



# COUGAR NEWS

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR CMS FAMILIES

• DECEMBER 2019 •



## LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL

CMS Families,

During our most recent Early Release Day on Wednesday, December 4th, our school once again focused on the theme of kindness. We began this annual tradition last December. Students worked in their TA groups to make clothespin wreaths. Each wreath will be delivered to an individual, group or organization from our school or greater Colchester community that we would like to recognize for their dedication.

Additionally, TA's worked together to decorate their classroom doors in a winter theme. One requirement was that kindness snowflakes be incorporated into the design. These snowflakes were specially designed by students with a kind message displayed on each. Next week the doors will be judged as part of a team competition. The TAs with the winning doors will be awarded a doughnut and hot chocolate treat during afternoon TA the week prior to the winter vacation!

*Continued...*

## DATES TO KNOW

### DECEMBER

- 6 Dance • 6 pm • CMS Cafeteria
- 12 Band Concert • 7 pm • CHS Performing Arts Center
- 13 Ski & Board Program: Week 1
- 16 PTA Meeting • 6 pm • CMS Library
- 19 Choral Concert • 7 pm • CHS Performing Arts Center
- 20 Ski & Board Program: Week 2
- 23-1/1 Winter Recess: No School for Students

### JANUARY

- 2 School Resumes
- 10 Ski & Board Program: Week 3
- 17 Ski & Board Program: Week 4
- 20 MLK Holiday: No School for Students
- 24 Ski & Board Program: Week 5
- 31 Ski & Board Program: Make-up Date *(if needed)*



As I walked the school that morning visiting TA classes and observing their work on these projects, I was struck by how well everyone was getting along. Even when disagreements arose about a design or idea, students were taking the time to communicate with each other in a positive manner to work out their differences. I have to say I smiled a lot that morning seeing our students cooperatively engaged in the activities!



Later that morning we held a school wide assembly. We invited firefighters from the Mallets Bay Fire Department and Colchester Police Department to speak to our student body about the importance of fire and lock down drills. I am pleased to report our students were an awesome audience! They listened attentively as the fire chief talked about the importance of practicing these drills and explained why we expect single file and silence during fire drills. As students left the assembly, many of them thanked and shook hands with the firefighters.



I shared with the students how wonderful the morning went because of their positive interactions with one another and engagement with all the activities. I let them know that because of their actions we are able to offer more of these kinds of opportunities. I am looking forward to our next Early Release Day in February and the activities we have planned for our students!



Respectfully,

**Michele**

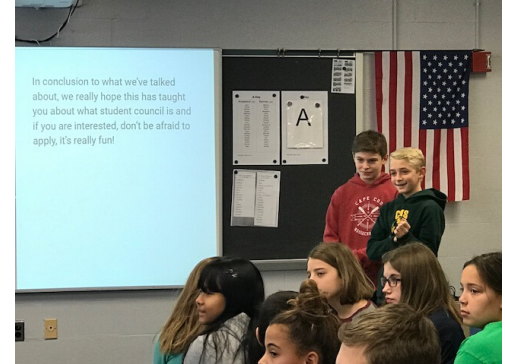




# WHAT'S GOING ON AT CMS

## STUDENT COUNCIL

Earlier this month, several of our Student Council members met with 6th grade classes during a team meeting to give them an overview of Student Council and to invite students to apply to be a Student Council member. The Student Council members had the following to say about the application process. “For the application, you have to get a recommendation from a teacher and a friend. You have to answer questions about what you would contribute to Student Council and what ideas you have for change.” In an interview with two of our members, Carter and Stephan, they shared the seriousness of being a Student Council representative. “As a member you have to be committed to getting the work done. The position is not for everybody.” The group is dedicated to supporting projects that enhance the school experience for the full student body. Each year Student Council sponsors two Spirit Weeks, Pennies for Patients fundraiser, and school dances. They have been instrumental in bringing restorative practices to CMS by partnering with the Essex Junction Community Justice Center. This year they are also taking on the yearbook and working with a parent volunteer and the assistant principal in this endeavor.



## FOCUSING ON SAFETY

On Monday, December 2nd, we held a school fire drill. This drill was not well executed by our students. While the expectation is for students to walk silently and in single file both out of and back into the building, these expectations were not adhered to by many of our students. In response, we asked for our local firefighters and police officer to attend our school wide town meeting held last Wednesday morning. They spoke to our students about the purpose of the fire drills and why it is important for us to follow the expectations of single file and silent while leaving and reentering the school building. Our students were an attentive audience. As always, it is our intention to teach and reteach as necessary expectations for behavior in all situations. We felt that by having our local safety personnel here to deliver the message might be more powerful for our students. We ask that you please speak with your children about the importance of following the expectations during a safety drill.



# WHAT'S GOING ON AT CMS

## U MATTER LEADERSHIP TRAINING



This year we have a group of eight students who participated in U Matter Leadership Training last month. This training is for middle and high school students who want to bring awareness and find solutions for mental health issues within their school setting. Students who attended the conference are now making plans with the support of Kara Pawlusiak, one of our school counselors, to decide how to use the information they learned to support mental health awareness at CMS. While still in the early stages of their planning, the group is considering building a website with helpful resources on suicide prevention as well as other

mental health topics. The group is hoping to incorporate information on the following areas they learned about at the conference into their project: suicide prevention/helping a friend who is considering suicide, growth mindset, and managing stress.

## CELEBRATION CORNER

Eve Stirling, one of our 6th Grade students, was recently chosen as the 2019 Patriot's Pen Essay Contest winner. This contest was sponsored by the Veterans of Foreign War Post 6689 in Essex Junction. The theme this year was "What Makes America Great?" Her winning essay will be sent on to the state level competition. At the local level, Eve was awarded a certificate and check for \$50. She will be recognized at a Scholarship Awards Dinner in early December.





# FOR YOUR INFORMATION

## WEATHER AND RECESS

As a reminder, our students are going to recess each day. Recess will be outside unless the temperatures become too cold or the weather is inclement. For this reason please make sure your child comes to school with appropriate outerwear for the weather.



## BEVERAGES...

Please monitor the type of drinks your child is bringing into school. We are asking you not send your child with energy drinks, soda or coffee type drinks. Students are welcome to have water and bring water bottles.



## PTA NEWS

Questions?

[ColchesterMiddleSchoolPTA@gmail.com](mailto:ColchesterMiddleSchoolPTA@gmail.com)

The PTA is still looking to fill two positions, Secretary and Treasurer.

The bottle hut continues to thrive. Please be sure to only put in bottles/cans with a refund. Do not put your trash or other recycling into the hut. If the hut is full you can simply drop your bottles and cans off at the Cap N Cork by the Hoagie Hut and let them know they are for CMS. We appreciate all of the donations and ask that you put all of your bottles/cans in one large trash bag and recycle your cardboard at home. It often takes 2 or more trips per week to bring all of the bottles and cans. If you are able to help us out and make a mid week run for us we would greatly appreciate the help.

Our next meeting is Monday Dec. 16th from 6-7. We are hoping to have some 8th grade parents attend to begin the discussion of the 8th grade dance. We look forward to seeing you!

