



Bright Spots and Big Moments in Mapleton

Thursday, Oct. 9, 2025

Welcome to **Spark! Bright Spots and Big Moments**, your biweekly roundup of feel-good stories, standout moments, and celebrations from around Mapleton. From student achievements to staff highlights, this community newsletter is all about what makes Mapleton shine.

Spark stories are organized by:

Bright Spots – shout-outs and recognitions

Big Moments – experiences, milestones, and celebrations

Behind the Spark – staff profiles or features

Community Connections – events, partnerships, family highlights

High Fives!

[Share your good news!](#)

[Send a "High Five"!](#)

Past issues of all our employee newsletters are available [on our website](#).

Bright Spots



Homecoming 2025: A roaring success on and off the field

Mapleton's "Great Homecoming 2025" celebration was one for the books, bringing together students, families, and staff for a weekend full of school spirit.

The festivities kicked off with the annual parade, where dazzling floats and roaring '20s-inspired costumes brought "The Great Gatsby" theme to life. **Welby Community School of the Arts**

earned top honors in the float competition for the second year in a row, impressing judges with creativity and flair.

On Friday night, the **Skyview Wolverines** football team capped off the celebration with a **24-14 victory** over The Academy Wildcats. Senior quarterback **Carlos C.** led the way with 142 total yards and two touchdowns as the Wolverines improved to 3-2.

Thank you to everyone who made this unforgettable weekend possible!

Academy High School science teacher selected for rare weightless research experience

Academy High School science teacher **Dr. Mellissa Pfaff** is preparing for a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, flying aboard a zero-gravity aircraft to test a student-designed experiment in weightlessness.

Pfaff is one of only 12 educators nationwide selected for the 2025–26 Embedded Teacher Program, offered by the nonprofit Space for Teachers to promote STEM engagement. She will fly in a specially modified Boeing 727, which is also used by NASA, that will make 30 steep climbs and dives, creating about 11 minutes of total weightlessness.

“This opportunity excites me most because I get to share it with students,” Pfaff said. “They won’t just learn about science, they will actually do science, and that’s where true inspiration begins. My goal is to help students see themselves in space.”

Throughout the year, Pfaff will guide students, from chemistry and AP biology classes to Air Force Junior JROTC cadets, in developing and refining research projects for the flight. The experience will take place in May, likely in Florida or Houston.



Friendly competition drives Clayton Partnership School's strong October Count turnout

Clayton Partnership School turned attendance into a friendly, schoolwide competition during its three-day Attendance Challenge, held Sept. 29–Oct. 1, to build excitement leading up to October Count. The grade level with the highest attendance on Wednesday, Oct. 1, earned a popsicle party, giving students extra motivation to show up to class.

One fun activity to encourage attendance was a schoolwide rock-paper-scissors tournament on Oct. 1, where students collected necklaces for each win. Those with the most necklaces won

Water World tickets, generously donated by our partners at Hyland Hills, and other prizes.

The challenge paid off! Clayton surpassed its 95% attendance goal, with seventh grade leading at 97.4% and second grade close behind at 97.1%.

York middle schoolers launch new engineering pathway with glider project

York International School middle schoolers put their creativity to the test last month by designing and building skimmer gliders to launch down the hallway as part of a new middle school Engineering Pathway. Using blueprints and careful measurements, students constructed their gliders from file folders, glue, and tape, then tested them for distance and accuracy.



The hands-on project is part of York's new Career and Technical Education (CTE) Engineering Pathway, which uses the nationally recognized Project Lead the Way curriculum to introduce students to engineering, design, and problem-solving. The program aims to spark curiosity and prepare students for York's high school engineering track.

Expanding CTE opportunities is a district priority, helping Mapleton students graduate ready for college, careers, and beyond.

Big Moments



Check out construction updates!

Construction to begin on Explore Primary

Yesterday, Mapleton families and staff gathered to celebrate the groundbreaking for Explore Primary, the second of Mapleton's "Final Four" school rebuilds made possible by our community's support of the 2022 mill levy.

Explore Primary will welcome preschool through first-grade students in one of Mapleton's fastest-growing neighborhoods, expanding the Explore campus and creating new opportunities for our youngest learners. The existing Explore building will be remodeled to serve grades 3–8. Similar to Explore PK-8, every detail of the new Explore Primary will honor the rich farming and ranching heritage of the land.

Thank you to the design teams at Hord Coplan Macht, the crews at JHL Constructors, and our Owners Representatives at Accenture for their partnership, creativity, and collaboration. A big thank you to the entire Mapleton community for investing in our schools, our students, and our future.

Four Academy High School seniors earn College Board AP Scholar Awards

Four Academy High School seniors were recognized last month by the nonprofit College Board for their academic achievement on multiple Advanced Placement (AP) exams, earning **AP Scholar Awards** that highlight their hard work and college readiness.

The students each earned one of two distinctions: the AP Scholar Award or the AP Scholar with Honor Award, for receiving scores of 3 or higher on three or more AP exams. Kipley M., Manuel M., and Marley P. earned AP Scholar Awards, while Abraham M. earned the AP Scholar with Honor Award.



These honors reflect students' dedication and persistence in rigorous coursework that builds a strong foundation for college success.

Read more about how Academy students are pushing themselves and planning for the future in the [“News from the District” section here](#).



York seniors earn National Recognition Awards from College Board

Not to be outdone by their Academy peers, four York International School seniors recently earned National Recognition Awards from College Board for their academic excellence. Students qualify first based on strong PSAT/NMSQT performance and a GPA of 3.3 or higher.

Lissania N. and Anya F. received the First-Generation Recognition Award for being on track to become the first in their families to complete college. Tanner C. and Alexis T. earned both the First-Generation and School Recognition awards, the latter celebrating the top 10% of performers within their school community.

York is proud to celebrate these outstanding seniors whose achievements reflect hard work, perseverance, and bright futures ahead.

Students savor local flavors on Colorado Proud Day

Colorado Proud Day proved to be a hit with students last week as Mapleton's Nutrition Services team served up a locally inspired menu that celebrated Colorado agriculture and healthy eating.

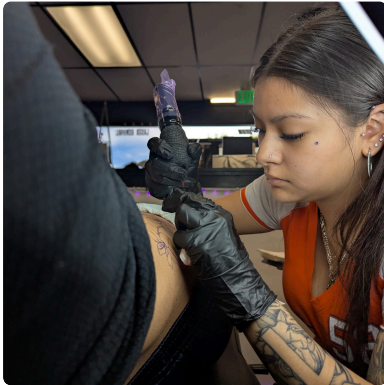
Students lined up for cheesy ground beef quesadillas made with Colorado-raised beef, tortillas, sour cream, pinto beans, and house-made pickled jalapeños. The colorful salad bar featured local

favorites like cherry tomatoes, watermelon, cantaloupe, apples, lettuce, and carrots, with chocolate chip cookies from Sweets of Inspiration bakery as the perfect finish.

The celebration gave students a fun way to explore local foods while supporting Colorado farmers and food producers.



Behind the Spark



Finding her canvas: Mia Windy Boy's path from Mapleton to tattoo artistry

From sketching in York classrooms to making her mark in Denver's tattoo scene, Mia Windy Boy's journey is one of passion, resilience, and creativity. Encouraged early on by friends, family, and teachers who saw her talent, Mia dreamed of becoming a tattoo artist. Personal loss nearly pulled her away from art, but with family support she found the strength to keep going. After completing an intensive apprenticeship, the 2021 York

International School graduate is now a professional tattoo artist at 5280 Ink, turning her lifelong love of drawing into a career.

[Click here to read](#) how Mapleton helped shape her inspiring path!

Read the full story here!

Celebrating Mapleton's classified employees and school principals!

In September, Mapleton's Board of Education unanimously adopted proclamations recognizing October 6-10 as Classified School Employee Week, and the month of October as National Principals Month.

We are proud to recognize **Mapleton's dedicated classified employees** who play an essential role in the success of our schools and the growth of our students. While they may often work behind the scenes, their impact is felt every single day in every corner of our district.

Classified employees:

- Clean and maintain our school facilities, creating safe and welcoming spaces for learning.
- Safely transport students to and from school each day.
- Prepare and serve nutritious meals that fuel learning.
- Keep our main offices organized and running efficiently.
- Maintain important records and systems that support student success.
- Hire and onboard new staff while supporting the needs of current staff.
- Balance our district's budget and steward resources wisely.
- Keep our technology systems up and running.
- Assist in classrooms and on playgrounds to support students directly.

Together, these vital contributions ensure that our schools run smoothly and that students, staff, and families feel supported and cared for.

Each year, the National Association of Secondary Schools, the National Association of Elementary Schools, and the American Federation of School Administrators designate **October as National Principals Month** in recognition of the dedication and tireless efforts of administrators to provide excellence in educational leadership. In celebration of our outstanding school principals and assistant principals, and in support of their daily contributions to the education of our students in Mapleton Public Schools, we will recognize the month of October as National Principals Month.

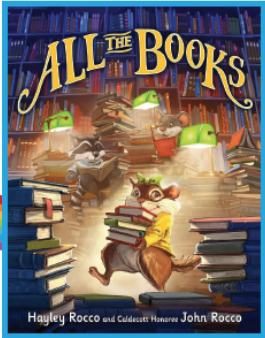
We invite you to join us in celebrating our classified employees and school administrators! Take a moment to share your gratitude for a staff member who is making a difference in Mapleton. **Send your messages to communications@mapleton.us.**

Community Connections

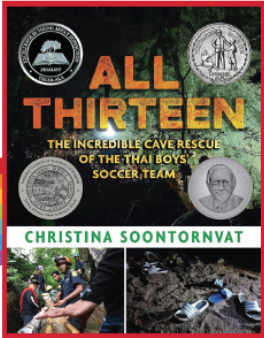

Mapleton Public Schools

MAPLETON READS

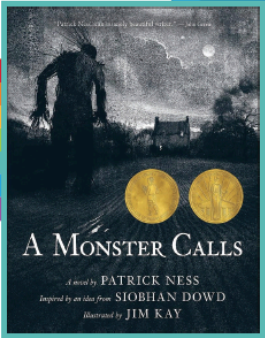
Community Reading Program



ALL THE BOOKS
 Written by Hayley Rocco
 and Caldecott Honoree John Rocco
Reading Level: Grades K-3



ALL THIRTEEN
 Written by Christina Soontornvat
Reading Level: Grades 4-8



A MONSTER CALLS
 Written by Patrick Ness
Reading Level: Grades 9-12

Mapleton Reads kicks off its 13th year

Mapleton's annual community reading initiative, **Mapleton Reads**, is back for its 13th year, uniting students, families, and neighbors through a shared love of reading. From **October 2025 through January 2026**, readers across the district will explore this year's selected titles, sparking conversation and connection throughout the community.

"All the Books," by Hayley Rocco and Caldecott Honoree John Rocco (*K-3rd Grade*)

"All the Books" introduces us to Piper Waterstone—a charming, book-obsessed little chipmunk who treasures her collection of books so much she refuses to share it. She takes her beloved books everywhere, hauling them through every season, until the burden of her growing pile becomes truly cumbersome. After a mishap—in the rain, of all places—she's gently guided into a grand, welcoming library by a kindly mole (the librarian), who shows her that she can enjoy all the books she wants... as long as she's willing to share them with her neighbors

"All Thirteen," by Christina Soontornvat (*4th-8th Grade*)

"All Thirteen: The Incredible Cave Rescue of the Thai Boys' Soccer Team" tells the gripping true story of the 2018 Tham Luang cave rescue in Thailand. When twelve young soccer players and their coach became trapped deep underground by sudden flooding, the world watched in suspense as an international team of divers, engineers, and volunteers raced against time to bring them out safely.

Through vivid storytelling, photographs, and firsthand accounts, we learn about the boys' courage, the dedication of their rescuers, and the global cooperation that made the seemingly impossible rescue possible. This inspiring account of this story shows the power of hope, teamwork, and resilience.

"A Monster Calls," by Patrick Ness (*9th-12th Grade*)

"A Monster Calls" is a captivating and beautifully told story about love, loss, and the courage it takes to face the truth. Every night since his mother fell ill, Conor has been visited by nightmares. But one night, when the clock strikes 12:07, something different comes—something ancient, wild, and elemental. A monster arrives at his window, not to scare him, but to tell him three stories. In return, Conor must tell his own: the truth he has been hiding, the one he cannot bear to say out loud. Woven with myth, tenderness, and deep compassion, "A Monster Calls" is a powerful exploration of grief, healing, and hope.

Pick up copies of each title at any Mapleton school or the Administration Building and read along with us!

Join DAAC!

Mapleton Public Schools is seeking parents and guardians to serve on our **District Accountability Advisory Committee (DAAC)**. This is an important opportunity to make a real impact on the future of our schools and community.

As a member of DAAC, you will:

- Collaborate with district leaders on key decisions that affect students, staff, and schools.
- Review and provide feedback on topics such as the **district budget, school improvement plans, and the student discipline code**.
- Help ensure transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement in Mapleton Public Schools.

Meetings are held monthly online and are available in **English and Spanish**. Your perspective matters. Join us in building a strong, successful future for every Mapleton student.

Complete this [brief form](#) to join DAAC today!

DAAC Interest Form

High Fives!



"High Fives" are a quick and fun way to celebrate the people who make Mapleton shine. From kind gestures and creative ideas to everyday excellence, these shout-outs recognize those who go above and beyond and remind us of the many ways our community makes a difference.

If you know someone who deserves a "High Five", submit your appreciation using this form.

Andy Leapley and Melissa Johnson, Communications

"Andy and Melissa played an essential role in Adventure's recent transformation from the Miners to the Marmots. Melissa brought our community together with a joyful story that turned this change into a true celebration, making a lasting impact on our school. Andy designed stunning new images and logos for us and beautifully captured our students performing the revised school song, creating memories we'll treasure."

Submitted by Adventure Marmots

Natalia M., Meadow Community School Student

"She tries her best every day to make new friends, to be kind, and to learn new words and new sentences at school."

Submitted by Ashley Webb

Jake Martinez and Mary Applonie Wight, Integrated Services

"Thanks to Jake and Mary for providing Mental Health support to the Explore PK-8 community! It is this type of selflessness that shows we are all a community and want to help one another out when it is needed. Thanks to you both!"

Submitted by AJ Staniszewski

Sean Andersen-Vie, Communications

"Sean, I really appreciate you stepping up to complete our grant reporting. It was such an important piece of work, and your effort made a big difference for our team. Thanks for being someone we can count on."

Submitted by Sarah Kopperud

Leslie Cochran, Monterey Community School

"Leslie is our new IG for the middle school. She works tirelessly to make sure the teachers have all the support they need to succeed. She understands what coaching is and how it is supposed to

assist the teachers in their daily lives. She also listens and makes a real effort to help create a school that will maximize the learning of the all students."

Submitted by Paul Kaiser

Aaron Rugg, Mapleton Expeditionary School of the Arts; and Brian Touher, North Valley School for Young Adults

"Thank you for sharing chemistry materials with me last week! You guys are amazing!"

Submitted by Mellissa Pfaff

[If you know someone who deserves a "High Five", submit your appreciation using this form.](#)

Spark! Bright Spots and Big Moments – Call for Submissions

Do you have a bright spot or big moment to share? Email communications@mapleton.us, or call 303.853.1020 to share your ideas!

Email: communications@mapleton.us

Website: <https://www.mapleton.us/>

Location: [7350 Broadway, Denver, CO 80221, USA](#)

Facebook: facebook.com/MapletonPublicSchools

Twitter: [@mapletonschools](https://twitter.com/mapletonschools)



Mapleton Public Schools

Mapleton is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters

