



# Tiger TRADITIONS

*Inspiring Excellence and Leadership in All!*

November/December 2017 - Volume 21 • Issue 6

## College opportunities abound for high school students

Mexico Academy & Central School District students could be nearly half-way to obtaining a bachelor's degree by the time they graduate, thanks to an abundance of college opportunities at Mexico High School.

Juniors and seniors may enroll in online Cayuga Community College courses; Distance Learning courses through CCC, Onondaga Community College and other colleges and Advanced Placement courses. Seniors may also become dually-enrolled with OCC through the brand new Early College High School program. ECHS is a full-immersion, all-day experience at OCC, which allows seniors to take between 12 and 16 credits per semester. Fall classes correspond with remaining credit requirements for high school, while in the spring semester students may take courses they are interested in pursuing.



*Mexico High School students, from left: Kalysta Kempisty, Morgan Richardson, Katherine Hill, Natasha Ratcliff, Hannah Wakeman and Brandon Dutcher show their excitement on the Onondaga Community College campus in Syracuse where they attend classes, as part of the Early College High School program.*

There is no out-of-pocket cost to parents for ECHS, which essentially saves them over \$6,000 in tuition, books and fees per year. Mexico High School purchases required books for students to borrow and transportation is provided to and from OCC, giving seniors ample time to still be involved in MHS extra-curricular activities.

Diversifying student interest has proven to be a successful method, as about 61 percent of the Class of 2017 cohort earned college credits. Just over 22 percent of the cohort alone earned 15 or more college credits.

## Mexico Middle School students take on design challenge

Mexico Middle School seventh-graders have taken real-world problems and used their ingenuity, determination and teamwork to create solutions.

That occurred in the students' technology class with teacher David Wilcox, who presented the students with a foot orthosis instant design challenge. The Project Lead the Way activity allowed students to delve into an engineering mindset to design, test and build a model solution for patients with cerebral palsy. The activity served as a precursor to a design and drawing unit.



*Mexico Middle School seventh-graders, from left: Teajinn Ingersoll, Rebecca Vaughn, Ella McCoy and Nicholas Weber show off some foot orthosis prototypes created as part of a recent technology class challenge.*

## Celebrating

SCHOOL RELATED PROFESSIONALS  
RECOGNITION DAY

NOVEMBER 21



# A Message from the Superintendent



As you may recall, last year our District engaged Mr. Alan Pole and Dr. Bill Silky of Castallo & Silky LLC (Syracuse, New York) to review the use of our facilities with an advisory committee. Specifically, the committee was asked to answer the following question: "How can we educationally and fiscally reconfigure our grades and/or facilities to provide a sound instructional program now and in the future?"

During the course of the year, Mr. Pole and Dr. Silky were concerned with the long-term viability of Fitzpatrick and the revenue generated for our District. They were also concerned that we should prepare sooner rather than later for such a loss. With this and all of the data and information studied, their work concluded with the following two options for our Board of Education to consider:

**Option 1:** Remain as is: K-4, 5-8, 9-12 and renovate current buildings.

**Option 2:** Close New Haven and Palermo; put an addition on Mexico

Elementary School for PK-2; Mexico Middle School becomes a grade 3-7 Intermediate School; the High School houses grades 8-12.

After an in-depth review and careful consideration, our Board of Education has decided not to move forward with either of the recommendations at this time. While we agree that each of these options offer potential educational and financial advantages (for our district), we believe we must move in a different direction at this time.

We will not be closing buildings as recommended in option 2. While we understand that if we should lose the revenue from FitzPatrick, we may be in a position to reconsider option 2, we believe that the energy credits should sustain the plant's continued operation for the 10-year duration of the credits. Furthermore, we believe that we have substantial reserves to support a transition that accounts for the loss of revenue should FitzPatrick cease to operate at the time of such an event.

Additionally, we believe that we should continue to update and renovate our current buildings as necessary. We also believe that we need to continue to

honor our values, traditions, and all the unique things that makes MACS great. However, we feel that we should continuously seek innovative and more effective avenues to serve our students and our community. This may require moving beyond "as is." We believe that continually increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of our educational program remains at the forefront of our work. While we have strengthened opportunities of our secondary students, we strive to improve students achievement at all levels, especially in the early grades where foundational skills are learned.

As you may know, we have set District student achievement goals. We routinely analyze data to measure our progress towards our goals and to drive decision-making. While we are working to achieve all of our goals, we have prioritized our goal of 100% of our students reading at grade level by the conclusion of 3rd grade. We have prioritized this because mastering foundational reading, writing, and math skills supports all future success for our students. As we look into our data, we have found that our students who attend our Pre-K program largely outperform students who do not attend Pre-K. This gap in performance is present at Kindergarten and tends to continue over time. As a result, we are studying how to ensure that we provide such preparation for all of our students. We are also interested in determining if a longer Pre-K day would increase greater student success. In addition to this, we are interested in ensuring lower class size for those grades where students are learning foundational skills. Furthermore, we are proud to share that our wonderful teachers are also investigating innovative instructional strategies, techniques, and up to date resources to maximize student learning and enjoyment.

I will continue to update you as we progress in our investigation, discussion and decision making of how to continuously improve serving our students and our community. As always, please feel free to contact me through email: [sbruno@mexicocsd.org](mailto:sbruno@mexicocsd.org), office phone: 315-963-8400 ext.5403, or cell phone: 315-200-9542 with questions, ideas, suggestions, or concerns.

Sincerely,

Sean C. Bruno



## MACS Athletic Hall of Fame nominations sought

The Mexico Academy & Central School District is seeking nominations for its Athletic Hall of Fame.

Candidates may be individual athletes, athletic teams, coaches or special contributors to MACS sports. Nominations should be sent to: Athletic Director David Gryczka, Mexico School District, 16 Fravor Road, Mexico, NY 13114 by Feb. 1, 2018. Nomination forms can be found under "Athletics" in the "Departments" drop down menu on the district website, [www.mexicocsd.org](http://www.mexicocsd.org).

If you would like to nominate someone but do not have access to a computer, forms may be picked up at the athletic office at the high school, 3338 Main St., Mexico, NY 13114.

## Proud to be MACS

**October Proud to be MACS Honoree**

### Sadie Blauvelt



Sadie Blauvelt, typist in the Mexico High School assistant principal's office, was chosen as the October 2017 Proud to be MACS honoree. Sadie grew up in Pulaski and graduated from the Pulaski Academy & Central School District in 1985. Two years later, she graduated from Canton

Agricultural and Technical College with a degree in Restaurant and Hotel Management and eventually transitioned to CiTi BOCES in 1992 before she joined MACS in 2010.

Although Sadie resides in Lacona, the Mexico community has become her second home. She wakes up early to use the high school pool, works a second job at the local Kinney Drugs and works in the after-school programs.

She embodies the characteristic of extraordinary effort that is put into her work. Sadie is committed to taking courses or attending conferences to enhance her job and leadership skills. As a result, she serves as president of her local bargaining unit and president at the Oswego County level. She also has been selected as the New York State Association of Educational Office Professionals "Office Professional of the Year" for 2017, which honors office professionals who are recognized by their peers and supervisors as possessing exemplary professional and personal characteristics.

MACS Superintendent Sean Bruno said Sadie is a consummate professional who is respectful, kind, caring and dignified for all students, especially those who are called to the assistant principal's office for behavior issues. While these can be particularly challenging situations for students, Sadie always creates a comforting, supportive environment for students while simultaneously balancing high expectations. She is hard working and her level of commitment and dedication to our District and our students regularly exceeds expectations."

Sadie said she is excited to live close to her son, Jamie, his wife Taylor, and her three-month-old granddaughter, Reagan.

## Big hearts lead to big impact at Mexico Elementary

At Mexico Elementary School, students and staff members embody the school district's core belief that the students are the heart of the community.

So, when Hurricane Harvey recently hit Texas, Mexico Elementary students stepped up to lend a helping hand and open their hearts. Students worked with a group of teachers to raise funds for relief efforts. The entire school rallied around the effort.

The school collected more than \$600 for the Salvation Army's hurricane disaster relief fund.



*Mexico Elementary School students, from left: second-grader Ally Rando, third-grader Madison Greenway, second-grader Emily Moroz, second-grader Alyssa Campbell and third-grader Parker Jock beam with pride as they show off a large representation of students and teachers who donated to the school-wide Hurricane Harvey disaster relief project.*



Mexico High School SADD Club members recently celebrated National Red Ribbon Week by spreading awareness concerning destructive decisions teens are making, such as distracted driving, drugs, bullying, alcohol and suicide. Club members asked classmates to take a pledge connecting to each theme.

## Rachel's Challenge inspires MACS students

Students in fifth- through 12th-grade within the Mexico Academy & Central School District have embraced acceptance of others, kindness and the willingness to see the good in all.

Much of that sentiment has always existed within the halls of MACS buildings, but the re-energized high school student body and newly excited middle school students together have committed to accepting Rachel's Challenge. The challenge to be kind to others, always, and to spread compassion and hope began after Rachel Joy Scott was the first person killed in the tragic Columbine High School shooting on April 20, 1999.

During a recent Rachel's Challenge presentation at Mexico High School, presenter Alex Jackson encouraged students to give people a few chances before making a decision about them. That message carried over to Mexico Middle School where Jackson said he was pleased with the buzz from students in grades five through eight in wanting to bring Rachel's legacy to their school.



# CAPITAL PROJECT Update

Through your support, we have been able to update many areas of our district for our students, community and staff members. Work has continued on the 2013 district-wide, voter-approved capital project. Below is a list of completed projects:

## BUS GARAGE

- Overhead door replacement
- Masonry reconstruction
- Drainage
- Fuel dispenser
- Trench drain
- Maintenance area

## PALERMO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- Gym and Cafeteria roof replacement
- Cafeteria ceiling
- Basement steel joists
- Masonry reconstruction
- Exterior Gym Door
- Library and Computer Lab

## NEW HAVEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- Gym and Cafeteria Roof replacement
- Corridor ceiling
- Roof insulation
- Gym wall
- HVAC
- Air handling and ducts
- West side Library windows

## MEXICO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- Gym and Cafeteria Roof replacement
- Door Replacement
- Corridor ceiling

## MEXICO MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Gym and Cafeteria Roof replacement
- Ceiling for two wings
- Floor tile for two wings
- Locker replacement for two wings
- Hallway and classroom renovations for two wings
- Elevator reconstruction
- Toilet room fixtures and partition
- Brick masonry
- Toilet rooms crawl space drainage and ventilation
- Clocks
- Band/Wrestling room HVAC
- Terrazzo treads
- Corridor doors
- Nurses office HVAC
- Window shades for two wings

- Electric panel replacement
- AHU replacement
- Brick expansion joints
- Computer room AC

## MEXICO HIGH SCHOOL

- Gym and Cafeteria Roof replacement
- Doors
- Main Entry
- Main cupola & Clock tower
- Side entry East
- Side entry West
- West Cupola
- Sidewalks
- Roof Leaders and Foundation drain
- Brick masonry
- Precast stone
- Plaster abatement
- Corridor acoustic ceiling



## Reading takes Western adventure at Palermo Elementary

Palermo Elementary School students are committed to saddle up and read throughout the 2017-2018 school year.

Several activities were a part of a week-long kick-off celebration which included dressing up as cowboys and cowgirls, and learning about how to care for horses from MACS Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction Mary Beth Horn.

As part of the Saddle Up and Read pledge, students will strive to read for at least five out of seven days per week and set their own goals/track their progress.

To help keep the momentum going, Principal Margaret "Peggy" Scorzelli created a Western-themed bulletin board outside of the cafeteria where progress will be tracked for each classroom that meets or exceeds a goal of having 90 percent of the class population complete that weekly reading goal.

Principal Scorzelli said the whole initiative will help the school achieve its building-wide goal of having 100 percent of the student population increase its reading levels.



*Cecilia Barry, Palermo Elementary School kindergartner, laughs during a recent "Saddle Up and Read" theatrical performance and magic show, which promoted reading.*

## Open house attracts several families to New Haven Elementary

New Haven Elementary students and their families flocked to the school's annual open house event to share in the excitement with teachers over the start of the 2017-2018 school year.

Principal Jennifer Granholm greeted everyone as they walked in the main entrance before they disbursed to their classrooms and special areas. Students were excited to show their personal work spaces to their guests and they beamed with pride over their projects and artwork displayed throughout the halls.

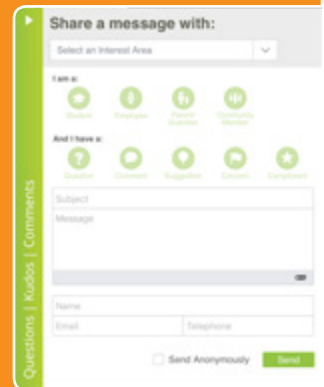


*At left, Sophia Cahill, New Haven Elementary first-grader, joins her sister Paige Cahill, right, during a visit to Paige's third-grade classroom with teacher Andrea Searles during the school's recent open house.*

## Questions, Kudos, Comments?

Utilize our district website's Let's Talk! questions tab on the right hand side of your web browser window to conveniently share your questions, kudos or comments on anything MACS related anytime, anywhere, from any electronic device. You can choose to remain anonymous or share your contact information, including your e-mail address, to receive a personal response.

This is not intended to replace traditional means of communication, such as face-to-face meetings and telephone conversations. Thank you for helping us to become a more responsive and effective district, allowing us to focus on what matters most: student success.



## Snuggled up, Palermo families get reading

Palermo Elementary is turning the page when it comes to encouraging and promoting family literacy.

As a continuation to the school's year-long reading initiative, the Parent-Teacher Club recently hosted its annual Snuggle up with a Good Book event, which drew more than 40 people to the school cafeteria. Dressed in their warmest pajamas and snuggled up with their favorite blankets and stuffed animals, the students took turns reading to their parents and then listening to stories about Pokémon, Disney princesses and fairytale endings.

Principal Margaret "Peggy" Scorzelli said the event served as an opportunity for Palermo students in grades pre-kindergarten through four to welcome their families into school to simply enjoy family reading time.



*Hannah Huber, Palermo Elementary pre-kindergartener, gives Olaf a hug as she and her dad, Matt Huber, take a quick break from reading about Rapunzel during the school's recent Snuggle up with a Good Book event.*

## "Pete the Cat" Demonstrates Friendship and Artistic Expression at New Haven Elementary

New Haven Elementary recently welcomed the musical theatre performance "Pete the Cat" to celebrate the school reading goals.

Based on the popular book series by Kimberly and James Dean, lead character Pete the Cat gets sent to the Biddle family to learn his manners as a trained house cat. He meets clean, proper and organized child Jimmy, who can't seem to conquer second grade art. Together, they both learn a little bit about life, communication and relationships. The students clapped, laughed and cheered throughout the performance, which reinforced class learning in literature, language arts and artistic expression.



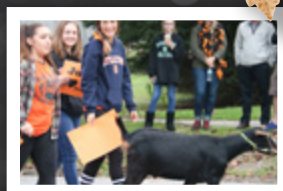
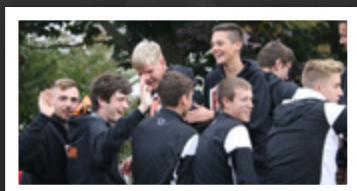
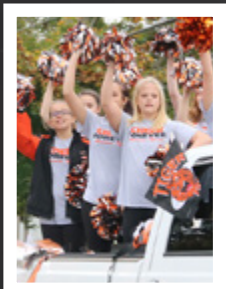
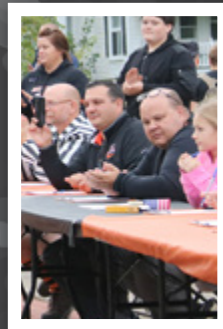
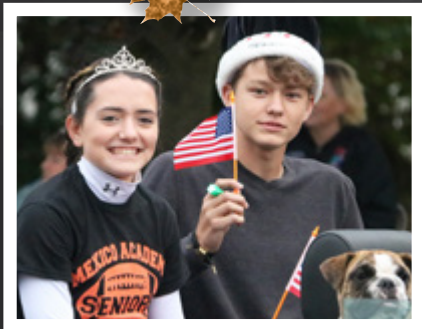
*Musical theatre performance "Pete the Cat" teaches New Haven Elementary School students about friendship, communication and artistic expression.*

## Homecoming parade draws crowd in Mexico

Mexico High School's Class of 2021 stole the show during the annual Homecoming Parade, as the freshmen dressed up in jeans and flannel shirts and threw a country ho-down, complete with line dancing and farm animals.

Representatives from the classes of 2018, 2019 and 2020 also riled the crowds on both sides of the road from Mexico Elementary School and down State Route 104 before ending at the Mexico Middle School. Several other school groups, such as the U.S. Marine Corps Junior ROTC, French Club and Friends of Rachel Club, dazzled the judges with gifts such as flowers, décor and tasty treats.

The parade helped conclude Spirit Week, which brought a sea of Orange and Black through the schools and community.



## Palermo Elementary Builds Annual Family Wall of Fame

For years, Palermo Elementary School has welcomed students and families to participate in building their annual Palermo Family Wall of Fame during the school's open house.

A colorful backdrop filled the art room at the school where students and their families posed for a photo opp. Later, the photos will be printed, laminated and showcased in hallways throughout the school year.

In addition to receiving a tour of the school, parents were able to meet with their child's teacher, visit a book fair in the library, see a bus safety presentation by the Mexico Academy & Central School District Transportation Department and enjoy a performance by the third and fourth grade chorus.



*Mexico Academy & Central School District students proudly show their artwork to Superintendent Sean Bruno at the Palermo Elementary School Open House.*

# Thank You!



In 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!

## New Haven, Palermo elementary schools celebrate Dot Day

In celebration of International Dot Day on Sept. 15, art teacher Megan Christopher read the book "The Dot" by Peter H. Reynolds to students in grades kindergarten through four. The story is about a child's lack of self-confidence as an artist and after only putting a dot on her paper, she experiences a journey of self-discovery. Christopher applied that concept to the collaborative art pieces to teach students that together, creative minds can make something beautiful with different dots, points of view, colors and patterns.

Displayed outside of the art rooms are the collaborative pieces, which consist of nine panels of dot artwork with the words: "Make your mark and see where it takes you!"



*New Haven Elementary School students in grades kindergarten through four created the beautiful dot artwork display in celebration of International Dot Day, which occurred Sept. 15. A similar project also was created at Palermo Elementary.*

## Mexico Elementary open house draws a large crowd

Students and their families flooded the hallways and classrooms, as the children in grades pre-kindergarten through four were ecstatic to show off their school work and have their parents or guardians meet their teachers. Several teachers set-up scavenger hunts to offer a fun activity to help families navigate the classroom space, while others had folders of class work to show progress from the first day of school. The library was also packed with people eager to browse new literature at the book fair.



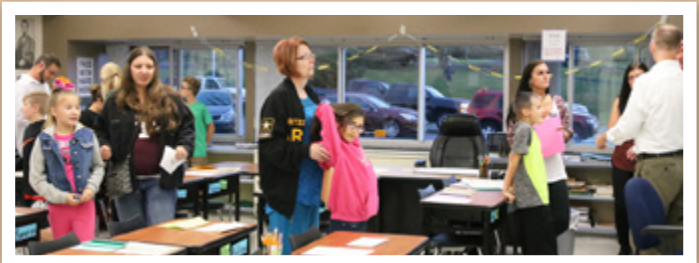
*The Rainbow family, from left: dad Daniel, Mexico Elementary kindergartner Emma and mom Rebecca, enjoy time spent together during the school's recent open house event.*

## Mexico Middle School open house a success

Mexico Middle School families flocked to the recent open house to experience their child's fifth-, sixth-, seventh- or eighth-grade daily routines.

Principal Kim Holliday greeted attendees as they arrived before students joined their parents, guardians and siblings as they showcased completed assignments and projects they worked on since the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year, viewed classroom spaces and interacted with teachers. Some parents were even asked to do a quiz about their child's school experience.

The event also served as an opportunity for parent-teacher conference sign-ups, families to receive school and community information and a sit-down peach crisp desert was served to all in the cafeteria. The real treat came at 6:30 p.m. in the auditorium when guests were invited to participate in a videoconference to learn all about the Great Barrier Reef.

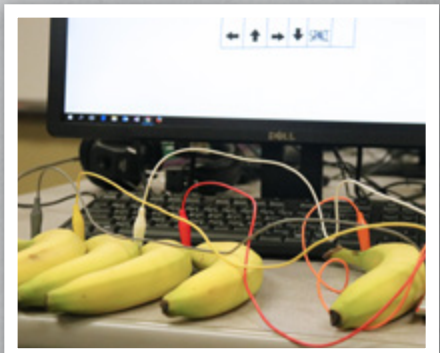


*Mexico Middle School students, families and teachers recently came together during the building's recent open house to celebrate a successful start to the 2017-2018 school year.*

## Palermo Elementary students learn basic circuitry skills

MakeyMakey kits are designed to let students imaginations run wild and embody discovery learning through a trial and error of beginning programming skills, explained Lynn Millbyer, itinerant computer education specialist with the Center for Instruction, Technology & Innovation. These kits have been made available for students in the library media center.

The kits are comprised of a small computer board that plugs into a USB port. Students will be well on their way to circuitry fun once alligator clips are attached to various components of the board, such as letter keys, a space bar or arrows, and the clip's other end is attached to an object that conducts electricity. The person wanting to control the "keys" must hold one end of a remaining clip attached to the bottom of the board in order to complete the circuit; without that step the process won't work.



*A small computer board and alligator clips, which are all components of a MakeyMakey kit, are attached to bananas in order to conduct electricity to use the fruit as arrow key strokes to play the piano on screen. These kits are available for creative play at Palermo Elementary School*

Use of objects such as bananas, clothing, Play-Doh and more, will then replace strokes of the standard key board. Playing a plethora of online games or even typing a word document are all possible with the MakeyMakey kits.

## BOARD OF EDUCATION

James Emery – President  
Darlene Upcraft – Vice President  
Chad Bigelow  
Janice Clark  
Connie Douglas  
Amy Shaw  
Susan Teifke  
Annie McDowell – Student Representative

## SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS



- Nov. 8** MS Fall concert @ MS auditorium 7 p.m.
- Nov. 9** 10-week marking period ends
- Nov. 9** ME/PAL/NH Veteran's Day celebration 2 p.m.
- Nov. 9** BOE mtg 6 p.m.
- Nov. 10** Veteran's Day, NO SCHOOL
- Nov. 13** Superintendent's Conference Day, NO SCHOOL
- Nov. 15** MS early dismissal: 1:55 p.m.
- Nov. 15** HS French Theme Night, An Evening of Art @ Pierce Library, 6 p.m.
- Nov. 17** Report cards go home
- Nov. 17, 18** HS Area All-State @ Dolgeville
- Nov. 18** JH All-County Band Auditions
- Nov. 20** NHS Induction Ceremony, HS auditorium 6 p.m.
- Nov. 23, 24** Thanksgiving Break, NO SCHOOL
- Nov. 29** Early Dismissal P-T conferences: MS 10:45 a.m., Elem 11:45 a.m.
- Nov. 30-Dec. 4** HS NYSSMA All-State
  - Dec. 1** PAL PTC Holiday Fun Night 6 p.m.
  - Dec. 4** Early Dismissal P-T conference MS 10:45 a.m., Elem 11:45 a.m.
  - Dec. 5** HS Holiday Concert, HS aud. 7 p.m.
  - Dec. 6** HS holiday concert II band, HS aud. 7 p.m.
  - Dec. 7** NH gr ¾ chorus concert MS 6 p.m.
  - Dec. 12** PAL holiday concert 6 p.m.
  - Dec. 13** ME concert MS aud. 6 p.m.
  - Dec. 14** BOE mtg 6 p.m.
  - Dec. 19, 21** MS holiday concerts MS aud. 7 p.m.
  - Dec. 20** MS early dismissal 1:55 p.m.
  - Dec. 25 to Jan. 1** Winter recess,
    - Dec. 28** BOE workshop 6 p.m.
    - Jan. 11** BOE mtg 6 p.m.
    - Jan. 12** NH winter ball 6 p.m.
    - Jan. 12-13** HS all-county band @ phoenix
    - Jan. 15** Martin Luther King Jr, Day, No school

## New Haven students learn fire safety

New Haven Elementary School students are ready to stop, drop and roll to their next lesson in fire safety.

Each student recently participated in a series of hands-on stations at the New Haven Volunteer Fire Department to learn important facts about being prepared for emergencies and proper procedures in case there is a fire at school or home. Inside the station, the youngsters learned as the smoke goes high they should go low so they practiced crawling to the exit. If their clothing catches on fire, Deputy Assistant Chief Ken Bogart said they should stop, drop and roll to prevent the spread of flames.



*Lucas Warner, New Haven Elementary School second-grader operates a fire hose during a recent field trip to the New Haven Volunteer Fire Department as part of National Fire Prevention Week.*

The activities came at a perfect time during National Fire Prevention Week, which Bogart said the department is happy to promote to ensure everyone knows what to do if a fire occurs. At another station, the students watched as firefighters put on their turnout gear so they could see that regular folks are under all of the unfamiliar equipment.

Bogart encouraged the children to speak with their parents or guardians about practicing escape plans at home because having drills at home are just as important as fire drills at school, he said.