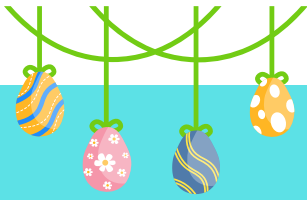


Cotrone's Character Corner

A Monthly Newsletter from School Counselor, Connie Cotrone

APRIL 2026



Character Education

The character theme of the month for April focused on being Open-Minded. Being open-minded is a quality that benefits us all in many ways.

Students learned that when we are open-minded we are willing to try new things and learn from new experiences. Being open-minded also allows us to learn from others' opinions, experiences, cultures, interests and perspectives. When we open ourselves up to different ways of thinking we grow in many ways. Our character tree highlighted different ways for students to practice being open-minded. Students were encouraged to write ways they were open-minded this month. Some wonderful examples they shared were:

"I tried a new activity."

"I learned from my mistakes."

"I tried a new game."

"I tried new foods."

"I agreed with a friend's idea."

"I played with different people."

"I made a new friend."



STAR Students

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

Julia Gammarati

Izzy McCallop

Hayden Miles

Valentina Cirioni

Anthony Summa

Gavin Utschig

Amaris Laari

Courtney Foley

Maddox Courniotes

Christian Paquette

Cameron Carew

Reise Spahr

Frank Dlugon

Mariella Fusco

Mrs. Talusan & Ms. Scarangella's Class

Tommy Liberati

Audrina Ferrara

Giuliana Piccininni

John Greco

Logan Karol

Erick Leonor

Nicky Smacchia

Livio Mellusi

Luke Pinto

Guy Salvatore

Annabelle Bergman

Bethany Lucia-Cotter

Solomon Skariah

Haley Michaelidis

Mason Einaugler

Cameron Carew

Emma Huffman

Gigi D'Ambrosio

Aurora Cala

Alexa Lohay

Juliette Costello

Amelia Daniel

Marco Smacchia

Frank Fasano

Isabella Gitler

Ellie Marsch



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 April.

We are so proud of you!



Making a connection...

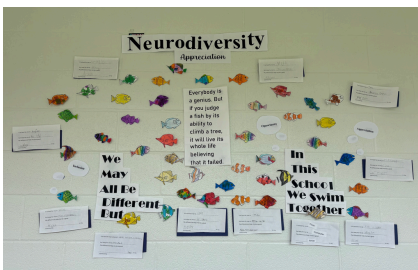


How to reinforce character education at school and home

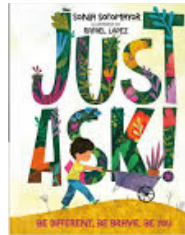


Neurodiversity Awareness Month

On Friday, April 17th, Columbus celebrated Neurodiversity Awareness Month. Students were encouraged to wear PJs or their "Always Be Yourself" T-Shirts with PJ bottoms to promote the message of being comfortable with yourself and accepting others for who they are. PA Announcements, a bulletin board and library books were displayed and read to reinforce this impactful message. A special thank you to SEPTA for purchasing additional library books on neurodiversity for our students and faculty to enjoy.



What are we reading?



In honor of Neurodiversity Month, 3rd graders spent their library time reading *Just Ask!* by Sonia Sotomayor. This story reframes "differences" as unique strengths, encouraging students to be open minded and lead with curiosity rather than hesitation. The reading sparked engaging conversations as students shared personal connections to the story—reflecting on their own experiences or those of friends and family.

Open Minded STEM Students

Third grade students are practicing being open-minded in Ms. Gabriel's STEM class while using Lego Spike engineering kits to consider multiple solutions to a design challenge. As they build and test their models, they often discover that their initial design does not work as expected, which encourages them to rethink, revise, and try alternative approaches. Working in pairs or small groups also helps them hear and value different perspectives, even when those ideas differ from their own.



What can I do at home?

Please click on the image below to learn ways to instill open-mindedness in your children. The article suggests ways to practice being open-minded and finding teachable moments in everyday conversation.

