



Tiger TRADITIONS

Inspiring Excellence and Leadership in All!

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Mexico Cares: District Donates Hundreds of Shirts for Hurricane Relief

To help those in need, the Mexico Academy & Central School District community recently proved they'd be willing to give the shirts off their backs. More than 1,500 shirts to be exact.

To help students at Harrells Christian Academy in Harrells, North Carolina, in the aftermath of Hurricane Florence, Mexico High School participated in a shirt collection called Mexico Cares: Give 'Em the Shirts Off Our Backs Campaign.

The shirt collection was started when retired English teacher Jane Backus learned from one of her former students, now a teacher at Harrells Christian Academy, that the community surrounding the district was devastated by the hurricane.



"I thought, even muttered to myself, 'I'd love to give her the shirt off my back to give to those poor souls.' In the next minute, I found myself asking, 'Why not?'"

Once Backus received permission from Mexico Academy to conduct the shirt drive, she and teacher Shannon Bigelow wrote emails and announcements to students and staff to consider donating one shirt to the cause.

The word went out Oct. 1, and when Backus visited the school Oct. 9, she found 10 large boxes already filled. By Oct. 19, Backus returned to find a, "literal wall of boxes, two deep and stacked four feet high."

By Oct. 23, 62 large boxes were filled and contained approximately 1,500 shirts. Others from outside the Mexico community heard of the drive and decided to contribute financially by covering the cost of the truck and mileage it would take to get the shirts to North Carolina.

Once the shirts arrive in North Carolina, they will first go to families and students who lost everything, then to students and families in need and finally to area shelters still in recovery.

Backus said the shirt drive and the efforts of students and staff throughout Mexico Academy & Central School District serves as a reminder what a great community Mexico is.

"They are truly good and great," said Backus. "One simple thought can lead to goodness and greatness."

Middle School Students Turn Trash into Art for Environment



Students at Mexico Middle School recently collected more than 2,000 pieces of trash off Lake Ontario's shore and turned it into art to raise awareness for plastic pollution. Pictured, the student artwork was displayed at the school's open house.

Continuing their efforts of being stewards of the area's natural resources, students at Mexico Middle School recently participated in two beach cleanups on Lake Ontario.

As a part of their aquatic ecology unit, students went to Mexico Point State Park and picked up more than 2,000 pieces of trash, with most of the pickup being plastics.

The students then turned the trash into artwork to display at the school's open house to raise public awareness and get conversations started about the plastic pollution issue in Lake Ontario.

"It is getting into our food chain in the form of microplastics," said teacher Alicia Archer. "Since the students retrieved the plastic before it broke down into microplastics, they were improving the environment and doing a community service."

New Haven Community Enjoys Annual PTC Fall Festival

There was plenty of autumn fun had during New Haven Elementary's recent Fall Festival. Activities included fall-themed games, face-paintings and even a pumpkin volcano STEM project.



A Message from the Superintendent



I hope this Tiger Traditions finds you and your family well! During this holiday season, I find it important to reflect on all of the many things to be thankful for as well as begin to formulate my new year's resolutions so that the coming year may be the best year yet!

In addition to being thankful for my family, I am thankful for my MACS family. It is truly an honor and pleasure to serve as superintendent of an incredible school district with such wonderful students, staff,

families, and community members! Together we continue to honor our traditions and values while continually improving for our students, staff, and community. There have been improvements in every school building and every department including Transportation, Food Service, and Operations & Maintenance. I thank our colleagues for their dedication and commitment! We have also experienced an abundance of increased opportunities, clubs, and organizations for our students. Some of the many highlights include the following.

Through successfully negotiated agreements with Onondaga Community College (OCC), Cayuga Community College (CCC), and Jefferson County Community (JCC), we have increased the opportunity for our high school students to take college level coursework and gain college credit. This not only helps our students to be sure they can be successful with college level coursework, it also provides a financial savings and head start for those graduates choosing to further their education. Currently, we have experienced a 57 percent increase of our high school students earning up to three credits, 24 percent earning 4-15 college credits, and 22 percent of graduates earned 15 or more college credits. We have successfully instituted a high school distance learning and online learning lab for MACS high school students to access college coursework and earn college credit.

We have partnered with our CiTi BOCES and our fellow Oswego County school districts to successfully institute the grant-funded Oswego County Pathways in Technology Early High School (P-Tech) to provide our students the opportunity to simultaneously work towards a Regents High School Diploma and an associate degree in Applied Science from OCC. Through partnerships like these and by utilizing grant funding, we have also instituted an early College High School program for MACS seniors to attend OCC with dual enrollment full-time in their senior year.

As you may know, we have instituted the student character development program, The Leader in Me at our elementary schools and are progressively implementing it at our middle school.

We have improved math instruction in grades PK-8 which has resulted in increased student achievement outcomes that, in some cases, are in excess of 10 percent or more per year. We have also committed to achieving our aspiration goal of 100 percent of our students reading at grade level by the exit of grade three by attending professional development for the most recent evidenced-based instructional strategies and techniques for reading instruction, updating and closing gaps in our reading instruction resources. In addition to our own district-wide professional development, we have also joined a county-wide collaboration, called the Oswego County Literacy Initiative. This is a partnership with SUNY Oswego, The Reading League, CiTi BOCES and our eight other Oswego County school districts to increase teacher knowledge about

reading instruction. (The Reading League is a Central New York nonprofit organization that trains educators on evidence-based practices to improve reading instruction. This endeavor has recently received a grant of \$4 million to expand its programs nationally. The Pleasant T. Rowland Foundation has awarded the three-year grant, along with a \$5 million pledge for an endowment fund.) The County school districts have aligned annual calendars so that we can share superintendent conference days to provide professional development consistently throughout our county as well as enjoy the financial benefits from such collaborations. (Ensuring we are fiscally responsible is always at the forefront of our agenda.) I thank our colleagues and our partners in this wonderful collaborative model!

I also would like to thank our community for supporting the most recent five-year, \$21 million capital project that recently culminated with the construction of our new stadium complex. While the complex is the most visible and last part, this total project provided updates and improvement for all of our buildings and grounds. We are forever grateful to our community members who supported the project.

Just like at home, it seems like the more we fix and update a lot of different areas, the more other areas need fixing and updates. In the next few years, we may need to address those issues, and we will be reaching out to you. While capital projects must address deterioration, they can also provide an opportunity to fulfill a vision. They can answer the question of what we want to become and how does the physical make-up of our district support that vision.

As we look towards the future, we want to hear ideas, thoughts, and suggestions from our students, staff, families and community members so together we may develop a vision for 2020 and beyond. In the coming months and over the next year, we will be looking for committee volunteers, focus group members and survey responses to gain input for what continues to be successful areas of our district and where we need to grow and improve so we may collaboratively create our District's vision and charting a course for 2020 and beyond.

As this year comes to a close, I also wanted to provide an update from a recent newspaper article. You may have seen the recent article in The Palladium Times regarding Exelon's Tax certiorari lawsuit. Yes, Exelon has filed a lawsuit to lower the current \$550 million assessment of FitzPatrick to \$50 million. Should this lawsuit be successful, it could result in a potentially substantially detrimental multimillion-dollar reduction in school district revenue. While news like this can cause concern and anxiety, please know that we continue to remain optimistic and work diligently in reaching a fair Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreement.

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

I thank you for your continued support of our District! I hope you and your family enjoy a wonderful holiday season and a Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

Sean C. Bruno



Proud to be MACS



October Proud to be MACS Honoree

Alexandra Scorzelli

Alexandra Scorzelli, teacher at New Haven Elementary, was chosen as the October 2018 Proud to be MACS honoree. Allie graduated from MACS in 2010, and went on to attend LeMoyne College, earning a degree in sociology with a concentration in

childhood and special education. LeMoyne College would also be where Allie earned her Master's Degree in literacy as well as a K-2 certification.

When it comes to instructing, you might say that Allie doesn't "fall far from the tree," as her mother, Peggy, is the instructional leader of Palermo Elementary and father, Matt, dedicated many, many hours of instruction of swimming to the youth of our community with his involvement in the much honored Mexico Tiger Sharks program.

Allie started with the District in February of 2015 as a long-term substitute at Palermo Elementary but would move to New Haven Elementary in September of 2015 as a first-grade teacher.

"Allie puts so much effort and creativeness into her lessons. She spends many late nights at school preparing for these lessons. Allie is just a special teacher," said teacher Cheryl Barbeau, who nominated Allie for the award.

When asked about the favorite part of her job, Allie said seeing the children grow and develop over the course of the year. Allie believes that each student has a gift and "The Leader in Me" program helps to promote this gift. But, not to be lost, is the need to encourage those traits in her students that they may need to try or develop.

I feel that Alexandra Scorzelli should be "Proud to be MACS" because she is extremely dedicated, a hard worker, and demonstrates great leadership skills. I feel inspired when I work with her and love how she always has a positive attitude," said Barbeau.



November Proud to be MACS Honoree

Eileen Murray

Eileen Murray, teacher at Mexico High School, was chosen as the November 2018 Proud to be MACS honoree. Eileen grew up in Cicero and graduated from Cicero High School. After attending SUNY Cortland for two years, Eileen moved over to

LeMoyne College and majored in history with a minor in education. She would return to SUNY Cortland for her Master's Degree in social studies. Eileen started with MACS in 1988.

Eileen considers herself fortunate to have been mentored by former social studies leader Mike Kuno and High School principal, Jack Proud. This mentoring, combined with Eileen's innate abilities as an instructor, propelled her toward a rewarding career as one of MACS' premier educators.

"Eileen is a true classroom pioneer. She is always willing to try something new and exciting in order to benefit her students. She is a teacher leader who is innovative and inspirational and motivates her colleagues to take on new things," said teacher Shannon Bigelow, who nominated Eileen for the award.

As for her favorite part of the job, Eileen loves seeing her students develop from ninth grade to 10th grade. For the ninth-graders, it is the challenge of introducing and refining their organizational skills. For the 10th-graders, it is the delivery of content that ranges from the French Revolution to date. Eileen also said she loves her role as one of the district's Blended Learning leaders.

"Eileen has recently transformed her classroom into a true Blended Learning environment, and students are benefiting from varied and exciting instructional practices," said Bigelow.

Elementary Students Showcase Their Creativity During Halloween Parades

Elementary students had a spooky good time during recent Halloween parades. Pictured are some of the great costumes on display this year!



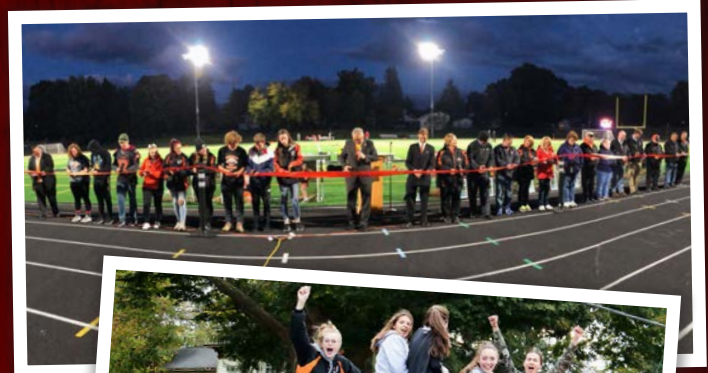
MACS Celebrates Stadium Re-Opening at Homecoming



After making major improvements to the district's stadium complex, Mexico Academy was able to host a re-opening during the varsity football team's homecoming game.

Following the annual homecoming parade and prior to the start of the football game, the district held a ribbon cutting ceremony, which featured opening remarks from Superintendent Sean Bruno and Board of Education President Jim Emery. The ribbon cutting featured current students, as well as current and former Board of Education members.

The new improvements to the complex include resurfacing of the tennis and basketball courts, new bathrooms and concession stand, a new scoreboard, a new track and turf field, new LED lighting, additional parking and new and improved bleachers and press box.



Tiger Terrace Takes on Dozens of Bread Orders for Thanksgiving



Students in the Tiger Terrace have been busy this holiday season with bread orders, and baked more than 50 loaves of bread for Thanksgiving. Pictured, student Aaron Humphrey is all smiles standing in front of some of the bread.

For the holiday season, students in the Tiger Terrace program have been taking bread orders for staff, and have so far baked more than 50 loaves of bread.

Teacher Alison Zell said the students have baked some holiday bread favorites, including pumpkin, cranberry and pecan. Zell said the program teaches students a variety of skillsets, including measuring, reading a recipe and general baking skills.

The students will continue to take orders during the first few weeks of December for Christmas, and will then turn their attention to a Valentine's Day brownie sale.



NHS Inducts 11 New Students

For showcasing character, scholarship, leadership and service, 11 students at Mexico High School were recently inducted into the school's chapter of National Honor Society.

During an induction ceremony held at Mexico High School, the students were congratulated for demonstrating the four pillars of National Honor Society, with Principal Ryan Lanigan offering words of encouragement.

"We should all strive to be better tomorrow than we are today," said Lanigan. "I ask that you do not rest on your laurels and continue to grow and continue to be individuals of great character."

Lanigan said the students are well on their way to making lasting contributions to the community and world.

Following words by NHS President Josh Washer and Superintendent Sean Bruno, the new inductees were introduced one by one and made their way to the stage. NHS adviser Joseph Deckman then recited the NHS pledge, officially introducing the students to the organization.

The inductees include students Shannon Michaelis, Sydney Lawton, Kierra Webster, Calla Lewis, Emily Thompson, Jolie Pelow, Aidan Sherman, Evan Blunt, Caleb Kinsey, Mariah Wright and Emma McCarthy.

New Haven Enjoys Charlie Brown Thanksgiving

After watching "A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving," students in Brianne Hartmann's class at New Haven Elementary were able to enjoy some of the snacks showcased in the movie.

The students feasted on buttered toast, pretzels, popcorn, jelly beans and ice cream, which is what Snoopy famously served in the movie.

High School Students Help With Operation Reindeer Initiative



Students at Mexico High School recently volunteered their time after school to help the First Presbyterian Church in Mexico with their annual Operation Reindeer efforts. The students packed more than 400 children's bags to help bring joy to 147 families this holiday season.





22 German Exchange Students Start at High School

Mexico High School saw an influx of European culture, as 22 German exchange students attended the school during the month of October.

The students visited as part of the German American Partnership Program (GAPP) and shadowed students from Mexico High School and learn what everyday life is like for students in America. GAPP is Mexico High School's long-standing exchange program with its sister school in Schneverdingen, Germany.

"They attended school, sporting events and spent time with their host families. They also explored local history and American history with a variety of field trips," said Kimberly Rice, who teaches German at Mexico High School and helps coordinate the program.

Rice said the exchange students visited local attractions such as Fort Ontario, the Safe Haven Museum and the H. Lee White Marine Museum in Oswego. The students will also travel to Auburn to tour the Seward House and the Harriet Tubman House, as well as stops to Niagara Falls, Gettysburg, PA, Washington D.C. and New York City.

When asked why the program is important to Mexico High School, Rice said it is key to create positive relationships with foreign nations.

"Our families and students get to know their exchange students on a personal level. It changes the way we think about what is happening in the world and how we react to foreigners," said Rice. "It gives our students a fresh perspective on our own lifestyle."

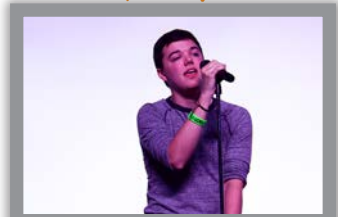
"I truly believe that this program helps our students understand the world around them and their role as a world citizen."

The German exchange students were recently introduced to the school during a reception, where district officials welcomed the students to Mexico.

"We're really excited you're here and really hope you enjoy your time in Mexico and the United States," said Principal Ryan Lanigan.

Students Showcase Talent at Mexico Idol

More than one dozen students participated in this year's Mexico Idol held at Mexico High School. Participating students sang a variety of songs, much to the delight of the audience.



Thank You!



October was National School Board Recognition Week. We thank our past and current school board members for all that they have done for our students, school and community over the years! Thank you for all of the hours, commitment, dedication and support, it is truly appreciated!



Middle School Students Present Disney's 'Peter Pan'

Students at Mexico Middle School recently found their Neverland while performing Disney's "Peter Pan Jr.," which left audience members hooked. The play tells the classic tale of Wendy and her two brothers being taken to the magical world Neverland by Peter Pan, where they come face-to-face with the evil Captain Hook.

New Haven Students Take a Google Expedition



Students in Melissa Stoutenberg's class at New Haven Elementary recently participated in a Google Expedition activity that brought them close up to wildlife.

Google Expedition allows students to experience and interact with parts of the world not common to the area with the use of 3-D goggles. Mrs. Stoutenberg's class used the expedition to see animals from around the world.

"They were very engaged and extremely excited during the experience," said Stoutenberg. "They are begging for me to sign them out again soon."

Mexico Middle School Open House a Success

The halls of Mexico Middle School were recently buzzing with activity as students and families flocked to the school's open house to experience the students daily routines.

Principal Kim Holliday, Vice Principal Colleen Root and the rest of the middle school staff welcomed parents and students into the building and answered an array of questions. Teachers eagerly awaited visits from parents and guardians and discussed topics such as curriculum and the progress of each student.



Rose Signs On to Play Lacrosse at Montevallo University

Although she has one more season of lacrosse to play at Mexico High School, senior Rachel Rose will transition from Mexico's orange to the purple of Montevallo University next fall after recently signing her letter of intent.

Rose, who plays goalie, first caught the attention of varsity head coach David Passer as a seventh-grader when she displayed commitment to the position.

"What I noticed is that she never flinched. The first game I watched her play, she let in goals, but she never flinched from the ball," said Passer.

After that first game, Passer said he approached Rose's father to let him know how talented and successful his daughter could be. Fast-forward five years, and Rose has proved her coach right.

"It's to Rachel's credit as a student first and an athlete second that this day has come. It's been a great five years and I'm looking forward to this last year with her," said Passer.



Pictured, senior Rachel Rose poses proudly with her family after signing her letter of intent to play lacrosse at Montevallo University in Alabama.

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SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Dec. 18** PAL Holiday Concert & PTC Book Fair 6pm
- Dec. 19** MS 2pm Dismissal - Faculty Meeting
- Dec. 19** MS Holiday 7/8 Band Concert MS Aud. 7pm
- Dec. 20** 15 Week Reports Go Home
- Dec. 21 to Jan. 1** Winter Recess
- Jan. 7-11** HS Spirit Week
 - Jan. 8** Dollars for Scholars 6:30pm
 - Jan 10** Board of Education Meeting
- Jan. 11-12** All-County Band Festival - Oswego
- Jan. 16** MS 2pm Dismissal - Faculty Meeting
- Jan. 18** NH PTC Winter Ball MS 6pm
- Jan. 21** Martin Luther King Jr, Day, No school
- Jan. 22-25** Regents Testing
- Jan. 24** Board of Education Workshop
- Jan. 25** Early Dismissal MS 11:05am/Elem 12:05pm
- Jan. 25** 20 Week Marking Period Ends
- Jan. 31** 20 Week Reports Go Home
- Feb. 1** No School Superintendent's Conference Day
- Feb. 4** PAL 4th Gr. band Educational Concert 6pm
- Feb. 5** ME 4th Gr. band Educational Concert 6pm
- Feb. 7** HS True Beauty Day
- Feb. 8** MS Dance 6:30-8:30pm
- Feb. 11** NH 4th Gr. band Educational Concert 6pm
- Feb. 12** Dollar for Scholars HS 6:30pm
- Feb. 13** MS Early Dismissal 2pm
- Feb. 14** Board of Education 6pm
- Feb 18-22** No School Mid-Winter Recess



LET'S GO TIGERS!



New Mural Showcases Togetherness at Mexico Middle School

In collaboration with the school's newly developed School Leadership Team and School Intervention Team, Mexico Middle School recently created a new mural featuring the hands of each student.

Teachers Maureen Spath and Julie Osborn set out on a mission in August to create visuals and quotes throughout the building to enhance our sense of family, community, diversity, respect, warmth, compassion and belonging amongst our students, staff, community and visiting guests.

The teachers then facilitated a school-wide project in which everyone in the building had a "hand" in it. Each student and staff member in the building were given the opportunity to utilize their handprint to create the leaves, butterflies, dragonflies, flowers, and the sun's rays in the new mural. At the center of the mural reads, "Mexico."

"Though we all may go in different directions one day (branches), our roots remain as one! I could not be more proud of our school community and participation in such a loving, collaborative project," said Principal Kim Holliday. "It has given us a sense of unity and pride and serves as a constant reminder of the beauty of the things that can be accomplished when we all come together as one loving community."

