



Character Corner

A Monthly Newsletter from School Counselor, Connie Cotrone

FEBRUARY 2026



STAR Students

Students and Staff at Columbus are continuing to show behaviors that are responsible, respectful & safe. For the month of February, CES continued to focus on recognizing

STAR behavior that was above and beyond what students/staff are expected to do. Names of all February recipients were announced each week and STARS have been placed in the cafeteria celebrating their accomplishments. Please see a comprehensive list of all our February STARS.

Emilia Dobronravova	Mason Damin	Hayden Miles
Juliette Diana	John Grasso	Maya Mathew
Dean Minott Jr.	Logan Karol	Dylan Noonan
Henry Soriano Fuentes	Chris Ippolito	Gracie Sheible
Adam Duran	Conor O'Donovan	Scarlett Sequinot
Anthony Lohay	Frankie Fanelli	Kendall McCloskey
Julia Gammarati	Besiana Celaj	Sabrina Hanigan
Nicholas Gernant	Alessandra Camaj	Audrina Ferrara
Mr. Sean Mayer	Skylar Arcuri	Alexa Ferretti
Kayla Brito	Dylan Pungello	Sofia Orlando
Jude Farrelly	Natalia Ramirez	Leianne Fegi
Samantha Zhungo	Dominick Carver	Peyton McCloskey
Pelagia Ferst	Marina Cook	Mackenzie Budesza
Dalilah Chavez	Isabelle Brown	Juliet Baldino
Harrison McAlley	Luna Sollazzo	Cameron Carew
Michael Nyarady	Ava DeVito	Frankie Camaj
Elizabeth Kirtley	Mrs. Coughlan's Class	Leo DiGioia
	Josh Sica	

Character Education

The Portrait of a Learner quality this month was RESILIENT.

Character education lessons focused on how having a growth mindset helps us be resilient. Students were faced with a challenging activity and we discussed as a class how our reactions to it caused us to persist or feel defeated. Students learned phrases to help train their brains to think more positively. Students also learned about famous failure stories and how it took a growth mindset to get to where they are today. See below for some examples of the growth mindset statements we discussed.

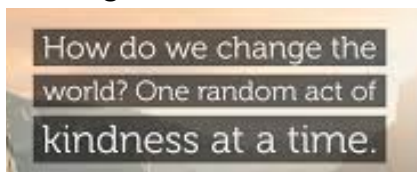
INSTEAD OF.....	TRY THINKING....
I'm not good at this	What am I missing?
I give up	I'll use a different strategy
It's good enough	Is this really my best work?
I can't make this any better	I can always improve
This is too hard	This may take some time
I made a mistake	Mistakes help me to learn
I just can't do this	I am going to train my brain
I'll never be that smart	I will learn how to do this
Plan A didn't work	There's always Plan B
My friend can do it	I will learn from them

PICTURES FROM OUR GROWTH MINDSET ACTIVITY



RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS MONTH

February was the perfect opportunity for students to practice last month's theme of empathy, as well as compassion, by doing random acts of kindness to brighten someone's day. Mr. Hanlon sent home a calendar with a random act of kindness students could do every day of the month. Click on the image below to see the calendar.





Making a connection...



How to reinforce character education at school and home

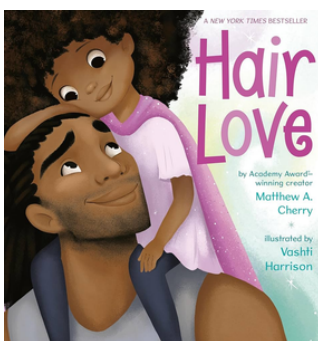


Ben's Bells is a program we use to promote the practice of intentional kindness. Each month students and staff nominate people who have shown genuine acts of kindness. Congratulations to the following recipients for the month of February.



What are we reading?

During the month of February, in Ms. Finno's library class, 3rd grade students enjoyed reading *Hair Love* by Matthew A. Cherry and then watched the Academy Award-winning animated short film adaptation. They discussed the theme of resilience and how the characters kept trying throughout the story. Students then compared the book to the film, discussing similarities and differences between the two versions of the story.



Hearts for Heroes



Thursday, February 12 our district celebrated Hearts For Heroes, a special recognition to honor service providers that make our community so special. Student council members and classrooms created Valentine's Cards to distribute to local first responders (police officers, healthcare workers, firefighters, and veterans). This special recognition culminated in a walk through at Columbus where several community helpers paraded our halls as students applauded and received lovely cards thanking them for their services. T-Shirts were purchased by many to show our appreciation. All proceeds were donated to the Maria Ferrari Children's Hospital and the Ronald McDonald House.

What can I do at home?

Developing a growth mindset is a skill that can take long to occur. The image below was shown during our character education lesson as a visual reminder of the many steps we may need to take to achieve success. We discussed how we may fall a few steps in the process but that is all part of learning from failure and challenges. Feel free to use this visual in your conversations at home when helping your children through challenges.

