



Cotrone's Character Corner

A Monthly Newsletter from School Counselor, Connie Cotrone

MARCH 2026



Character Education

Communicator was our portrait of a learner quality for the month for March. PA announcements reflected how we communicate our messages with and without words, how being effective communicators helps us solve problems and get our needs met. Mr. Hanlon's Community meetings this month focused on how being a communicator helps students be responsible contributors to our school community. Conversations also ensued about how communication is an essential skill for future careers as we had our first annual Career Week this month.

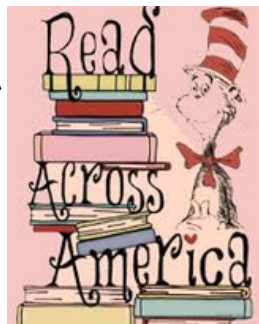
Mismatched Socks for World Down syndrome Day



Columbus recognized World Down syndrome Day by rocking mismatched socks on March 19th. This day is celebrated annually on March 21st, which fell on a Saturday this year. March 21st (3/21) is significant as it represents the triplication (trisomy) of the 21st chromosome that causes Down syndrome (which under a microscope looks like a sock). This day is celebrated worldwide to raise global awareness, advocate for rights, and promote inclusion for people with Down syndrome.

Read Across America

The National Education Association launched Read Across America in 1998 as a year-round program to celebrate reading. Read Across America is celebrated in March, the birth month of Dr. Seuss, as a way to commemorate his impact on the reading world. All classes at Columbus participated in a school wide reading endeavor on March 3rd. All students lined the hallways with their independent reading books and read for a specified period of time in their cozy PJs.



STAR Students

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

Arnel Hasaj
Marley Walton
Bethany Lucia-Cotter
Dean Minott
Juliette Diana
Caroline Clough
Kaylee Lagana
Cara Piliero
Cameron Carew
Victor Perez
Eliana Gjokaj
Courtney Foley
Gia Fuschetto
Amelie Savino
Sarah Baker
Stella Giustino
TJ Weadock
Jack Gedris
Nico Barbosa-Ray
Logan Karol
Lucas Montaldo
Aurora Cala

Ms. Rutledge's Class
Lukas Gjokaj
Gracelyn Sheible
Julia Gammarati
Marina Cook
Josh Sica
Camila Mazariego
Jacob Smith
Josie Nyarady
Santino Sinhart
Marco Smacchia
Olivia Palatnik
Izzy McCallop
Bella Aguilar
Michael Vale
Ryan Davi
Scarlett Sollazzo
Adam Avezzano
Marius Sukaj
John Grasso
Ethan Thundiyl
Dylan Pungello



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 March.

We are so proud of you!





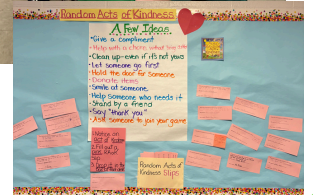
Making a connection...



How to reinforce character education at school and home

KINDNESS WEEK

Columbus celebrated Kindness week from March 9-13th. The purpose of kindness week is to practice kindness in a way that inspires others. There were many activities scheduled this week in classrooms, specials classes and throughout the building to remind us how showing kindness makes a difference in the lives of others. Some activities included a kindness singalong in Music, a schoolwide kindness chain in STEM, paper kindness rocks with inspirational messages, Wonder read aloud/activity in library and movie in the cafeteria, daily kindness challenge, hanging hearts on our character tree with ways we show kindness to our friends, sharing kindness tear off strips with positive messages and of course our daily kindness spirit days, which kicked off with coloring CES purple for Gia, who always lived her life spreading kindness. Members of our 5th grade Student Council also worked with the MS/HS Kindness Club on an art project, which culminated with them spreading kindness. A special thank you to CES Student Council and advisor, Mrs. Galbo, Mrs. Mayer, classroom teachers, specials teachers, Ms. Roma and her Nicholas Center Helpers all for helping to bring these activities to life.



CAREER WEEK

Columbus celebrated our first annual Career Week March 16-20. Mrs. Cotrone began the week with an engaging Intro to Careers lesson designed to help students begin thinking about the many possibilities for their future. In this lesson, students explored how strengths, interests, values, and goals can help guide career choices. They learned about a variety of careers and discussed the different skills and talents people use in their jobs, as well as important factors to consider when exploring career paths. Students also had the opportunity to research careers in their classrooms and extend their learning beyond school by conducting a career interview with a family member, friend, or community member to learn more about a job that interests them. Students also enjoyed seeing what teachers identified as careers they may have chosen if they didn't go into the field of education. We wrapped up the week with a fun Spirit Day, where students dressed as their favorite career or wore college apparel to celebrate future goals and possibilities. It was a wonderful week of curiosity, exploration, and dreaming about the future!

