 20<sup>th</sup>! We have a lot of energy and enthusiasm!"
- Helping Hands Club (Miss Croasdale and Mrs. Ruperto) - "The children enjoy volunteering inside and outside the classroom. We've been impressed with their sense of generosity and giving."
- Scrabble Club (Mrs. Peterson) - "We have many 'word wizards' who are mastering the art of making letter combinations that acquire the maximum number of points. They are also learning many new vocabulary words. For example, do you know what 'zarf' means? It is an ornamental metal used for a coffee cup without a handle."
- Study Skills Club (Mrs. Sigman) - "Our students are working on organization and how to prepare for class assignments. They are doing a great job!"
- Video Club (Mrs. Kaiven and Mr. Flumerfelt) - "Students have produced several successful Friday morning school-wide broadcasts! We have future news anchors and production staff in our midst!"

Clubs rotate throughout the year; for example, French Club and Test Skills Club start up in January, Latin Club starts up in February along with our Running Clubs and Garden Club starting in early spring. Check out our Club page at <http://www.washtwpsd.org/clubs-activities/> !

Port Colden School  
Brass Castle School

Volume 6, Issue 5

January 2014

## Brass Castle January Winter Concert

The Blue and White Band and the Panther Band will be performing at the upcoming Brass Castle Winter Band Concert. The concert is being held on Wednesday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> at Brass Castle School at 7:00pm in the All-Purpose Room. The students have been working extremely hard all year long, and we know how excited they are to perform for their friends and family members at this concert. It is a magical evening, to be sure! We look forward to seeing you there!





## Honeywell Instant Alert



Given recent weather conditions, the Washington Township School District will have the need to forward e-blast notifications for delayed openings, school closings or early dismissals.

If you are not receiving our alerts, please go to the parent login page found on our district web site under "Parents" and choose **Honeywell Instant Alert Login**.

Once logged in, there is a page where you can determine which type of alert you wish to receive and to what device or account (cell phone, home phone, text message, and / or email). This page simulates a table where you can place check marks after the contact mode.

If you have forgotten your username or password, please click on the link "Forgot Username/Password." Honeywell will email you the information needed.

If you have any difficulties, please contact your child's main office and school personnel will assist you with the web site.

### Friendly Reminder

The hours for the crossing guard at the intersection of Brass Castle and Castle Street hours are as follows: **8:25am-9:00am**. Brass Castle School opens at **8:30am** for students. Please do not send your child to school prior to 8:25am to ensure their safety in crossing Brass Castle Road.

### Kindergarten Round-Up



If you have a child who will be 5 years old by October 1, 2014, please contact the Brass Castle main office at 908-689-1188, extension 600 to be included on the list to receive a registration packet.

### Kindergarten Full/Half Day Option

The Washington Township Board of Education has decided to offer full-day kindergarten for the children scheduled to enter our school as kindergartners in September 2014. The Board was concerned that there may be parents who wish their child attend only a half-day program. With that in mind, the Administration will monitor registration requests and offer a half-day program as well as full day if the numbers warrant offering both full and half day programs.

### The Buzz about the Bees!

If you have been wondering what all the buzz is about at Brass Castle lately, it is coming from our classrooms! Homeroom classes are in the process of selecting students who will represent them in the upcoming Geography Bee and Spelling Bee!

The Geography Bee will be held Friday, January 3<sup>rd</sup> during the school day. The PTA Spelling Bee will be held on Wednesday, January 15<sup>th</sup> at 6pm at Brass Castle.

Good luck to all our "bzzz-y" students as they compete within their classrooms and in the upcoming competitions!

## Important Immunization Reminder — For Preschool/Pre-K Parents

All children attending a Preschool or Child Care program in the state of NJ, **must annually receive one dose of influenza vaccine between September 1 and December 31 of each year.**

Please provide documented proof of your child having received this vaccine **so that your child may remain in school in January 2014.**

## Vaccination Reminder!

**Grade 5 Parents** - Remember all students entering 6<sup>th</sup> grade next year **must receive one dose of Tdap and one dose of Meningococcal vaccines** before school starts. Required documentation of your child having received these vaccines **MUST** be sent to the Health Office **PRIOR** to school starting next September.

Don't wait until summer time when doctor's offices are booked and busy! **Documentation of these vaccines can be sent in any time during this current school year.** If your child is already 11 years old or turns 11 during the school year, consider having them receive these vaccinations early and send in documentation **at that time.**



Jonathan Jardines, Curtis Roth, Justin Daniel  
Emma Smith, Paige Lennox

## Holidays are a Time for Traditions

This is the time of year when families get together for the holidays, and traditions are established that may last for generations to come. Hanging stockings, caroling, tree decorating, baking cookies and special dinners are just a few of the traditions that our students enjoy with their families.

Mrs. Melhem's students created a classroom quilt that represents each of their family's interests and traditions. The quilt is hung in the classroom as a reminder of the importance of traditions and that children learn from their parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles. In full circle, like the eternal circle of a quilt, our children will pass their own family traditions to the next generation.

## Port Colden Winter Concert

On Thursday, December 12<sup>th</sup> students from the Port Colden School kicked off the holiday season by presenting a wonderful winter concert. Students performed a selection of holiday and winter songs to entertain family and friends. Students in grades 1 through 3, under the direction of Mrs. Dahmer, put on a fantastic show for everyone! Mr. Rizzo would also like to congratulate sixth grade band students Daniel Pitsch, Alanna Smith, and Jordana War for doing such a wonderful job at the concert.

## Battle of the Minds

It was an exciting afternoon on December 1<sup>st</sup> when ten of Brass Castle's enrichment students went to Great Meadows School to match minds against other county teams in a Jeopardy-style game called *Battle of the Minds*. Fifth grade students Julia Fox, Jordan Damiano-Florez, Amy Twohig, Eddie Kaiven, and Michael Finke gained much experience as "first-timers" at this event. The "seasoned" sixth graders Phoenix Daugherty, Kelcie Bannon, Jake Stria, Simon Ribeiro, Cristian Gallardo, and Kelly Banfield soared through the preliminary rounds, winning two out of three rounds to take fourth place overall!



Fifth Grade Team: Julia Fox, Jordan Damiano-Florez, Amy Twohig, Eddie Kaiven and Michael Finke



Sixth Grade Team: Phoenix Dougherty, Kelcie Mannon, Jake Stria, Kelly Banfield, Simon Ribeiro and Cristian Gallardo



## Chorus Student Spread Holiday Cheer

The 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade chorus members traveled to Hawk Pointe on December 5<sup>th</sup> to perform for the Warren

County Association of Retired Teachers. The students performed a medley of holiday songs. It was fun to see some of our own Washington Township retired teachers at the luncheon!



The 4<sup>th</sup> grade chorus had the opportunity to share the gift of singing with the Washington Township Senior Citizens at their center located on Brass Castle Road recently on December 13<sup>th</sup>. The students sang a repertoire from holiday and winter songs. Joy was had by all - students and seniors!

# Warren County Consortium Debate 2013!

Our young debaters, Simon Ribeiro, Aryan Patel, Kelly Banfield, Kelcie Mannon, Phoenix Dougherty, Skylar Warren, Michael Finke, and Amy Twohig, came out to debate their view on December 12th at the Warren County Consortium for Student Enrichment's Annual Debate.

The affirmatives "attacked" and the negatives "counter attacked" in the classrooms of Blairstown Elementary School. The Resolution: "Children should learn how to write in cursive handwriting", was the topic of discussion for the afternoon. Competitors were vying to persuade the judges with all their thoughtful reasons, evidences, plans, attacks and quotes from professional sources. After the information was analyzed, the speeches perfected and the bus boarded, students went on their way to the event to take on fellow county debaters. Kudos to all the hard work, the jitters kept at bay, and the perseverance demonstrated by our students!

Special Thanks to Mrs. Cappitelli for being a judge and 4<sup>th</sup> grade G&T students for serving as timers at the event: Evan Heine, Jonathan Knittel, Noah DiNapoli, Stephanie Dunlap, and Olivia Mencia.



Kelly Banfield, Kelcie Mannon



Skylar Warren, Phoenix Dougherty



Amy Twohig, Michael Finke



Simon Ribeiro, Aryan Patel

## Counselor's Corner

Hip Hip Hooray for the New Year 2014! I am always awed by the passing of time. I take some precious moments at the dawn of each New Year to reflect on the past 12 months that passed, in a blink, I must add. I am so thankful that my year was full of positive milestones including my oldest, Kyle, attending his freshman year at Yale and LOVING it all! My younger 3 girls each had their own happy times though my middle daughter (grade 7) also had some challenges with her peers. As the Washington Township District Anti-Bullying Coordinator, I am well-versed in the language of the "bully." I am very sensitive to 'our kids' feelings and interpretation of what is being said or done to them. For our students I know that their 'perception is reality.' I am an advocate for any student who feels uncomfortable with the language or actions of another. Please know that this perspective is born not just of my extensive training but also of living the experience with my own children.

Than being said, it is vital to remember that every push, shove and tease does not equate to bullying. Again, I understand that this is a sensitive topic when it comes to our own children. However, I invite you to explore the difference between bullying and conflict. Generally, conflict involves antagonism among 2 or more individuals. Two people can have a conflict, a disagreement or a fight, but bullying occurs when there is a 'power imbalance' and one child has a hard time defending him/herself ([www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov](http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov).) Bullying is a form of victimization, and should not be confused with childhood conflict.

It is 'normal' for peer conflict to occur. Students benefit in the long term from some conflict in their lives. They begin to understand their own feelings, become empathetic toward others, develop appropriate responses to difficult situations, work on anger management, and learn proper behavioral responses.

Fast forward to your child's future - wouldn't you hope that they have the skills to tolerate diversity, manage opinions that differ from their own and handle adult peer competition and conflict? The time is now, when our children are young, to help them develop these essential life skills. I am here to help our children develop skills of self-advocacy, increase personal self-esteem and teach healthy, appropriate social responses in a safe, controlled environment.

Washington Township School District does not tolerate any behavior that is mean intentioned, even when it is not formally considered bullying. Respect for all is the theme of every character education lesson, small group activity and individual counseling session. This is reinforced in many ways by school staff and administration. We continue to practice the "golden rule" where we treat others as we wish to be treated - students and staff are encouraged to treat all with dignity and respect.

When our students return to school in January, our Community of Character trait will focus on TOLERANCE followed by a focus on DIVERSITY in February. Please review the Character Calendar with your children as there are daily reminders for you and yours to read together.

I wish you and your family a very Happy, Healthy New Year! I am always available to speak with you about concerns or positive milestones. If you have a schedule that does not permit you to contact me during the 'business/school day' let me know and I will be happy to provide my cell number.

Again, Happy Holidays, enjoy your family during this magical season. Wishing you all a fun, productive New Year!

# JANUARY 2014

Sunday	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	Satur-
	"If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient."	"The highest result of education is tolerance." Helen keller	1 Happy New Year! Wishes for a happy, healthy New Year!	2 Welcome Back! Celebrate our Differences today	3 Let us respect different opinions and ideas today (and always)	4
5	6 Do not judge anyone by their appearance alone	7 Tell your teachers why they are so special to you	8 Treat your friends and classmates how you want to be treated	9 Simply smile at someone in the hallway today J	10 Sit with someone different at lunch today - change it up!	11
12	13 Practice tolerance with kind words and respectful actions	14 Remember it is our differences that make each day so interesting	15 Understand others, be tolerant and accepting	16 Don't laugh when someone makes a mistake - be a friend	17 Have an open mind - listen to your friends ideas and opinions	18
19	20 Tolerance IS respect, acceptance and appreciation for differences	21 Take the time to listen to your friends today - even if you disagree	22 Think about what makes you different, unique and special?	23 Try to be tolerant of YOUR-SELF - do the best you can do each day	24 Learn the art of compromise - it is sometimes difficult but is a great skill for life J	25
26	27 Select a book about a character that is different than you - Enjoy!	28 It is our differences that make each day interesting - learn something new today!	29 Think about someone who is very different than you - how are you really similar?	30 Be tolerant - practice patience and kindness	31 Did you show tolerance this month?	
		<b><i>The test of courage comes when we are in the minority. The test of tolerance comes when we are in the majority. R. Sockman</i></b>				