



Cotrone's Character Corner

A Monthly Newsletter from School Counselor, Connie Cotrone

NOVEMBER 2025



Character Education



The November theme of the month based on our Portrait of a Learner is REFLECTIVE. November is a great time of year to reflect on what we're grateful for and students learned about the importance of how practicing gratitude can actually help reduce stress! Our character education lesson this month focused on reflecting on our emotions and how to manage them. Students learned a variety of coping strategies to reduce stress and made their own "Recipe of Calm" using the tools they learned about, including gratitude.

Reflecting on Tools We Can Use to Manage Stress

USE A GLITTER JAR/SNOW GLOBE or SQUISHY BALL	BREATHE DEEPLY	COUNT TO 10
COLOR or DRAW	THINK HAPPY THOUGHTS (memory, peaceful place, see yourself doing well)	HELPFUL THOUGHTS "This is a small problem, I can do this." "It's not worth getting in trouble over." If I say or do this, someone may be mad at me."
TAKE A BREAK (get some air, drink water)	READ or WRITE ABOUT IT (journal or diary)	SPEND TIME WITH A PET/ANIMAL
DO SOMETHING YOU ENJOY	LISTEN TO MUSIC	TALK TO AN ADULT or FRIEND

STAR Students & Staff

Students at Columbus are continuing to show behaviors that are responsible, respectful & safe and demonstrate our district's qualities of a learner. A special shoutout to 5th grader, Ella Quin, for advocating for teachers to now be recognized as STARS as well. Names of all November recipients were announced each week and STARS have been placed in the cafeteria celebrating their accomplishments. Please see a comprehensive list of all our November STARS.

Devan Gupta
Maddox Cournotes
Christian Paquette
Ella Quin
Evan Littlejohn
Lilou Lichtenstein
Mrs. Lenora Suraci
Emma Huffman
Reise Spahr
Stella Giustino
Massiel Zetin Rosas
Christopher Molina
Freddy Olsz

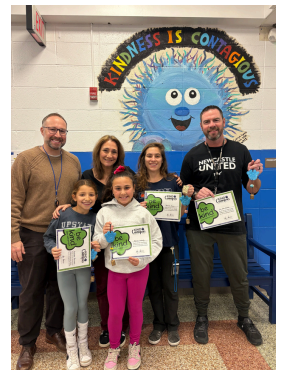
James Costa
Mrs. Felicia Kratz
Dominic Milo
Mr. Windman's Class
Harper Gjinaj
Maya Banach
Lucas Conde
Michael Vale
Nico Rodopoulos
Fabian Chuchuca
Naina Jacob
Ms. Gina Carmody
Lucas Anderson

Aron Shabaj
Carrie Dlugon
Alyssa Carter
Sonia Salomone
Johnny Pepaj
Gianni Liosi
Eliana Giglio
Dominic Clements
Ellie Marsh
Isabella Gitler
Riley Finan
Jack Nugent
Herbert Jiang

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 following recipients for the month of November.



Thanksgiving Feast

On Friday, 11/21, we celebrated a Thanksgiving Feast with our third grade students. Children ate a bountiful Thanksgiving meal in the cafeteria with their classmates and families, while they reflected on what they were grateful for. It was a wonderful way to celebrate a season of thanks!





Making a connection...



How to reinforce character education at school and home



Veteran's Day Assembly



On November 7th, students reflected on sacrifices made for our country as they celebrated our tenth Annual Take a Vet to School Day. Students showed empathy, gratitude and respect for Veterans during the many educational and engaging activities that took place during this special event. Mrs. Christine Galbo, together with a committee of teachers, helped organize an incredibly beautiful and poignant celebration honoring the men and women who served our country. Students spent time with veterans in their classrooms and learned about many different jobs performed in the military. Staff and students showed their gratitude by making veterans thank you cards, adorning the school with flags and patriotic artwork and the Honor Band played songs that represented each branch of service. All classes participated in Penny Wars and collectively raised \$2200, which was donated to freshman, Mikaela Gerring's Gold Award project, entitled "Remembering with Respect". She has proposed the construction of an outdoor memorial dedicated to our community veterans. The money raised will help fund items for her project, such as a park bench, a flag retirement box and a dedication plaque. Additionally this event granted Mr. Pietro DiPaolo, a veteran of the US Army, a Westlake High School diploma through New York State Law's Operation Recognition. This event is a true example of how showing respect and expressing gratitude truly impacts others.



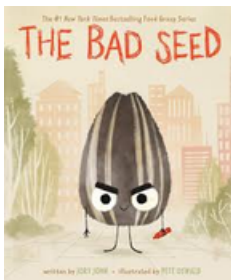
World Kindness Day

World Kindness Day was Thursday, November 13th. World Kindness Day is an international holiday to celebrate kindness around the world. It is a day when we can reflect on how showing kindness to others brings people together and makes our world a better place. To celebrate this day, many students wore shirts with kind messages and students were encouraged to do random acts of kindness, several of which were displayed on a kindness wall in the cafeteria.

The list below was sent home for additional RAK suggestions.



What are we reading?



This month during library class, our 3rd graders read *The Bad Seed* by Jory John and learned about the power of reflection. After the read-aloud, they discussed how the main character reflects on his choices and decides to make positive changes. Students then explored what it means to be reflective and shared their own examples with each other.

What can I do at home?

Practicing gratitude helps reduce stress. Reflecting on ways to be grateful helps us focus on the things that matter most.

Click on the jar image for a fun gratitude activity you can do as a family.

