



 November/December, 2023

Orchard Park Schools November/December Update



December Message from Superintendent Lilleck

A Message From the Superintendent



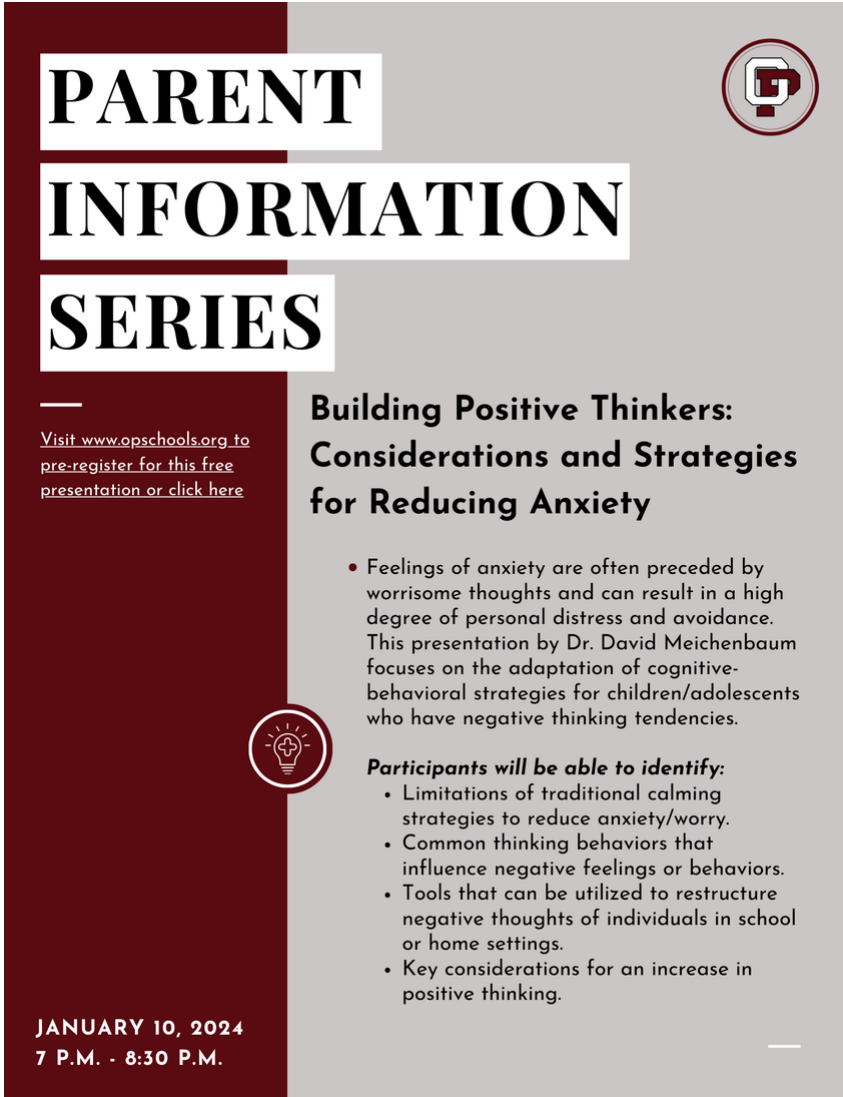
[Click to learn about how we are maximizing the potential of all students.](#)

Upcoming Events

Parent Information Series Continues with Building Positive Thinkers 

The 2023-2024 Parent Information Series is set to continue with a virtual presentation of Building Positive Thinkers: Considerations and Strategies for Reducing Anxiety on Wednesday, January 10, 2024 at 7 p.m. This presentation by Dr. David Meichenbaum focuses on the adaptation of cognitive-behavioral strategies for children/adolescents who have negative thinking tendencies. If you are interested, please click the link below to register.

Register for the Virtual Presentation of Building Positive Thinkers



**PARENT
INFORMATION
SERIES**

Visit www.opschools.org to pre-register for this free presentation or click [here](#)

**Building Positive Thinkers:
Considerations and Strategies
for Reducing Anxiety**

- Feelings of anxiety are often preceded by worrisome thoughts and can result in a high degree of personal distress and avoidance. This presentation by Dr. David Meichenbaum focuses on the adaptation of cognitive-behavioral strategies for children/adolescents who have negative thinking tendencies.

Participants will be able to identify:

- Limitations of traditional calming strategies to reduce anxiety/worry.
- Common thinking behaviors that influence negative feelings or behaviors.
- Tools that can be utilized to restructure negative thoughts of individuals in school or home settings.
- Key considerations for an increase in positive thinking.

**JANUARY 10, 2024
7 P.M. - 8:30 P.M.**

What's Happening in Our Buildings!

Orchard Park Middle School

Sixth Graders Bake for Good ☑

In November, the sixth-grade students from Orchard Park Middle School participated in an assembly sponsored by the King Arthur Flour Co. In two separate assemblies, King Arthur showcased the art of breadmaking to the entire grade-level. The company generously supplied all the necessary baking materials for students to bake loaves of bread at home. Students had the opportunity to bake a loaf to keep for themselves and another to contribute as a donation. The



OPMS Select Choir Performs at Mercy Hospital 🎵 🎹

Earlier this month, the Orchard Park Middle School Select Choir performed at Mercy Hospital for caregivers, patients, and visitors. They were a part of the Dr. George Moore Memorial Holiday Concert Series. The series was established in memory of Dr. George Moore who was a long-time surgeon at Mercy. In his retirement, he fully enjoyed and shared his love of music. Dr. Moore would come to Mercy and play his keyboard in the main lobby. In 2018 he decided that his music would be better played on a grand piano and donated one to Mercy Hospital for all to enjoy.



OPMS Art Students Design High-Quality Posters for the Lions Club 🐾

Earlier this year, Mrs. Sanchez's 8th-grade art students were "commissioned" by the Lions Club of Orchard Park to design a poster for the Lions International Peace Poster Contest. This year's theme was "Dare to Dream".

The students were instructed to envision themselves as real-world graphic designers, generating high-quality work, satisfying clients, and adhering to deadlines. Upon completing the task, more than 60 posters were submitted to the Lions Club, where members conducted a vote to select the first, second, and third place winners.

Congratulations to winners Julia N., Miriam S., and Mason H!



Eggert Elementary

Eggert Elementary Students Launch Eggert's Best ☺

Students in Mrs. Funigiello's class at Eggert Elementary launched Eggert's Best this fall. They offer pop-up stands serving, coffee, tea, hot cocoa, and chocolate-covered pretzels. So far this year, they have delivered beverages like coffee, tea, and cocoa to staff at Eggert Elementary in addition to utilizing their storefront where faculty and staff members come to them to place their orders. The students even took a field trip to the Orchard Park Central School District Offices and had a pop-up stand there!



Eggert's Best provides its students an opportunity to work on their social skills: greeting customers, taking orders, and communicating a customer's order to their peers. They are working on cooking and occupational therapy skills like sequencing a recipe, measuring ingredients, safely handling food items, identifying ingredients, and assembling the final products!

The hot cocoa with marshmallows, peppermint, and whipped cream comes highly recommended!



Ellicott Elementary

Ellicott Students Receive Insight Into the Writing Process

In the days before Thanksgiving Recess, author and artist Ryan Maloney visited fourth and fifth-grade classes at Ellicott Elementary. Last year Mr. Maloney visited Ellicott Elementary and gave grade-level presentations to the entire school. This year, teachers at Ellicott Elementary invited him back to motivate fourth and fifth-grade students by sharing his writing and drawing process with them. His visit reinforced the fact that all writers, not just students, have to go through the editing process. Mr. Maloney visited individual classrooms allowing students ample time to ask specific questions of a published author.



South Davis Elementary

Inclusive Playground Opens at South Davis Elementary

Friday, December 8, South Davis Elementary had the grand opening of their new inclusive playground. The playground is a part of the Investing in Our Future Facilities Project overwhelmingly approved by voters in May of 2022. The playground is designed to be inclusive and accessible to all students, including a dedicated area for Pre-K students. South Davis is the fourth and final Orchard Park Central School District elementary playground to be completed this fall.



😊 South Davis' Buddy Benches Have Arrived

South Davis Elementary unveiled its new Buddy Benches alongside the new inclusive playground in December.

The purpose of each Buddy Bench is to provide a dedicated space for students who are feeling lonely or would like to make a new friend. When their classmates see them sitting on the bench, they know they can ask them to play.



The initiative for the Buddy Benches began in 2021. Students at South Davis connected with Sammie Vance through the Kids Need Mentors program. Sammie had created a Buddy Bench for her school and has helped others around the country do the same. She is a 14-year old author who wrote her first book in 2021, *Inspire the World: A Kids Journey to Making a Difference*. The South Davis community was so inspired by Sammie's work that they decided to take steps toward making their own.

Throughout the 2021-2022 school year, a team of 5th-grade students, led by Mrs. Carter and Mrs. Pietrantone, observed the usage of the existing Buddy Bench. Recognizing the need to refresh awareness of its purpose, the group decided to have two new Buddy Benches built. The South

Davis Buddy Benches were created by South Davis students by recycling plastic bottle caps and lids through Green Tree Plastic's ABC Promise Partnership Program.

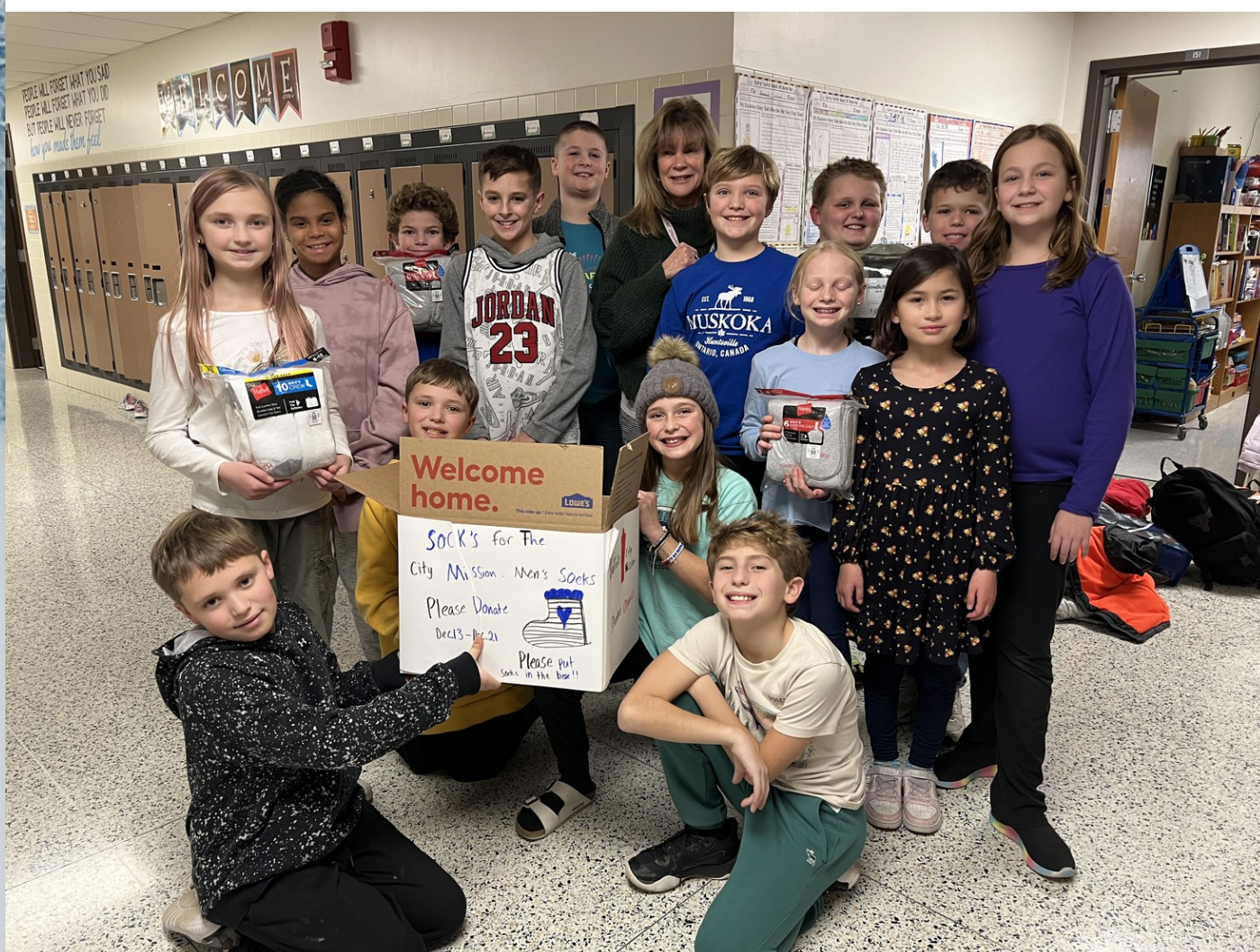
In the 2022-2023 school year, the BPCC, (Bullying Prevention Student Committee) group meticulously sorted all plastic caps and lids, ensuring compliance with the recycling program's guidelines. Several classrooms also contributed to this collective effort. As the school year concluded, the South Davis PTO played an important role in supporting the final steps and facilitating the shipment of the benches to the school.

As of Friday, December 8, 2023, the completed Buddy Benches were installed and ready to be used!

Windom Elementary

Windom Student Council Holds Sock Drive to Benefit Buffalo City Mission 🏠

Student Council members at Windom Elementary hosted a men's sock drive to aid the Buffalo City Mission. Socks are the most requested item from the Buffalo City Mission. The students were motivated by a Windom staff member, Mrs. Schmidt, who has participated in the sock drive for years.



Orchard Park High School

DECA Excels at Regional Competition 🏆🏆

Orchard Park High School DECA members traveled to Niagara Falls on December 19, to compete at their regional competition in an attempt to qualify to represent OP DECA at the States. Thirteen students placed in their categories! Twenty-three of thirty Orchard Park DECA students qualified to compete at States in Rochester March 6-8!

DECA prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs in marketing, finance, hospitality and management in high schools and colleges around the globe.



👞👗 OPHS Students Prepare for their Annual Shoe Fashion Show

Students in Miss Perla's Fashion class at the Orchard Park High School are preparing for their annual Shoe Fashion Show which will be held in January. Students prepare a shoe design for themselves or a model and the shoes are modeled at a fashion show at school. The students plan, coordinate and advertise the fashion show as a part of the class.





Crime or Punishment Toured the NY State Unified Court System

Mrs. Feeley's COPS class (Crime or Punishment in Society) recently toured the NY State Unified Court System in downtown Buffalo. Students viewed the City Court Lockup Facility and heard from the Case Manager of the DWI court. The class also viewed criminal arraignments and visited Family Court. Judges, Court Officers, Court Reporters, and Attorneys all shared information about their legal careers and answered student questions.



Second Generation Holocaust Survivor Speaks to Human Rights Students at OPHS

On December 11, the Human Rights class at OPHS celebrated Human Rights Day. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is now 75 years old. To commemorate and celebrate this important document, Mrs. Giallella's class enjoyed a shared breakfast and a presentation by Ms. Wendy Weisbrot. Ms. Weisbrot is a second-generation Holocaust survivor. Her father, Joe Diamond, was a survivor of the Holocaust and Auschwitz II. Ms. Weisbrot shared her father's story of survival and life after World War II. She led the class in an investigation of Upstanders during the Holocaust. With a local connection to Buffalo, students learned about Dr. Clara Ambrus, Tibor Baranski, and Sister Margit Slachta. Ms. Weisbrot is a local speaker who helps lead the Holocaust Education Resource Organization (HERO).



Buffalo History Museum Field Trip

The Honors Seminar in the Humanities at the high school took a field trip to the Buffalo History Museum. Honors Seminar is a senior elective that serves as both an English and social studies course. Students researched, discussed, and collaborated to create a college-style classroom environment where they explored this year's topic of "The Power of Myth and Legend." The museum staff focused on Native American history, stories of the Pan-American Exposition, and President McKinley.





Welcome



Mr. Aaron Grupka Named Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

On December 12, 2023, the Board of Education appointed Mr. Aaron Grupka the Orchard Park Central School District, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. Since 2012 Mr. Grupka has served in multiple building leadership roles within the District. Most recently he served as the principal of the middle school. Prior to that was the House II principal at the high school. Mr. Grupka is set to begin his new position on January 3, 2024.



Mrs. Jill Sengbusch Named Assistant Director of Special Education and MTSS

On December 12, 2023, The Board of Education appointed Mrs. Jill Sengbusch the Orchard Park Central School District Assistant Director of Special Education and MTSS. Mrs. Sengbusch comes to Orchard Park from the Clarence Central School District where she served as an Assistant Director of Special Education. Mrs. Sengbusch is set to begin her new position on January 16, 2024.

A Snapshot of OPCSD 📸



Sixth Graders Participate in Ancient Egypt Breakout Session

Mr. Herman and Mr. Helfman brought their sixth-grade social studies classes to the library where they participated in a Breakout EDU about Ancient Egypt. Students had to solve clues related to Ancient Egypt and open a breakout box.



Kindergarten Gingerbread Houses at Windom

Kindergarten students at Windom were able to spend time with their loved ones while building and decorating gingerbread houses on Friday, December 15.



Fifth Graders Adopt a Family through P.U.N.T.

Fifth graders and their families at South Davis adopted a South Davis student and his family through the P.U.N.T. foundation. The fifth grade posed for a picture with the gifts before they were delivered! The mission of the P.U.N.T. Foundation is to provide children affected by cancer and their families with the opportunities and support to enjoy the life for which they fight so hard.



Interview with Scientist Corey Hensen

On December 7th, Ms. Richey and Mrs. Ruffino's seventh-grade science classes were able to interview Geologist



OPHS Science Teachers Get Behind-The-Scenes Experience at the Buffalo Zoo 🦒

On Friday, December 15 after school a group of science



Eggert Students Collaborate on Book Project

Fifth-grade students chose topics to research to learn about and share with their

Corey Hensen from Cornell University. Mr. Hensen virtually connected with our classes to present his research on geologic time, how geologists study geologic time, and interesting examples from right here in New York State. At the end of his presentation, students were able to ask questions about geology and Mr. Hensen's specific research of Devonian fossils, including types of fossils he has discovered, which included a portion of a dinosaur vertebrate. This presentation and interview gave students a view into real-world scientific research and inspired our students to learn more about the world around them pertaining to geology.

teachers from Orchard Park High School visited the Buffalo Zoo and had a personal behind-the-scenes experience with a Giraffe Keeper. The teachers are participating in a book study, on "West With Giraffes," by Lynda Rutledge. Stacy Rominger arranged for the Book Study group to get this special experience with Rebecca Balk, the School Programs Specialist at the Buffalo Zoo. The group was able to visit and feed the giraffes at the Buffalo Zoo while having an in-depth conversation with the giraffe keeper to learn more about these incredible animals.

classmates. Some of the topics included animals, the Bermuda Triangle, England, the Titanic, etc. They conducted research in the library using books and online databases. Then, they were taught about what Book Creator is and how to use it: an online eBook app/site that allows students to join a class library (set up by the librarian or classroom teacher) to make their own eBook. Books are then published and shared online or printed.



Ellicott Food Drive 📺

Ellicott Elementary hosted a food drive to benefit several local food pantries. This year they turned the event into a competition. Teachers' names and pictures were attached to the donation boxes. The teachers who ended up with the most donations in their boxes dressed up in costumes! The food drive was a success!



South Davis Kindergarten Writing Celebration 📺

Kindergarten students at South Davis Elementary held their Kindergarten Writing Celebration on Friday, December 15. Students proudly presented their writing pieces to their Kindergarten peers, all while wearing the pajamas for P.U.N.T.



Holiday Letters to Oishei Children's Hospital 🌲

Mrs. Schermerhorn's fifth-grade class at Windom, made holiday cards for children who will be spending their holiday in Oishei Children's Hospital. The students made their cards interactive, creating word searches, and coloring pages for the children to do, while also including inspirational messages. Jackson H. was

able to deliver the cards to the hospital.



Winter Recess

December 23, 2023 - January 2, 2024

Helpful Links

Parent Portal

Virtual Backpack

Menus

My School Bucks

Calendar

Free and Reduced Meals/Milk  



Orchard Park Central School District

Maximizing the potential of every student, every day.



Contact