



O'HARA SCHOOL COUNSELING NEWSLETTER

#2 FOR THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR



SECOND STEP LESSON UPDATES

K-2 Students completed Unit 1 lessons with skill development for learning that focused on listening, focusing, using self talk, and being assertive. Puppy, snail, & Mrs. Machen also introduced mindfulness strategies with breathing, self-talk affirmations, and yoga. All K-2 classes have begun Unit 2 Feelings and will have a lesson centered on gratitude prior to break.

3-5 Students:

*3rd graders practiced being respectful and skillful learners by focusing attention, using self talk, being assertive and making a plan to learn.

*4th & 5th graders focused on empathy, compassion and respect. Lessons were geared towards understanding different perspectives and disagreeing respectfully. Upcoming lessons will focus on managing emotions.



FAMILY RESOURCES: THE O'HARA CARING CLOSET & BACKPACK FOR HUNGER

The **O'Hara Caring Closet** is officially open thanks to our partners, Fox Families Care! Located in Mrs. Machen's office, this quiet & private space allows students to "shop" a large closet with new personal hygiene items, school supplies, and backpacks. New & gently used Foxes t-shirts, sweatshirts, and other clothing items are also provided. Fox Families Care also provides extra snacks for the closet & for teachers.

New & gently used winter coats in all youth sizes are also available at the Caring Closet now!

Backpack for Hunger

Weekend food bags are available for any family that requests them! The bags are placed in student lockers before school on Fridays to maintain confidentiality. Extra snack for the week can also be placed directly in the student locker if requested.

Reach out directly to Mrs. Machen at Rachel_Machen@fcasd.edu or 412.967.2507 or connect through your child's homeroom teacher. All services are confidential.





Children's Grief

AWARENESS DAY

EDUCATE. EQUIP. HONOR.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20TH: CHILDREN'S GRIEF AWARENESS DAY

BE A "CHAMPION OF HOPE" AND WEAR BLUE ON 11/20/25 TO SHOW THAT YOU SUPPORT STUDENTS THAT HAVE LOST A LOVED ONE.

THE HIGHMARK CARING PLACE OFFERS AN ONLINE ACTIVITY THAT YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR CHILD TO HONOR THE MEMORY OF A LOST LOVED ONE. ONCE YOU COMPLETE THE BUTTERFLY, IT'S ADDED TO THEIR VIRTUAL GARDEN:
[VIRTUAL BUTTERFLY](#)

WHAT IS CHILDREN'S GRIEF AWARENESS DAY?

- A day to keep in mind other kids having a very hard time after someone special died.
- A day to reach out and show you care to someone who needs it.
- A day to remember those special people who have died—someone you know or someone who a friend knows.

WHEN IS CHILDREN'S GRIEF AWARENESS DAY?

The third Thursday of November every year (the Thursday before Thanksgiving).

WHY OBSERVE CHILDREN'S GRIEF AWARENESS DAY?

Grieving kids don't just "get over it." They need support—more support and for a longer time than most people assume.

HIGHMARK CARING PLACE PROVIDES MANY SUPPORTS FOR FAMILIES COPING WITH THE LOSS OF A LOVED ONE:

PITTSBURGH LOCATION
620 STANWIX STREET
PITTSBURGH, PA 15222
(888) 224-4673

SUBMIT AN ONLINE REQUEST FOR INFORMATION:
CONTACT THE HIGHMARK CARING PLACE

CRANBERRY TOWNSHIP/WEXFORD LOCATION
200 WARRENDALE VILLAGE DRIVE
WARRENDALE, PA 15086
(888) 734-4073



A MINDFUL THANKSGIVING

Tips for Mental Wellness During the Break



Practice gratitude for mental wellness

Encourage your loved ones to start a daily gratitude ritual. Write down or share one thing you are thankful for each day during the break.

Manage holiday stress

The holiday season can be stressful. Prioritize self-care by taking breaks, practicing deep breathing, and setting realistic expectations.

Stay connected, but balance alone time

While it's important to connect with loved ones, it's also okay to take time for yourself. Encourage quiet moments to recharge.

Create a safe space for conversations

Use this break to check in with your loved ones. Ask how they're feeling, especially if they've been stressed or overwhelmed during the school year.



Limit digital overload

Reduce screen time and enjoy more in-person connections and outdoor activities. Digital detoxes help improve mental clarity and reduce anxiety.

Promote healthy sleep habits

Encourage a healthy sleep schedule during the break. Rest is key to maintaining good mental health and well-being.

Need help? Call (888) 515-0595

If you or someone in your family needs support, Care Solace is available 24/7 to help connect you to mental health resources quickly and confidentially.



**PUPPY & SNAIL LOVE WORKING WITH OUR LITTLEST LEARNERS,
ESPECIALLY TEACHING SKILLS TO HELP WITH BIG FEELINGS!
HERE ARE SOME TIPS AND
FAVORITE RESOURCES FROM THE 1ST NINE
WEEKS!**

SNAIL'S BOOK CORNER PICKS:



**PUPPY & SNAIL ALSO FOCUSED ON BEING
A BUDDY, NOT A BULLY
DURING ANTI-BULLYING MONTH!**



Things I can do when I need to

CALM DOWN

