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Midland Public Schools’ Superintendent Communiqué

December 19, 2016      <>     Volume 4, Issue 20

Wishing you
Happy Holidays and
a New Year filled with
health, happiness and peace!

THANK YOU  MPS Sharing Tree Coordinators!

The work began in early September as Sharing Tree info &
forms were given out to families in need of the program.
Building coordinators entered info into the database in early
October and contacted families if additional information or
forms were needed. On December 5, over 250 gifts were
checked in and sorted for MPS families. MPS building &
grounds employees delivered the gifts to our buildings.

Multiple trips have been made to the United Way and each
school. Building Coordinators ask building staff members
to help them fill any unfilled gifts. They contact parents to
schedule a time to pick up the gifts. Their job is not done
until all gifts have been picked up. Some building coordina-
tors even deliver the gifts!

All of this work is in addition to their full time job with Midland
Public Schools. Their time, effort, and dedication to helping
our families have a nice holiday is greatly appreciated. This
year 440 gifts will be handed out from MPS buildings!

MPS 2016 Sharing Tree Building Coordinators are:
★ Adams        Wendy Cooper
★ Carpenter    Deanna Jewell
★ Chestnut Hill Kolleen Smith
★ Eastlawn     Lynn Burns
★ Dow H.S.     Doug Bradford
★ Jefferson    Roxanne Weisend
★ Midland H.S. Craig Hawkins
★ Northeast    Sue Storey
★ Plymouth     Beth Chapman
★ Siebert      Paul Schroll
★ Woodcrest    Tammy Dobschensky

Thank you also to our District Sharing Tree Coordinator,
Tracy Renfro, Chestnut Hill Principal for organizing this
herculean effort!

Mrs. Kreusch’s fifth grade students at Adams Elementary collected $220
for Heifer International by doing small acts of kindness locally and donating globally
their money from these tasks. They then
voted upon what animal to purchase from
Heifer International and they decided upon
gifting: 1 goat, 2 shares of a llama, and 3
flocks of chicks. Way to go 5th Graders!!!!!

The Chestnut Hill Staff Action Team collected food
items and put together food baskets for Chestnut Hill
Families. The CHE Boy Scouts donated $250, which
was used to purchase meat certificates for each
basket. It is so great to see all of the great
partnerships within the CHE community!

MPS Holiday Break: December 22-January 2 — Classes Resume: Tuesday, January 3

Next Superintendent Communiqué will be Published Monday, January 9

is a great communications tool for you to connect with me. Every message comes to my desktop.
Either I or a member of our staff will do all we can to reply to your message the next work day.
Click on the green MPS Connect box on our MPS website (www.midlandps.org) to connect with me!
Parent Night for Mrs. Stajdl’s Fourth Grade at Plymouth Elementary was held December 13. The students just finished their Unit of Inquiry with the central idea of “A Balanced Ecosystem is Dependent on Many Factors.”

The students shared their work with their parents. This night was organized by the students in Mrs. Stajdl’s 4th Grade classroom; the students were in charge of teaching their parents about what they had learned.

MPS Football Accolades

In the December 2016 Michigan High School Football Coaches Association (MHSFCA) Newsletter, we were excited to learn that the Midland Public Schools high schools were in the top 6 out of 24 Division 2 teams listed as 2016 Academic All-State Football Teams!

Midland High is #1 (3.965 GPA) and Dow High is #6 (3.863 GPA). WOW!

The process for nomination requires the team’s top 11 student athletes’ previous semester grade point averages.

Congratulations to Dow High’s Aaron Reardon named First Team Academic All-State by the Michigan High School Football Coaches Association!

Congratulations to both 2016 MHS & DHS Football students and coaches as well as parents and MPS teachers who helped our football programs accomplish these very impressive State-level points of pride!

Don’t miss your chance to make a 2016 charitable contribution for Central Park Elementary’s STEM Outdoor Learning Areas before the 2016 tax year closes!

The Midland Area Community Foundation (MACF) is granting $50,000 toward a creative playground project for Central Park Elementary that is slated to open for the 2016-17 school year. In addition to the $50,000 grant, MACF has a goal of raising $50,000 via community donations and providing a 2-to-1 match for donations up to $100,000 total. Gifts of $50 or more will allow donors to have their name permanently engraved on one of three large donor walls paying tribute to famous names in STEM.

Those interested in giving a gift have a couple of donation options: cash or check to Midland Area Community Foundation, 76 Ashman Circle, Midland, MI 48640 OR online at www.midlandfoundation.org.
Woodcrest kindergarten students took action and made over 100 birthday kits on Grinch Day. All of the kits were donated to local organizations to be used to celebrate children’s birthdays in the community. The kindergarten students demonstrated that they are caring learners who understand needs and wants after completing a PYP unit with a central idea of: “People buy and trade for things they need and want.” Their “actions” were designed to fulfill the "want" of celebration for families. The kindergarteners had a great time celebrating the Grinch and all he became after "his heart grew three sizes that day."

Midland High Pep Band visited Midland police and fire fighters last week spreading holiday cheer, saying thank you for their service and sharing holiday treats.

Great job Midland High Pep Band and thank you Midland Community first responders for all you do to keep Midland safe!

See you in 2017.
Classes resume Tuesday, January 3!
The Northeast Middle School FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) Robotics Team #9931 capped off their season by competing in the FTC state championship in Battle Creek this past weekend. While they did not earn any awards or advance to the next competition level, they performed very well in their judging session and ended up in 19th place out of 36 teams in their division of the robot game. The team enjoyed the opportunity to meet and compete with 71 impressive teams from across the state and looks forward to applying what they learned to their future endeavors.

Congratulations on a terrific season Viking Maelstrom Team!

FIRST LEGO League (FLL) is the exciting robotics program for upper elementary school age students. Teams of two to ten children, guided by coaches and mentors, work on a Challenge, which is based on a real-world scientific topic. Each Challenge has two parts: The Robot Game and The Project. The team develops an autonomous robot using the LEGO Mindstorms kit to score points on a themed playing field (Robot Game). They also research, develop and present a solution to a research problem (Project).

There were several FLL teams from Midland Public Schools during Fall 2016:

- The Woodcrest team “All the Right Koalafications” did well at the Freeland Qualifying FLL Competition on December 3rd where they won the “Programming Award” and qualified to go to the Michigan State Competition in Flint on December 10th. At the State Competition, the team had a lot of fun. They were especially pleased to win 2nd place for the “Gracious Professionalism Award”.

- The “Red Panda Prodigies” team from Adams Elementary had a fun FLL season learning robot programming and researching ways to help the endangered red panda. They competed at the Freeland FLL Qualifying Competition on December 3rd where they won the Champions Award. They were very proud to represent their school at the Michigan State Competition in Flint on December 10th.

- The “Adams Animal Adventure” team from Adams Elementary School, as a rookie team, had lots of new things to learn. Team did very well in Project, Core Value and Robot Design on December 3rd at Freeland FLL Qualifying Competition. They won the Judges Award for Gracious Professionalism at the Freeland event.

- The “Animal Emojis” team from Adams Elementary School had a fun rookie season. They competed at the December 3rd Freeland FLL Qualifying Competition where they won the Inspiration Award.

- The Chestnut Hill “Robotic Chipmunks” team competed at the Freeland Qualifying FLL Competition on December 3rd. The team showed excellent Gracious Professionalism and Cooperation. The judges described their robot as very simple and efficient. Each team member learned through writing a program for each mission, which was good way for all team members to learn and be involved. They worked well as a team, were respectful of each other and worked hard to research their project and problem-solve as they worked with the robot game.

- The Woodcrest “Robotics Tech Squad” team also competed at the Freeland Qualifying FLL Competition on December 3rd.

Junior FIRST LEGO League (Jr.FLL) is the fun robotics program for elementary school age students through 3rd grade. Teams of two to six children, guided by coaches and mentors, work on a Challenge which has two parts: The Model and The Show Me Poster. The team designs and builds a model using LEGO elements and incorporate simple machines and movement into their creations (Model). They illustrate their research and team journey through their Show Me Poster.

There are two Jr.FLL teams from Adams Elementary School, which sponsored an expo for parents & siblings on December 10th. The Challenge was to build a habitat and include the honey bee and one moving component:

- The Awesome Atoms built a forest habitat with a snake, bee and a tree that falls down to mimic destruction of habitat.

- The Ultimate Adams Builders built a wet lands habitat with a bee and an alligator that chomps its mouth.
Homestead Holiday Field Trip … Carpenter Street School first grade students took a field trip to the Chippewa Nature Center for their Homestead Holiday Field Trip. They learned about Midland in the 1870’s by doing chores, seeing a sleigh, and participating in lessons in a one-room school house!

Thoughts from Michelle Obama:

“We learned about gratitude and humility—that so many people had a hand in our success, from the teachers who inspired us to the janitors who kept our school clean … and we were taught to value everyone’s contribution and treat everyone with respect.”

“Choose people you lift you up.”

Consider becoming trained to help our elementary schools administer the DIBELS assessments. The training is free and the volunteer opportunity is rewarding!

DIBELS stands for Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills. It is an assessment system designed to assess all students’ progress. It is not a reading program. MPS elementary students are tested three times a year—fall, mid-year and spring.

DIBELS are individually administered measures of student skills in each of the key basic literacy skills. The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) are a set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills from kindergarten through sixth grade. DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) is a measure that assesses Accuracy and Fluency with Text, the ability to effortlessly translate letters to sounds and sounds to words. The fluent reader is one whose decoding processes are automatic, requiring no conscious attention.

If you are interested in becoming trained to help administer the Oral Reading Fluency part of DIBELS, please contact Lou Ann Bensinger at 923-5070 or bensingerlt@midlandps.org.

Amanda Ladach’s Eastlawn Elementary 5th Grade class recently worked with Kyle Hildebrandt (software engineer at Criteo in Ann Arbor) and Lauren Zamiska who taught the students some basic coding. Students interacted with games or created movement of a character within the program options.

Jefferson Middle School students from Ms. Partanen and Ms. Jacobs’ classes took a few minutes last week to decorate holiday cookies!

Carpenter Kiwanis Christmas Party … Santa visited Carpenter Street School on December 13 to bring gifts and joy to all of our 1st Grade children. Students were served McDonald’s hamburgers and milk in their special luncheon. They were then called up to get their gift of clothing items and to talk with Santa. We greatly appreciate the Kiwanis Club of Midland for this generous gift!

Congratulations to our December Shining Stars:

✿ Sarah DeGroat, Kindergarten Teacher, Adams Elementary
✿ Viv Lijewski, Paraprofessional, Jefferson Middle School

These dedicated, hard working members of the MPS team are being recognized at tonight’s Board of Education meeting. Thank you Sarah and Viv for going above and beyond to make MPS a better place for students! Please keep the Shining Star nominations coming in. We hope you will take a moment to let us know why you think an MPS team member is a Shining Star! Here is a link to the nomination form: http://midps.org/shiningstarform