



Tiger Traditions

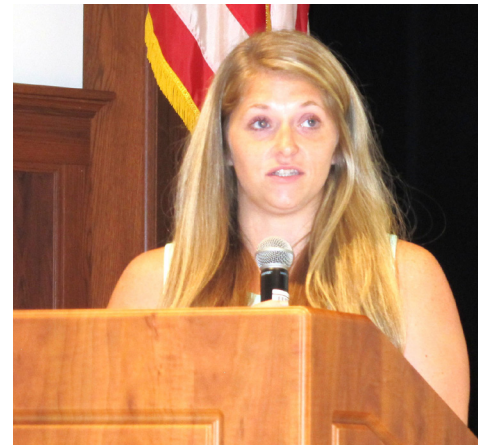
November/December 2015 - Volume 16 • Issue 2

MACS Celebrated 2015-2016 Opening Day

Over 600 members of the MACS administration, faculty, and staff gathered in the Mexico Middle School auditorium for staff opening day ceremonies on September 8. MACS District Superintendent Sean Bruno opened the event with welcoming remarks, and was followed by MACS Board of Education President James Emery. Mr. Emery identified two goals that the board of education is currently working toward.

- Goal 1: MACS will be in the top 10% of the school districts in New York State.
- Goal 2: At the conclusion of grade 3, 100% of students will be reading on grade level.

Dr. Nicole Krzyewski, pictured right, a 2006 graduate of MACS, was the guest speaker at the opening day ceremony. Mr. Bruno also gave a power point presentation, and the newly hired teachers and staff were introduced.



Mexico High School Project Adventure Outdoor Course

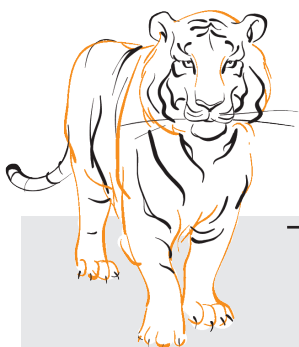
There is a new and exciting addition on the grounds of Mexico High School and it is called Project Adventure Outdoor Course. This outdoor challenge course is located on the north side of Black Creek, behind the high school and next to the softball field.

Project Adventure Outdoor Course is part of the final phase, year three, of the Carol M. White Physical Education Program Grant (PEP Grant), that has allowed the school district to expand its physical education instructional program for students in the district.

“This project is on
(Continued on page 3)



MACS Physical Education Teachers Andrew Chamberlain, right, and John Hansen, left, reach the top of the Vertical Playpen during training on the new Project Adventure Outdoor Course.



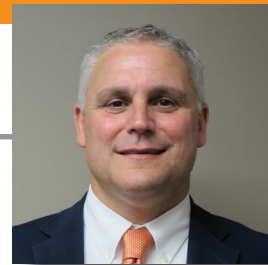
New MACS Employees

The newly hired faculty and staff were recognized during the opening day ceremonies for faculty and staff on September 8. The event was held in the auditorium at Mexico Middle School. Seated front, left to right, are: Molly Bryant and Ashley Cobb. Seated on stage, left to right, are: Kelly Cullen, Lisa Sanderson, Rebecca Wilson, Erica Schipper, Katrina Coe, Claudette Boyzuck, Glen Gagnier, Kaitlin Anderson, Gina Guifre, and Alexandra Scorzelli. Standing on stage, left to right, are: Lindsey Platek, Christopher Herrick, Jennifer Rombough, LeShaun Benjamin, James Loomis, Melissa Perlet, David Kerwin, Jennifer Muller, Jennifer Pacelli, Tanya Gordon, Tara Simko, Katelyn Taylor, Chad Merritt, Kathleen Pallotta, Toni Hould, Michelle Wilson. Absent from photo: Tiffany Green, Brenda Abelgore, and Candice McIntyre.

For district information including a calendar of events, MACS Board of Education meeting dates and times, contact information and more, visit the district web site at www.Mexicocsd.org



A Message from the Superintendent



I hope this Tiger Traditions finds you and your family well! It certainly has been an interesting few months! While we have been in our share of the news lately, I'm excited to inform you of some exciting new developments in our district.

BOE GOALS:

We have a wonderful MACS Board of Education who truly support students, staff, families, and our community. Recently, our Board has renewed their focus on our students by establishing the following aspirational goals:

1. MACS will be in the top 10% of the school districts in New York State.
2. At the conclusion of grade 3, 100% of students will be reading on grade level.
3. MACS will achieve a 95% passing rate for Regents exams.
4. MACS will achieve a 60% proficiency rate for grades 5-8 testing in ELA and Math.

This is exciting to me because there has been compelling research since the 1990's regarding how critical goal setting is to enhancing performance. The research also indicates that setting specific, challenging goals can increase performance by as much as 250% higher than setting easy or "do your best" goals.

The goals our MACS Board has set are aspirational goals, which means that it will take longer than a school year to achieve them. Our staff is currently working on action plans that will focus on annual achievable goals to support yearly progress towards these aspirational goals. Please know that goal setting isn't new to our staff. Furthermore, our entire staff has always done their very best to ensure that each and every student reaches their fullest potentials. This year we look forward to setting specific, challenging annual targets with actionable plans to achieve them to provide laser-like focus on continuous improvement of our programs, our instruction, and most importantly our students. It also enables us to maximize performance for all. I look forward to reporting on our plans and progress as we move forward.

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT COMMON CORE SURVEY

The New York State Education Department is currently conducting a review of the New York State P-12 Common Core Learning Standards in English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics. They would like your feedback and have developed a survey. This survey provides an opportunity for every New Yorker to go online, review each standard and comment on what is liked, not liked, or offer a suggestion for a change to a particular standard. The survey results will be considered initially by an advisory group that will provide recommendations to the State Education Department and the Board of Regents regarding appropriate revisions to the standards.

Please know that this is not a referendum on the standards, and only comments tied to a specific standard will be considered. Any changes to the standards would not be implemented until the 2016-17 school year or later.

While I strongly encourage everyone to participate in this survey, please know that this is not a "quick" survey. It provides the opportunity to revise and re-write standards. While the full set of standards are available for your comment, you can comment on as many or as few as you desire. You do not need to complete the survey in one sitting. You may also leave and come back to the AIMHighNY Survey at any time, but you will only be able to submit suggestions on a particular standard once per electronic device.

You can access this through our website or with the following link: <http://www.nysed.gov/aimhighny>.

ENTERGY UPDATE

I would like to thank all who participated in our community rally and signed the petition for FitzPatrick! It seems that our efforts have begun to produce some positive results. While (as of this writing) we have not yet received word about Entergy's decision, Governor Cuomo has made a statement that seems to show he supports doing the right thing for our families, community and our schools. You can read more about this on our website.

SCOREBOARD COMMITTEE

Our district received a donation of two scoreboards a couple years ago by the Mexico Academy Educational Foundation and the Mexico Sports Boosters. The installation of these scoreboards was delayed due to the cost of installation. I'm happy to report that our own Mike Wood investigated alternative power sources to reduce the installation costs. He successfully found solar power as a solution. To reduce installations costs even further, our own crews will be installing these scoreboards. All of this progress was made by a shared decision making committee.

The committee's recommendations of using solar power and to have our own crew install the scoreboards were sent to our board for approval. At the October meeting, our board approved the installation and it is underway. We are hopeful that the scoreboards will be installed and working as soon as possible. Our soccer scoreboard will be installed at our middle school field where most of our home varsity soccer games are played. The baseball scoreboard will be installed at our middle school baseball field. We are hopeful that our JV soccer teams will also be able to use this scoreboard. I thank our committee members for their time and dedication for supporting the project!

STADIUM RENOVATION COMMITTEE

As you may know, the next phase of our multi-year pre-approved renovation plan involves the renovation of our high school stadium. The length and depth of this project has the potential to affect spring 2016 sports, high school graduation and fall 2016 sports. Due to these potentials, we formulated a shared decision making committee. The committee members consisted of students, parents, staff, and community members who represented all groups that may be impacted. We also surveyed grade 12 students to include their preferences in our decision making. Our committee reviewed the projected 4.5 month minimum timeline of the project. (The project could take longer if impacted negatively by weather or hidden construction renovation "surprises" that seem to be all too common.) The committee also reviewed the original high school stadium renovation project start date of May 1, 2016 as recommended by our project architects and engineers. They explored the opportunity to adjust the timeline so that graduation and spring sports wouldn't be affected. Our work uncovered that the project is weather dependent for two reasons; it must be completed before (fall 2016) snowfall and is also temperature sensitive. Due to some of the materials being temperature sensitive, the project also has to be completed before we have freezing temperatures in the fall of 2016. While delaying the start date until after graduation would cause the end date of the project to be in the second week of November 2016, the committee decided to recommend having our board members consider delaying the start of this project to after graduation as their first choice. If the board doesn't feel comfortable delaying the start date due to the potential weather that could take place in October and November, the committee decided to recommend that our board members consider holding graduation next to our stadium on the softball field as their second choice.

I presented the committee recommendation at our October Board meeting. I also explained to the board they had time to consider their decision because the project has not received (required) final approval from the New York State Education Department. I will notify our board and our community when we do receive final approval for the project to move forward. I thank our committee members for their time and dedication for supporting the project!

As always, I welcome your comments and suggestion. Please don't hesitate to contact me anytime.

I thank you for your continued support in our district!

Sean Bruno,
MACS Superintendent of Schools

Contact me at:
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www.mexicocsd.org

The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Jeremy Belfield, 16 Fravor Road, Suite A, Mexico, NY 13114, 315-963-8400 x5407 or 315-297-7780. Inquiries concerning the application of the Mexico Academy & Central Schools non-discrimination policies may also be referred to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), 32 Old Slip, 26th Floor, New York, NY 10005, telephone (646) 428-3800 (voice) or (800) 877-8339 (TTY).



Proud to be MACS

Gregeen Koes, MACS

Fitness Monitor/Instructor, was selected as the September 2015 MACS honoree. Gregeen is a 1965 graduate of St. Anthony's Academy in Syracuse. She spent many years as an employee of New York Telephone, Mid-State Telephone and the U.S. Postal Service. Additionally, she has a background in physical fitness and holds seven strength and conditioning/personal training certifications. Gregeen was hired as the fitness monitor/instructor at the MACS Fitness Center when it opened in September of 2012. Her duties include: supervising the pool during community hours; monitoring the track; training, spotting, and safety on the equipment; working with athletes; teaching classes; and cleaning and maintaining the equipment. Speaking about her job, she says, "I love seeing what other people are able to do with motivation. I love to encourage people to reach their potential, become healthy and stay that way." Gregeen and her husband Robin make their home in Palermo. They are the parents of five children, 10 grandchildren and one great-grandson.



Denise Rhinehart,

MACS Help Desk Support, was chosen as the October 2015 MACS honoree. Denise grew up in Schroepfel, NY, attended Phoenix High School, and graduated in 1985. She worked in the insurance field as an administrative assistant until she changed careers and began working at Volney Elementary School as a substitute. In time, she began as a full-time teacher's aide in the office, and eventually moved to the computer lab as a teacher's assistant. Ultimately, she was requested to work in the technology department where she learned how to fix computers. "It just came natural to me," she explains. In 2002, Denise began at MACS as a teacher's assistant in the technology department. About her position as the help desk support she says, "I get it. I get where people are coming from with computers and it's easy for me to put myself at their level to help them." Denise possesses the skills of a LAN Technician and also has the organizational and people skills that the job requires. When asked how she feels about her work Denise replies, "I love it. I absolutely love it. I get to do all my favorite things." Considering the MACS award she says, "I feel honored. I feel like it's a blessing." Denise is married to Jay Rhinehart, MACS LAN Technician, and the couple are parents to Cody Rhinehart, a junior at Mexico High. The family makes their home in Volney.



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CMOO Joined 'Tigers Earn Their Stripes Night'



The Children's Museum of Oswego (CMOO) hosted a station at the 'Tigers Earn Their Stripes Night' at Mexico Middle School on October 7, during the annual fall open house at the school. At the CMOO station, Ethan Workman (pictured to the left), rode a "Smoothie Bike," using the bicycle power to operate a blender that made fresh fruit smoothies which were served to all who visited

the station. Ethan's mother, and CMOO volunteer, Jenny Workman, is pictured behind the bicycle. A variety of stations, with a variety of nutritional information and foods were available at the event, which was sponsored by the Carol M. White Physical Education Program (PEP) Grant. These stations included: MACS Food Service Department, Kelly's Choice Nutritional Company, Tiger Terrace, and Cornell Cooperative Extension. The event was designed to encourage "fit bodies, good food, and strong minds."

High School Project Adventure Outdoor Course Continued

(Continued from page 1)

the cutting edge of new physical education at Mexico," says MACS Physical Education Teacher Andrew Chamberlain.

The outdoor course, as explained by Andrew Chamberlain, will include both low elements, such as the Mohawk Walk, a traversing element built using cables, and high elements, and the Climbing Tower which consists of two 12 ft. wide x 37 ft. high climbing sides and a rappelling side.

Project Adventure, Inc, is the company that installs the elements of the expanded physical education program provided by the PEP Grant. In mid-October 11 members of the MACS physical education staff participated in three full days of training on the new course. The training was led by Project Adventure, Inc. Trainer Nate Folan.

All high school students will be trained on use and safety of the adventure challenges. They wear helmets and harnesses, learn spotting techniques, communication skills, critical thinking skills, and how to operate as a belay (safety technique for climbers) team.

Palermo Elementary Students 'Snuggle-Up with a Good Book'

Palermo Elementary School second grade student Christopher Schwerdt enjoyed an evening of reading with his father, Brandon Schwerdt, at the Annual 'Snuggle-Up with a Good Book' event at the school on the evening of October 1. Many families attended the event to share an evening of reading together. This event was part of this year's reading celebration "Go for the Goal." The goal that the school is going for is every student reading five out of seven days a week, all throughout the school year. This goal coincides with the Mexico School District goal for every student to be reading on grade level by third grade. 'Snuggle-Up with a Good Book' is sponsored by the Palermo Elementary Parent-Teacher Club. Refreshments were provided.



Mexico Elementary Open House

A multitude of families attended the Mexico Elementary School Fall Open House on September 24. The event included classroom visits with teachers, refreshments, bus safety reviews with balloons, and, for many, time on the playground. The Eddy family is pictured at right with Mexico Elementary School Principal Robert Briggs, standing left. Gabriel and Cali are standing back, and Sierra, Jeffery and Zachary are standing front.



Open House Held at High School

Mexico High held their annual fall open house on September 23, with an impressive number of students and their families in attendance. Mexico Academy and Central School Faculty Association (MACSFA) members offered refreshments, and the staff from the Tiger Terrace offered banana bread, made by their students, as well. Classroom visits were the highlight of the evening.



The Mills family visited with MACS English Teacher Anne Michaelis in her classroom during Mexico High's open house September 23. Standing from left to right are: Shawn Mills, Angie Mills, Anthony Mills (a freshman), and Anne Michaelis.



Fire Safety Week Recognized at Mexico Elementary School

Fire Safety Week at Mexico Elementary School included visits from the Mexico Volunteer Fire Department. During this fire truck presentation, on October 8, Mexico Firefighters Chris Meyer, back left, and Shawn Edwards, back right, explained the parts of the fire truck and how it operates. These second grade students were invited to climb up into the truck, through it and out the other side. Students at all three elementary schools in the Mexico School District learned about fire safety throughout the month of October.

Exploratory Occupations Class Travels to the National Women's Hall of Fame

Four girls in the Exploratory Occupations Class at Mexico Middle School took a field trip to the National Women's Hall of Fame, in Seneca Falls, on October 15. There are eight boys and five girls in the credited class that



is designed to focus on academics, life skills, character building, business models, occupation exploration, and personal awareness skills. The girls, pictured here during the trip to Seneca Falls, have been learning about women as leaders in history in the class as well. MACS Technology Teacher Steve Connolly and MACS Teaching Assistant Monique Hager teach the class that was created for Mexico Middle School and has been in place for the boys for four years. This year is the first year girls have taken the class and they have opened an after-school nail salon business to learn organization, budget, reception, and people skills. "This class is designed to help each girl bring out the best in herself," says Monique Hager. Pictured left to right are: Megan Coe, Branigan Paye-Walker, Halina Martin, and Morgan Butler.



MACS Staff Members Receive Board of Education Honors

Barb Sheldon

Mexico High School Art Teacher Barb Sheldon was recognized at the September 10 MACS Board of Education Meeting for the awards she received at the 2015 New York State Fair. Mrs. Sheldon took home “Best of Show” for her acrylic painting titled “Maggie Mondrian,” pictured bottom left, and she received two second place awards for sculptures; “Times Up 2” and “Angels Wings.” Mrs. Sheldon began her career with the district in 1986.



William Kays

Coach William Kays was honored by MACS District Superintendent Sean Bruno and the MACS School Board Members at the MACS Board of Education meeting on October 8. Coach Kays has been named the New York State 2015 Wrestling Coach of the Year by the National Federation of State High Schools Association (NFHS). Coach Kays is in his 30th year as a teacher of biology, chemistry, and physics at Mexico High School. He has coached wrestling at Mexico High for 27 years, without a losing season. During the 2014-15 school year, Coach Kays led his team to become the 2015 New York State Division II Team Champions.



Palermo Elementary Open House

Families by the dozens attended the Palermo Elementary School Open House on September 23. The evening began with the third and fourth grade chorus singing the Leader in Me “7 Habits” song. Families then toured classrooms, visited the school bus safety review station, went to the book fair and enjoyed Mrs. Miller’s apple crisp. Palermo Elementary first grade student Danny Pullen is pictured here with his parents, Chris and Traci Pullen, and his teacher, Karen Metcalf, standing left.



Kyle Miller: Mexico Idol 2015

Mexico Idol 2015 was held on October 15, in the Mexico Middle School auditorium. Thirteen contestants performed; five became finalists; and three took the prizes, by popular audience vote, at the end of the show. Kyle Miller, center, took first place singing “You Never Called Me By My Name” and “Hallelujah.” Alexis Richer, left, was second place and Karlin Twiss, right, took third place. Mexico Idol is sponsored by the Tri-M Honor Society.



ASAP Visits Behling Orchards

Over 120 Mexico High and Mexico Middle School After School Activities Program (ASAP) students took a field trip to Behling Orchards, Mexico, on October 8. The students rode on hay wagons, picked apples, and watched cider being made.

Middle School Open House



Many families attended the Mexico Middle School annual fall open house at the school on October 7. The evening event included: visits with classroom teachers, refreshments by Mexico Academy and Central School Faculty Association (MACSFA), a book fair, free T-shirts, and the Tigers Earn Your Stripes nutrition and fitness event in the gymnasium. Mexico Middle School fifth-grade student Adrea Ariola is pictured here with fifth grade teacher Michelle Whaley, standing left, and her parents, Jim and Shelly Ariola.



New Haven Lessons in Leather

The fourth grade students at New Haven Elementary had a special leather workshop on October 6. Dylan, back center, from Tandy Leather, in Syracuse, brought skins and hides from a deer, calf, fox, beaver and snake. He allowed the students to feel and guess which animal wore that skin, and then spoke about the process of tanning leather. He also led the students in making leather bookmarks with imprints using stamps and mallets. The purpose of the workshop is to help preserve the American craft heritage and the presentation was tied into the Iroquois curriculum, and the ELA and social studies curriculum. Melissa Stoutenberg's class is pictured below. Chad Merritt's class participated in the workshop as well.



School Supply Distribution

The Annual MACS School Supply Distribution Day was held August 21 at Mexico Elementary School. The Mexico Academy and Central School Faculty Association (MACSFA) orchestrated the event, with MACS Teaching Assistant Jeanine Spicer acting as the coordinator. Several MACS staff members shopped prior to the event, using \$2,500 that had been donated on Faculty Jeans Days throughout the 2014/15 school year, to buy school supplies. On the distribution day, 18 staff members were on hand to pack bags full of binders, crayons, pencils and more for students pre-K through 12.



Save FitzPatrick Rally

Mexico Academy and Central School District made a mighty showing at the Save FitzPatrick Rally October 5, at the Oswego County Highway Department building, in Oswego. The rally was organized to show support for the effort to keep the James A. FitzPatrick Nuclear Power Plant in Scriba open, following the announcement in September that Entergy Corp. may close the facility. Four MACS school buses transported students, sports teams, bands, administration, school board members, staff and community members from Mexico Middle School to the rally. Both the Mexico Middle and Mexico High School Bands performed at the rally as the 1500-1600 attendees arrived. The MACS JV volleyball team attended the rally, as did the MACS varsity soccer and MACS cross country team.



MACS District Superintendent Sean Bruno spoke at the rally, voicing support on behalf of the Mexico School District. "We care," he said. "We care about you and we're here to support you." He called the MACS bands and students front and center and shared important facts about what the James A. FitzPatrick Nuclear Power Plant means to the Mexico School District such as the amount of financial support the district receives from the plant.

New Haven Elementary Hosts Successful Open House Event

New Haven Elementary School welcomed many families to the annual fall open house that took place on September 18. The event included school bus safety reviews, classroom visits, a book fair, refreshments and more.



Seanna Twiss, a second grade student at New Haven Elementary, and her mom, Linh Twiss, visited the book fair during the open house.



Foreign Exchange Students

Seven foreign exchange students, from around the world, are attending Mexico High School for the 2015-16 school year. The students, pictured here left to right, are: Leonhard Ziegler, Germany - 11th grade, Subin Kwak, Korea - 10th grade, Anne Halasz, Germany - 11th grade, Morgane Lindanda, Switzerland - 12th grade, Giulia Bancale, Italy - 12th grade, Ara Fernandez Vega Alonso, Spain - 10th grade, and Paul Winterfeld, Germany - 11th grade.

Mexico High School Bands and Choirs Perform Fall Concert



Mexico High combined choirs

The Mexico High School Annual Fall Concert was held on October 14, at the Mexico Middle School. The Mexico High Jazz Ensemble performed two songs; "Night Train" and "Johnny B. Goode". Mexico High Combined Choirs sang four songs, two of which were; "The Phantom of the Opera" and "When You Believe". To close out the concert, the Mexico High Symphonic Band performed "The Washington Post" and the main theme from "Back to the Future". The bands were directed by Brian Carnes, and the choir by Hope Greco-Gaham.



Mexico High combined bands

FIRST LEGO League Challenge

The Mexico Academy and Central School District will once again host the regional qualifying event for the FIRST® LEGO® League (FLL) Challenge. This year's event, to be held on November 14 beginning at 8:00 a.m. in the Mexico Middle School gymnasium, will see 24 teams from across Central New York compete in the 2015 Trash Trek Challenge.

Students in grades 4-8, working in teams of up to 10 students, will explore the fascinating world of trash. This year's challenge is divided into three parts: the Robot Game, the Project, and the FLL Core Values. The Robot Game will feature students programming an autonomous robot to score points on a "trash" themed playing field. The Project portion involves developing a solution to an identified problem. Some of the Core Values include: we are a team; we do the work to find solutions with guidance from our coaches and mentors; we learn together; we honor the spirit of friendly competition; and we display Gracious Professionalism® and Coopertition® in everything we do. For more information, visit the website at: www.firstlegoleague.org.

Construction Corner

The 2013 capital project efforts have been in full swing. Roofing work on Mexico High School, Mexico Middle School, Mexico Elementary and Palermo Elementary Schools is substantially complete. New Haven roofing has been underway and should be substantially complete prior to winter. Pictured below are the roofers, from Titan Roofing, Inc., working on the New Haven roof. Be on the lookout for a new shingled roof!

In the next issue of the Tiger Traditions, the Mexico High School scope of work, which includes the auditorium renovation and building exterior renovation work, will be highlighted. The district is currently out to bid for the high school package, and construction is scheduled to begin in the auditorium during the month of December.



Board of Education

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 Chad Bigelow
 Dennis Brooks, Jr.
 Connie Douglas
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 Amy Shaw
 Kennedy Lamb - Student Representative

Superintendent of Schools

Sean Bruno
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MACS Homecoming Weekend 2015



Mexico High varsity football team was victorious at the end of the homecoming game against Oneida High, 21-18, on Saturday, October 10. Marc Nowakowski, #52, was named the Most Valuable Player for Mexico.



The Mexico High Seniors won the prize for best float during the homecoming parade on October 9. All grade levels entered floats, as did various groups. The JROTC cadets led the parade.

2015 Powder Puff Game



Seniors - Winners. The Mexico High Seniors won the girls homecoming powder puff game against the junior girls on October 9.



Juniors



Calendar of Events

- Nov. 11 Veteran's Day, No School
- Nov. 14 FIRST® LEGO® League Challenge
- Nov. 12 MACS Board of Education Meeting, 6pm
- Nov. 23 National Honor Society Inductions
- Nov. 26-27 Thanksgiving Break, No School
- Dec. 1 Chorus Concert, New Haven Elem., 6pm
- Dec. 8 High School Winter Concerts I & II
- Dec. 9 Superintendent's Day, No School
- Dec. 10 MACS Board of Education Meeting, 6pm
- Dec. 15 5/6 Chorus Concert, Middle School, 6pm
- Dec. 17 Chorus Concert, Palermo Elem., 6pm
- Dec. 22 7/8 Chorus Concert, Middle School, 6pm
- Dec. 24-31 Winter Break, No School

AmeriCorps Collecting Clothing

The AmeriCorps workers at Mexico Elementary School are holding a collection of clothing items to supply the nurse's office at the school, should a need arise for students. The items are: sneakers (boys size 12 - 4, girls size 3 and up); undergarments (boys - all sizes, girls - small and medium); socks and belts. The collection will run throughout November.