From the Desk of the Superintendent

February 2015

The New Year is underway and we are nearing the midpoint of the school year. As we look forward to the spring, while beginning to plan for the 2015 school year, I have important information to communicate to parents and community members. First, from March 2, 2015 until March 20, 2015, students at all grade levels will be participating in the first year of PARCC testing. Please see the calendar below for specific dates for each subject area and grade level.

The district has taken many steps to prepare for PARCC testing. Our web site will continue to provide more detailed information for parents. As with NJASK, PARCC assessments will test students’ knowledge and skills in English Language Arts and Math. However, PARCC is computer-based and aligned to the new Common Core State Standards. As a result, the district has made a tremendous investment in technology infrastructure to prepare for this first year of PARCC testing. Additionally, the district is participating in a New Jersey Department of Education Instructional Improvement System Grant to assist teachers with implementing the new standards.

Secondly, the we have experienced an increase in our Kindergarten enrollment over the past few years and are anticipating similar registration numbers for September 2015. Therefore, the Board of Education has approved my recommendation to install eight (8) modular classrooms at School 5 for September 2015.

As a result, the following will take place beginning September 2015:
1. All PreK classes will be moved from School 4 to the new classrooms at School 5 beginning September 2015.
2. All Kindergarten classes will be moved from each of our elementary schools to School 4 beginning September 2015.
3. Grades 1-6 will remain in each of our elementary schools.
4. The moving of our PreK and Kindergarten classes will result in additional classroom space in our elementary schools.

Please be assured that the eight (8) modular classrooms will adhere to all NJ Department of Education regulations and that the safety and security of our students and staff remains our top priority during this transition.

Please check our web site as www.cliffsidepark.edu to keep abreast of these two important developments, as well as news updates, related to school closings, additional parent trainings, and updates related to PARCC.

The Board of Education and my administrative team are working diligently to make the successful transition to new state requirements. Thank you for your ongoing support as we work on your behalf.

Michael Romagnino

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### Cliffside Park School District

**Tentative PARCC FBA Spring 2015 Schedule**

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**Legend**

- School 3,4,5 and 9
- School 3,4,5
- High School

March 2015
Across the District....

Parent Training to Focus on New PARCC Assessments

On February 9, 2015, the district offered a parent training workshop focused on PARCC, in the high school auditorium, entitled “An Information Session for Parents on PARCC, the New State Assessment.”

The information session was developed to familiarize parents with the new state assessment; how it relates to new common core standards; the format of the assessment; how the district is preparing students for the test; and how parents can help their children cope with anxiety related to the test.

For parents, who couldn’t attend the session, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is a consortium of states that collaboratively developed a common set of assessments to measure student achievement and preparedness for college and careers.

The PARCC assessments are aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and were created to measure students’ ability to apply their knowledge of concepts rather than memorizing facts. The assessments will also provide teachers with information on student progress to inform instruction and provide targeted student support.

During the 2014-2015 school year, the PARCC assessments will replace the existing statewide assessments (NJASK) in grades 3-8 and HSPA in high school beginning in March, 2015.

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant Meets Targets

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant is once again funding daily after school programs across the district from 3:00PM-6:00PM in grades 4-8. All school sites have reached their target enrollments and have a waiting list.

Parents and teachers report that the wide array of activities is the most impressive aspect of the 21CCLC After School Program. Samples of new activities include Engineering, Karaoke, Lego Robotics, Science Concoctions, Ceramics, Under the Microscope, Crafts of the World, iPad Games, Yoga, Zumba, and Self-Defense.

In Year III, CPSD is also striving to elevate the percent of high school students participating in PSAT and SAT. This year, the program provided access to APPS for iPads and cell phones and collaborated with LearnDoEarn New Jersey to utilize their software programs to better prepare middle school and high school students for college and career in the 21st Century.

Additionally, CPSD has employed certified special education aides, as part of the after school staff, to make it possible for additional students, with special needs, to participate and get the support they need.

Collaborators continue to make extremely valuable contributions to the program. Cliffside Park Public Library is offering monthly training sessions for parents and family literacy activities. Training also shows parents how to use the online components of the district’s web site (report card, etc.), completing required school forms, and communicating effectively with other parents.

William Paterson University has been an outstanding collaborator and has been offering professional development on site 1-3 times per month. Jewish Family Service is offering activities to address the emotional wellness of students and offering character education activities. They are also offering counseling daily after school from 3:00 – 4:00pm.

According to Project Director, Linda Ludwikowski, the 21st Century After School Program is running extremely well and teachers are doing a remarkable job developing really interesting offerings for students. Mrs. Ludwikowski stated, “We are lucky to have extremely dedicated teachers.
During January, 2015, teachers in grades 3-12 have participated in training on a new Instructional Improvement System (IIS) through a grant offered by the New Jersey Department of Education—together with edconnectnj.

Through the grant, CPSD has upgraded the district’s Wide Area Network and desktop computers in each elementary school’s computer laboratory. Additionally, the grant will provide laptops to teachers for 24/7 access to the IIS; fund school setup fees, per pupil licenses, provide NJDOE-sponsored professional development, and reinforce IIS professional development with ongoing training.

The IIS pilot project will involve 649 students in grades 3-6 and 35 teachers and support staff including special education and ESL teachers.

The IIS will enable teachers to accelerate the improvement process by taking advantage of the "perfect storm" of Core Content Standards and technology that is coming together to give teachers the tools to finally apply what they have been learning for several years.

The IIS will make it possible for teachers to develop personalized learning plans and assessments for our diverse students.

At the same time, the IIS will serve as one-stop shopping that links together the "Hodge Podge" of initiatives that have been implemented in past years. The IIS will empower teachers to go beyond the new textbooks, that were purchased, to align to the CCS and maximize their exceptional knowledge of the students before them to create their own assessments to specifically target their needs.

Also, the district will dedicate local professional development funds for professors, from William Paterson University, to provide ongoing training on how to effectively use the system. For more information about IIS in NJ, visit http://www.state.nj.us/education/techno/iis/.
Four CPHS students were selected to participate in the Exploration of the Moon and Asteroids by Secondary Students Program (ExMASS). After CPHS Biology Teacher, Dr. Quinlan, submitted the application, CPHS was one of one of ten schools in the United States selected to participate.

The ExMASS program is managed by the Center for Lunar Science and Exploration (CLSE), one of nine teams with the NASA Solar System Exploration Research Virtual Institute (SSERVI). ExMASS is an academic year-long, national standards-based lunar/asteroid research program that envelops students in the process of science. Working alongside their teachers and a scientist advisor, students undertake authentic, open-inquiry research projects that engage them in the process of science. At the end of the year, student research is reviewed by a panel of scientists.

The top four teams present their research to this panel of scientists, competing for a chance to present their work at the Exploration Science Forum held at the NASA Ames Research Center in the summer. Through this exciting program, Dr. Quinlan and her students have been working with NASA Scientist, Dr. Dean Eppler, who works for NASA and who tests space suits. Dr. Eppler is from New Jersey and asked to work with New Jersey students. Dr. Eppler explains, "I grew up in Berkeley Heights, and attended Governor Livingston High School, graduating in 1970. Dr. Eppler stated that, “I keep in touch with the folks at Governor Livingston, and I try to get back to visit often.” He wrote to the girls saying, “I may be heading back to New Jersey sometime in the spring, so I may be able to come visit y'all in person sometime this school year. In the meantime, I'm looking forward to connecting.” Dr. Quinlan hopes to have Dr. Eppler visit Cliffside Park High School in the Spring. The girls are excited and love working with him.

Before the end of my Sophomore year, my biology teacher, Dr. Quinlan, offered a program (created by the Lunar Planetary Institute) where we learn about the Moon and get to compete against 9 schools in all the country. Katherine Pabon, Amal Santiago, Jessica Pereira, and I, Brenda Amaya, are enjoying the program very much. We work on our research every single day & I have to say we all learned so much about the Moon. Especially, things we were completely oblivious of!

The moon has so much more than a beautiful face! The program gave us an amazing mentor, who we work with through phone calls and emails. He is a scientist named, Dean Eppler. He grew up in New Jersey and resides in Texas. The competition ends around April and we have been working hard so far. We're super happy we're representing Cliffside Park High School. Go Red Raiders!

Written by Brenda Amaya

Being a junior in high school can be very stressful because it's the year that mostly counts for college, but working on NASA program is very helpful because it helped me manage my time because I know that people rely on me. Working on the NASA program has opened my mind to endless ways of learning. It has taken my interests to another level—which is really exciting.

Working with my friends during this process has also been fun and exciting because we learn together and make mistakes, but keep trying until we get it right.

Written by Jessica Pereira

Being given the opportunity to work with Dr. Quinlan and a few of my peers in a Lunar Research Program has to truly been an unforgettable experience. This program has not only broadened my knowledge pertaining to the Moon, but has opened my eyes to how truly complex and remarkable the Moon is as a specimen of our Solar System. First, going into this program I have to admit I was a bit nervous, for I was unsure if I could fully grasp a multitude of information and facts about a subject that was completely foreign to me. However, by trying to comprehend bits and pieces of new information step by step, and by asking loads of questions, I realized I had the ability to actually understand much more than I gave myself credit for in my mind. That feeling of knowing or understanding something that many of your peers may not know is truly an invigorating feeling that I received almost everyday from this program. This program has taught me one thing that I will definitely remember throughout my lifetime: It’s that although you may face unknown or entirely new obstacles in life, that seem unattainable to overcome, with perseverance and dedication, you can truly achieve what you thought was impossible for you. I am truly grateful to have been one of a lucky few to have been involved in such a special and fascinating program.

Written by Katherine Pabon
It is too easy to live our lives without putting much thought into what allows America to function politically. Perhaps the worst offenders are teenagers. We are often times more concerned with our phones or friends than politics. It is not until we are given a chance to experience the system of democracy that we can appreciate our government. This summer, several students from Cliffside Park High School (myself included) were given that opportunity.

We were selected to be delegates to Boys State and Girls State. Boys State was started by the American Legion in response to several communist youth programs that began springing up throughout the United States in the 1930s. In order to instill in the youth of America a sense of pride in their democratic system, they decided the best way to do so would be to put the youth in the heart of it all - leading and running their own towns, counties, parties, and states. After spending a week at Rider University in June of 2014, it is clear why the program has been so successful.

Though I was separated from my fellow delegates from Cliffside Park, I quickly found myself surrounded by peers just as interested as I in what was to come. We bonded incredibly fast. Before we could blink, the first day had gone by, and we had elected city positions amongst ourselves. Laws and solutions to problems created by our Legionnaires flew left and right, and the 30 or so boys I had met less than twelve hours ago were now working frantically together and laughing while doing so. This was a trend throughout each day. More was done - county elections, city manuals, state elections… the amount of work that was done in six days was mindboggling. But even more so was the fact that, though this was all fictional, it really did instill in every boy at Jersey Boys State a deeper understanding of our democratic process and the importance of it all.

Perhaps my favorite memory is the day we had mock trial, where after learning about how our court system works, we put many of our fellow Statesmen to trial for things like playing the soundtrack to *Frozen* or wearing ‘inappropriately-colored’ underwear. It is the perfect example of what Boys State was - an incredible way of learning so much about our country, all the while doing it in a fun and unforgettable way. I am proud to have been a Statesman and to have represented Cliffside Park High School at Jersey Boys State. I know all my fellow delegates would agree.

**Written by Gilbert Orbea**
This year both Project First Robotics Teams, Team 251 - The Mechalodons and Team 5212 - Megahertz!, competed in this year's FIRST Tech Challenge game Cascade Effect.

We also hosted our Second Annual Cliffside Park Cliff-hanger. Twelve robotics teams competed in a tournament in our cafeteria. At the end of the evening Team 5212, Megahertz!, was ranked 3rd and Team 251, The Mechalodons, were ranked 6th. Both teams are hoping to qualify for the state championship tournament at NJIT in March.

At a tournament at Dwight Morrow High School, both teams were paired together in the finals, but lost in the last match. At another tournament held in Liberty Science Center, they were once again paired up in the semi-finals.

The results of these contests were that Team 5212 - Megahertz! won an Innovate Award at the tournament at Liberty Science Center as well as a PTC Design Award (That is an award for CAD drawings) at the tournament at Dwight Morrow. Team 251 - The Mechalodons were runners up for the Innovate Award at the Liberty Science Center tournament.

This year, the challenge involves the robots picking-up wiffle balls and placing them in tubes of varying heights. The teams get more points for putting the balls in the taller tubes.
On Sunday, November 2nd, the CPHS Marching Red Raiders competed in the 6th annual Weehawken Invitational Marching Band Festival hosted by Weehawken High School.

With a roster full of senior talent, the Marching Band lit up the field with the show theme ‘Music of the 80’s’ featuring *Take On Me*, Theme from the ‘A’ Team and *One Way Or Another*.

With the newly-formed color guard under the leadership of junior transfer, Margerita Volta, the visuals came to life in support of the already strong musical chops of the band.

Under the leadership of drum majors, Robyn Issa and Tiffany Rolle, the band shared the field with programs such as the 2014 National Champion Weehawken Marching Band and received high critiques all around.

Band Director, Derek Nelson, talks about the Band’s success. “I’d have to credit our success this season to our incredibly strong student leaders; section leaders Jordan Adragna, Saviel Marecki, Victor Perez, Nathaniel Jaquez, Tyler O’Connor, Alejandra Ordonez, Margarita Volta and James Diaz. Especially strong were the drum majors, Robyn and Tiffany,” Nelson stated.

Director Nelson was extremely pleased with the caliber of student leadership. He stated, “I couldn’t have had a better group of leaders and staff. I’d also like to thank Mr. David Rappaport and our volunteer assistant, Mr. Bryan Antolos, for their hard work and dedication this season.”
Cliffside Park’s Athletic Director, Mr. John Lombardo, asks you to join him in congratulating the Cliffside Park High School athletes that were selected for All League recognition for their excellence in the fall sports season.

Mr. Lombardo also congratulates Coach Carmine Cambareri for being named the Big North American 2014 Girls Soccer Coach of the Year!! Also congratulations to Coach Reggo, who was named the Big North American 2014 Girls Cross Country Coach of the Year. Mr. Lombardo acknowledges the hard work of all fall sport program participants and applauds the athletes and the CPSD fans for their sportsmanship, teamwork and ongoing support.

### Fall Sports Update

**Boys Soccer**

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<tr>
<th>1st Team</th>
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<th>Hon. Mention</th>
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<td><em>Edgar Argueta</em></td>
<td>Julian Guzman</td>
<td>Tomas Suarez Palacio</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Jaime Bangas</em></td>
<td>Jose Navarro</td>
<td>Odelia Cordova</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enrique Rubio</td>
<td>Kevin Campos</td>
<td>Stefanie Russo</td>
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<td>Walter Lopez</td>
<td>Elias Pappas</td>
<td>Kathleen Silva</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Matthew Reyes</strong></td>
<td>Mario Taglie</td>
<td>Jessica Moreno</td>
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<tr>
<td>Francisco Flores</td>
<td>Alejandro Cuba</td>
<td>Amber Fernandez</td>
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*Denotes 1st Team All County  ** Denotes 3rd Team All County

**Girls Soccer**

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<td>Amber Fernandez</td>
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**Tennis**

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<td>Magdalena Lozinski</td>
<td>Karla Pena</td>
<td>Gloralda Thaci</td>
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<td>Soomin Ahn</td>
<td>Aara Ana Vidovic</td>
<td>Estephany Nunez</td>
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<td>Hae Ry Na</td>
<td>Jhocelyn Mircovich</td>
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<td>Victoria McCoy</td>
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<td>Binnaz Bekirefendi</td>
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<td>Angela Gallina</td>
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**Girls Volleyball**

Way to Go!!

**Football**

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<td>Jeremy Neff</td>
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<td>Hunter Corcoran</td>
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<td>Christopher Aquino</td>
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**Cross Country**

**Denotes 2nd Team All County**
School 6 Middle School is part of the Inclusive Schools Climate Initiative in partnership with Rutgers University. Through this initiative, one of the activities that Ms. Pacelli’s middle school students participated in was a project to raise awareness of the accomplishments of those with disabilities, in conjunction with Inclusive Schools Week.

Students located inspirational quotes of people with disabilities which were read over the school loud speaker. The students conducted related research projects about famous people with special needs. The photo of the bulletin board to the right displays the project.

Another empathy initiative was the creation of this "giving tree" in which students and staff collected hats & gloves for people in need as tree decorations in December 2014.

Another empathy initiatives such was conducting a canned food drive in December, 2014.

On, January 28, 2015, Middle School students participated in an assembly focused on Character Education that featured The Ned Show. This 45 minute assembly features NED, a loveable cartoon character, whose name is an acronym for Never give up; Encourage others; and Do your best. Teachers love that NED is simple, relatable and kid-focused.

After the assembly, educators had access to extensive collection of resources. The lesson plans, videos, and classroom activities center upon the NED traits and easily integrate into existing curriculum. The program begins with this assembly and continues year round to promote a culture of kindness and excellence at school.

The goal of the NED Program is to: Improve Student Behavior; Strengthen Test Scores; Enrich Instructional Time; and Increase Academic Achievement. Mrs. O’Conner would like to thank the many parents who helped to make this assembly a success.
Middle School Band Performing Well

Once again the CP Middle School band is preparing for another great year of performing. We have already performed a winter concert for the students and parents of Number 6/Middle School.

In the coming months we performing at the Veterans Home in Paramus, The Little League Opening Day Parade, The Annual Spring Concert and an outdoor concert on the plaza at Lincoln Center in NYC.

The picture to the right shows CPMS Band performing at the Veterans Home last year.

Middle School Chorus Spreads Holiday Cheer

The Cliffside Park Middle School Chorus traveled around Cliffside Park spreading some holiday cheer. The chorus, led by musician and teacher, Alec Shantzis, traveled to all of the Cliffside Park Elementary Schools to perform several of the songs that they have been practicing for the last several weeks. The chorus is made up of over 140 students.

This year’s program included four songs in a program that combines some fun, popular winter songs with precision challenging baroque music and a medley of traditional holiday music.

The program included:

- Frosty the Snowman
- Fugue for Fast Food
- The Snow Begins to Fall
- Christmas in About Three minutes.

(Students sang parts of over a dozen Christmas songs in 3 minutes!)

The students spent months preparing and it showed in their skill and enthusiasm.
First Spanish Language Parent Night

The district hosted its first ever Spanish language family night on November 12, 2014. This was a discussion of effective approaches and useful resources that Spanish speaking parents can use with their children. The goal of this meeting was to give parents tools to help their children succeed in school. The strategies were presented in Spanish, allowing presenters to reach a wide audience. Presenters were Iveth Mollinedo, a Spanish speaking 3rd grade teacher in School 3 & Julie O’Connor, District ESL Coordinator.

Exploring Animal Habitats

Ms. Berta and Ms. Corcoran’s first grade students at School #5 have been busy learning all about different animal habitats. They put their knowledge to use when they created a habitat diorama of a forest, dessert, wetland, or habitat. The students included animals from the habitat and what they needed to survive. They presented their habitat to their classmates and gave three facts about their animal and how it survives in its habitat.

This unit will become cross curricular because first grade will use the animal they chose for their diorama, as their topic for their All-About book for the Writing Fundamentals unit. Students became writing detectives when we took a trip to the Cliffside Park Public Library to research more information about the animal of their choice. Students will use this information to create and publish their All-About book. We are very proud of all of the first grade students for doing an outstanding job!

Students Learn the Importance of Drinking Water

In December, 2014, Mrs. Hem-Lee (a mother of two boys in Mr. Ben Luderer’s class) visited the class and taught a lesson about the importance of water. Mrs. Hem-Lee is a dietitian, at Shoprite, and is a very active member of our the classroom community. In December, Mrs. Hem-Lee also demonstrated the negative effects that drinking sugar-filled drinks can cause. She brought many interactive activities, as well as a nutritious snack for the students. The activity took place in my classroom, and was viewed as a real treat for the students. Mrs. Hem-Lee felt it was a great time to deliver this lesson during the holiday season, when many sugar filled treats/drinks will likely be consumed. In addition, Mr. Luderer’s class plans on attending a "store tour" of Shoprite in the near future, which will be set up with the help of Mrs. Hem-Lee.
The 6th graders at Cliffside Park School #3 celebrated Veterans Day by learning the history of Veterans Day and comparing the history of Veterans Day of today to Armistice Day. The students also sent E-cards to veterans that are currently in VA Hospitals. To top off the day, the students donated over 71 pounds of Halloween candy and packed it into care packages that were mailed to soldiers serving in Afghanistan.

Cliffside Park School #3 hosted their annual Thanksgiving Food Drive. The students, teachers, and parents donated almost 600 boxes and cans and $50.00 in cash to the effort. The students, with the support of Acting Mayor, Tommy Calabrese, packed all the food into large boxes and put them in a teacher's truck to be transported. The sixth graders thought it was a lot of fun to work with the Mayor! (They had a ball making the boxes he was carrying EXTRA heavy!!! LOL) The food was donated to the Cliffside Park Epiphany Church Food Bank. The Epiphany Food Bank helps all local Cliffside Park families, regardless of religion.

The second graders in Ms. Panzella's class performed a research project over the last two weeks. The students had to research what it was like to be a pilgrim. The students read short books, magazine articles, and checked the internet for interesting facts. The students then wrote a short speech. After decorating hats/bonnets and face masks, the little pilgrims went to various classrooms to present what they learned. Some of the highlights that the kids learned included that Pilgrims ate with your fingers and that if children were misbehaving, their PARENTS were locked up in the stockades!!!

The students at Cliffside Park School #3 hosted a "Toiletry Drive" for the Cliffside Park Comfort Station, which is located at the Trinity Episcopal Church on Palisade Ave. Reverend Willie Smith and his parishioners open the church for local residents during any emergency event, such as the Walker Street fire that recently occurred. The parishioners had personally provided and set up the comfort station with a large variety of toiletry donations. However, during the Walker Street fire, almost 25 families that were evacuated received "toiletry packages" to help them through their situation draining the comfort station's "stock". So the children of School #3 donated toothbrushes, shaving cream, baby wipes, and many other necessities. The students at School #6 donated hats, mittens and scarves to the comfort station.
Thank you for Sharing with Our Schools!!

With the cooperation of the New Jersey Department of Corrections, the Cliffside Park Police Department and the Cliffside Park Board of Education, the program "Project Pride" was presented to the sixth graders throughout the school district. The program brings low-risk inmates from the New Jersey Correctional System to speak to the students about the importance of making good decisions. Each inmate described their childhood, which included stories about being on the Honor Roll or being part of award winning sports teams. Each of the inmates had great potential until they made poor decisions. The two most-often stated reasons for inmates making bad decisions (and which were most applicable to the students) were getting involved with drugs and/or hanging out with the wrong people (peer pressure). After the 90 minute presentation, the students spent a good deal of time discussing how "one" simple wrong decision can lead to another and how it makes a person head down the wrong path. The students all agreed that the program made an impact on them.

The staff of Cliffside Park School #3 took some time at a recent assembly to present an award to local resident, Giovanni Orjuela. Giovanni is employed with the Cliffside Park Department of Public Works. His wife, Elsa, is a beloved custodian at School #3. During this past summer, after working his regular job at the DPW, he would come to School #3 and donated hundreds of hours of his labor to help beautify the school. Giovanni painted doors, completed numerous carpentry jobs, built new bulletin boards, beautified the teachers room with new cabinetry, helped renovate the school's library and the list goes on and on. He even supplied his own personal power washer for the school to utilize. Because of all his hard work and dedication, Cliffside Park School #3 Principal Calabrese and Cliffside Park Borough Council President, Tommy Calabrese presented Giovanni with a "volunteer award" to thank him for all he did (and does) for Cliffside Park School #3.

Mr. Joseph Kohout, whose daughter is in 6th grade (and his mom is a retired Cliffside Park School teacher) offered the sixth graders, in his daughter's classroom, an extremely special reading incentive program. He, in cooperation with the classroom teacher, set monthly reading goals. Students who met each monthly goal received an incentive to keep reading. The first month's incentive was a lunch from Sarge's; the second was a set of homework coupons; and the third month was two movie passes to the Edgewater Multiplex. Students who met all of the goals were then entered into a raffle to win an Amazon Kindle Paper White. There were five students who met all the goals. To reward them for their efforts, instead of raffling off one Kindle, Mr. Kohout generously provided Kindles for all five students with Amazon Gift Cards, so they could start buying books to keep up their reading habits! The students were extremely happy to each win the "grand prize."
On Wednesday, December 17th, the School #3 Parent-Teacher Organization hosted their annual Stories With Santa. The evening started off with a variety of ornament making activities that the teachers prepared for the students. Students had the opportunity to make wreath ornaments, reindeer ornaments, and others. There was even an iPad station to allow students to play Christmas games. Then with the assistance of the Cliffside Park Fire Department, Santa, Frosty, and Rudolph were able to visit the children.

After each child had their picture taken with Santa, then they munched down on Santa's favorite snack...cookies!! The parents provided the cookies and milk for all the children. To end the evening, Principal Calabrese sat next to the school's Christmas Tree and read Twas a Night Before Christmas to all of the students.

Over 75 students attended the event, including over a dozen 6th graders, who were "honorary" elves for the evening and helped the youngsters make all of the projects!

Each individual class is celebrating Martin Luther King Jr. Day with their own activities. The 5th and 6th grades viewed a video biography and then analyzed King's "I Have a Dream Speech." The 4th graders viewed a video and read a biography, then they wrote their own "I Have a Dream" speech. Students also created a bulletin board.

Miss Panzella, 2nd grade class completed research and booklets on Martin Luther King. They used posters that were hanging in the room, the internet, and several biographies to complete their research. Below is a quick summary:

"Is that fair? What is equality? Courage!! Service to others!

These and many more topics were discussed by second graders in Ms. Panzella's class in honor of Dr. King's birthday. Students researched facts about Dr. King's life and created booklets of their own. The ultimate assignment, however, was creating personal "I Have a Dream" vignettes. From it all, a valuable lesson was learned from one of America's great leaders—one whose dream of equality for all lives on!"

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The 6th graders and 3rd graders at School #3 worked together to review nutritional information from McDonalds. The students have been reading nutrition labels with a focus on calories, fat and sodium. The students worked together in a spin-off of the movie "Super Size Me". They had to "eat" breakfast, lunch, and dinner at McDonalds keeping within the recommended guidelines provided for by the US government. The students realized that it is VERY difficult to eat all their meals at McDonalds and stay within the recommended guidelines, but that it WAS possible to accomplish...if they chose carefully. The students used the school's iPads to research the nutritional info from the McDonalds nutritional information.

On Friday November 21, 2014, parents, grandparents, siblings and preschool students gathered to celebrate a cultural experience. The preschool class consists of students ages 3-4 years old.

Bringing the families together was a great educational opportunity to foster partnerships between students, community, and school. Families shared their favorite traditional desserts, which were representative of their culture. Desserts were made at home and brought into the classroom for everyone to sample. The familial diversity allowed for many wonderful and delicious treats from all over the world. Some of the desserts and students cultural backgrounds were:

Pizzellies and Pantone: Italy
Brigadeiro (Brazilian chocolate candy): Brazil
Frite: Croatia
Natilla: Columbia
Flan: Mexico & Ecuador
Kugel: Central Europe

In addition to the above homemade treats, a variety of cookies, cakes, and hot chocolate were donated by several of the families.
Ms. Iveth Mollinedo, a third grade teacher in School # 3, has been named New Jersey Agricultural Society 2015 Teacher of the Year. Ms. Mollinedo is responsible for bringing gardening to her school, Cliffside Park #3. In 2013, Iveth read about the Learning Through Gardening program, envisioned a gardening program at her school and decided singlehandedly to apply for a grant. Now all 340 students at Cliffside Park School #3, from kindergarteners to sixth graders, are learning about gardening.

From the start, Cliffside Park School #3 began growing vegetables in three seasons. Lettuce, radishes, and collard greens were planted in the spring and fall. In the summer months, everyone pitched in to tend the vegetables – Ms. Mollinedo and her fellow teachers, as well as students and custodians. When the students arrived back at school, the garden was burgeoning with tomatoes, onions, peppers, and cucumbers. The fresh vegetables were made into tomato sauce for the students. “Their reactions every time they tried something that was made from the garden was priceless,” Ms. Mollinedo said. The students couldn’t believe they were eating food they had planted themselves.

Meanwhile, in the classroom, Ms. Mollinedo and her colleagues began teaching about the garden. Students learned the parts of a seed and the parts of a plant, and planted seeds in the classroom to watch them germinate and sprout. They explored the life cycle of pumpkins. When November came, students learned how the Pilgrims obtained their food and what the Native Americans showed the Pilgrims about growing crops. Older students discussed the process of composting and students in the After School Program contributed a handmade composter. In December, the entire school celebrated National Poinsettia Day, discussing the origin of the flower and how it came to America. Most recently, Iveth and her students planted wheat seeds, to discover where bread comes from.

Enthusiasm for the garden has spread throughout Cliffside Park School #3. “Every class wanted to visit the garden, water the plants, and just stand there and watch them as if they would magically grow in front of their eyes,” Ms. Mollinedo said.

The Learning Through Gardening annual Farm-City Poster and Essay contest was another teaching opportunity for Ms. Mollinedo and her colleagues. Students made posters and wrote essays about the contest's theme “Eat A Rainbow,” which stressed the importance of eating fruits and vegetables of all different colors for their different vitamins and nutrients.

“With the garden,” she says, “I am able to add something to the curriculum that helps the students think outside the box and use other skills some of them probably never thought they had.”

For her vision and dedication to providing a gardening program for all the students at her school, the Board of Trustees named Iveth Mollinedo as the New Jersey Agricultural Society 2015 Teacher of the Year.

Principal Calabrese asks you in joining her in congratulating Ms. Mollinedo for this wonderful accomplishment.