AMHERST CENTRAL FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

Where mental health matters and strong families succeed

Parent Newsletter November 2025

Attend this Thursday, Nov. 6 - Digital Dangers with the FBI

We invite all parents to a special event aimed at helping families navigate the challenges of raising children in the digital age. On Thursday, Nov. 6, representatives from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) will be hosting an informative presentation titled "Digital Dangers: When Online Chats Turn…". This event is for adults only due to the nature of the content. We encourage all parents, guardians, and caregivers to attend and become more informed about how to protect their children online.

Event Details:
📅 Date: Thursday, November 6
🕕 Time: 6 - 8 p.m.; check-in begins at 5:30 p.m.
📍 Location: Amherst Middle School Auditorium
Please RSVP Here

In today's connected world, children and teens face a variety of online threats that can be difficult for parents to detect or prevent. From social media exploitation and cyberbullying to online predators and the misuse of technology, the digital landscape is constantly evolving — and so are the dangers. This presentation will give parents a behind-the-scenes look at real-world risks from the perspective of law enforcement professionals who investigate cybercrimes involving children.

Topics will include:

- Current online trends and apps teens are using
- Warning signs of online exploitation and grooming
- Tips for safe internet and device usage at home
- Steps to take if your child becomes a target
- Resources for families

Holiday Giving Program Update: Capacity Reached

The Amherst CSD Holiday Giving Team is incredibly grateful for the overwhelming response and participation in our Holiday Giving Program this year. We have officially reached capacity for the 2025 season. All available slots for assistance have been filled, and we are no longer able to accept new requests at this time.

We understand that this may be disappointing news for some families, and we want to ensure that every family has access to support during the holiday season. If you are still in need of assistance with necessities, we encourage you to reach out to the Family Support Center (716-362-3071) where staff can help connect you with basic needs resources.

In addition, the following local organizations may also be able to provide holiday support:

- **Hearts for the Homeless™**
  Services: Food, clothing and gift assistance available during the holiday season. Contact: Please call (716) 876-7346 for more information.
- **The Salvation Army**
  Services: Food, clothing and gift assistance available during the holiday season. For children ages 12 & under. Contact: Please call (716) 888-6261 if you would like further information.

- **St. Luke's Mission of Mercy**
  Services: Holiday Giving Program - Food, clothing and gift assistance during the holiday season. Contact: (716) 894-4476.
- **St. Christopher's Outreach**
  Services: Food, and clothing assistance available. Contact: Please call (716) 504-7124 or (716) 564-9023 to schedule an appointment.
- **The WNY Holiday Partnership**
  Services: Gift assistance available during the holiday season For families who receive SNAP benefits, and have children ages 12 and under. Contact: Please call 211 or text your zip code to 898-211 and ask for a referral to the WNY Holiday Partnership.
- **Toys for Tots**
  Services: Gift assistance during the holiday season. Contact: Please call 1-888-696-9211.
- **Tiger's Den Food Pantry**
  Services: Food assistance available for those who qualify. Contact: (716) 835-0407.
- **University Presbyterian Church Food Pantry**
  Services: Food assistance available for those who qualify. Contact: Please call (716) 836-7660. for more information.
- **USPS Operation Santa**
  Services: Potential gift assistance for a child who writes and mails a letter to Santa. Contact: Follow the instructions for writing and mailing a letter to Santa at the Programs Website.

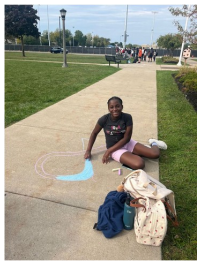
Chalk the Walk Event Spreads Hope and Raises Awareness

In September, our district came together in a powerful and inspiring way for our Chalk the Walk event as part of Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. The event helped students of all ages spread messages of hope, support, and mental health awareness—one very colorful sidewalk square at a time.

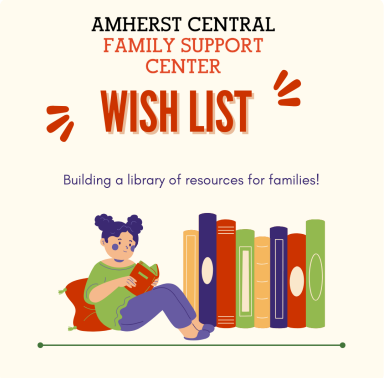
Participants were encouraged to use sidewalk chalk to write uplifting messages, draw meaningful artwork, and share resources for those who may be struggling. Messages like "You are not alone," "It's okay to ask for help," and "Your story matters" filled the sidewalks, creating a powerful visual reminder that no one has to face mental health challenges alone.

We were thrilled to see so many students, and staff members participate. The outpouring of creativity and compassion turned our building sidewalks into a vibrant tapestry of hope. By simply showing up and sharing kind words, our students sent a strong message that we care, and we are here for each other!

We'd like to thank everyone who participated. Your voices—and your chalk—made a difference. If you or someone you know is struggling, remember that help is available. Call or text 988, the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, for 24/7 free and confidential support.



Help Us Grow Our Social Emotional Learning Library



Have you heard about a special program in our school district — our **Social Emotional Lending (SEL) Library**? This carefully curated collection of books is designed to support the emotional well-being of our students and families alike, by offering resources that nurture empathy, resilience, and emotional understanding.

Our SEL Lending Library includes books in the following important categories:

- **Understanding Emotions** – Helping children identify and express their feelings in healthy ways
- **Managing Emotions** – Teaching strategies for self-regulation, mindfulness, and coping skills

- **Bullying** – Empowering students with tools to stand up to bullying and build positive peer relationships
- **Grief & Loss** – Providing gentle guidance, comfort and understanding during difficult times
- **Parenting** – Resources to support caregivers in navigating challenging behavior and fostering strong family connections.

This Giving Tuesday we invite families to **support our SEL Lending Library through book donations**. You may consider donating through our **Amazon Wish List**.

Together, we can create a safe and supportive space for all students and families to explore and grow together emotionally. Thank you for being a part of our caring community!

November Events

Thursday, Nov. 6 - Digital Dangers
5:30 p.m. check-in; 6-8 p.m., Amherst Middle School Auditorium
Registration Required

Wednesday, Nov. 12 - Grandparent & Kinship Fair
5:30- 7:30 p.m., Amherst Center for Senior Services, 370 John James Audubon Pkwy.

Understanding Sensory Sensitivity During Colder Months

Winter often brings about a variety of sensory experiences that can affect children, especially children with sensory processing disorders (SPD). The cold weather, different textures of clothing, and sensory overload from the holidays can be overwhelming. Here are some strategies to help your child manage sensory challenges during the winter months:

- **Layered Clothing Options:** Help your child feel comfortable by offering clothing with soft fabrics or seam-free socks, which can prevent irritation. Try to avoid tight or rough materials, and be sure they are dressed warmly enough for the weather.
- **Create a Sensory-Friendly Space:** Set up a calming area in your home where your child can retreat when feeling overwhelmed. This could include soft blankets, noise-canceling headphones, or a weighted blanket.
- **Use Calming Scents and Sounds:** Consider using essential oils or scented candles (lavender, for example) to create a calming atmosphere. A white noise machine can also help block out loud holiday sounds or outdoor noise, making the environment more soothing.
- **Offer Gentle, Quiet Winter Activities:** Instead of jumping into loud, fast-paced holiday events, offer your child the option of a quieter winter experience—such as reading by a cozy fire or creating winter-themed sensory bins with fake snow or cotton balls.

By acknowledging your child's sensory needs and providing the right accommodations, winter can become a more enjoyable and manageable time for everyone involved.

The Mission of the Family Support Center

We exist to provide community resources and support to families in the pursuit to create well-adjusted and confident children.

Get to Know the Amherst CSD Family Support Center

Hotlines & Collaborative Partners

988 Suicide & Crisis Hotline

National Mental Health Emergency Number
Call 988 if you, or someone you love is having a mental health crisis and is in need of assistance.

Text HOME to 741741

National Mental Health Crisis Text Line
Text HOME to 741-741 if you are having a mental health crisis and need support.

Collaborative Partners

Horizon Health Services
Gateway Longview Behavioral Health
Parent Network of WNY
National Alliance on Mental Illness
Mental Health Advocates of WNY

Bridges From Borders
Best Self Behavioral Health
EPIC (Every Person Influences Children)
Amherst Youth and Recreation

Virtual Calming Space

FSC Website & Events Calendar

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