



# CGS PTO Newsletter October 2010

## A Memo From Marybeth Moyer, Principal

On this first day of fall, mums are decorating our doorstep, and the air is crisp and cool. Welcome to October! At CGS, we have held our very popular Open House, and the teachers and students have settled into their classroom schedules and instructional routines. Teachers and support staff are busy gathering and analyzing information and data that has been collected throughout the first month of school in the effort to further target instruction for all of our students.

The Coventry School District is firmly committed to providing the highest quality of education for every student. To meet this goal, we have begun planning and implementing a tiered approach to instruction. This process, known in Connecticut as *Scientifically Researched Based Instruction* or SRBI, first gained attention when federal law established these practices as an approach to identify and provide intervention to struggling students. Each tier provides additional support beyond the core curriculum. Students needing intervention will be monitored frequently to ensure they meet grade level expectations. All students will continue to participate in the core curriculum within their classrooms even if they need the support of tier two or three interventions.

In tier one, classroom teachers will continue to use a variety of strategies within their lessons to address the learning needs of all of their students. Those who are experiencing academic or behavioral difficulties or who are not meeting the targeted goals on grade-level benchmark assessments will be provided interventions matched to their needs. These tier two interventions will take place in small group settings for approximately 30 minutes up to four times a week. An instructional-support team will provide the instruction and track the student's progress with the intervention plan on a regular basis. Interventions will occur for a minimum of 6 weeks but may continue up to eight weeks to ensure student success in the core program. The instructional-support team may make adjustments in the intervention plan based on the student's progress. Depending on the student need and progress, the team may change the intervention or increase the frequency, time or intensity of the planned instruction. This more intense level is considered tier three. Students provided with tier three interventions are placed in smaller groups than tier two with an increase in the minutes of instruction. Monitoring a student's progress will continue on a regular basis.

At Coventry Grammar School we recognize the educational needs of young learners. In developing the foundational skills for life-long learning we are committed to providing the support that may be necessary to allow students to succeed. In our efforts to put this plan into action an intervention program is underway at all grade levels.

Please be assured that as we monitor student growth throughout the year, parents will be apprised of their child's progress and the need for additional support. Another initiative that supports our instruction is the development of standards-based report cards in Kindergarten through Grade 5. A core of dedicated teachers has spent over a year developing and revising a new grading instrument that will be piloted this year. Information will be available for all parents on this report card at two information sessions (October 5 from 6:00-7:00 at CGS or October 21 from 6:00 - 7:00 at GHR.)

We certainly want you to be informed of the instructional practices so that you can support our efforts at home. We look forward to sharing additional information with you as we progress through the school year.

## Coventry Grammar School

3453 Main Street  
Coventry, CT 06238

Phone: 860-742-7313

Website: [www.coventryps.org](http://www.coventryps.org)

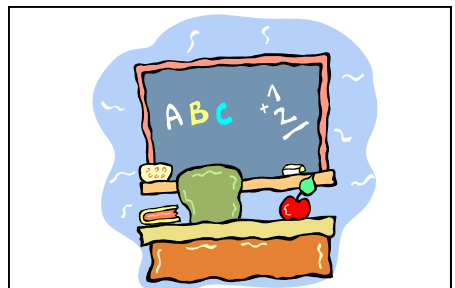
CGS PTO Newsletter

October 2010



### Inside this issue:

Kindergarten News	2
First-Grade News	2
Second-Grade News	3
From Our School Nurse	4
From Our Math Corner	4
Donuts with Donna	4
From Our Reading Room	5
Weather & Emergency Closing Information	5
From Our Friends at CECC	5
PTO News	6
PTO Treasurer's Report	6



*At Coventry Grammar School we recognize the educational needs of young learners. In developing the foundational skills for life-long learning we are committed to providing the support that may be necessary to allow students to succeed.*

## Kindergarten News

### Kindergarten Team

Teachers: Wendy Baver, Terry Bitwinski, Heidi Bosco, Eileen Hosey, and Debbie Hurlburt  
Para-Educators: Debbie Carroll and Sue Lewis



Autumn leaves are falling down,  
Falling down, falling down,  
Autumn leaves are falling down,  
We love autumn!

We are celebrating the wonderful changes that the fall season is bringing to all of us in Coventry. Nature walks, stories and colorful art projects will be part of our October work in kindergarten. All kindergarten classes will be taking a trip to Hurst Farm in Andover, to pick pumpkins and experience the season firsthand on either October 21 or 22.

In literacy this month, we will be focusing on Concepts of Print. Concepts of Print is an awareness of how print works and how it looks. Print is made up of letters which correspond to sounds and words, and text is read from left to right across the page.

Kindergarten is also using a program called *Making Meaning* to help our kindergarteners build their reading comprehension skills. We are fortunate to be able to build upon the stories we read in the *Making Meaning* program by working with Mrs. Dubois, our art teacher, on enrichment activities that connect the learning with an artistic representation.

At the math center, there will be activities and experiences with beginning number concepts. We begin Topic 3, which includes space, 3-D shapes and patterns. Children will explore the concepts of position inside/outside, above/below, before/after, over/under, left/right. Opportunities to work with 3-D geometric shapes as well as simple patterns will also be part of mathematics instruction in October.

Fire Prevention will be one of the topics this month as well. We have a special presentation from Firefighter Phil on Monday, October 4. The Coventry Fire Department will also be visiting our school in October. Other safety-related activities are planned at school. Every kindergartener should know his/her complete name, address and phone number...remember to practice!

We welcome student interns from ECSU. Heather Neves in Mrs. Hosey and Mrs. Bosco's classroom and Joe Ramonas in Ms. Bitwinski's classroom will be working at our school two days a week throughout the semester. The primary focus of this experience is to support and scaffold the learning and social development of our students.

It was wonderful to see so many kindergarten families at Open House and to have such supportive and caring families at C.G.S.!



## First-Grade News

### First-Grade Team

Teachers: Megan Babcock, Bruce Gale, Colleen Hamblett, Patricia Klaneski, Matthew Kyer, Cristy Rau, and Ginny Taber  
Para-Educators: Laurie Darling and Jennifer Ray

Our first graders have been busy with their adjustment to a longer school day, greater independence and new routines. Eating lunch at school is always a big "first", and children are becoming comfortable with this.

Open House is an exciting time, and this year was no exception! It was fun to greet our new families and to see old friends as our hallways buzzed with enthusiasm and eager anticipation. Many parents signed up for November conferences. If you have not yet done so, please contact your child's teacher. Teachers will be sending reminders home later this month. We look forward to meeting with you in November about your child's progress.

In keeping with this time of year, we will observe weather and seasonal changes. We encourage children to come to school dressed appropriately for outdoor play.

October is the month in which we discuss explorers in conjunction with Columbus Day. We also welcome our local fire fighters to our school to observe Fire Prevention Week to teach and review safety tips and emergency procedures.

Many students will begin to bring home guided-reading books to share. Please take that time to sit with your children and listen to the stories they have worked so hard on. During whole group and small group reading instruction, we will be focusing on exploring and responding to literature through discussions about how literature enriches our lives. Students will begin to understand and appreciate the importance of literature in everyday life. They will begin to respond to the information found in literature and make connections to their own personal experiences, other texts, and

(First Grade - continued)  
the world around them.

As our season changes into fall, we look forward to our “Storybook Character Day” on October 29 when we will dress as our favorite storybook character. Start your imaginations working!

We continue to enjoy using our “Growing With Mathematics” hands-on materials and have begun *Understanding Addition and Subtraction*. Students will be reviewing addition and subtraction language, counting on, practicing addition facts and writing subtraction number stories.

In discussing the “Hopes and Dreams” for first grade, it was no surprise that “learning to read” was the top desire of many children. The interest and help that you give from home is of HUGE importance. A variety of exciting activities that our first-grade classes engage in are “Book Buddies,” “Book Contracts,” special book projects, and literacy components integrated into homework. Please, please, read at home to and with your child! Thank you for taking the time each day to check notes and school work in backpacks. As sight-word cards are sent home, it is really important to keep them in a special place for frequent review. We appreciate your working with us as partners as we share your wonderful children.

## Second-Grade News

### Second-Grade Team

Teachers: Carolyn Bennett, Jerry Craig, Nancy Gwozdz, Erin Hazzard, Heather McPeck, Nancy Plaster, and Angela Puccia

Para-Educators: Gloria Barry and Heidi Holever

The school year is now in full swing for our second graders. We had another wonderful turnout for Open House this year. Open House is always an exciting time for everyone, and we enjoyed meeting so many of you. If you did not get a chance to sign up for the upcoming conferences, please contact your child’s teacher to set up a time to meet. Conferences are scheduled for November 16, 17, and 18.

October is Fire Prevention Month, and our second-grade students are participating in fire prevention activities. Firefighter Phil meets with the students on Monday, October 4, to discuss fire safety and prevention. This assembly has always been a favorite for our students and staff alike! Additionally, members of the Coventry Fire Department will visit the school in October. Students will have the opportunity to ask fire-safety questions and see a fire truck up close.

Students can look forward to the end of the October for “Character Day”. Our second-grade students will have the opportunity to dress up as their favorite character from a recent book that they have read. Students are invited to talk about their character and share their book with the class. More information about “Character Day” will follow soon.

Reading is fundamental to students’ success in school. At this time, students are learning how to choose “just right” books and the importance to choose books that they can read independently. In our supplemental reading program, *Making Meaning*, students are learning the skill of visualization, or making a mental picture to better understand the story.

The W.E.B. (We Enjoy Books) home-reading program started for our students and is a very important part of your child’s homework. Home reading enhances your child’s interest and reading ability. Please encourage your child to read 15 minutes nightly. Children may read to self, to someone, or with someone. If you have any questions about the W.E.B. program, please contact your child’s teacher.

In science, the students are getting “down and dirty” learning about soil. Students are discovering the importance of soil to plants, animals, and people. As well, they are classifying soils by properties such as color, particle size, and amount of organic matter. Finally, students are investigating how different soil types affect plant growth.

This year in math, students continue working in the *Growing with Mathematics* program. Students have completed Topic 1 – Reviewing Number and Time Concepts and are now exploring various addition and subtraction strategies in Topic 2. They are extending their understanding of the two operations as they solve a variety of story problems. Mastery of number facts is essential for ongoing success in mathematics. Please help your child master his/her addition and subtraction facts at home.

Students are learning a new set of spelling words each week. The spelling words each week focus on specific spelling skills. Students are expected to learn their assigned words for the week. Although the students practice using their spelling words in class, students are encouraged to study their spelling words at home daily.

Now that the leaves are starting to fall, the changing weather means cooler temperatures outside. Please make sure your child dresses accordingly.



As our season changes into fall, we look forward to our “Storybook Character Day” on October 29 when we will dress as our favorite storybook character.



October is Fire Prevention Month... Students will have the opportunity to ask fire safety questions and see a fire truck up close.



Now that the leaves are starting to fall, the changing weather means cooler temperatures outside. Please make sure your child dresses accordingly.

## From Our School Nurse ~ Mrs. Paula Curtiss

Happy Autumn! Hoping you are settling in to the new school year.

I wanted to share the following information with you. As always, do not hesitate to contact me with any questions, problems, or concerns.

Paula Curtiss RN

860-742-4558

[pcurtiss@coventryct.org](mailto:pcurtiss@coventryct.org)

### Head Lice

Head lice are an occasional problem in schools and can spread when children come in close contact with one another. Head lice are not a health hazard or a sign of uncleanliness. The most common symptom is itching/scratching of the scalp. I strongly encourage parents/guardians to do frequent and regular checks of their child's scalp at home.

Although it is impossible to totally prevent head lice, it is prudent for parents/guardians to teach their children not to share personal items such as combs, brushes, scarves, hats and other articles of clothing or headwear.

Please contact me if you have any questions or if you discover your child has head lice. I can provide you with additional information and assistance.

### Cough Drops

Cough drops are allowed in the classroom with the following directions.

Parents/guardians must send a note in with their student giving them permission to have them in school. The classroom teacher will hold the cough drops and only allow students to have them if they will be seated at their desks, and there is an obvious need for them. If a student's cough is excessive or disruptive, he/she will be sent to the health office for evaluation to see if it is appropriate for the student to remain in school.

As an alternative to cough drops, please consider sending your student to school with a water bottle. A frequent sip of water will probably be just as effective and a healthy alternative.

### School Nurse Substitutes Needed

Immediate openings are available for school nurse substitutes in Coventry. You must be an RN with experience in the last five years and have a current CT license.

For more information please visit the Coventry Public Schools website under job openings or contact Stephanie Levin at 860-234-1969 for more information.



*If a student's cough is excessive or disruptive, he/she will be sent to the health office for evaluation to see if it is appropriate for the student to remain in school.*



*Parents, be sure you are taking an interest in what websites your child is using.*

## From Our Math Corner ~ Mrs. Stephanie Wissler, ASSIST Program

Parents, be sure you are taking an interest in the websites your child is using. You can help them learn math by working together. Have Fun!

### Top Five Math Websites

1. [www.AAAmath.com](http://www.AAAmath.com). Customized by grade level and topic, AAA Math features explanations of various mathematical topics, practice problems and fun, challenging games.
2. [www.coolmath.com](http://www.coolmath.com). This fully interactive site allows the user to sharpen basic math skills, play games and explore new math concepts.
3. [www.figurethis.org](http://www.figurethis.org). Created by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, this site helps families enjoy mathematics outside of school through a series of fun and engaging challenges.
4. [www.mathcats.com](http://www.mathcats.com). Math Cats provides playful explorations of important math concepts through games, crafts and interactive projects. (Includes a magic chalkboard and an art gallery.)
5. [http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/websites/4\\_u/site/numeracy.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/websites/4_u/site/numeracy.shtml). This lively, interactive Web site, based on the popular BBC Schools Television series "Megamaths," is for practicing and testing times tables.

Please feel free to contact me at any time this year if you have questions or comments:  
[swissler@coventryct.org](mailto:swissler@coventryct.org).



## Donuts With Donna

The superintendent of schools is available for casual conversations with community members during the school year. "Donuts with Donna" is a way for you to greet your school superintendent, ask questions, and keep informed about education in our town. Please feel free to stop by, where there will be an informal atmosphere with an open dialogue and no set agenda. The next session of "Donuts with Donna" is Wednesday, November 17 from 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. at Thymes Remembered, 1703 Boston Turnpike, (Route 44).

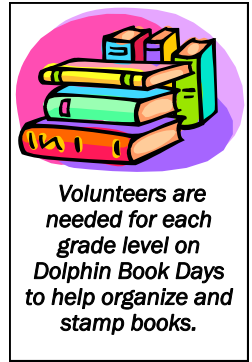
## From Our Reading Room ~

It was wonderful seeing all our visitors at Open House. We enjoyed talking to families about reading and the importance of reading to your children at home.

We would like to take this time to send out a huge thank you to our generous PTO for providing funding for CGS's Dolphin Book Days. The dates for our book distributions will be "Storybook Character Day" on Friday, Oct. 29, and *Read Across America Day* on Wednesday, March 2.

On Dolphin Book Days, students at CGS receive a FREE book to take home and *read!* Volunteers are needed for each grade level on those days to help organize and stamp books. The volunteer time is about one hour. Siblings still at home are welcomed to come along with parent volunteers.

If you are interested in volunteering, please sign the form below and return it to your child's teacher or email Jennifer Jones at [jjones@coventryct.org](mailto:jjones@coventryct.org). If you have any questions, please call Jennifer Jones in the CGS Reading Room at 742-7313 ext. 195. Thank you for your support.



### 2010-2011 Dolphin Book Day Volunteer

Parent(s) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade/Teacher (indicate am/pm for Kindergarten): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

**TEACHERS: PLEASE PUT IN MRS. JONES' MAILBOX. THANK YOU.**

## Weather-Related/Emergency Closings, Delays, and Early Release Notifications

Announcements regarding these closings, delayed openings, and early releases will be made via our ALERTNOW calling system. In addition to broadcasting this information on selected TV and radio stations, all student homes are now phoned by ALERTNOW. If families would like a list of the selected media outlets, please see the website at [www.coventrypublicschools.org](http://www.coventrypublicschools.org).



## From Our Friends at the Coventry Early Childhood Center

By now, your child is adapting to the school year routine. Family routines are also a very important part of child development. Children develop best in an environment of order and consistency. They are happier when they know what to expect. To a young child, a predictable world is a safe world.

By setting regular, reliable times and procedures for daily events, parents and teachers provide a dependable environment. Routines also help avoid the power struggles that so often occur between adults and children.

You'll find life with your child goes more smoothly if you set up and consistently carry out regular routines such as bedtime, wake-up time, mealtimes, chore times, play times, and homework times. It might help to have a list of the sequence of daily events posted where your child can refer to it as necessary (for example, bedtime – put on pajamas, brush teeth, read story). Use simple drawings on the schedule to facilitate young children's understanding (kids love to help with such drawings).

Of course, some changes in schedules and routines are unavoidable. And while children prefer routine, they are resilient enough when a familiar routine has to be disturbed. There are two basic points to remember:

1. **Be consistent.** Children are the most content when the same thing happens at pretty much the same time every day; and
2. **Explain deviations from the routine.** If you have to change your plans, let your child know ahead of time, if possible, and explain the situation and the change you are making.



[www.coventryecc.org](http://www.coventryecc.org)

## PTO News

We had a terrific turnout at our first meeting! It was wonderful to meet so many new and returning parents and hear your great ideas. We thank you for your participation and look forward to another successful meeting on October 4.

We enjoyed seeing so many families at the Open House. Thank you very much for bearing with the heat and long line to support our Scholastic Book Fair. We took in \$4,500 from the book sales - our profit will be determined shortly and reported in the next newsletter. Thank you all for your support! A special thanks to Martha McKerley and Claudia Schenk for co-chairing this terrific event, along with the great group of volunteers that pitched in to help with the setup, work the cash registers and pack up the books at evening's end.

Just a reminder that it isn't too late to fill out a membership and volunteer form. This will get you added to the PTO email distribution list so that you can get updates on all of our events and activities as well as copies of the PTO meeting minutes if you aren't able to make a meeting.

Our Lyman Orchards pie fundraiser is currently underway. Please remember to have your orders in by October 20, and your delicious pies will be available for pickup beginning at 1:30 p.m. on November 16 - just in time for Thanksgiving! Also, the Original Artworks fundraiser (turning your child's artwork into items that you may purchase as gifts) will be coming home soon. Mrs. DuBois is working diligently with your children to create a special masterpiece!

### Upcoming Events:

- Friday, October 15, from 6:30 - 8 p.m. is Family Fun Bingo Night
- Monday, November 8, at 7:00 p.m. is our next PTO meeting. Free babysitting is available.
- Wednesday, November 10, from 4 - 8 p.m. is our "Beat the Holiday Rush Shopping Event" at Thymes Remembered Gift Shop. More details to follow!

**Help Wanted:** We are looking for a chairperson (or co-chairs) for the following events:

- Teacher Appreciation Days (during November conferences)
- Bake Sale at the town Craft Fair on Saturday, December 4
- Family Fun Nights (ongoing)
- BJs membership fundraiser

If you are interested, please contact Beth Hassett or Carrie Houk.

### Look for the CGS PTO on Facebook and become a member today!

#### Beth Hassett, Co-President

Phone: 860-742-5605;  
Email: [bhassett5605@charter.net](mailto:bhassett5605@charter.net)

#### Carrie Houk, Co-President

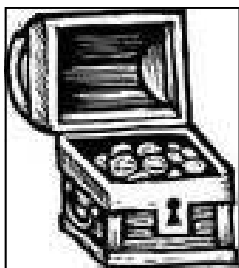
Phone: 860-498-0189;  
Email: [chouko189@charter.net](mailto:chouko189@charter.net)

#### Anita Hilinski, Secretary

Phone: 860-742-1907;  
Email: [doggroom21@cs.com](mailto:doggroom21@cs.com)

#### Camilla Byam, Treasurer

Phone: 860-742-8682;  
Email: [camillabyam@hotmail.com](mailto:camillabyam@hotmail.com)



## PTO Treasurer's Report

September 13-29, 2010

Treasurer: Camilla Byam

<b>Beginning Balance:</b>	<b>\$1,209.41</b>
<b>Income:</b> ~Target Donation- \$184.70 (Target Redcard) ~ PTO Membership Dues - \$335.00 ~ Returned Check - \$50.00	<b>\$569.70</b>
<b>Expenses:</b> ~Babysitting (PTO Meeting)- \$60.00 ~ Book Fair Start-up Cash- \$250.00	<b>(\$310.00)</b>
<b>Ending Balance:</b>	<b>\$1469.11</b>

For an electronic copy of this newsletter, or for additional information about the Coventry Grammar School, please visit our website:

[www.coventryps.org/cgs/cgs.html](http://www.coventryps.org/cgs/cgs.html)

