

Tiger Traditions

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Mexico Hosts FIRST LEGO competition



Mexico Academy and Central Schools hosted the FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) LEGO League qualifying event at the Mexico Middle School.

The recently renovated gymnasium was packed with smiling learners, coaches and parents. Onlookers cheered as student groups used technology, robotics and teamwork to perform tasks in a table arena. Each competition could easily be viewed on the new gymnasium projector screens. At the start of each challenge, the audience shouted, "3, 2, 1 LEGO!"

Teams were judged on three categories: core values (discovery, integration and team spirit), robot design (durability, mechanical efficiency and mechanization) and a culminating project (research, innovative solution and presentation).

Mexico Academy had four fourth-grade teams compete, with more than 267,620 children participating in the qualifying tournaments worldwide. The top eleven teams from Mexico's competition advance to the championship tournament at SUNY Polytechnic Institute.

School Business Administrator Alicia Koster and New Haven Elementary Principal Richard Chapman played a large role in making FIRST LEGO League a reality for Mexico.

"As a district, we recognize that providing opportunities to develop

critical-thinking and problem-solving skills through the use of technology and robotics are skills that students need to be college and career ready at graduation," said Koster. "My hope is that we can encourage more kids of all ages to explore opportunities with STEM."

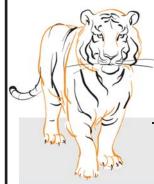
Mexico Academy hopes to host this event again in years to come and hopefully expand to other grades as student interest rises.

"As an administrative team, we are looking to expand our STEM program for next year," stated Koster. "As educators, if we have a passion for this type of learning, hopefully that passion encourages students to get involved and learn valuable skills necessary for the globally competitive environment they will be entering at graduation."

Honor Society Inductees



The 2014 induction ceremony for the Los Inteligentes National Honor Society was held at Mexico High School on Tuesday, November 18, 2014. MACS English Teacher Joseph Deckman is the MACS National Honor Society Advisor. Standing front, left to right: Sarah Cherchio, Hannah Sheldon, and Kendra Harter. Second row, left to right: Kennedy Lamb, Brianna Jessmore, Hannah Bittner, and Sophia Raymond. Third row, left to right: Demi Mannise, Corrinne Perrotti, and Emma Andrews. Fourth row, left to right: Trevor Allard and Joseph Gardner.



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



A Message from the Superintendent



Happy New Year to everyone in our Mexico Academy and Central School District Community! This is the time of year when I don't seem to be getting much sleep – between getting up at early to predict the weather and getting home late after attending one of our amazing holiday concerts. The days are short due to our winter timetable which further contributes to the feeling of being a "night owl." I'm often asked this time of year, "how do you know when to cancel school due to poor weather conditions?" The process

associated with an emergency closing (a.k.a snow day) or a weather related delay is often the result of constant monitoring of developing meteorological trends, consulting with our transportation experts, and having a sense of what the immediate future may look like concerning the safety and well-being of our students (Author's note: For any of you who are long-time readers of my "Superintendent's Message" in the Tiger Traditions, you may readily perceive that the snow-day protocol that I've just summarized is a metaphor for something larger...please read on, my esteemed community member).

My alarm clock is typically set for 4:40 a.m., which is about the same time the other superintendents in Oswego County start to e-mail messages to each other with the subject line, "how's it looking out there?" Even though my alarm is set for 4:40 a.m., my true wake-up devices are the snow plows that may be running past my house in the Village of Mexico during the night (and my two dogs who are likely barking up a storm at around that point). Once I'm up, the dogs and I take a walk down my driveway to Norman Avenue and I make a hasty

Chorus Performs at Crunch Game



On Friday, December 5, 2014, the Mexico Elementary All-Star Chorus sang our National Anthem on the ice at a Syracuse Crunch game. The 50 students who sang included third and fourth grade singers from Palermo, New Haven, and Mexico Elementary Schools. The chorus was directed by MACS Music Teachers Glen Gagnier and Keith Himes. A total of 200 Mexico students, family, and friends turned out for the event. The Syracuse Crunch beat New Hartford Wolfpack 6-5, to close out an exciting evening of music, patriotism, and athletics.

assessment as to what the existing weather is in my small geographic section of our school district. I look at several weather-related websites that have Doppler radar data and have a dialogue with our

Transportation Director who has been driving the roads in our district long before I've even woken up. After a few more e-mails to my fellow superintendents around the county, I make the decision to open schools on-schedule, delay, or close. Sometimes, we may even send students home early when travel conditions change during the day. It's as much art as it is science, and as many of you know who have lived in this area of the world for any amount of time, the weather changes can be dynamic (to say the least). We communicate this information to households via the Web, television, e-mail, radio, and telephone. Keeping the community informed, in as timely and accurate a manner as possible, is a big part of keeping everybody safe.

The process of watching the weather is a little bit like keeping an eye on our students' academic progress. The analytics (testing and assessment) that we use to monitor the progress of each student are helpful, but the interaction that we have with students in "real-time" is the best way for teachers and parents to understand what the student's expectations are and to push the learner to exceed those expectations. Once a student has performed at a level that is beyond his or her own expectations, he or she gains confidence in his or her learning ability. The "high expectations" for our students' ability to excel is the #1 determinant of student success according to educational research (John Hattie, *The Visible Learner*, 2012). Having an understanding of what the immediate future may look like for our students is as much an art as it is a science and requires a considerable amount of planning, communication, intuition, and collaboration.

I invite each community member and stakeholder to get a vision of what our students are expected to know and be able to do by the time each graduates from Mexico Academy and Central School District. We welcome folks to arrange to come and visit and be part of the great things that we are offering our students at MACS. It is the best way we can support these students and promote a positive future for all. Many of you have already been in contact with our schools concerning our Project Lead the Way initiative that integrates classroom learning with realworld opportunities in the areas of computer programming, engineering design, computer integrated manufacturing, robotics, and biomedical engineering – all "in-demand" skills that will make our students viable as each enters the workforce.

Here's wishing you all a happy and productive 2015 and I look forward to another great year of serving our community and its learners. As always, contact me with any questions or concerns that you may have. Sincerely,

Robert Ditchard

Robert R. Pritchard, Ed.D. Superintendent

Contact me at: 16 Fravor Road, Mexico, NY 13114 963-8400 Ext. 5401

www.mexico.cnyric.org

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Proud to be MACS

Karlene Krzyiewski

a teaching assistant at Mexico High School, was selected as the December 2014 MACS Honoree. Karlene was born and raised in Hornell, NY. After graduating from Hornell High School in 1978, she attended Keuka College where she earned a bachelors' degree in math. Following college graduation in 1982, Karlene married Richard Krzyiewski and the



couple moved to the Mexico area for Richard's employment. Karlene worked in Oswego as a bookkeeper until her daughter Amanda was born in 1984. In 1986 she began working as a substitute teacher in the Mexico School District and soon accepted a job as a full-time teaching assistant. Karlene left the workforce in 1988 when her second daughter, Nicole, was born. Son Daniel joined the family in 1990 and when he entered kindergarten in 1995, Karlene returned to MACS as a substitute teacher. In 1999 she again accepted a full-time teaching assistant position at the Mexico Middle School and remained in this position for 13 years. In 2012 Karlene, working as a one-on-one with a student, shifted to the high school and continues in this position today. When asked how she feels about her job Karlene says, "I love working with kids, I really do." In her position she travels room to room with her student and this year her student is taking welding. Learning right alongside him, Karlene says, "It's very exciting for me to learn how to weld." Speaking about receiving the MACS award, she says, "I'm very humbled by it. I never expected to be MACS. I'm never one to seek recognition. I do a lot for others but I never really expect anything in return so I'm very humbled that I got this award." Karlene and her husband make their home in Scriba.

Linen Collection for CNY Refugees

As a member of a local group called World Relief Action League, Mexico High School Senior Katie Linerode, second from left, coordinated a community/school collection of sheets, towels, blankets and pillows. Linerode's



group partnered with the district and Mexico First United Methodist Church, to collect a large amount of new and gently-used linens, which were then transported to Interfaith Works Agency in Syracuse. This agency is one of two in Syracuse, that are approved by the US Government to re-settle refugee families from around the world. The linens will be used by the refugee families. Fifth and seventh grade students at Mexico Middle School study the United Nations Commission of Human Rights, and refugees as part of the English Language Arts Curriculum. Standing from left to right are: Mexico Middle Teaching Assistant Jennifer Ferrara, Katie Linerode, Mexico Middle School Teaching Assistant Shelly Williams, Cameron Lewis (6th grade), and Shaun Huggins (6th grade).

Arts in Education Presentatio

The students at all three elementary schools in the Mexico School District enjoyed the 'Fly Guy Assembly' during the last week of October. Actors from Theatre Works USA



presented this lively, educational and entertaining musical revue based on favorite children's books. The show included books such as "Diary of a Worm", "Horace & Morris But Mostly Dolores", "Fly Guy", and, as pictured here at the New Haven Elementary School, "The Paper Bag Princess". These presentations were made possible through the Center for Instruction, Technology & Innovation Arts in Education program.

Clubs Help Operation Reindeer



Over thirty-five students from Mexico High School assisted in packing the bags of Operation Reindeer Christmas presents at the First Presbyterian Church in Mexico on Thursday, December 11, 2014. The presents, all donated or purchased with monetary donations, went to 151 families, with over 400 children, in the Mexico School District. The students assisting represented the following groups from Mexico High: National Honor Society, French Honor Society, French Club, German Honor Society, German Club, Spanish Honor Society, Spanish Club, Friends of Rachel, ASAP (After School Activities Program), and Tri M Music Honor Society. Members of First Presbyterian Church and employees of the Oswego County Probation Department also worked at the gift packing event.

Gingerbread House Workshop



Mexico High School Students Dustin Barck, standing left, and Wesley Akley, standing right, volunteered several hours of community service for the Mexico Public Library Gingerbread House Workshop that took place during Christmas in Mexico on Saturday, December 6. In addition to building the numerous

gingerbread house bases and preparing for the event that drew nearly 50 children, the two students assisted during the actual workshop. Pictured seated and working on gingerbread houses are Kyle Clark, left, and Alexis Jewell.



Over 530 Books Donated to Library in Ghana, Africa

The third grade students at Mexico Elementary donated over 530 books to a library in Ghana, Africa. Area resident



Dawn La Flamm visited Mexico Elementary and shared about her trips to Ghana, her discovery that the young students there have no books to learn from, and her eventual creation of a library there. The students, 64 of them, donated gently-used books from home and Mexico Elementary teachers made a monetary donation to assist in defraying the cost of shipping the books. Pictured, from left to right, are: Ainsley Bigelow, Ashley Bennett, Emily Bennett, and Hayden Combs.

Dangers of Bullying Presented



All of the Mexico students in both the high school and the middle school attended the Dignity for All Students Act Presentations on Thursday, October 23, 2014. Presenter Joseph Bufano, Esq. from the Ferrara, Fiorenza, Larrison,

Barrett & Reitz Law Firm in Syracuse, spoke to the students about the dangers of bullying, cyberbullying, sexting, misuse of text, Snapchat, and more. The Mexico School District website addresses bullying behavior and specific staff members in each of the five school buildings are trained to address all types of bullying situations as they arise. Visit www.Mexico. cnyric.org for more information or contact the building principal at your child(ren)'s school.

New Haven Candy Buy Back



The New Haven Elementary kindergarten students in Brianne Hartmann's classroom posed, along with four third and fourth grade students, behind a mound of Halloween candy on November 4, 2014. The students in this kindergarten class, one third grade classes, and two fourth grade classes, donated their own Halloween candy to be shipped to

men and women serving overseas in the military. Halloween Candy for our Troops is part of the nation-wide Operation Gratitude program which sends care packages and thank you letters to the US Military. The children in New Haven Elementary learned that when the troops receive the candy, they will share it with children in the country where they are serving.



High School Chorus Carolers

Several members of the Mexico High School Chorus shared their talent in the form of Christmas carols during the Christmas in Mexico event on Saturday, December 6, 2014. The carolers sang throughout the village including, as pictured here, at the Mexico Public Library.

Dear Parent or Guardian:

The Mexico Academy and CSD is pleased to offer students in grades 7 - 12 access to District electronic mail. This valuable resource will support our continued work towards creating a 21st Century Learning Environment in our schools.

While our intent is to make electronic mail available to further educational objectives, parents/guardians and students should be aware that all incoming and outgoing email is archived and can be reviewed by administrative staff. Therefore, it is important for students to accept responsibility for their behavior while using email. We believe that the benefits to students from access to electronic mail outweigh any disadvantages.

Inappropriate Uses:

- Using the system for any illegal purpose.
- Using another person's account. No sharing password with others.
- Posting personal information about yourself or others (such as street addresses and phone numbers).
- Downloading or using copyrighted information without the permission from the copyright holder.
- Posting messages or accessing materials that are abusive, obscene, and sexually-oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal.
- Gaining unauthorized access to restricted information or resources.

Students will receive awareness training about proper electronic mail etiquette, as well as online and email safety. Student email account will allow them to communicate with other students to collaborate on projects and will allow a line of communication between students and teachers that otherwise would not be available.

Opt-Out Option: Parent Written Request to Deny Email Access

If a parent chooses not to allow their child to have access to district email services, such request must be made in writing and sent to your child's school annually. If you have questions concerning this policy, please contact the principal of the building your child attends.

Steve Roux

Director of Instructional Technology



Carol M. White Physical Education Program Grant (PEP Grant) Implementation

The Mexico School District has been awarded the Carol M. White Physical Education Program Grant (PEP Grant). The PEP Grant is allowing for the implementation of both nutrition education and physical education programs and events during this school year and the next. The nutrition education features include: nutrition presentations at all grade levels and for all sport teams; healthy boxed meals for athletes on away events; a high school wellness club; healthy snacks offered to students by Tiger Terrace and more. The grant physical education features include: polar heart rate monitors;

Greg Callan, Founder of Move Along Inc. of Central New York, spoke to the student body at Mexico Middle School during a presentation on Friday, October 31. At age 29, Callan suffered a detrimental accident that left him in a wheelchair. He founded Move Along Inc. in 2009 to enhance the physical abilities of those with disabilities. Move Along Inc. Executive Director Jeff Wright explains the goal of the organization saying, "We help focus on their abilities not their disabilities. We're inclusive so able bodied players can play with disabled players." This event was made possible through the Carol M. White Physical Education Grant (PEP Grant).





For final of the Move Along Inc. presentation, members of the middle school staff joined Move Along Inc. staff for a lively and competitive game of wheelchair basketball.

Annual MCJROTC Drill Meet

The Mexico High
Marine Corps
Junior Reserve
Officer Training
Corps Cadets
performed
during the
Annual Fall
MCJROTC
Drill Meet
held at Mexico
High School on



Saturday, November 1, 2014. Ten schools from the across the northeast, with a total of 400 cadets, attended the drill meet.

active gaming stations; yoga; inline skating; climbing walls; low to high ropes courses and more. Watch for continuous updates on the PEP Grant programs and events.

Kelly's Choice Dietician Kelly Springer gave a "Power of Planning" presentation to MACS staff during MACS Superintendent's Day training on November 11,



2014. The presentation focused on the reasons for planning nutritious meals and snacks, how to plan menus, and examples of healthy meals and snacks. In addition, the dietician suggested foods to always keep at home. These included: vegetables, fruits and fish in the freezer; canned tuna, salmon, fruit and vegetables in the pantry; and eggs and grilled chicken in the refrigerator. The nutritional presentations are part of the Carol M. White Physical Education Program Grant (PEP Grant).



Kelly's Choice Dietitian Kelly Springer, standing center left, gave a "My Plate" presentation to fourth grade students at Palermo Elementary on November 6, 2014. The nutrition presentations are part of the Carol M. White Physical Education Program Grant (PEP Grant), currently

being implemented throughout the district. Kelly Springer explains that "My Plate" is, "a tool created [by the US Government], to help people understand how to eat healthy. It makes a lot more sense than the food guide pyramid." "My Plate" is a plate divided into four segments to show the food groups - fruits, grains, vegetables, and protein, as well as proportions. Along side the plate is an additional circle allotted for dairy. During the presentation the students colored their own "My Plate" and learned that the vitamins and minerals in fruits and vegetables combine to create the colors and that they need to eat all different colors. Both the plates and a grocery list went home with each student.

The new fitness room at Mexico Middle School is in full use by the students. This fitness room, part of the Carol M. White Physical Education Program Grant (PEP Grant), offers the students weights, weight machines, treadmills, stationary bicycles and more.



toliday Concerts in the Mexico District



The Mexico Elementary Third Grade Chorus presented A Winter Festival of Music on Thursday, December 4, 2014. Under the direction of Keith Himes, Mexico Elementary School Chorus Director, and Pamela Kuczawa, Mexico Elementary School Assistant Chorus Director, nearly 90 third grade students performed for a large audience of family and friends. In addition to singing winter and holiday songs, three students played xylophones (pictured front), and several others played "Jingle Bells" on recorders. A sing-a-long and the finale of "I Hear those Jingle Bells" concluded the delightful concert.



The Mexico High School Music Department presented the 2014 Winter Concert of Choirs on Tuesday, December 9, 2014. The event included musical numbers by the following choirs: concert choir, chamber choir, barbershop, chorale, vocal jazz choir and the combined choir. The concert was directed by Hope Greco, Mexico High Director of Choral Studies. Accompanying on the piano was Abel Searor.



Mexico High School Music Department presented their Holiday Band Concert on Thursday, December 11, 2014. Both the Mexico High Jazz Ensemble, and the Mexico High Symphonic Band performed for the concert under the direction of Brian T. Carnes, MACS Director of Bands.



The New Haven Elementary School Winter Concert was presented to a full house on Tuesday, December 9, 2014. New Haven Music Director Glen Gagnier, front right, led the students in several numbers including, but not limited to: "Deck the Halls", "Hip Hop Reindeer", and "Walking in a Winter Wonderland".



The third and fourth grade chorus at Palermo Elementary School enjoyed presenting the Winter Concert on Thursday, December 11, 2014. "Frozen Heart", "Hip-Hop Reindeer", and "Let it Go" were three of the eight songs the students sang. The concert was directed by Palermo Elementary Music Director Glen Gagnier.



Mexico Middle School Band Director Julie Raner, center, directed the 5th grade band during the Mexico Middle School 5/6 Grade Holiday Concert on December 2, 2014, at the school. Over 70 fifth grade students play in the school band, and on this evening they performed "Angels on Parade", "Celebrating Chanukah", and "Christmas Mash-Up March". In addition to the 5th grade band, the 6th grade band performed as well as the 5/6 grade chorus, the latter under the direction of Laura Washburn, Mexico Middle School Chorus Director.

Day of the Dead Celebration

Mexico High Spanish Honor Society students posed amidst their "Day of the Dead" display in the main foyer of the school on October 28, 2014. MACS Spanish Teacher Virginia Sobota explained the holiday saying, "This is a centuries-old celebration where people in Mexico, and some other Central American



Countries, honor loved ones who have passed away." On the Day of the Dead it is believed that the spirits come back to celebrate. Families clean and decorate grave sites, and have picnics in the cemeteries - sometimes spending the night there. In addition to honoring their deceased, this holiday, which is annually celebrated on November 1-2, also recognizes that death is a natural part of life. Posing with Day of the Dead decorations are Spanish Honor Society students: Sophia Raymond, Andrea Ross, Deanna Spencer, Noah Galluzzo, Elizabeth Spencer, Alyssa Ross, and Hannah Bittner.

Drama Club Presents "Elektra"

Jacob Fraisier, front, took command of the stage in this scene when he, acting as Paedagogus, announced the death of another character in



the Mexico High School Fall Play, "Elektra", on Friday, November 7. Approximately 30 Mexico Drama Club members were involved in the production of this thrilling tragedy set in Crimea in Ukraine in the year 2042. The play ran for two nights and was directed by William Coughlin, Mexico High School Drama Club Director .

French Club Celebrates French Week

Members of the both the Mexico High French Club and the French Honor Society posed for a photo in the high school foyer which they had decorated for



French Week, November 3-7. The week included a number of activities, one of which is focusing on different countries where French is spoken. On the day of this photo, the students were studying Vietnam (where French is spoken by the older generations), which is evidenced by MACS French Teacher Kim Harter's costume, bottom right.



MACS Artwork on Display

Artwork by students at all grade levels in the Mexico School District is currently on public display at Mexico Public Library. Artwork created by Mexico High students is on display at Dunkin' Donuts in Mexico as well.

Schools Celebrate Veterans' Day



US Navy Veteran Charles Harris, enjoyed cookies with his two great-grandsons, Mexico Elementary School students Kevin and Dylan Perlet, during the school's Veteran's Day Program on Friday, November 7, 2014.

Also attending the event are: Cindy Currier, back left; Melissa Perlet, back right; and Ellie Bryant, seated second from left.



The students at New Haven Elementary School sang for the over three dozen veterans who attended the Veteran's Day Program at their school on Friday, November 7, 2014. Beyond the music, the veteran's enjoyed homemade cards, refreshments and more.

US Military Veteran Rowland Towle Jr, of Fulton, was greeted by Palermo Elementary School fourth grade students Caleb Collins and Merrisa Jewell, as he entered the school for the Veteran's Day Program on Friday, November 7, 2014. The program included



refreshments, music, and speeches for the attending veteran's. Towle's grandchild is a student at the school.

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Students Against Destructive Decisions Club at High School

MACS Teacher Jeanne Baldwin, Todd Rector, Ashton McCormack, Riley Green, Tori Brownell, and Shelby Buffham posed for a photo in front of the 'SAY NO TO DRUGS' banners that they hung in the Mexico High School cafeteria at the end of October. These students, along with others, are members of the school's Students Against Destructive Decisions Club (SADD) Club. Jean Baldwin, MACS SADD Advisor, says that this student education group works to inform the student body about destructive decisions with the hope that they will make better decisions. To achieve this, the club members use announcements, posters, ribbons, trivia contests, banner signings, and a mock DWI in the spring. Mexico High School Psychologist Kim Arroyo is also an advisor to the group. They meet at least once a month.

Palermo Elementary Hosts Family Holiday Fun Night



The Annual Palermo Elementary Holiday Fun Night was held on Friday, December 12, 2014. Second grade student Hannah Smith, left, paused while writing a letter to Santa to have her photo taken with her family: Heather Smith, Brad Amidon,

and twins Reed and Ryder Amidon. The well-attended event included a Christmas shop, treats, crafts and visits with Santa Claus, and was sponsored by Palermo Elementary Parent Teacher Club.

Class of 1940 Podium Restoration Recognition

The podium in the auditorium of Mexico High School was recently restored and several gathered to recognize the return of the podium to the school on October 30, 2014. Seventy-four years ago the podium was presented as a gift from the MACS Class of

Feb. 27



1940. With thanks to the Mexico Academy Educational Foundation (MAEF), the daughters of Robert and Mildred Murray (in memory and honor of their parents), and the Class of 2014, the podium was recently restored to its original condition. The restoration work was done by The Craftsman in Eastwood, NY. Pictured front, left to right: Jessica McKenna, MACS Teacher and Class of 2014 Advisor; Jeanne Baldwin, MACS Teacher and Class of 2014 Advisor; Eleanor Loomis, MACS Class of 1941, past member of the MAEF, and sister to the late Harold Mansfield, MACS Class of 1940; Jack Proud, MAEF Board of Directors and Oswego County Legislator; and Amy Shaw, MAEF Board of Directors and Pathfinder Bank Manager. Pictured back, left to right: James Emery, MAEF Board of Directors President; Cindy (Murray) Hanley; Becky (Murray) Riley; Robert Oustrich, MAEF Board of Directors and TOPS Market Manager; Donald Root, Mexico High School Principal; Ron Cosser, The Craftsman restorer; and Peter Allen, The Craftsman restorer. Not available for photo: Michelle (Murray) Miller.

Calendar of Events

Jan. 1-2 No School Jan. 14 Board of Education Meeting, 6pm Jan. 19 Martin Luther King Jr. Day, No School Jan. 30 Superintendent's Day, No School Feb. 5-7 Middle School Musical, 7pm Feb. 11 Board of Education Meeting, 6pm Grade 4 Band Performance, ME Feb. 12 Feb. 16-20 Winter Recess - No School

High School Semi-Formal, 8pm