



# GHR NEWSLETTER

## NOVEMBER 2008



### From the Principal~ Mr. Dave Petrone

Dear Parents,

As we prepare for parent-teacher conferences here at GHR, I reflect on my first experience as a parent attending conferences for my children. I remember that I was very anxious. What would the teacher tell me about Kali and Wes? I had been a part of so many parent-teacher conferences, how could I possibly be so nervous? I vowed to be a good listener and to put away my "principal's hat." In the end it was an excellent experience. The teacher was very positive and we had a good discussion about how I could help my kids at home with some of their learning. It felt very good to have the conference experience from a parent's perspective. I learned a lot about my kids, but I learned even more about myself (always fun). Parent-teacher conferences are an excellent opportunity for positive dialogue and meaningful discussion between parents and teachers. Working together, parents and teachers can have a tremendous positive impact on students.

I hope that you will feel at ease and comfortable knowing that GHR teachers are here to help you. We are your teammates in ensuring a positive and enriching educational experience for your children. As a parent, I think that the following questions are helpful to think about and to ask during conferences. I hope that they will help you to have an excellent conference:

- Does my child consistently meet classroom standards for completing assignments?
- How does my child interact with others and contribute to classroom activities?
- What additional resources might benefit my child?

- What can our family do at home to help my child be more successful in class?

Please know that our teachers are anxious to hear what you have to say. You are the utmost authority on your child. Of course, your youngster(s) will be very excited to hear positive feedback after your meeting. Please celebrate the positives and build on their strengths as they continue to learn and grow. Best wishes for a rich and rewarding conference with your child's teacher. Lastly, please know that I am always available to meet at anytime throughout the school year.

Cordially,  
David Petrone



### Inside this Issue

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

3rd Grade News	2
4th Grade News	2
5th Grade News	3
Reading Room	3
Math Matters	3
Superintendent	4
Bd of Education	4
Media	4
Nurse	5
Band & Music	5
PTO	6

- Parent Conference 1/2 school day
- Staff Dev. Day
- Holidays

The first quarter has come to a close and now that two months of school have passed and schedules have been established, our days are flowing more smoothly and efficiently in third grade. Students have settled into a routine and seem to be more aware of classroom and school expectations.

**Parent Conferences** are right around the corner! Our time to meet during parent-teacher conferences will be used to review your child's first quarter progress, especially in the areas of reading, mathematics, and writing, and to share thoughts, observations, and goals for your child. If you have not yet signed up for a conference, you may call the main office to schedule a time.



As the chilly days of November and December settle upon us, all classrooms are settling in with themes revolving around **Immigration, Industry, and Communities**. These three units of study are closely integrated. Classrooms will be focusing on reasons why people came to America, the hardships they faced as they settled into a new, strange life, industrial jobs they may have had to support their families, and how the communities they settled in grew, changed, and supported them.



Of course, we cannot neglect to mention our annual community event- Thanksgiving. Third graders will celebrate the holiday in a Charlie Brown fashion. Can you guess what's on the menu?

Our *Everyday Mathematics* focus for the month of November is **Measurement**. Students will explore length, area, and perimeter in both metric and customary units of measure. Students will also identify "personal references" for estimating lengths. Look for the Unit Three Family Letter to explain these concepts in detail.



Thank you for your continued efforts in supporting your child's academic growth.

Sincerely,  
Heidi Bosco, Erin Brown, Anne Burke, Ronnie Giana, Donna Gwozdz, Jennifer Emerson, Jan Spangle, Gail Sroka, and Katie Stiles

## News from Grade 4

Jerry Craig, Mike Daigneau, Jim Dzwonchyk, Janine Goldsnider, Erin Hazzard, Nora Jones, Michelle Santese, , Barbara Timberman

It is hard to believe that the first marking period is coming to a close. If you haven't signed up to meet with your child's teacher during November conferences, please call the main office to schedule a time. We all look forward to meeting with you to discuss your child's first quarter progress.



On October 22 the Science Center visited the fourth graders and performed experiments on electricity, physics and weird science. It was a great experience and was enjoyed by all who attended.



During late October and November the fourth grade has many special events planned. On October 31, the fourth graders will participate in our third annual Walk-a-thon to benefit UNICEF. The fourth graders are also encouraging the other students in the school to Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF.



Native American presenter/storyteller Clint Chartier will be visiting the fourth grade on November 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>.



On November 18-19 the fourth graders will be visiting the state capitol.



Students are encouraged to write in their planners daily. Please be sure to check your child's planner daily for homework assignments, long range projects, or any other special events.

Just a reminder...please work with your child on memorizing his or her math facts.

Thank you for all you do!! We appreciate your efforts.

November is here and fifth graders are now comfortable with the routines, schedules, lockers, and assignment pads. Students are adjusting to the expectations of fifth grade. Please make sure you check your child's assignment pad and homework on a daily basis. Report cards will be coming home on Friday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, and parent conferences will follow. We are looking forward to meeting with you.

The first unit in math, number sense, has come to a close. Students are now studying various methods of computation of whole numbers and decimals. Some of these methods are different from the ones traditionally taught. We encourage the students to use the method with which they are most comfortable. It would be helpful if you could work with your child reviewing these methods as well as practicing multiplication facts. Math classes will be continuing on with number stories and an introduction to basic algebra principles.



The reading classes are finishing up their work with the first novel of the school year, Night of the Twisters.



Predicting, character development, and sequencing are just some of the skills on which the students focused. Please remember that reading logs need to be signed daily and turned in on Friday.

In language arts, the students are concentrating on adding details to their expository writing paragraphs. In addition they are working on the conventions of grammar.

The science classes have begun their study of the earth, the moon, and the sun. The students will be responsible for keeping a moon journal for sixteen nights. They will write and draw their nightly (including weekends) moon observations. The journals will be going home on November 3<sup>rd</sup> and will be collected later in the month. There will be no additional science homework during that time.



We encourage the whole family to get involved in the fun! It's a great opportunity to explore and learn together.

All of our students have been given the opportunity to enter the CT Secretary of the State's Fifth Grade Essay Contest. The topic this year is "What can you do to help protect the environment and prevent global warming?" We have had many wonderful pieces of writing submitted.



Plotting a course in social studies, the students are using map coordinates and learning about map symbols. In addition students will be continuing on with current events and keeping up with what's happening in the world.

Check your child's trapper or binder and if "filled to the brim with papers," sit down check, and organize papers together. Never throw out papers unless you have asked your child. A clean and orderly trapper is a good way to start the second quarter.

Gr 5 – Mrs. Bernier, Mr. Carlson, Mrs. Piteo, Ms. Steeves, Ms. Silvernail, Mrs. Sandberg, Mr. Spivey, Ms Woodin

## From the Reading Room ~ Mrs. Sue Hansen

### How Can I Help My Struggling Reader?



Do you have a child who is great at reading words, but who understands or remembers almost nothing they read?

A child needs to know that reading fast is not necessarily the sign of a good reader. In fact, good readers often read quite slowly, reflecting on the text and responding to it. A child should look at the title, pictures, and section headers and make guesses about what is going to be in the text (predicting). As they begin to read, they should reflect on whether their predictions hold. Encourage your child to develop mental images of the settings, characters, and actions, or in case of informational text, of the processes being explained in the text. This is known as visualization. Remember, visualization is a process that uses all five senses. When the text gets confusing, good readers re-read or slow their reading. Readers should check and see if they remember what they read and make interpretations. Throughout reading they connect ideas in the text to their prior knowledge to help them understand the text. Teaching readers to read actively improves comprehension.

## MATH MATTERS- Kim Licata ASSIST Teacher



Sometimes we hear children ask, "Why is math important?" They often do not realize that math is a tool we need and use every day. At home, we use math in many ways-to cook meals, to make repairs-even to check the weather forecast so we will know what to wear. At work, math is used in almost every job-from counting change to designing machines. At play, math is used in countless ways-from solving puzzles to keeping score.

Parents can help students succeed in math. As a parent, you are your child's most important teacher! You can present a positive attitude about math. Let your child know that you believe he/she can succeed. Children tend to emulate their parents, and if a parent says, "You know this is interesting!" that becomes the child's model.

Show interest in your child's homework. Talk with your child about mathematics and listen to what they are saying. Even when you don't know how to solve a particular problem, asking a child to explain the meaning of each part of the problem may be enough to find a strategy,

Point out examples of how people use math in daily life. Help your child see how math is a part of daily life. In the store, have your child use a calculator to add up costs as you shop. Ask your child to read maps or road signs while reading in the car to figure how far it is to your destination. In the news, notice the numbers and percentages used in weather reports, news stories, and advertisements. Show how sewing, woodworking, or planning a garden can involve math. Point out that math is used to figure batting averages, field goal percentages, etc. Encourage activities that make math interesting and fun!

## Superintendent's Corner

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 scheduled for Wednesday, November 12 from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. at The Knitting Nook, 3466 Main St.



Have you ever wanted to be more informed in emergencies? This is your chance to get news quickly. The Town of Coventry and the Coventry Public Schools have a new way to get information out to the public. Anyone can sign up to receive email-blast updates on town information and on school emergencies/closings. Check out the school website at [www.coventrypublicschools.org](http://www.coventrypublicschools.org) to access the link to sign up to receive this information.

There will be a test "e-blast" sent out on December 15, 2008, to those who have registered for school information. If you are interested, be sure to register your email address by December 12. If you register your email address for school information and do not receive the December 15 test email, please contact the Superintendent's Office.




---

### Board of Education News: Programs That Make a Difference

At the October 16, 2008 meeting, the "Coventry Pride" section featured the Student Test Results Summary (CMT, CAPT, SAT) and PowerPoint presentation developed by GHR Principal, Mr. David Petrone, CHS Principal, Mr. Troy Hopkins, and CNH Principal, Ms. Michelle Mullaly. Mr. Petrone, Mr. Hopkins, and Ms. Mullaly all took turns presenting the testing information. The academics Math, Reading, Writing and Science were broken down into 3 areas: Positives, Areas of Focus, and Instructional Connections. During the presentation Mr. Petrone conveyed that GHR was able to get off AYP with little to no money spent, while some districts spend millions doing the same. Mr. Petrone also noted the difference between Coventry's per student expenditure vs. DRG E's and how the administration is committed to Coventry students by being competitive with surrounding towns, despite the lack of resources. Positive comments were made and questions were asked by several Board members. One question posed, referred to the tracking of and comparison of students' test results as they move through the years. Mr. Petrone and Ms. Mullaly said that a data team is being put together to look at and study these comparisons and many other areas of student test results. Tune in to Munivision, Channel 13, to view the entire portion of this meeting and learn more about "Programs that Make a Difference."

---

## Greetings From the Media Center!

Welcome to November in the Media Center. October was a great month for all our readers. We added over 300 new titles to the shelves and they are being checked out fast and furiously. fifth graders learned about The Edge Chronicles by Paul Stewart and Chris Riddell. This is a fun fantasy series that is sure to capture the attention of interested readers. Students from 5th grade also polished their dictionary skills and talked about how the guide words can help them locate the word they are looking up. Third and fourth grade students fell head over heels for the My Weird School series that was introduced to them. This series is written by Dan Gutman and is certain to elicit laughter from all ages. Students in 3rd and 4th grade also heard some fables from Jon Scieszka's Squids Will Be Squids. As we move into the next month we have lots of new, exciting books and series to share with everyone.

This weekend (November 8th and 9th) is the annual UConn Book Fair. As usual, the coordinators of the event have put together a great assembly of authors and illustrators for children to meet. If you have some free time, make sure to stop by and check it out. More information is available at <http://bookfair.uconn.edu/>





## Nurse's Notes ~ Therese McKeever 742-4529

Did you know that here at GHR there are 9 students with life-threatening food allergies and more than 20 students with other dietary concerns that can greatly affect their health? These children are scattered in classrooms throughout our building. Understandably, sending food into the school should take some thought.

**What food is safe to send to school with your child?** The most common of these issues is an allergy to peanuts or other nuts, but there are many other complex considerations. Here are some guidelines to make it simple:

- It is ok to send your child with lunch from home containing nuts, peanut butter, trail mix, etc. because we offer a peanut / nut-free table in the cafeteria.
- Instruct your children not to share their lunch with other students.
- Always check with your child's teacher *several days before* you send in birthday or celebration food to *share* with the class.
- If your child has any dietary concerns, please contact me at 742-4529.

Therese McKeever



### From the Band Room: Mrs. Gould



The GHR band students are working on their "Fun Songs" and have started working in the lesson books. I am amazed each week with the progress they are making in regards to tone production, tonguing, and reading skills. I hope that you are enjoying mini-concerts at home!

The lesson schedule should be solidified very soon. It takes a bit of time to fit the students in to accommodate the other classes they are responsible for.

Our first concert date will be determined this month. Our Spring Concert will be at the Veteran's Memorial Auditorium on May 19, 2008. We will be performing with the CNHS Grade Six Band.

It is essential that your child attends his or her weekly lesson and come prepared to play.

Practice isn't always fun, but in the long run when things start to come together, the fun begins! Your encouragement is a plus. If you have any questions regarding the band program, please call.

Carol Gould,  
GHR Band Director

\*\*\*\*\*WICKED TICKETS STILL AVAILABLE\*\*\*\*\*

There are still tickets available for grade five students and parents wishing to see

the Broadway Musical "Wicked" in New York City on May 13, 2009. If you are interested, please have your child contact the band director, Carol Gould or call 742-7341 ext. 173.

## "Just a Note!" From the Music Room ~ Mrs. Labelle

The schedule for the Holiday Program is as follows: Grade 4 12:30 – 1 P.M., Grade 3 1:30 – 2 P.M., Grade 5 2:30 – 3 P.M. The program will be held in the Robertson Gym where the students will perform on stage.

The date of the program is December 17, 2008.



# GHR PTO News

**Next PTO  
Meetings! :  
Tuesdays  
11/18  
@ 7pm!**

## *The 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Coventry Schools PTO Craft Show*



Will be held on Saturday, December 6, 2008

At

Coventry High School

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

\$2.00 Adult Admission

**\*\* Children Free \*\***



**Over 80 Crafters, HUGE Bake Sale, Take-A-Chance Table  
and a luncheon served by the FCCLA Class**

This is a wonderful community event and fundraiser for our schools!  
All proceeds from the Craft Show are shared equally among Coventry's four schools.

Each school is responsible for a part of the show.

CGS – Bake Sale

GHR – Set-up Friday Night, Crafters' Breakfast, Admission Tables

CNHMS – Take-A-Chance Table

CHS – Publicity, Senior Service, Clean-up



If you are interested and can help out with Set-up Friday Night, Crafters' Breakfast or Admission Tables, please call Shelley Ratte at 742-7898 or email at [RatteSL@aetna.com](mailto:RatteSL@aetna.com).



Any questions regarding this year's Craft Show, please contact Laurie LaBrec (Chair)  
742-0353