

January 4, 2019 Vol. 4

Every Student, Every Day!

Parents, Families, Friends, and Educators Working Together on Behalf of Our Children!

Happy New Year to Our NW Community!



Happy 2019! With our incredibly kind, thoughtful, resilient, loving, and "eager to learn" children at Northwest, we look forward to this new year with warm hearts and open arms. Every day we tell our students that they are each unique and special, and we love them... and we mean it! Thank you for sharing your amazing children with us every day! We continue to look forward to working in partnership with you -- our parents, guardians, and family members -- whenever the opportunity presents itself. Whether it's at parent conference, "Meet the Teachers Night," calling to discuss joys and/or concerns, attending concerts, participating in PTC, or joining us for "Make it Take it," we

love family involvement and encourage all of you to join us. Solid teamwork between school and home will help our children blossom and grow!

Wishing all of our children and families a happy new year filled with growth and learning, love, good health, and joy!

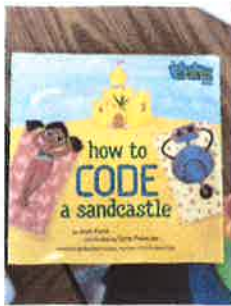
Holidays Around the World



Our students learned about many of the holidays celebrated around the world during the month of December. Two unique events occurred during these lessons. First, Ms. Forman invited her friend in Israel, Sam Bachman, to video chat with all of our second graders. Mr. Bachman told children all about holidays in the Jewish religion, and he graciously answered the many questions asked by students.

Secondly, our students enjoyed another firsthand experience when our counselor, Saaz Baweja, visited several classrooms to share with them India's most important holiday of the year: Diwali. This Hindu festival of lights celebrates the "victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance." Again, our inquisitive children asked many questions, displaying their interest in learning about other cultures' customs and traditions.

Coding in Mrs. O'Rourke's First Grade



December 3rd through December 7th was Computer Science Week. Mrs O'Rourke's young students learned that programmers write code to make computers, iPads, tablets, and applications solve problems for us. We can all write and follow code.

With young children, we often teach big ideas by sharing a good book. [How to Code a Sandcastle](#) by Josh Funk is a great starting place. The main character is a young girl named Pearl who works through the process of programming her robot to help her make a sandcastle.

Then we discuss the commands that Pearl used in the book. Follow this with a game called Hopscotch Coding (developed by Brooke Brown of Teaching Outside of the Box), and children experience being *the robot* as they take turns following the code's sequence of commands of forward, left, right, touch your toes, and even loops. All the while, classmates cheer on and even act out the code as each child makes his way through the code.



Children learn to solve specific problems by using a Blue Bot. With this device, we set up a work mat on which the robot will travel. Then, we set up a specific problem for the students to solve with code. Here, the children must write code to send Blue Bot to a representation of 6 (resources shown from Sara Malchow and Della Larson's Class on TpT). Each student takes a turn coding the path for the Blue Bot to take. The teacher records this code. Then the student programs the robot as classmates read the code off chorally. Then the student presses go, and we test the code. Sometimes it takes several tries to get Blue Bot to the solution. Sometimes it takes a team of students to write and rewrite the code to get the sequence to work correctly. We discuss how this process is exactly how programmers work-- as a team, to figure out tricky problems. We also talk about perseverance and how we feel when we have successfully solved a problem.

After these experiences, children are ready to try coding on their own. Here children are using Box Island to practice coding independently or with partners. They must write simple code sequences to move the character along pathways. As students progress through the levels, the problems to solve become more complex and require group problem solving talks to generate ideas. We do this by projecting the student's iPad on the SMARTboard, and we discuss ideas together. We try the solutions proposed as a group and see which idea(s) work to solve the problem at hand. Then we cheer for each other. Children go back to their own puzzles, working at their own pace, but with more knowledge of how sequencing code works.



Coding with young children can happen in primary classrooms. For the above experiences, we use our 30 minutes of Theme time each day during Computer Science Week along with the Hopscotch Code in the morning to sign in as children arrive. As the week progresses, children are very excited about coding. Spontaneous dancing has broken out as Theme time approaches in the course of the day. Joy, teamwork, and using logical thinking as they code are great outcomes for this special week of school.

(Submitted by Mrs. Cathy O'Rourke (or Mrs. O'), First Grade Teacher)

Greetings from Mr. Cupoli's Physical Education Class!

The students of Northwest Primary School have been working extremely hard over the past few months in Physical Education to strengthen their bodies and learn lots of new lifetime skills. We have been working on Locomotor Movements, Overhand Throwing, Underhand Rolling and Throwing, Body and Spatial Awareness, Pathways and Cooperative Games. Over the next few weeks, we are super excited to try a new activity where the Killington Riglet Program will come to our school to introduce ski and snowboard skills to the students. Also, Walking Club is winding down for the winter months. The students have voluntarily participated in walking laps during recess to earn miles (and tokens) for their efforts. Students have already walked over 300 miles during recess this year! Great Job!! Stay tuned for more in the PE World! Remember to help your child Bring Sneakers for class and think snow for snowshoeing in a few months!

Cheers,
Mr. Cupoli



The Gift of Giving

On behalf of our students, we thank the 20 - 25 parent and family volunteers who joined us for our "Make it Take it" event on December 17th. Children walked away with three lovely handmade gifts to give to someone special. While our children appreciated the purposeful craft-making, they also loved working together with our volunteers. Thank you to each one of our volunteers for your generous gift of time and energy during this event and for helping students see that this is the season for giving in more ways than one!



**Dates to
Remember:**

January 7th
PE Riglet Program Gr. 1 & 2
in PE Classes

January 9th
PTC 6:30 - 7:30 pm

January 21st
No School / Martin Luther King Day

January 24th
Therapy Dogs Visit NW

January 25th
Hero Assembly @ 10:30 am

January 30th
Ice Skating Day #1

February 7th
Ice Skating Day # 2

February 18th - 22nd
Vacation Week

Heroes Honored at Northwest School

During the months of November and December, children at Northwest School learned about character traits in regard to citizenship, gratitude, and "reach for the stars." In culmination of this work, all NW students participated in a "Hero Assembly" to recognize specific students who displayed these character traits and to meet Rutland City Mayor David Allaire. Mayor Allaire talked to children about citizenship, how this begins in the home, and then is carried at school and in the community by doing for others. Below is a photo taken from our visit with Mayor Allaire.



Come Join the Parent Teacher Collaborative!

Our Parent/Teacher Collaborative (PTC) holds its next meeting on Wednesday, January 9th, from 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm in the NW art and music room. Please join us! When parents and educators work together, our children benefit. All are welcome, and snacks will be available!

A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ONE AND ALL!

Every Student, Every Day!