

# Pride in Our Schools

May/June 2014

We are very proud of our students and staff.



The 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in Gold Strings at Central School performed at the Warren Library to a full house. These ten students brainstormed the idea of playing at the library, as a way to connect more with the community. After meeting with the Youth Services Librarian Antonette D’Orazio, and setting the date, the group organized the program and continued to rehearse. Under the direction of their teacher Tim Leonard, the talented musicians performed fiddles tunes, pieces by Bartok and Beethoven, and the recent hit 'Royals' by Lorde.

## Excellence in Education Award Recipients

Congratulations!

Mary Lynch: Angelo L. Tomaso School

Laura Lamson: Central School

Meredith Fishelman: Mt. Horeb School

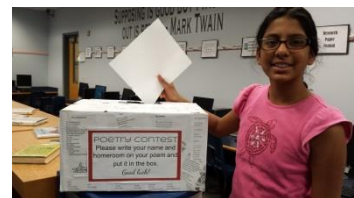
Margee Pfeifer: Woodland School

Michelle Zgombic: Warren Middle School



Warren Middle School celebrated National Poetry Month with Poem in Your Pocket Day! Poems were given to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade homeroom teachers to distribute to their classes, and students were encouraged to share them with each other. During Guide, there were poetry activities set up in the library for those interested. During morning announcements, 8<sup>th</sup> grade public speaking students read short poems to

the student body. Students also were able to participate in a poetry contest as well as create posters to be hung in the halls. The whole idea was to create an atmosphere of poetic celebration and make this style of writing accessible and fun. Thanks to Wendy Rosenberg, Emily Baker, Cynthia Cassidy and Christine Cirrotti for coordinating the special event.





Earth Day was celebrated throughout the district! Library Media Specialist Susan Jackson shared many terrific books on protecting the planet. Students in Gina Cocivera-Wright's class made a craft from recycled materials. Their project, "Ways I Can Give the Earth a Hand", also incorporated a home extension. In the days following, families tallied the number of times they reduced, reused, or recycled at their homes. Student Owen Griffin described

the wonderful composting system at his home. Making children more aware of all the ways their contributions help our planet is critical. Mt. Horeb School collected used toys in conjunction with Second Chance Toys. The focus was to collect used plastic toys that were in good condition and then donate them to another organization. This was done specifically during Earth Day week to help spread the message about keeping toys out of our landfills. The toys have found a new home at the Acelero Learning Center in North Brunswick. Fifth graders at Woodland School continued the school's annual tradition of planting a tree around the perimeter of the playground in honor of Earth Day. A purple-leafed plum tree was the selection this year; its beautifully colored leaves will surely add to the beauty of Woodland's landscape. In addition, the students were excited about the opportunity to leave behind a legacy that will be enjoyed by future students for years to come.

Both the Buildings & Grounds Department and Transportation Department adhere to high standards. They remain vigilant in their training and certification updates. Along with her team, Transportation Coordinator Jan Donlay participated in a recent hands-on exercise which focused on special bus functions. Both drivers and aides reviewed the operations of the wheelchair lift, as well as practiced using it and securing the wheelchair inside the bus. We are proud of the staff's dedication to the students of Warren Township, as well as to their safety.

To aid the Community Food Bank of NJ, 8<sup>th</sup> grader Danny Cole Lifson organized a charity event in support of the fight against hunger and poverty. Held at Little Shanty, a Warren eatery, there was artwork displayed and live music performed by roughly 20 local students. Peri Martins, Michael Hopwood, and Danny Lifson all contributed to the success of the night with entertaining vocals and/or instrumental accompaniment. To prepare, Music teacher Amy Jensen provided advice as the students rehearsed with her during lunch. Not only did the event raise over \$300, but it was an evening where students could enjoy music and company, in a safe and positive environment. Check out the article on our website at [www.warrentboe.org](http://www.warrentboe.org) for more details.



For the past three years, ALT's REACH teacher Susan Kline has been an instructor at the Morris Union Jointure, working with educators enrolled in the Alternate Route Provisional Teacher program. Her comprehensive classes have provided information on gifted and talented education including theories, approaches and myths. She prides herself in assisting new teachers in developing a solid foundation in order to help them support gifted students in the classroom and differentiate curriculum. She also serves on the G&T committee at the Jointure to promote what is happening in the world of G&T, proudly sharing that Warren is consistently noted as a comprehensive and effective G&T program.

Students in Lisa Seccamanie's Financial Literacy class were swimming with the sharks. As part of a 21<sup>st</sup> century learning scenario middle school students created original product ideas, prototypes, logos and slogans. They designed either storyboards or PowerPoint presentations to pitch their ideas to staff members who were invited to offer feedback in the "Shark Tank". They had to research, study patent and copy right laws, and evaluate their businesses. Some of the creative projects included an Alarm Pillow, Goggle Contacts and Meal Gum.



The Warren Township Education Association held its second annual Blood Drive. About 40 people, including staff and community members, came out despite challenging weather conditions. Due to caring donors, blood will always be available during times of need. A blood donor's gift is the gift of life. Donations will save the lives of trauma victims, as well as patients with blood disorders, cancer and many other life-threatening injuries in New Jersey hospitals. Special thanks to Jane Auriemma for planning the event.



Central School first graders presented the story of "Twinkle Star". This short musical play told the tale of a young star who did not know how to shine. Of course in the end, Twinkle's destiny was revealed when she heard the wish of a young child. The play was fashioned from a short children's story by Music teacher Jennifer Kaniuka. Students performed songs to highlight special moments in the play, and designed their own stars to wear as part of their costumes. Warren Township Schools' young actors sure know how to shine! Woodland School's first graders performed "Number Bop", a musical show focusing on preliminary math skills. To celebrate the new Go Math! program, Music teacher Karen Sutherland felt it was important to use music to compliment and reinforce some of the skills children are learning. The students loved the songs, and even learned more about fractions. Third graders at ALT School are looking forward to their annual recorder concert as they have been preparing and practicing their skills since November. They will play folk songs from America, to Mexico, to Russia. Music teacher Kelly Backus shared that the students are just as excited to sing these songs as they are to play them. Some of their favorites are the silly Mexican folk song called Al Citron, and a song from the Caribbean called Four White Horses. They have been working very hard to master their syncopated rhythms and all of their notes.



The Preschool classes at Mt Horeb School had a visit from Swift Farms. The farm brought chicks, bunnies, lambs and baby goats. This special activity included many lessons including language, communication, and social interaction. Check out the article on our website at [www.warrentboe.org](http://www.warrentboe.org) to read more!



Warren Middle School recently announced an exciting new pilot, the WMS STS team. The STS is a Student Tech Support team designed to assist both staff and students in Warren Middle School. Comprised of current 7<sup>th</sup> grade members who have shown interest and talent in technology, it is the hope that this may be an inspiration for careers in IT, computer programming, engineering and more! The team is involved in troubleshooting, testing new programs, and researching apps. The hope is that this team can continue to assist while in grade 8, as well as help transition a new group of STS members coming up in grade 7. The current STS team members include the following



students: Alex Strasser, Alan Lin, Amay Mehta, Jeffrey Zhang, Jason Amalraj, Scott Hoffman, Prateek Humane, Neelay Trivedi, and Ian Martin. Some members of STS will join the Technology Showcase during the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Expo, to present new technology during the Tech Slam! and to assist in the Chromebook Lounge.



Congratulations to Central School's Shruthi Shankar. She won 2<sup>nd</sup> place in a regional Vocabulary Bee conducted by the North South Foundation. Some of the words she encountered were dynamo, brood, impair, and blight.

Genevieve Rust and Josephine Pascale of ALT School participated in the Morris-Union Jointure Commission 5<sup>th</sup> grade treble choir. They were picked by their Music teacher Kelly Backus, to represent the school based on their dedication and enthusiasm for music in class, as well as for their strong singing talent.



Rebecca Brady, a 5<sup>th</sup> grader at Woodland School and Paramount gymnast, recently competed in the state championship for gymnastics in Hamilton, NJ. She had the highest all-around score of the meet, including placing 1<sup>st</sup> on the balance beam. Congratulations on earning the title of State Champion!

ALT School student Keira Chen is the Gold Award recipient of the 2014 Golden Key Festival United States, in the category of piano and strings competition. Keira will perform at Carnegie Hall in a few weeks. Best of luck Keira!

Dubbed Warren's All Star Band by their band director Bruce Gant, over 60 musicians from all four elementary schools are set to perform the national anthem at the Somerset Patriots Stadium. While their original game was called for rain, they will now perform on June 23, 2014 when the Somerset Patriots play the Bridgeport Bluefish, the second game in a 3-game mini series! Most existing arrangements of the national anthem are primarily high school level, but these 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students are dedicated and motivated to succeed!

In celebration of Arbor Day, all students and staff at Mt. Horeb School gathered in front of the building to experience the first tree planting ceremony. The ornamental plum was a donation from a local landscaping group eager to planting. The Chorus Club, led by Spangled Banner. Principal Cook discussion of the history of Arbor sharing original poems. Kate Kogler how, scientifically, this tree could environment. She noted how many and just how much of a benefit one tree can be. Ending on a happy note, the 5<sup>th</sup> graders, leaders of the building, each took turns assisting with the tree planting, while the Chorus Club sang an uplifting and energized rendition of the recent hit song, "Happy"!



help out with delivery and Mark Weber, sang The Star-opened the ceremony with a Day, followed by 3<sup>rd</sup> graders gave a thorough description of possibly aid the surrounding species certain trees can support

The Central School yard sale was a success due to the energy and efforts of staff and PTO. Staff



raised over \$250 for the American Cancer Society. The school continued to add to their donation by walking together as a school community at the Relay for Life Charity Walk. Over \$5000 in sponsorship was raised! Congratulations to ALT School as well for raising \$2000 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, the world's largest voluntary health agency dedicated to fighting blood cancers. Staff and students participated in Pennies for Patients. The school was awarded a Champions of Change banner and several classrooms were also

recognized for their outstanding contributions. Service clubs throughout the schools continue to promote kindness and generosity. The Peanut Butter and Jelly/Jam Slam was a successful endeavor. Club Advisor Christina Beekman, and the Woodland Service Club members, collected 100 items to donate to the soup kitchen in South Bound Brook! Recently, they made a difference even closer to home as they proudly prepared treats in celebration of Teacher Appreciation.



Where do *you* go to grow and learn? Like many classes, Barbara Pellicano and her kindergarten students enjoy spending time outside, right on Angelo L. Tomaso School's own property! Nature's Pathway was started in 2007 with a grant from the Business Education Alliance and National Starch & Chemical Foundation. This allowed staff to purchase garden equipment, an indoor Grow Lab, bird houses, and many starter plants. Over the years, the garden has evolved with the assistance of dedicated staff and enthusiastic students who work during recess and after school as part of the gardening club with their leader Mary Balkonis. Additionally, thanks to two former ALT students and the ALT PTO there is now bench seating, a podium, a shed, outdoor tables, and fencing.



Along with their teacher PJ Jones, Woodland's REACH Too! 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders presented Independent Study projects to members of the Board of Education. Daniella Green and Grace Scali shared their idea for re-purposing gently used clothing. Other ventures included the creation of a TerraCycling campaign for schools to earn money by reusing and recycling garbage, and the planning and promotion of a local flea market to benefit the American Cancer Society. Fifth grader Emily Morris decided that she wanted to find a way to reduce waste in her community, and repurposing old sneakers through the Nike Reuse-A-Shoe program seemed to be a perfect fit. To raise money to pay for the shipping of the sneakers to the Nike facility in Oregon, she devised a clever fundraising plan. Emily partnered with the local Smoothie King in Warren and organized a Smoothie Day at lunch. It is evident that Warren Township Schools' students can use 21<sup>st</sup> century problem-solving skills to achieve great things. With hard work and planning, they *shine brighter every day!*



The Peer to Peer Program at Warren Middle School, consisting of twenty 8<sup>th</sup> graders, is a program designed to allow student leaders the opportunity to demonstrate leadership skills in various

settings. Many leadership activities take place throughout the year where students promote healthy living and inspire younger students to make good choices. The peer leaders visited the Warren Senior Center to run a special intergenerational “Wordles” activity where students interviewed seniors about their lifetime memories and achievements and then created artistic Wordle displays. Each senior citizen received a completed Wordle, which is a collage of words, phrases, and colors in a unique computer generated design.

Third graders at ALT, Central and Woodland are participating again in the Bonnie Plants Mega Cabbage contest. Each third grade student was given a cabbage seedling to plant and care for at home. Over a ten week period the students have been tracking how they have watered, weeded, fertilized and bug checked their cabbages. Once the cabbages are fully grown the students take a picture with their cabbage and submit it to their teacher. One lucky student at each building will be chosen to represent his/her school and compete for a \$1000 scholarship. Best of luck to all!



Eighth grade students experimented with Newton’s Three Laws of Motion. Integrated into the physics curriculum are the following two labs which have become student favorites: “Inertia Skills” and “Splat Lab”. Newton’s first law focuses on inertia, an object’s resistance to a change in its state of motion. Via stations, students acquired skills that allowed them for example, to drop a sugar cube from a hoop into a jar. Additionally was the old favorite, where they attempted to pull out a tablecloth and leave the dishes. (Certainly, they were encouraged to not try this at home!) Splat Lab focused on Newton’s second and third laws. To start, students sent a special physics car down a ramp to test one of three variables: ramp height, road surface, and weight of the car. After releasing the car, it plowed into a faux stone wall and sometimes even took the wall with it. Students took measurements, analyzed data and formed conclusions about the effect of their variable on the acceleration and momentum of the car. Galileo and Newton would be proud, as are their teachers Cathlin Sweeney and JoAnn Blatchford.



Speaking of science, ALT School held its first Science and Inventors Fair. Nearly 70 young scientists and inventors from all grades created amazing projects to share. There were plants, chore robots, tornadoes, volcanoes, puppy bots crystals, fossil, salty seas, flowers, computers, motors, machines and much more! Students cannot wait for the event to occur again next year!



Combining science with a 21<sup>st</sup> century learning scenario gave Mt. Horeb School students in Jill Ziobro, Chris Schwallie, and Lisa Lukko's classes the challenge to design a "fast and furious" balloon powered vehicle. The 4<sup>th</sup> grade budding engineers were off to the races! The car design had to use a balloon as the force to accelerate the car. The design had certain constraints. It had to be a land vehicle, travel at least five meters, and be made of only simple materials with balloons as the only usable energy source. What fun!

Kara Miletic and her 5<sup>th</sup> grade science students have been working on their Measuring Time unit... sometimes outside! Students learned how to track their shadow length to indicate the time of day. They went on the blacktop for a hands-on





experiment where they located north, and tracked their shadows every hour. Students analyzed why the shadow length changed at various times of the day, and how this relates to sun safety and avoiding a sunburn due to the sun's position in the sky.

The Warren Middle School PTO offers mini-grants in the fall and spring of each academic year. The purpose is to support and enhance the instructional and educational experience of all students, by providing funding to support the educational professionals who are willing to pursue alternative and innovative ways to enhance the curriculum. Money has been allocated to the following staff members to use towards materials, technology, projects and programs: Lynn Alger, David Arnold, Cynthia Cassidy, Amy Jensen, Carolyn McCloskey, Lisa Seccamanie, John Seramula, Kevin Speckin, Michelle Zgombic. The grants relate to technology, poetry, music history, financial literacy, science safety, student presentations, and more!

REACH teacher Jill Zimmer has been meeting the last eight months with former ALT and Warren Middle School student and Warren Boy Scout, Max Micheller. In an ambitious project to complete his Eagle Scout certification, Max built six raised garden beds at Central School along with the help of many volunteers whom he supervised, including scouts from Warren Troop 228 and New Providence Troop 63. The project was the result of much planning, budgeting, and discussion; the



four foot square garden beds will enable Central School students to experience the joy of growing and eating fresh vegetables. A compost bin was also constructed, which will allow students to learn about increasing sustainability through composting. To fund this amazing project, Zimmer used the \$500 she received as Central's 2013 Excellence in Education Award winner. Additionally, the PTO provided a grant for up to \$750 for the project. What is on the horizon? Students will be planting seedlings very soon, and are eager to participate in

hands-on learning opportunities in the garden, across the curriculum, in the days to come!

### **Warren Middle School ~ Students of the Month**

Congratulations to recent award recipients for their demonstration of positive character traits.

6<sup>th</sup> grade - Steve Vecchio and Lindsey deCavaignac

7<sup>th</sup> grade – Jamie Linton and Hannah Tobin

8<sup>th</sup> grade - Harsabreen Chadha and Thelonious Rowley

Unified Arts - Jillian Ferrara and Nick McGann



For the last three years, Chris Burkhardt and Michelle Cebula's 5<sup>th</sup> grade collaborative class has partnered with Chris Cebula's 5<sup>th</sup> grade class at Newmark School in Scotch Plains. Both classes read the Newberry Award winning book, The Westing Game, as shared reading in their classrooms. Each student was assigned a character in the book, to track the clues and crack the case! Using Skype, the two classes had conversations about the book. Recently, Mount Horeb students traveled to Newmark School to have a literature discussion in person and also play the board game Clue.



### HELPING OTHERS SHINE

Across the state, numerous schools banded together to help displaced students and staff after their school fire in Edison, NJ. In Warren Township, Central School teacher Rebecca DeMarco and her class of kindergarten students wanted to brighten the day for the students of James Monroe Elementary School. Since they have a weekly "Happy" dance from the popular Disney movie, they decided to make and send a minions craft to bring happiness to those children and do a kind deed. They also enjoyed working with Rosemarie Rio, a Senior Connection member and Warren resident, who volunteers at Central School every Friday during Center Time. Lisa Scherzer's 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class also wanted to make a difference for this nearby school. Since the beginning of the year, her students had been collecting, counting, and bagging their water bottles which were taken to a facility and exchanged for cash. As a class, the students chose, upon hearing about James Monroe, to put the funds towards a Staples gift card along with some extra school supplies and heartfelt cards. Additionally, many Central School staff members contributed to a collection spearheaded by teacher Danielle Riccio, by donating supplies, books, and gift cards.

Principal Chris Huss donned a Captain America costume in support of a fundraiser at Woodland School... and his school was quick to join in! While it is true that "Not All Superheroes Wear Capes", the slogan inspired staff and students to wear a superhero t-shirt or the Woodland School colors, and donate spare change. The Woodland School and PTO joined together and raised over \$700 for the James Monroe Elementary School population.



“Watch for a soon-to-be released Communications survey. We appreciate your feedback.”  
~ Dr. Tami Crader, Superintendent

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