

**NORTH HAVEN
MIDDLE SCHOOL
MISSION**

**IT IS THE MISSION OF THE
NORTH HAVEN MIDDLE
SCHOOL TOGETHER WITH THE
COMMUNITY TO PROVIDE A
COMPREHENSIVE, CREATIVE
AND CHALLENGING EDUCA-
TIONAL EXPERIENCE THAT
DEVELOPS INDEPENDENCE,
SOCIAL EMOTIONAL GROWTH
AND AN UNDERSTANDING OF
A DIVERSE SOCIETY**

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NHMS News

NOVEMBER 2013

News from the Principal

On Our Way

The faculty and students of NHMS are into their routines as we move forward from a great start to the 2013-14 school year. It was great to see so many parents and family members in attendance at our Open House in September. A strong relationship between home and school is such an important part of your child's success. The entire faculty of NHMS will make it a priority to help improve communication between the school and families in an effort to help all of our students be successful learners.



Another important aspect of the middle school community is our school culture. We want to provide an environment within which students can thrive, academically and socially. One big step we've taken already this year is by bringing back Rachel's Challenge, a program fostered from the writings of one of the victims of the Columbine school shooting. Through the work of our PTSA and donations from various organizations within North Haven, we were able to bring this program to all of our students. The message of the program is one of spreading kindness and you can read more about it in this newsletter.

Working together this year, I know the NHMS community will be strong and our students will be prepared and supported for all the challenges that come their way.



**NHMS
Students of the
Month
September
2013**

News from the Maroon Team

Social Studies with Mr. Johnson

“The Five Themes of Geography” were the early focus of Mr. Johnson’s Social Studies classes this year. Students applied the themes, such as location, place, and human-environment interaction to their own lives, culminating in a project titled “The Geography of ME”, which are on display along the back wall of room C-24. Currently, the students are investigating the amazing story of “Otzi the Ice Man”, a copper-age natural mummy found frozen in the Italian Alps. Based the artifacts found with him, and recent scientific analysis, the students are using their research to develop an understanding of the daily life of this man who lived over 5,000 years ago.

Math with Mr. Bevins

We began the year with Common Core Unit 1 “Number Sense”, which consists of identifying prime and composite numbers, listing factors and multiples and finding perfect squares and cubes. In addition, students also used a variety of strategies to find square and cube roots such as making factor trees. Chapter 2 in the *Math in Focus* text book continues with the Number Sense Unit by ‘opening up the number line’ to include negative numbers and absolute value.

Science with Mrs. Bryden

Science classes on the Maroon Team have been improving their scientific skills thus far. Through the use of various lab activities they have worked on observing, recording data writing scientific problems and hypotheses, inferring and using properties to identify substances. Currently, we are completing a scientist research project in the library. This report will be presented as a PowerPoint. More to come as the year progresses!

Language Arts with Mrs. Montagna

Mrs. Montagna’s Language Arts students have just completed Because of Mr. Terupt. We used the Notice and Note Signposts for close reading and making inferences about the story. The students followed a character in the story to see how the character developed and responded as the plot moved to resolution. We are writing a narrative as our first essay. The students will be using the writing process to create and strengthen their writing pieces.

Yellow Team News

The Yellow Team is off to a great start this year. There are a myriad of exciting things going on. Mrs. Laster’s Science classes are exploring Newton’s Laws of Motion and attempting to apply these actions and their inevitable reactions to everyday events. Mrs. Baron’s Math classes are busy working with real numbers and the Pythagorean Theorem (Think $a^2+b^2=c^2$). And, Mr. Gott’s Social Studies classes are just beginning their group presentations on the settlement of New England. The real highlight of the Yellow Team so far is Mrs. Quinn-Devine’s English class. They are beginning their readings and discussions of censorship, conformity, individual creativity, technology and their connection to the past as well as our present society.

From Mrs. Quinn-Devine: “Many futuristic stories have an historical base or underlying idea which underscores what is happening in that society, and many times predicts the future. So it is with Ray Bradbury’s novel *Fahrenheit 451*; though Bradbury claimed he was trying ‘to prevent the future’ rather than predict it. In class recently we explored the geo-political milieu of the 1940’s and 1950’s via a jigsaw presentation of the major events and beliefs of that time period”.

Dave Yaccarino visits Mrs. Titus' art classes

State Representative Dave Yaccarino recently visited students in Mrs. Titus' 6th grade art classes as they worked on a "Mapping My North Haven" art project. Each student used art elements and mixed media techniques to communicate places of personal importance and meaning in North Haven and surrounding towns. Students viewed an assortment of maps and artistic variations of maps before starting the planning for their own maps. Students learned how to plan and organize the content for their visual communication by brainstorming places within North Haven where they spend their time and then elaborate to support those choices through visual details as well as text. Students explored what it means to be from North Haven and their relationship to the community and how to use visual media to express their ideas.



State Representative Dave Yaccarino has arranged for two projects to represent North Haven in a display area in Hartford in the Capitol Complex for the month of November.

Principal Philip Piazza selected the two maps to be featured in Hartford which include one by Agnes Keefe and one by Griffin Symon. Congratulations Agnes and Griffin!

White Team News

It's been a very busy fall for students on the White Team. The year is off to a great start and the students have all done well adjusting to their new school and its expectations. Academically this is what White students are all currently studying.

In Social Studies, students have recently completed the Early Man unit and currently are writing a 3 page diary about Otzi (the Ice Man) and what his last 3 days were like. They will soon be beginning the unit on Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent. The students have been very welcoming to their new Social Studies teacher, Colleen Fitzgerald and were happy to hear that Mrs. Kaplan has welcomed a new baby girl. Both Mom and daughter are doing great!

Language Art students have written narrative stories and are now in the process of refining their editing and revising skills. Soon the focus will shift to close reading and learning to generate ideas about the text.

Math students are finishing up the first unit in Common Core and working with the new "Math in Focus" program. The current content focus includes positive numbers and working with a number line.

Science students are engaged in learning the many science process skills that are necessary to do science inquiry. They have enjoyed doing some lab activities. They have also completed their first research project through which they made connections between science and their everyday lives by researching famous scientists and how their discoveries or inventions have impacted them.

As you can see White team students are off and running.

Library Notes



The annual Scholastic Book Fair will be held in the Library Media center from Wednesday, December 4th through Wednesday, December 11th. Students will visit the book fair with their language arts classes. There will be a wide variety of books available for purchase. Proceeds are used to purchase audio visual equipment and to pay for visits from authors. The fair also will be open during the Parent Teacher conferences.

The lunch period book clubs are off and running. Interested students meet in the library once a week during lunch to share their favorite books!

Physical Education Department Completes Testing

The Physical Education Department is pleased to report that we have completed the mandated testing for the CT Physical Fitness Test. The four testing components are the mile run, flexibility test, curl up, and push up. Please take a moment to talk with your child and ask how these areas of fitness impact their health.



Violet Team News

We are very excited to begin this year with such a great group of seventh graders. They are quickly showing themselves to be hard workers and as importantly, kind young men and women!

In Geography they have just completed their "Global Environmental Summit" presenting their topic to the President. The public speaking skills they've been working on in Language Arts really shined through. Speaking of Language Arts...Students in Language Arts are learning about the elements of fiction. By analyzing the parts of a text, they are discovering what authors do to create a character, build suspense, examine issues, and show truths about people and the world. By reading "The Monkey's Paw", students analyzed the word choice of the author and how "meaty" words such as rubicund, bibulous, fusillade, avaricious, and pulsating affect the reader and story. Students are also improving their vocabulary through a program called Membean. Students currently are taking the elements of fiction from fairy tales and building a parody by altering the elements for performance in class. In 7th math students are continuing their exploration of Rational Numbers. We have already learned how to add positive and negative numbers and are now working on applying that skill to adding and subtracting fractions. All students should continue to work on and study their basic math facts! In science students have been practicing all of the skills that will be used in the laboratory experiments done this year. We have begun our study of biology with the characteristics shared by all living things. Students have viewed a video clip on "beach creatures" and are using their learning from class to classify the creatures as living or not and support their claim with evidence. Soon our focus will change to the study of bacteria and students will be designing their own lab experiments to investigate how bacteria grows.

We look forward to a great year! Please contact us at any time, for any reason!



World Language Department News

The NHMS World Language Department is busy with many activities to begin the new school year. In the sixth grade, students have been studying greetings and practicing dialogs with their classmates. Introductions, as well as exchanges of origin, age, and well-being have been used. Calendar components are also being studied and students have discussed and debated as to which way they like better - the American version of starting the calendar week on a Sunday, or the Italian, Spanish and French ways of starting the calendar week on a Monday.

Spanish and Italian students in Grade 7 spent the month of September reviewing essential concepts from Grade 6 and have now begun the year's first new material on activities they like and dislike. In Grade 8 Spanish Mrs. Torres and Ms. Arboleda are completing an intensive review of last year's material before beginning this year's first new unit which is chapter 5, "Birthdays and Celebrations". Students in Grades 7 and 8 also celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month by doing computer research on famous Hispanic people and creating posters to decorate the halls of the school.

Italian Grade 7 students of Mrs. Mangino researched famous Italian people to begin their study of Italian culture. In Mr. DiPalma's 8th grade Italian classes, they have spent the earliest part of the year reviewing vocabulary and grammar lessons from 7th grade. Now they are ready to jump into the first stop of a virtual Italy tour: Venice. They have learned about the different islands that make up the famous city, seen examples of Murano glass, and studied three historic landmarks, the Bridge of Sighs, the Rialto Bridge, and Saint Mark's Basilica. If only they could go on a real gondola ride!

When you're near the main office, stop and see the new bulletin board created by the teachers in the World Language Department. Displays will change each month to highlight the diversity of language and culture in our world.




News from the Music Department

General Music: The general music curriculum has been revised for all grades. This helps align the General Music curriculum, across the grades, chronologically. Some highlights: The history component has begun and will continue through term two. The focus of Grade 6 is on Classical music; grade 7 on jazz, gospel and blues; and grade 8 on modern (pop) music. Additionally, all grades will be playing the keyboard and guitar; and creating music using *Garage Band*, a multi-track music production software for Apple computers. Feel free to contact Mrs. Hutton or Mr. Nigro with any questions.

Choir: In 6th and 7th grade choir the students are learning how to identify their vocal parts in their music and how to follow their parts (2 part music). They are also working on "proper vocal technique" through warm-ups, use of Solfege, and applying concepts that are taught (such as: proper breathing; posture; sound placement; and identifying musical symbols). 8th grade students are working on technique and identifying/following their vocal parts in 2 and 3 part music.

Band: The 6th grade band members are adjusting to playing in a larger ensemble and they are showing daily progress. The 7th and 8th grade band members are building on the skills they learned last year and playing increasingly more challenging music. Several students have signed up for the CMEA, Southern Region, Middle School Music Auditions which take place on Saturday, December 7 at Washington Middle School in Meriden.



Sage Team News

Welcome back to the North Haven Middle School! Grade eight is an exciting time. The students, as I am sure you know, are both excited and anxious about growing up, assuming more responsibilities and moving on to the high school level. Preparing students emotionally, socially, and academically for high school is a goal in grade eight. We would like to share several tools that we use to communicate our expectations and our curriculum. All teachers on the Sage team keep up to date website pages complete with grading procedures, handouts, thematic units, long term assignments and helpful links. We recommend parents and students look at these sites and print our calendars on a regular basis. We also can communicate newsletters and notices about upcoming assignments via Power School. If

you do not have an up to date e-mail address in Power School, please add that or call the school to find out how it can be added, so you do not miss any important updates. All teachers update their grades with percentages or point values



Students demonstrating Newton's First Law using a car and a play-doh "crash test dummy".



How can you tell if an egg is raw or cooked?

per assignments at least every two week, but more than likely more often than that, so that is another efficient way of keeping current. We recommend students prepare for their classes for about ninety minutes per day, which can include the twenty five minutes they are in study hall. So if your child is not working for at least an hour at home on assignments, you may want to touch base with the teachers to make sure your child is keeping up with expectations. Preparing for classes includes not only written work, but reading, reviewing, studying, revising written work, and getting ahead on long term assignments. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any concerns. We look forward to a productive year.

Navy Team News

The Navy team is off to a great start. The students really embraced the Rachel's Challenge presentation and the kindness activities that accompanied it. Many of our students even went so far as to join the Friends of Rachel club. In social studies, the students have been busy studying the European colonization of America and the unit will culminate with creating colonization time lines. In language arts, students are currently working on close reading with short stories and Membean vocabulary at home. They will be introduced to Glogging, a visual blog, in November. In science, they are studying Newton's Laws of Motion and have been actively demonstrating how these laws affect what we do every day. In math, students are adapting well to the new Common Core math program and persevering to complete the Performance Tasks associated with the curriculum.

Red Team News

Red Team is getting technical! Social Studies and Language Arts are off in the world of blogging. Students in these two classes will also be staying up to date on current event articles through Newsela. In addition to new technology initiatives in Social Studies, students also reviewed the five themes of geography and are now beginning a global environmental issues project. The readers and writers of the Red Team are working hard. They are currently involved in a unit called "Writer's Bag of Tricks," which is being taught through short stories. Students are learning the skills of reading closely and annotating. They are becoming more comfortable actively reading and analyzing literature. In the exciting world of math...students have been working on adding and subtracting rational numbers (including positive and negative integers, fractions and mixed numbers). Students have been incorporating the Common Core Practice Standards to help them understand and solve problems involving rational numbers. The work has been challenging but many students have demonstrated their prior knowledge and understanding of the new concepts and have done very well in class discussions and on assessments given. The next unit will be applying the rules of multiplying and dividing integers to fractions and mixed numbers. In Science students completed a sports injury project and are now having an introduction of cells, characteristics of life, cell parts. Coming up: Biology and the body systems!

Green Team News

7th grade green team is off to a great start. Our students are becoming experts on environmental issues and have done a great job creating Power Point presentations to share with their classmates. Seventh grade science students started the year by reviewing safe lab conduct and scientific experimentation techniques. We are currently learning about animal cells and the characteristics of living things as we head into our human body unit.

Blue Team News

The Blue Team students began their journey at NHMS with bounds of positive energy and a noticeable enthusiasm for learning. The students got their schedules down quickly, and adjusted well to a totally new environment including seeing 8 different teachers a day and rotating through a 3-day schedule!

In Math with Mr. Russo, Blue Team students opened up a brand new textbook titled "Math in Focus". All students in Grades 1-6 are now using this dynamic and thorough program to teach Math. Currently, the students are enthralled in a unit on Number Sense, learning their Standards of Math Practice through integration and are starting each math class with a Calendar Math lesson that teaches and reinforces algebraic concepts with the daily calendar.

Students in Science with Mr. Laydon have been diligently working on the Scientific method since the beginning of the school year. They have learned about the three main branches of science as well as specific careers in science. Students have been amazed at the fact that science is connected to every area of life here on earth

In Social Studies, Mr. Marr's Blue Team students began the year with a unit of Geography. Students have already completed their first project which centered on the Five Themes of Geography. Students are now studying Early Man before they make their way to the Fertile Crescent.

Ms. Crismale's Language Arts students finished writing choice narratives and reading "Because of Mr. Terupt." We created attractive posters that advertise our Nutmeg books and will attract other students to read the books that we recommend! Blue team students are learning the writing process and how important it is to pay attention to each step along the way and, reflect afterwards. We will be starting our unit surrounding "diversity" soon.

And in World Language classes with Mrs. Ierardi, Mrs. Malafronte and Mrs. Munk, students have been studying greetings and practicing dialogs with their classmates. Introductions, as well as exchanges of origin, age, and well-being have been used. Calendar components are also being studied and students have discussed and debated as to which way they like better - the American version of starting the calendar week on a Sunday, or the Italian/Spanish/French way of starting the calendar week on a Monday.

Rachel's Challenge

On Wednesday, October 9th, North Haven Middle School was proud to host the Rachel's Challenge program. Rachel's Challenge is a series of student empowering programs and strategies that equip students and adults to combat bullying and allay feelings of isolation and despair by creating a culture of kindness and compassion.

The programs are based on the writings and life of 17 year-old Rachel Scott who was the first student whose life was taken at Columbine High School in 1999. Rachel left a legacy of reaching out to those who were different, who were picked on by others, or who were new at her school.

An evening presentation for the community was held in the high school auditorium. After the program luminaries were lit in the shape of a heart and placed in the courtyard in memory of Rachel.

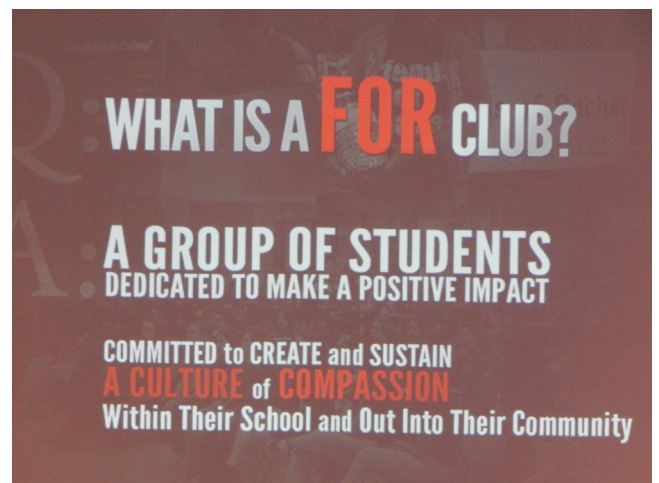
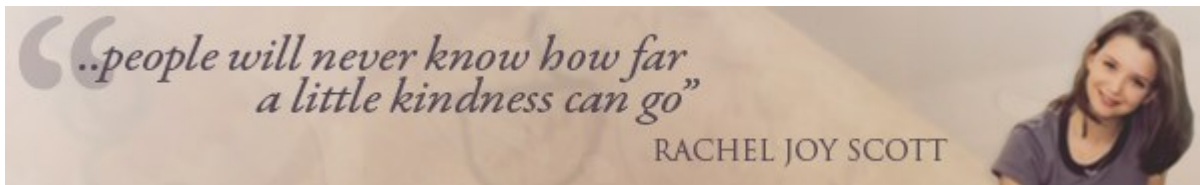
NHMS has an active chapter of the "Friends of Rachel" club. They meet twice a month to plan activities to spread kindness and acceptance at the middle school.

The program was made possible with the financial support of the NHMS PTSA as well as some North Haven businesses.



"I have this theory that if one person can go out of their way to show compassion, then it will start a chain reaction of the same. People will never know how far a little kindness can go."

Rachel Joy Scott





Wearing PINK in Honor of Breast Cancer Awareness



October 11th

NHMS
Spirit Day

