Students Learn The Importance of Patriotism

During the month of September, our students and staff commemorated Patriot Day and Constitution Day with creativity and respect.

Each school principal read a statement informing students that Patriot Day is a day to remember those who were injured or died during the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001. This announcement was followed by a patriotic song. To further expand on the importance of the day, at the Primary Learning Center, a group of students recited the pledge of allegiance at the new flag poles that were dedicated last year on Flag Day. Students at the Ocean Acres School created a large American flag from cutouts of their hands and a 9/11 remembrance with cut out stars. Two classes at the Intermediate School participated in a Pay It Forward activity by completing acts of kindness such as mowing the lawn for a neighbor or making breakfast for a family member. They then wrote a reflection on what it meant to them to perform this act of kindness in honor of September 11th.

Constitution Day was celebrated across the district utilizing books, websites and class discussions. The preschool students at Oxycocus marched in a Constitution Day Parade and had “We The Kids” read to them. Students at the McKinley Avenue School discussed the importance of the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights and then created their own class constitutions delineating their rights and freedoms within the class. They also created posters to show their understanding of these influential documents.
Interactive Garden Lab at PLC

The Ronald L. Meinders Primary Learning Center, home to over 300 kindergarten students, recently created an indoor, interactive garden lab. This room will be used by the Garden Buddies after-school program, which works to maintain the beautiful “kinder-garden” located in the rear of the school building. The new garden lab will also be used by all classes for activities in Science throughout the year. In addition, it can be used by students in the winter as an alternative to recess on bad weather days.

Mrs. Sbailo and Mrs. Dreher began setting up this facility at the beginning of the school year and it now houses all of the garden, insect, and nature items that they have accumulated over the many years they have been teaching. The garden lab contains different areas: a listening center with books on tape, an area with a table for crafts and activities, computers, felt boards, a carpet area for reading or watching a video, grow stations with grow lamps, live plants and a critter explorations center with artificial and real terrariums.

A Day in the Life of a Preschool Student

The Oxycocus School is home to over 75 three- and four-year-old students for six and a half hours each day. It is also home to an amazing group of staff members who work to provide engaging and meaningful activities that benefit the development of each student.

Our preschool students arrive at the Oxycocus school at 9:05AM each morning ready for a wonderful day. They are cheerfully greeted by their teachers as they exit the buses and are brought to their classroom. After settling in, it is time to get the day started with Morning Circle Time, where they discuss and learn the days of the week and the weather. They also learn a new letter of the alphabet almost every week. The preschool classrooms are bright and welcoming, and equipped with blocks, a pretend kitchen, dress-up clothes, and many, many books. Teachers read to the students and engage them in pre-reading activities and introduce them to numbers and counting skills. Students also receive speech therapy, as well as occupational and physical therapy, as needed.

Each day, a home-packed or school bought lunch is followed by some much needed rest time for these young learners. Then, during Free Choice time, students have the opportunity to practice matching and fine motor skills, read books, play music, work in the math or science center or on computers. This also provides an opportunity for developing social skills as the students interact together at the various stations.

As the day wraps up, backpacks are filled with the day’s colorful creations and students get back on the bus for a safe ride home to their families.
Kids Kitchen at Ocean Acres

Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs
If you Give a Mouse a Cookie
Johnny Appleseed
What do all of these books have in common? The answer is Food!

There is a new addition to the Ocean Acres School - Kid’s Kitchen - which officially opened this Fall thanks to a grant from the Stafford Township PTA. It is the perfect location to link Literature, Science, Math and an important life skill: cooking!

All classes will have access to the kitchen, which has seating for 30 students at seven work stations. The Kids Kitchen boasts a refrigerator, two microwaves, two ovens, as well as griddles, kitchen gadgets, crock pots, waffle irons, a Wok, baking and cookware dishes, and so much more.

On a recent morning Mrs. Ruff’s first grade students arrived at the kitchen ready for their first cooking lesson - but it wasn’t only about the cooking. Since it is Autumn, they have been reading about apples and this morning they set out to prepare four apple dishes. After some important safety rules from their teacher, the students began measuring, mixing and cutting. They worked with solids and liquids, discussed measurement, and worked in cooperative groups to create apple pancakes, apple muffins, apple crisp and caramel apples. They even did the dishes!

When the cooking was finished, they tasted their creations as well as different types of apples and filled out taste test forms. Then they graphed the results to find the class’ favorite recipe and their favorite type of apple.

Teaching life skills and a hands-on lesson on how cooking incorporates Math, Science and Literature - just another day at the Ocean Acres School! Oh, and one more thing...Mrs. Ruff’s students even used their writing skills to send a thank you note to the PTA for their generous grant that funded the Kids Kitchen.

Congratulations to Michael Dunlea, Ocean Acres 2nd grade teacher, on being selected as Ocean County Teacher of the Year!

Mr. Dunlea (center) is seen accepting his award with Ocean Acres Principal Deborah Addesso and New Jersey’s Acting Commissioner of Education, Christopher Cerf.
For the past eleven years, the McKinley Avenue School has participated in Make A Difference Day by raising money or collecting items for a wide variety of local charities. Among those that have benefited from the students’ efforts and the generosity of our families, staff and the surrounding communities are Ronald McDonald House, Ocean Country Hunger Relief, Family Promise, Stafford Township Police Department, and Ocean of Love.

This year, the school will be assisting ARMS - American Recreational Military Services. This charity was founded in 2003 by a group of volunteers who wanted to give something back to the military and their families. They solicit, pack, and ship donations to troops overseas, provide services to local armories, and support the military’s Family Readiness Program. This year, ARMS goal is to provide a care package for every area service member.

To help them reach their goal, the McKinley Avenue School is hosting a walk-a-thon and students will collect monetary donations in support of their effort to walk for 45 minutes. Prior to the day of the walk, the school will hold a kick-off assembly where students will learn about Make a Difference Day and a representative from ARMS will speak about the goals of the organization, so that they know about the cause that they are supporting. At the end of walk day, ARMS will be presented with the funds raised.

Ten teachers at Stafford Intermediate School were recently honored by Wal-Mart as part of their Teacher Rewards Program, a new initiative that is providing more than $4 million to 40,000 deserving teachers across the United States. Tim Burns, the Wal-Mart Store Manager, thanked the teachers for all of the hard work they do every day in the classroom and presented each of them with a $100 gift card. Congratulations to Susan Aljoe, Kathy Coates, Shannon Mastrogiavanni, Laurie McAvoy, Kathy McGinnis, Cathy O’Leary, Tim Rogers, Debbie Seitz, Tim Serabian, and Steven Smith.
Many of us have difficulty planning a meal night after night for our families. Can you imagine planning a month’s worth of meals for the entire district? Sodexo, our food service provider does just that as it plans to serve 1500 meals every day.

Under the direction of Mary Bueti, and following the guidelines for the Healthier US School Challenge (HUSSC), they work diligently to successfully meet all of these challenges. For $2.55 per day (or 40¢ for those who qualify for reduced lunch) students can purchase a well-balanced, full course lunch that includes five components: protein, bread/grain, vegetable, fruit, and milk. The menus always feature a vegetable and fruit of the month and there are also many hot and cold alternatives to the daily main lunch. Meatless Mondays and daily vegetarian options are also available for students.

Sodexo is the only national student nutrition provider to adopt the school snack and beverage guidelines from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation. The district website has a link to the current menu and on that page there is a link to the Sodexo website which contains a variety of nutritional information including “Ask the Dietician” which allows parents/guardians to email specific questions about menu items.

Did you know:
◆ No fried foods are served
◆ No soda or sugary beverages are served
◆ No snacks high in sugar or fat are served

Instead, we use:
◆ Low-fat cheeses
◆ Whole grain bread and rolls
◆ 100% fruit juices
◆ Low-fat milk
◆ Low-fat snacks
◆ Fresh fruits and vegetables

The district has a new website! It contains updated information and a comprehensive district-wide calendar containing all events going on in the district.

The site contains some old favorites such as individual teacher web pages, lunch menus, and wellness information and some new additions like a home page for each school that contains school-specific information regarding announcements and events. You will notice that the pages all have a consistent look to them, which makes the entire site easier to navigate.

There are tabs with information about district departments and the Board of Education in addition to resources for the community and parents/guardians. As required by law, we have posted NCLB and Anti-Bullying notices and the user-friendly budget.

As in the past, we have links to our energy savings program and the site will contain voting and budget information as it becomes available.

The District News page contains items about the wonderful programs and events taking place in our district.

Please check out the site - www.staffordschools.org - and if you have any suggestions for improvement, please share them with us.
Each of the six pre-school classes at the Oxyccocus School has a mascot? They are the adorable baby animals featured in Whose Baby Am I? and Whose Nose and Toes? by author/illustrator John Butler. Two years ago, the school contacted Mr. Butler, who lives in the United Kingdom, and he gave permission for Oxyccocus to use the illustrations from his books.

District staff members will be presenting at the New Jersey School Boards Convention? Dawn Reo (Director of Special Services), Stephanie Bush (Director of Preschool and Special Projects), and Hope Scherlin (Teacher Learning Facilitator) will present a workshop to Board of Education members from around the state regarding Stafford’s own Professional Development Academy that was designed to enhance the expertise of staff members. Also, Stephanie Bush and Karina Monanian (Community Liaison) will present a session regarding the use of online surveys to obtain input from parents/guardians, staff members and the community.

In September we held a district-wide Food Drive to support our local food banks? As part of a township-wide community outreach program, the district will hold four food drives throughout the school year. Between November 14 and November 30 Donations of non-perishable items can be sent in with your child or dropped off in the collection bins in the main lobby of any of our schools.

The district will be receiving an award for safety? The district is part of the School Alliance Insurance Fund (SAIF), which is joint insurance fund that allows the district to manage risk and save on insurance costs. SAIF will be presenting the district with the Tier #1 Safety Incentive Program Award at their October meeting.

Sodexo, our food service provider, has an “Ask the Dietician” link on their website? Parents/guardians can ask the dietician questions about any food item served in our schools. Visit our website and click on the lunch menu icon on the homepage. At the bottom is a link to Sodexo’s Education Website. Under Nutrition there is a link to the “Be Smart Eat Smart Live Smart” page. There are frequently asked questions about nutrition and it allows you to directly email the dietician with your questions.

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Did You Know...

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Stafford Township School District
Mission Statement

Stafford Township School District, together with parents/guardians and community, shall provide a secure, nurturing environment that fosters a positive self-image through educational achievement and promotes mastery of the Core Curriculum Content Standards while encouraging students to become life-long learners.