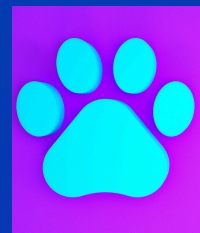




# Cotrone's Character Corner

A Monthly Newsletter from School Counselor, Connie Cotrone

## SEPTEMBER 2025



### Character Education

Welcome back to another exciting year at Columbus Elementary!

One pillar of our district wide strategic plan is the Culture of Care and Wellness. The goal of this pillar is to design and implement a systemic framework that fosters problem solving and addresses emotional wellness by developing the competencies of self awareness, self management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making in students, faculty and staff. These competencies are embedded in our daily communication and instruction on a continuum beginning in Kindergarten. The objective of this pillar is to provide a framework for students to progress in the qualities we have identified in our Portrait of a Learner, while developing these competencies in an emotionally supportive environment for them to grow and thrive.

Character education themes each month will focus on one of qualities identified in the Portrait of a Learner below. Students will learn vocabulary associated with these words, read related stories and will have lessons or building wide activities that coordinate with these themes.



### Care & Wellness

Ability to recognize own feelings and needs. Identifying strengths, weaknesses and learning to advocate.

Being able to follow directions, making good choices and recognizing the consequences of choices we make.



The ability to get along with others, play cooperatively, manage conflicts.

Learning how to regulate emotions and having the ability to stop and think before acting.

Being aware of others emotions, empathy and perspective taking.



# Making a connection...

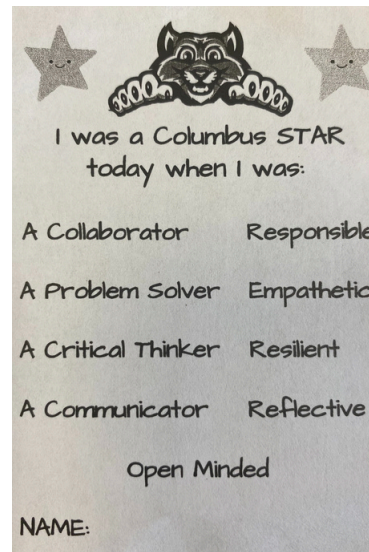
How to reinforce STARS throughout school and home



## STAR Students

One of the goals of the elementary counseling program is to teach skills that help children become responsible and positive role models in their community. Columbus emphasizes the importance of being STARS (Students That Are Responsible, Respectful and Safe) through established behavior expectations that align with our Profile of a Learner. Students are recognized when they demonstrate responsible, respectful and safe behaviors in their classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, and at recess. If students are caught being STARS, they will receive a STARS ticket to keep that indicates which quality of a learner they demonstrated. Students also receive a reward, are recognized in Mr. Hanlon's Columbus Connections, on the PA announcements and receive a STAR on the Columbus Wall of Fame. Students attended grade level assemblies in early September to learn about STAR behavior expectations and posters are hung as visual reminders throughout the school.

Check out our STARS Ticket!



## Character Theme of the Month

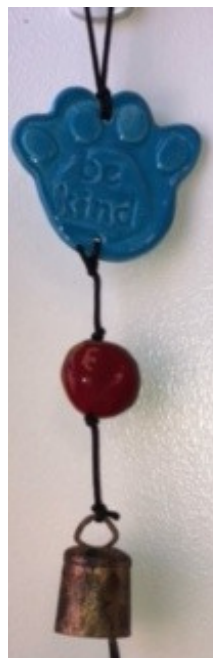
### RESPONSIBILITY

The theme of the month for September is "Responsible." Children are continuously learning how to make responsible choices as students, classmates, friends, siblings, etc. Grade level assemblies this month focused on becoming responsible members of our school community and what that looks like. Students were challenged to be leaders and brainstormed ways to lead by making good choices, showing kindness and exhibiting STAR behavior both at home and at school.

## Ben's Bells

"Kindness causes a chain reaction!"

Research has shown that an act of kindness can alter someone's mood in such a way that they would stop to help someone else, ultimately causing a chain reaction. Ben's Bells is a program we use at Columbus to promote the practice of intentional kindness. We encourage students and staff to look for kind acts among each other and nominate someone whose act of kindness greatly impacted them. Nominations to select student and staff recipients are reviewed at the end of the month. Nomination forms are available on a bulletin board outside of the gym. Stay tuned for our first Ben's Bells recipients!



## What can I do at home?

Teaching responsibility at home is both helpful to parents and children. It gives children a sense of accomplishment and helps them practice self-management skills. Please click on the image below for some free chore/responsibility charts to use at home.

