

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 EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE THAT DEVELOPS INDEPENDENCE, SOCIAL EMOTIONAL GROWTH AND AN UNDERSTANDING OF A DIVERSE SOCIETY

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WINTER 2016

NHMS News

<http://northhavenmiddles.ct.nhmschoolinsites.com>

News from the Principal

Welcome back everyone – We’ve had some time to get back in the swing, but on behalf of the staff at NHMS, I’d like to wish all of our Middle School families a Happy New Year! 2016 promises to be a big year for us at the Middle School as our new building construction moves forward.



We continue to be on pace to occupy

Superintendent Cronin and Mr. Piazza speaking before placement of the ceremonial final beam of the new school building

the new classroom wing for opening day in August. As we move forward, I will continue to update parents and students on the construction progress. You can keep up to date and access photos of the construction process by going to the North Haven Middle School Renovation Project Facebook page. Right now, we are stressing with the students the importance of working with their teachers and staying on top of their work as the year progresses.

Please continue to use Powerschool as a means to stay connected to how your child is doing in school and reach out to your child’s counselor or teachers if you have any questions or concerns. Our website will be updated to include the latest information on school happenings, and I encourage you to check our daily announcements link to hear about clubs, sporting events, and all the latest news. Thanks for your continued support – it is an important part of your child’s success.

Happy New Year!

MATHCOUNTS Team

According to the *Connecticut Society of Professional Engineers* website, “MATHCOUNTS is a coaching and competition program that brings to math achievement the same enthusiasm and prestige now enjoyed by athletics. Students are called “mathletes” and are rewarded for winning competitions at the school, area, state and national levels.” Led by 8th grade math teacher Anthony Benvenuto, NHMS has a robust MATHCOUNTS program and we’ve been gearing up for two local competitions.

NHMS Competition Qualifier—The North Haven Middle School MATHCOUNTS team held its school competition in January, and everyone that participated did phenomenally well. Ten people outscored last year’s high scorer. This competition decided who would represent the Middle School as a team at the MATHCOUNTS Chapter Competition at Yale University on February 6th. This year’s team was led by Matt Wabunoha, Tim Yang, Carlo Frunzio, and Kevin Hlavaty as they were the top 4 scorers in the school. Also going to the competition to compete as individuals were Luke Barrett, Hunter Stenquist, Laekhran Singh, Ben Fiore, Evan O’Connell, and Phil Caldarella. Honorable mention goes out to team members Chris Hansen, Gabrielle Weaver, Sydney Rastkhane, Diego Esponda, Ryan Yeager, Tinisha Narain, and Dev Patel who all did a fantastic job as well.

Interschool Competitions—The North Haven Middle School MATHCOUNTS team came in 9th place at the chapter competition at Yale University on February 6. All members should be proud of their hard work and effort. Although the team did not qualify for the State competition, Matt Wabunoha finished in 17th place to qualify as an individual competitor. The State competition will take place in March at University of Hartford Campus.

Our MATHCOUNTS team is looking forward to competing at the Foote invitational competition at the end of February. Congratulations to all of our Mathletes and good luck at the upcoming competitions!

Student Council Food Drive

Our Student Council hosted a holiday food drive which netted about 1800 items for donation to the KC101 Stuff-A-Bus effort, benefitting the New Haven Food Pantry. Classrooms competed to earn a free breakfast by collecting the most food items. The winning classrooms were Ms. Montagna (6th grade), Mr. Bunton (7th) and Mrs. Torres (8th).



Winter Concerts

BAND

The Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Grade Bands' winter concerts took place on Tuesday evening, December 8, 2015. Approximately 295 students participated, playing a varied program of traditional holiday songs and music by classical composers, including Mussorgsky and Holst. The students did a great job and received standing ovations from their enthusiastic audience.



CHORUS

Congratulations to the 6th, 7th and 8th grade chorus groups for three outstanding Winter Concert performances under the direction of Mrs. Porto. The students sang a variety of Holiday and winter pieces that made this season enjoyable for everyone.

SELECT CHOIR

As of late February, Select Choir auditions are complete and rehearsals are underway!



Internet Safety Assembly

On October 6, North Haven's Department of Youth Services sponsored a presentation by Scott Driscoll from Internet Safety Concepts to help students understand the consequences of their online behaviors. Mr. Driscoll is a law enforcement officer, educator and parent whose mission is to "help families learn about being safe while using the Internet and other technology." Mr. Driscoll spoke to the entire student body of NHMS in two separate assemblies that were geared toward different ages, as follows:

6th Grade

The focus of the 6th grade presentation was to get students thinking about what could happen if they share too much information about themselves on-line. Through discussion and presentations, the children were shown how things can get out of control quickly and why they have to think about safety while using technology.

7th & 8th Grade

Recognizing that older students tend to be "braver" and more comfortable sharing all their personal information on-line, the 7th and 8th grade presentation covered topics such as sexting, chat rooms and social networking to encourage students to think carefully about sharing information with all of their online "buddies."



7th Grade Assembly - *On Borrowed Time* author, Bryan Donahue

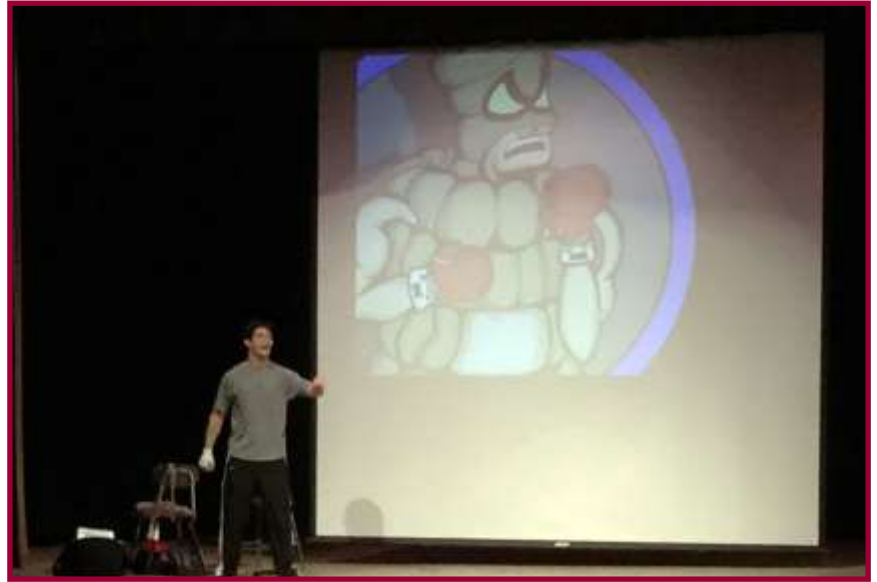
This is the 7th year that community member, friend of Red Team Science Teacher Dave Dagliere, and local author of "On Borrowed Time," Bryan Donahue, spoke to the Red Team. All 7th graders learned about Bryan's battle of Primary Sclerosing Cholangitis (PSC). Students read his book in Language Arts, learned about the human body in Science, and listened to his presentation on how this life-ending disease has made him a better person.



Anti-Bullying Assembly

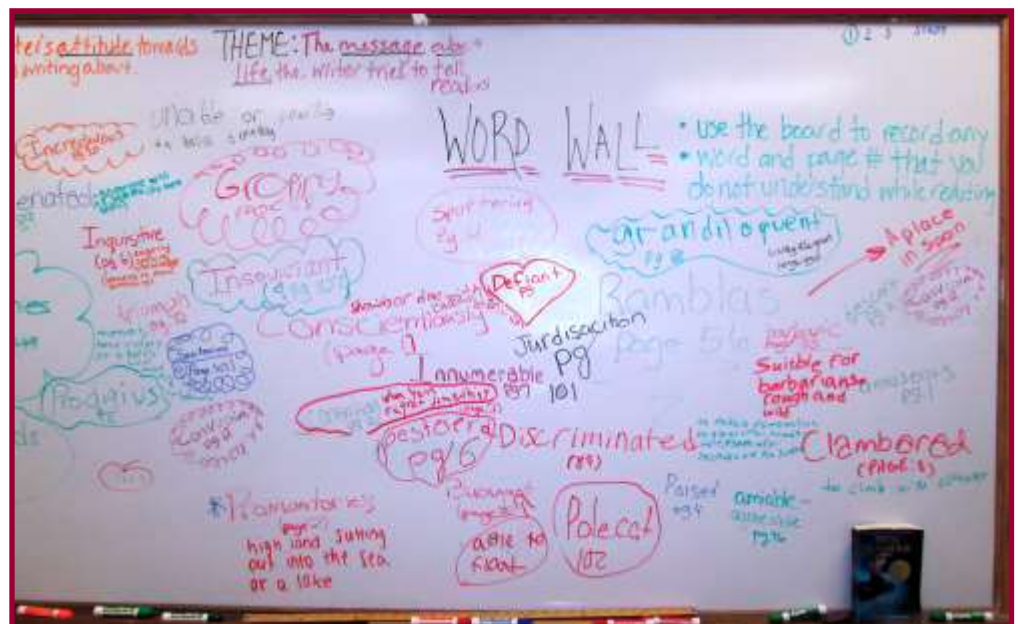
Writer and performer, Lee Kaplan traveled from New York City to provide all students and staff with two electrifying assemblies from his aptly titled program, *Bully, The Show*. *Bully* is a one man show based on Mr. Kaplan's life; he wrote the show upon rediscovering his own sixth grade journal, which revealed his experiences having been harassed and even bullied at that age. Mr. Kaplan's very poignant and encouraging messages resonated with the audience of middle school students and staff alike. The Question and Answer session following the performances allowed for a safe and respectful venue through which some students bravely shared their own experiences.

Afterward, all students were asked to write a reflection of their feelings about the show, revealing that students' hearts were touched by the performances. Some students felt as though they were taken out of their comfort zone in hearing of Lee's awful experiences during his middle school years. Overall, students indicated that they do have a supportive group of family and friends at home and at school to whom they can turn.



In The Classroom - Word Wall

One technique used periodically to enforce students' understanding of literature and grow vocabulary is the Word Wall. Here is an example of part of a Word Wall from Jackie Giordano's 2014-15 6th grade Language Arts class. Students "use the board to record any word and page # that they don't understand while reading."



In The Classroom—Flipped Classroom

Last summer Art Teacher Betsy Titus took a class on using “Flipped” instruction in the art classroom. The basic idea of “Flipping” class is to have instruction available outside of the class (such as a demonstration video), creating more time for students to work on the process in class.

A key component of the process for her has been the use of demonstration videos. Although she first needed to learn a lot about putting together her own videos, she has seen several advantages of video instruction, including:

- Consistent content for each student.

- Each student has a front row seat to video without distractions.

- Video can be viewed when the individual student is ready.

- With creative editing (i.e., speeding up sections), the video is more efficient than a live demo; the student can see the entire process in less time without imagining how to complete important steps. (She tries to keep each video to 5 minutes or less.)

- Video can be paused, replayed, and viewed at home and/or in the classroom.

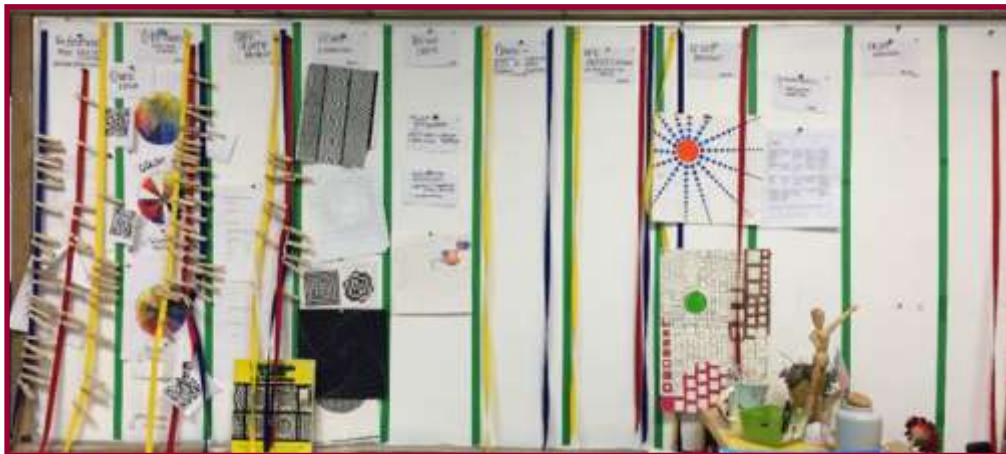
- If the student watches the video at home, parents are able to share in what is being taught.

- Absent students are able to access instruction from home.

In order to making video sharing convenient, Betsy also learned how to generate and print QR codes so students can use a personal device to easily access the instruction videos. (QR code reader apps for cell phone are available for free.) Try scanning the QR Code below to check out her video demonstration for an Op Art technique!



One final benefit of Flipped instruction is the way students can work at their own pace and monitor their progress. Using a student learning plan allows student and teacher to sign off on each of the steps of the unit. The learning plan communicates to the student the national standards, the lesson objectives, the criteria, and the sequence of the unit. The photo below shows the student progress board in Mrs. Titus’ class, with clothespins representing the stage at which each student’s project stands.



PBIS—Sage Team Locker Painting

What is PBIS???

PBIS stands for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and is a town-wide program used to incentivize students to **Be** Respectful, **Be** Responsible and **Be** Safe. Students “caught in the act” of noteworthy examples of good behavior are rewarded with yellow paper “**B**-Bucks” which they can “cash in” for various types of rewards. Each team can determine the types of rewards it will offer in exchange for B-Bucks earned, including prizes such as iTunes cards, permission to listen to music during study hall, chances to sit in the teacher’s chair, choosing the morning announcement song, homework passes, etc.

As an offshoot of our Middle School PBIS initiative, eighth grade Sage Team students were rewarded with a unique opportunity right before the December holiday vacation. In order to participate, a student had to contribute 2 “B-Bucks” to the Sage Team “Hive,” and the “Hive” needed at least 200 B-Bucks in total in order for the team to earn the reward. This unique reward was to allow qualifying students to personalize their hallway lockers with paint, something only possible since they are the last students ever who will use these lockers!

The results are bright and cheerful, as shown in these photos.



Leaving Their Mark

Similar to Sage Team's locker painting initiative (story page 7), at least two other teachers have found a way to allow students to take advantage of the unique opportunity that being in a lame-duck building presents. Tracey Carter (6th grade Special Education Teacher) and Nancy Hutton (General Music Teacher) have allowed students to decorate a brick in their classroom walls with their name or personal statement. Here are some examples of their student creations.



Science Department News

WORKING ON CURRICULUM

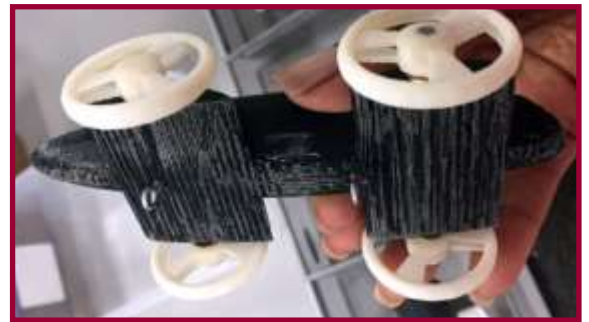
Mike Annino, 6th grade Science Teacher, spent one week last July discussing and writing science curriculum with teams of teachers from around the state at an ACES Educational Foundation workshop. The focus of the curriculum writing was integrating Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) practices into K-6 science lessons. This work is being shared with other science teachers to inform science curriculum writing at the middle school.

STEM CAMP—ATTENTION SCIENTIFIC MINDS!

Did you know that Igor Sikorsky was nineteen years old when he built his first helicopter and it was an epic fail?

The University of New Haven School of Engineering organizes a STEM camp every summer that is sponsored by Sikorsky Aircraft and the Georgia Institute of Technology. The message of this camp was to never give up and to aim high just like Igor Sikorsky did. Engineers, professors, teachers and incoming high school students meet for two weeks to learn, explore, invent, create and have fun! Eighth grade Science Teacher Hannah Jacob had the opportunity to attend this camp in July 2015 and learn alongside students from area high schools. Students are strongly encouraged to apply and – GIRLS – TAKE NOTE!!!! There are scholarships available especially for females.

Jacob says “Professors and lab students from Georgia Tech taught us how to use a program (CATIA) that Sikorsky engineers use to design parts for helicopters. With this, we were able to design dragster cars, use a 3D printer to make the parts, and then race them! The students had other competitive challenges which included building a helicopter, designing a robot and creating a wind turbine. It was great to meet new teachers and students and to learn about new techniques that I normally wouldn’t be exposed to. The best part of the camp was watching a 3D printer at work. Getting free lunch every day wasn’t so bad either!”



For more information, check out this link to view a news article and video clip about the 2015 camp. <http://foxct.com/2015/07/23/summer-camp-engineered-for-the-future/>

PS: A note about 3D printers, pictured here. You might wonder whether the printer cuts into an existing



piece of plastic or if plastic actually comes out of the printer nozzle like an extruder. The answer is that you actually have to put a ‘base’ down for the printer to then ‘spit’ the plastic onto it. After printing is complete, you have to peel the structure off of the base.

Staff Spotlights

NEW STAFF IN OUR BUILDING

The Middle School welcomed several new faces this school year!



Mike Annino, 6th grade Science & Social Studies. Came to us from Ridge Road School.



Melissa Hudson, Band Teacher. Came to us from Ridge Road School.



Maria Humphrey, Special Education Paraprofessional.



Kristina Tortora, 6th grade Language Arts & Social Studies. Came to us from Ridge Road School.



Sharon Yanosik, 8th grade Social Studies. Long term Substitute for Krista Kaplan.



Bill Kusmit, Part-time Building Substitute



Andrew Ladutko, Part-time Building Substitute



Dana Annatone, Quinnipiac Intern - Mathematics -



Lauren Portas, Quinnipiac Intern - Mathematics -

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO ALAN TANCRETI ?

Last year's Sage Team Social Studies teacher was Alan Tancreti, North Haven resident and father of two current Middle School students. Many may not know that he left the teaching profession at the end of the 2014-2015 school year to fulfill a long-time dream of becoming a police officer. After six months of very intense training, Officer Tancreti graduated from the CT Police Academy in December 2015, and is now a proud member of the Newington Police Department. Congratulations to Officer Tancreti!

Officer Tancreti receiving his badge at the December graduation ceremony.



Staff Spotlights, Cont'd

PAUL CASTIGLIONE—COURIER PERSON OF THE WEEK

Middle School Assistant Principal Paul Castiglione was honored in January by the North Haven Courier as *Person of the Week*. If you missed the article, you might not know that he enjoys painting and restoring houses; that he originally wanted to be an elementary principal but learned that he loves being able to help “steer” middle schoolers so they have a successful transition to high school and beyond; that his family loves to travel and recently went to Iceland; and that he is in charge of Middle School scheduling issues and working with others to determine how class choices may look different in our new school building (e.g., introduction of new technology, family science, cooking, art and music electives).

You can find the full article at

<http://www.zip06.com/profile/20160106/paul-castiglione-removing-roadblocks> .



BEHIND THE SCENES FOR MY FAIR LADY

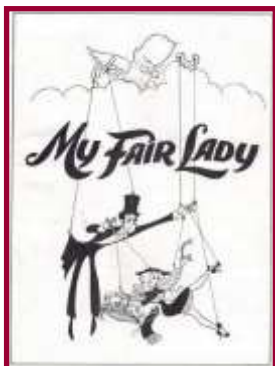
While actors, directors, choreographers and stage hands are all busy preparing for the NHMS Drama Cooperative production of *My Fair Lady* in April, another NHMS staff member has found her calling in another way to support the production. Special Education Paraprofessional Kim Gargano is putting her artistic talents to use by recycling old costume materials into dozens of gorgeous, fancy hats for the girls in the production. Look for them on stage in April!

Performances are scheduled for:

Thursday, April 7 at 6:30 PM

Friday, April 8 at 7:00 PM

Saturday, April 9 at 7:00 PM



Building Update -Beam Ceremony

The ceremonial final beam for the new Middle School building was installed in the structure on January 8. Prior to its installation it was placed outside the school for a day to allow students and staff to sign the beam with markers. Here are photos of the beam prior to and after installation.



Students of Blue Team posing in front of the ceremonial beam and expressing their thanks to the town for approving the much-needed new building—photo courtesy of Sean Laydon

Student Spotlights

DAR AWARD

Each year the Mary Clap Wooster Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) honors a student for being a good citizen. This award recognizes a student for their patriotism, leadership skills, and respect for people of all ages, races and cultures. This is an annual award that is chosen by the teams and administration.

Nominees were received by each team, and this year's nominees were *Sarah Boney*, *Lia Gambardella*, and *Cecile Tobin*. Each nominee was required to write an essay explaining how they impacted the school and North Haven community. Essays were read and ranked 1-2-3 by the counselors and administrators in an effort to choose one to represent NHMS. All three will be recognized at the 8th grade promotion ceremony at the end of the year.

After careful consideration, the nominee chosen to receive this year's DAR Citizenship Award was **Sarah Boney**. She and her parents attended the Good Citizens Ceremony on November 16 at the Spring Glen Church in Hamden.

We congratulate all three nominees on this recognition.



Sarah Boney, pictured with Counselor Anthony Giamattei and Principal Phil Piazza

SOUTH CENTRAL AREA SUPERINTENDENTS' AWARD

As we do each year, we work with the South Central Area Superintendent Association, to honor one boy and one girl from the 8th grade with The SCASA award.

Awards are based on: Community service and service to others; Academic prowess (relative to ability); and Leadership to the school community".

Each 8th grade team nominates one boy and one girl. All 6 students are asked to write an essay explaining why they feel they deserve the award. These essays are read and ranked by the administrative team and the counselors to determine our two winners. All 6 will be recognized at our year-end promotion ceremony, and the two winners will be honored in March at a ceremony in Hamden.

Our 4 nominees include Brooke Bigda, Anna Wootton, Brijesh Vyas, and Christopher Hansen.

And this year's two SCASA Award winners are Brynley Rainey and Andrew Carmody.

Congratulations to all 6 students for this recognition.

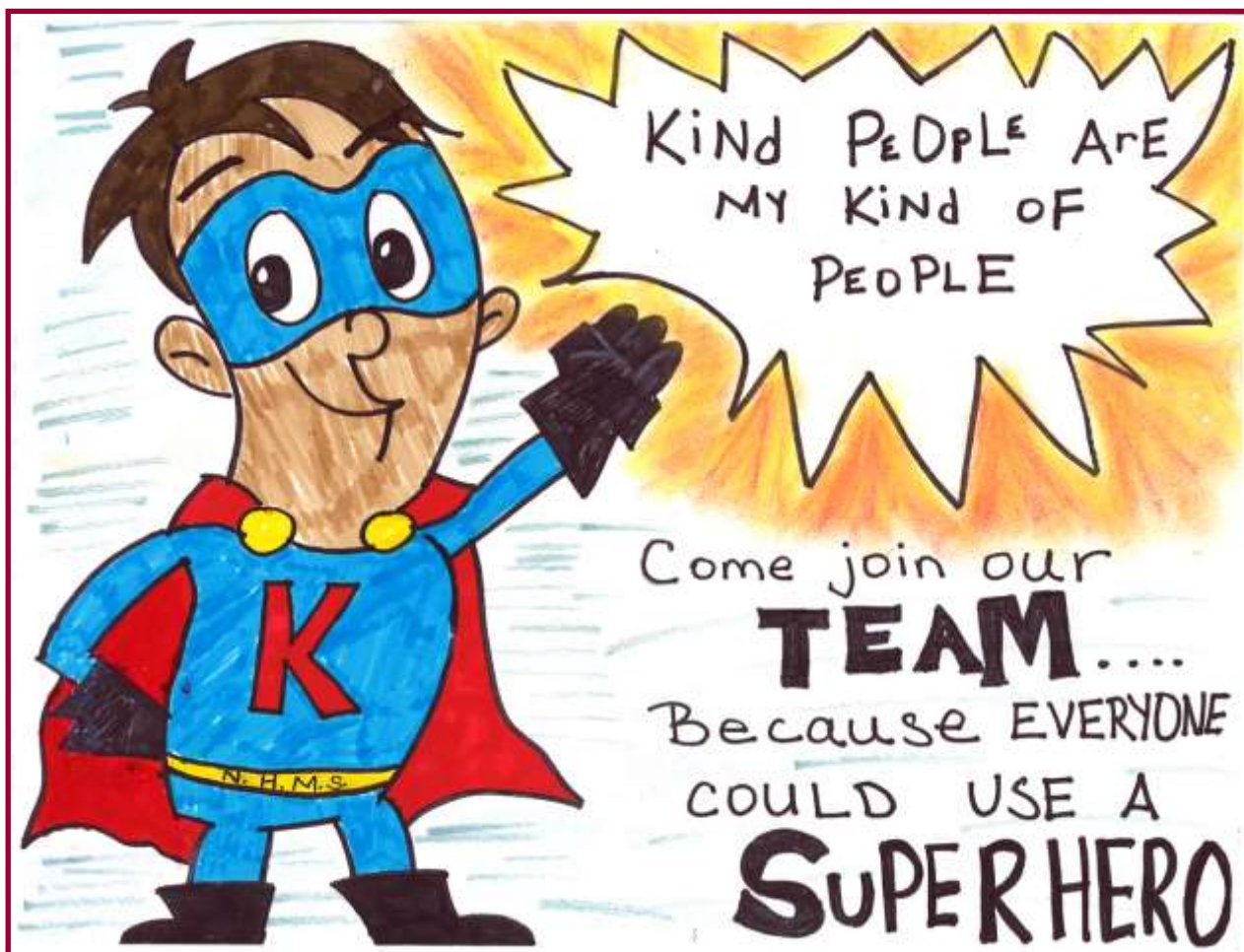


SCASA Award Winners, 8th graders Brynley Rainey and Andrew Carmody

Be A Hero Club

The **Be a Hero** Club is the new name for our former “Friends of North Haven Middle School” Club. The Club’s purpose is to “work together to come up with ways to have a positive effect on our school and our community.” This new group meets bi-monthly on Tuesdays and has been very busy this year. To show our appreciation on Veteran’s Day, our members baked muffins for the local veterans and delivered them to our local VFW. Throughout the month of December, students collected cold weather accessories (hats, scarves, gloves) for those in need in the community. The Club members also created uplifting Christmas cards in response to the national plea made by a young girl who had been badly burned in a fire two years ago, losing her family in the fire. Her simple wish was to have Christmas cards for her tree.

Club members work collaboratively to identify ways to spread kindness and compassion throughout our school and community. Whether through positive messages on the morning announcements, posters that decorate our hallways, welcoming new students, designating targets of kindness and gratitude or just through an encouraging smile, it is our job to make it happen. New members are always welcome!



Best Buddies Club

The Best Buddies Club here at NHMS has begun another wonderful, fun-filled school year! Best Buddies is an international program designed to match students with intellectual disabilities in a one-to-one friendship with a non-disabled peer. This gives both kids a chance at friendship that they might not otherwise have.

This is the eleventh year that the Best Buddies Club has been a part of the NHMS community and it is one of the largest and most vibrant clubs in the school. We have 72 NHMS students participating this year! The faculty advisors are Ms. West, Mr. Sansolo and Mrs. Mangino.

We have formed many Buddy Pairs both between students here at NHMS and with students at the ACES Village School on Temple Street in North Haven. The wonderful members of our club make a difference every day at NHMS by creating an atmosphere of kindness and acceptance and by sharing friendship with children of all abilities.

We all had a great time on Friday, December 18, 2015 when our ACES Buddies came here for crafts, snacks, music and fun!



Coding Club

Thanks to a parent who has generously donated her time twice a month after school, we now have a Coding Club. Led by Mrs. O'Shaughnessey (a Math and Computer Science teacher at Hopkins School), this club was filled to capacity from day one. Club members have spent the fall semester creating and collaborating to make fun games and animations with an online application called Scratch (sample screen below). More recently, members started learning how to build mobile apps using another application called MIT App Inventor. Later in the term, members will be learning how to create apps that can be shared with friends and family on Android devices. Students are doing a great job and are learning real coding tools that are used to create many of their favorite programs.

Both applications used are free. For more information, feel free to go to the following sites for more information:

<https://scratch.mit.edu/>

<http://appinventor.mit.edu/explore/>



Sketchbook Club

Our Sketchbook Club meets every other Friday after school in Mrs. Titus' room, and always has a waiting list! At the start of each meeting Mrs. Titus presents a suggested topic to get students' creative juices flowing; some examples this year have included creating single page magazines called "Zines," using creative lettering to write a favorite quotation, illustrating multiple variations of a single theme, playing the "telephone game" to develop a crazy story for inspiration, and creating decorated paper for collage using a brayer and acrylic inks. Club members are encouraged to try new techniques in a supportive and fun environment.





Safe, loving foster and adoptive parents are urgently needed!

The town of North Haven is presently in need of new foster and adoptive parents. Successful foster and adoptive parents are patient, committed, good communicators, will advocate for the child and have strong support networks.

Foster Care & Adoption Open Houses will be held in the New Haven DCF office at One Long Wharf Dr. on February 16th and March 1st. The Open Houses are from 6-7pm. Please call 1-888-KIDHERO for details and to pre-register.

Come to find out more on 2/16 or 3/1.

Bring your questions, your concerns, and an open heart and mind. Training, support and a modest stipend is provided to all licensed foster parents.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 1-888-KID HERO,
email kidhero@cafap.com or check out
www.ctfosteradopt.com**

