



Cotrone's Character Corner

A Monthly Newsletter from School Counselor, Connie Cotrone

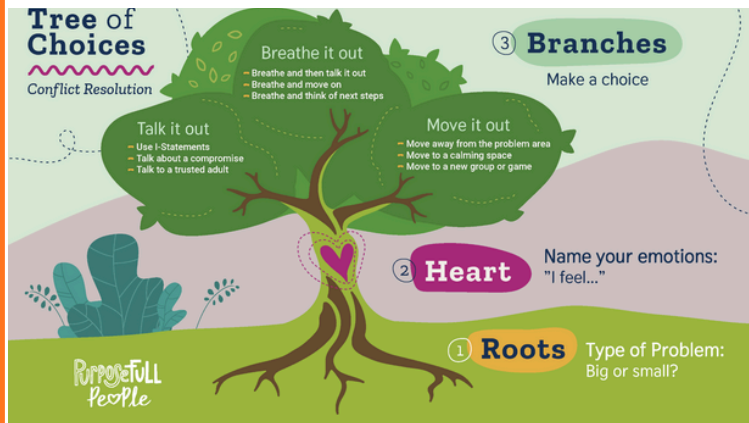
October 2025



Character Education

The theme of the month for October is Problem Solving. Character education lessons this month used resources from Character Strong/Purposeful People, an evidence based multi-tiered approach to supporting all children. Lessons this month focused on conflict resolution, using the social emotional competencies of self management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making. Students learned the difference between big and small problems and how our reactions should match the size of our problems. Students learned different steps to problem solve using kindness and respect. Steps were taught using the Tree of Choices that offered many strategies for becoming independent problem solvers. Conflict resolution steps and visuals were used to help students identify which strategies they could use to solve conflicts.

TREE OF CHOICES



Conflict Resolution Steps

STEP 1 (Roots)- Identify if this is a big or small problem

 BIG PROBLEMS = Dangerous / Emergencies OK TO ASK ADULTS FOR HELP	 SMALL PROBLEMS = Problems I am strong enough to handle on my own
Someone is hurt or sick	Arguments with friends or siblings
Someone is being teased	Could be a misunderstanding or something we didn't expect to happen
Someone is fighting with their hands/feet	No one is in danger
Someone is in danger or doing something dangerous	Can be solved trying different strategies

STEP 2 (Heart) - Name the feelings you're having about the problem



STEP 3 (Branches)-Which choice would you make to solve the problem?

MOVE IT OUT	BREATHE IT OUT	TALK IT OUT
Move away from the problem	Breathe and then talk it out	Use I messages
Move to a calm space	Breathe and move on	Talk about a compromise
Move to a new group or game	Breathe and think of next steps	Talk to a trusted adult

Problem Solving in STEM

In STEM with Ms. Gabriel, 4th graders put their problem-solving skills to the test in an exciting STEM challenge: designing a mini chair for a LEGO figure. Students worked through each step of the engineering design process — brainstorming, sketching, testing, and improving their creations. They had to think critically about balance, stability, and structure to make sure their chairs could support the tiny figure without tipping over. When their first designs didn't work as planned, they collaborated, made adjustments, and tried new ideas. Through this hands-on challenge, students learned that problem solving is all about perseverance, creativity, and teamwork!





Making a connection...



How to reinforce character education at school and home



STAR Students

Students at Columbus are continuing to show behaviors that are responsible, respectful & safe. For the month of October staff continued to focus on rewarding STAR behavior that was above and beyond what students are expected to do. Names of all October recipients were announced each week and STARS have been placed in the cafeteria celebrating their accomplishments. Please see a comprehensive list of all our October STARS.

Gianna Costello	Leianne Fegi	Peyton Broderick
William Reilly	Kayla Hernandez	Isabella DiNardi
Hayden Miles	Abigail Rogerson	Frank Taylor
Leo DiGioia	Isabella Benanti	Matteo DiPierro
Amelia Daniel	Stella Giustino	Miles Wallin
Milo Morrissey	Shayla Itri	Gavin Utschig
Evan Liller	Alexandra Badagliacca	Olivia Palatnik
Jacob Criscitelli	Luke Nealon	Ethan Thundiyl
Christopher Molina	Christian Paquette	Marco Smacchia
June Griffin	Annabelle Bergman	Frederick Olsz
Scarlett Sollazzo	Lavina Mainuddin	Sonia Salomone
Haley Michaelidis	Jenna Girolamo	Lily Griffin
Amelia Sze	Valentina Cheron	Olivia Zaccagnino
Lily Ann Stallone	Charlotte Fitzpatrick	Mia Piccininni
Gianna Drogan	Kelsy Carpio	Dominic Arcieri
Emma Cuzon	Arya Aquije	Courtney Foley
Amelia Roughan	Maddox Cournotes	Nicholas Salvatore
Marley Walton	Reise Spahr	Parker Horn
Gianmatteo Cheron	Sarah Baker	Brian Manriquez
Ava DellaVecchia	Bethany Lucia-Cotter	Ava Sprague
Angelina Romano	Henry Fuentes-Soriano	Emma Ragonesi
Lily Bottiglieri	Nicolas Barbosa Rayo	Adriana McNulty
	Sophia Olsen	

Ben's Bells

"Kindness is contagious!"

Ben's Bells is a program we use to promote the practice of intentional kindness. Each month students and staff nominate people who have shown genuine acts of kindness. Congratulations to the following recipients for the months of September and October.



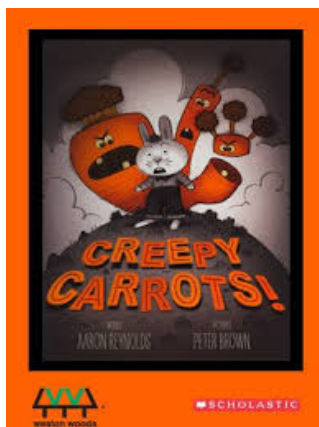
SEPTEMBER



OCTOBER

What are we reading?

During Library special with Mrs. Finno this month, some of our 3rd and 4th grade students enjoyed reading *Creepy Carrots* by Aaron Reynolds as they explored the theme of problem solving and Halloween. In the story, Jasper Rabbit finds himself in a spooky situation with some creepy carrots! Students had fun discussing how Jasper came up with a clever plan to solve his problem—and how, in the end, his solution helped the carrots too.



What can I do at home?

As parents, many times we find ourselves hearing about our children's problems right before bed. My kids are older now but I always thought that was a ploy to stay up late, lol! Looking back, I realized that when my children's bodies were ready to settle down, their minds start racing. Here are some suggestions to help gather useful information from your children if they are having trouble expressing their emotions/problems but need help problem solving.

Ask open ended questions – "What was the best part of your day and why? What was the worst part of your day and why?"

Family Journal – Everyone gets to write a page when they get home and whomever wants to share them can do so. Some kids find it easier to write what happened, rather than say it.

Click on the lightbulb for a [list of books that encourage conversation and problem solving skills:](#)

