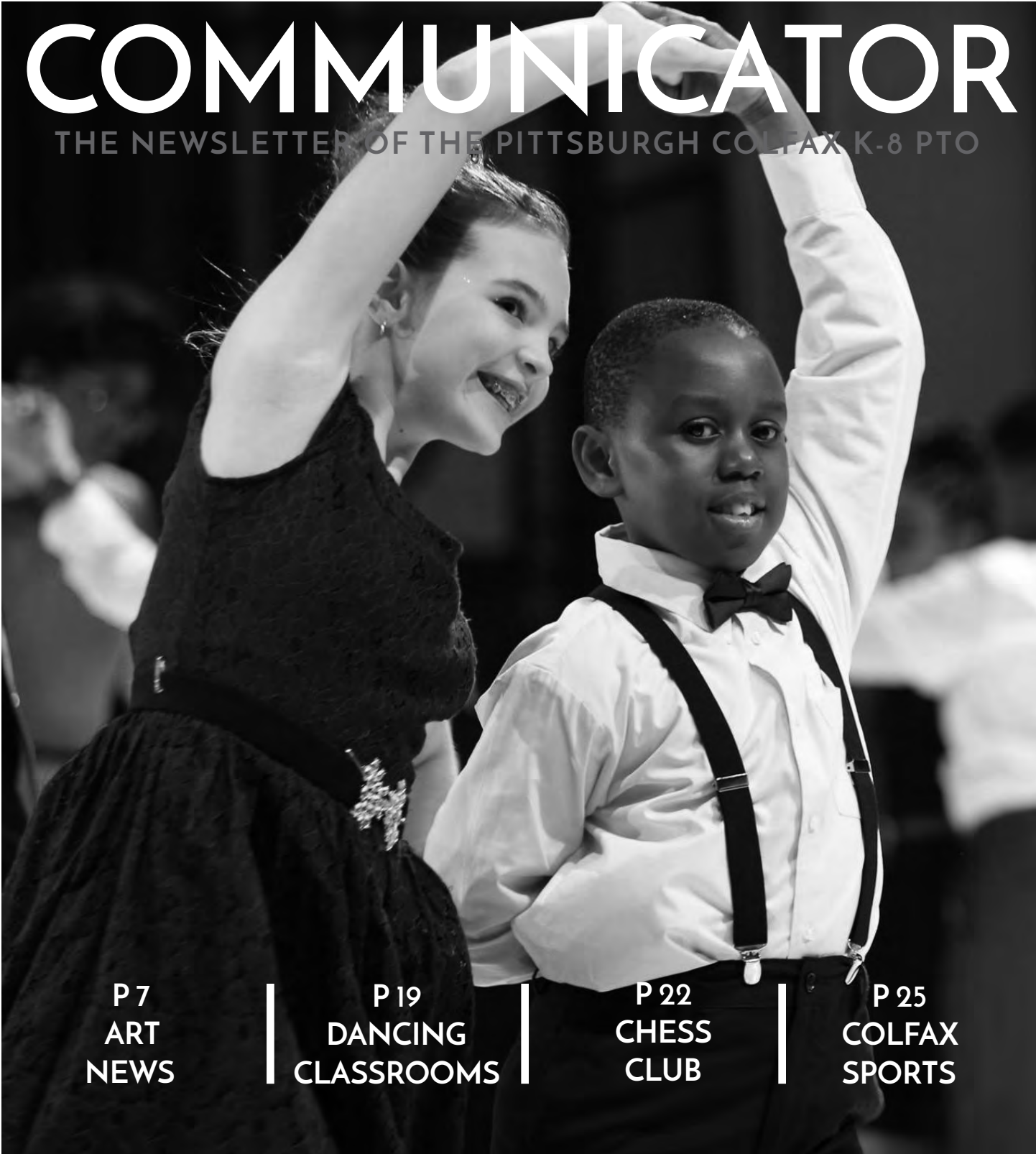


# COLFAX

# COMMUNICATOR

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PITTSBURGH COLFAX K-8 PTO



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## IMPORTANT DATES

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### **FEBRUARY 8**

PSCC/ PTO Meeting

### **FEBRUARY 25**

Party for Play

### **MARCH 8**

PSCC/ PTO Meeting

### **MARCH TBD**

Talent Show

### **APRIL 6**

Spring Movie Night

# PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Dear Colfax family and friends:

Happy New Year! At the start of each year, I always find myself wondering where the time has gone. It's difficult to believe that we are heading into the second half of the school year. I look forward to seeing what we, as a Colfax community, can accomplish in these final months.

We celebrated the end of 2016 with fun classroom parties and a fantastic teacher/staff appreciation lunch. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the delicious spread of food and beverages for our teachers and staff. A special thank you to the Zeff family for the donation of coffee. The event was a big hit. Even though it was intended as a thank you for their hard work, many teachers and staff expressed their gratitude to me for the overwhelming showing of support by the Colfax community.

On that note, it is a Colfax custom to honor our dedicated and hardworking teachers and staff with holiday gifts. Our ever-willing homeroom representatives organized classroom gifts for teachers, and as always, our parents generously responded. Did you know that, in addition to the 40 teachers with homerooms, Colfax has more than 20 devoted "non-homeroom" teachers, two office secretaries, two counselors, several paraprofessionals, a team of custodians, and a school nurse? Because of the continued generosity of parents and friends like you, the PTO collected enough money to give everyone on the "non-homeroom" list a \$25 gift card. My personal thanks to those who contributed in response to this additional request.

The New Year often brings with it "new" goals. Why not make it one of your goals to volunteer at Colfax? We are looking for parents and friends to assist with planning our 2017 Party 4 Play, to be held on Saturday, February 25 at the Edgewood Club. Consider being a part of the organizing committee for Colfax's annual adult-only party and auction. It is a great way to meet people in the community and it's a lot of fun! Contact Chelsa Wagner at [chelsawagner@gmail.com](mailto:chelsawagner@gmail.com) for more information.

Finally, a hearty congratulations to all our Cobras representing Colfax across Pittsburgh! In early December, our 4th and 5th grade swimmers came in first place in both the girls' and boys' categories at the PPS District's Annual 4th/5th Grade Swim Meet. In January, the Ballroom Dancing Team was awarded a Silver finish at the Dancing Classrooms Color of the Rainbow Championship. And, also in January, members of the Colfax Chess Club beat out seven other teams to win first place at the 19th Tri-State Junior Chess Open. Go Cobras!

Best wishes to you and your family for a healthy and happy New Year.

**Julie Wilson**



# PRINCIPAL REMARKS

Greetings Colfax Families,

With the second semester well under way, we want to thank everyone for your continued support of our students, teachers, and school as we collectively strive to provide optimal opportunities for learning each and every day. In addition, we want to also welcome our new families to Colfax and trust that you will find yourselves to part of an outstanding and supportive learning community.

Winter assessment season for Colfax has officially closed. As you know students are assessed three times per year to determine academic needs and to monitor student progress throughout the year. Dibels next winter benchmark began January 3-27 for students in grades k-5 and G.R.A.D.E winter benchmark assessments for grades 3-6. Students in middle level have also completed CBAs (Curriculum Based Assessments) in ELA, Geography, Math, U.S. History, and World History. Information regarding the upcoming PSSA will be coming home soon.

As Valentines' Day approaches, please make sure that you are checking in with your child's teacher or homeroom parent prior to sending in classroom snacks for this and any other school day. All classrooms are unique; activities, schedules, allergy limitations, and general incentives vary from room to room. And as a reminder all visitors must stop at the office for a visitor's pass prior to going to any classroom to drop off snacks.

On another note, congratulations to our boys and girls swim teams. Our boys team finished undefeated at 6-0 and the girls finished with 1 loss at 5-1. The championship meet will be held on January 25th. Our chess team also made us proud with their 1st place win at the 19th Tri-State Junior Open. They beat out 7 other schools to take 1st place! Way to go Cobras!!

In closing, we want to thank our families for your diligence in having your children at school on-time and well-prepared for learning each day. Please continue to be mindful that our students' academic day begins at 8:15 and continues until dismissal each afternoon. Every minute of instruction is valuable. It is very important that students arrive on time and are not dismissed early unless an unavoidable appointment or emergency is involved. As always, thank you for supporting the wonderful teaching and learning taking place here at Colfax!

Respectfully,

**Dr. Woods**

## 2016-2017 COLFAX PTO EXECUTIVE BOARD

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ColfaxPghPTO



# LIBRARY UPDATE

(Ms. Reed)

Words can't express how thankful I am to be a part of such an extraordinary family here at Colfax. The Barnes and Noble Event was a wonderful celebration of our school, children and music. Heartfelt thanks to Ms. Moule, our incredible music teacher, who had the choir bring in the holidays with a beautiful performance. It was so good to see all of the families recording and taking pictures in the store. Also, we had a special drink, The Cobra Freeze, which was absolutely delicious.

The store was buzzing with excitement and good cheer. The Barnes and Noble staff could not stop raving about our community and how our families supported the event. Please read the attached letter sent to Dr. Woods.

Congratulations, to Mrs. Balik's class for homeroom with most attendance!

Again, thank you Colfax for supporting the library.

Our next fundraiser will be Pennies for Patients.

Its aim is to help children with Leukemia by donating your pennies.

More information will be coming soon!



## LETTER FROM BARNES AND NOBLE:

*Good Morning Sheila and Happy New Year!*

*Big congratulations! Your Barnes & Noble Bookfair earned an estimated contribution of \$915.*

*We so enjoyed having Pittsburgh Colfax at our store. Please extend thanks to staff and parent volunteers who helped throughout the day. It does takes an enormous amount of effort to make this a success and I hope everyone enjoyed the event. I know your enthusiasm and energy undoubtedly contributed to this tremendous result.*

*I shared your commercial with our District Manager. He was, needless to say, speechless and so impressed with your creativity and dedication to the success of this bookfair. Pittsburgh Colfax is lucky to have you!*

*Here's to a great 2017...thank you for supporting our store, we appreciate it.*

*See you soon!*

*Most sincerely,*

*Nancy Heron*

*Community Business Development Manager*





# TAKE NOTE: Happenings from the Music Department

## (Ms. Moule)

There have been lots of things going on in the music department at Colfax school:

The chorus for grades 4 and 5 have begun and the 5th grade chorus performed at Barnes and Nobles at the Waterfront in December as part of a fundraiser for the Colfax library. There was a great turnout and the kids sounded wonderful.

Have you ever wondered: What goes on in room 108? What sorts of things do the kids do in music class? Although it is a large room, the space is definitely used to the max. It is common to see a group of students in a circle with instruments in their hands ready to play a beat or tap out a rhythm. The younger students are actively involved with movement and music and with the older students, the 3-7 grade students that are taught by Mrs. Moule receive instruction on the electric keyboards. The goal is for all students to know how to read music and play on an instrument. At the keyboards, the work is individualized so that students can progress at their own pace and continue to move forward. Within any class, some students can be at the beginning level while others may be working on advanced material.

Upcoming musical events include: The second grade attendance at Heinz Hall for the "Meet the Orchestra" program on March 7. The 3rd grade

students will have the chance to experience jazz and learn about famous jazz musicians from the Pittsburgh area when they attend a "School of Swing" program at the Manchester Craftsman guild on May 9th.

Colfax will be represented in several music events that are coming up: in April these students will be involved in a "Singing Saturday" experience that is part of the Pittsburgh Youth Chorus: Rachel Petro, Alina Weise and Elise Kim. The following students have been recommended to represent our school in the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association elementary sing fest at Carnegie Music Hall in Oakland on March 17, 2017: Gabriel Feinstein, Xanath Bernal, Jamier Johnson and Addilyn Bingham. They will have an all day rehearsal with students from other school districts and then perform in the evening in concert. In addition, the following students will be involved in an upcoming drumming experience through a partnership with Carnegie Mellon University: Adam Copeland, Lynda Johnson, Pavel Marin, Christevie Kombo, Isa Mandarin. They will rehearse with other students from the Pittsburgh Public schools and perform at Carnegie Music Hall on February 7 at 1:00 p.m.

The Pittsburgh Public Schools All-City Music event will provide additional opportunities for

students to sing or play instruments in public as part of a city wide ensemble and show off their talent. Information and applications (due February 1) can be found on google drive at: [tinyurl.com/2017PPSAllCityinfo](https://tinyurl.com/2017PPSAllCityinfo)

The chorus concert will take place during the beginning of March. The exact date will be announced soon. This concert will mark the last concert for Mrs. Moule who will retire on March 17 after 28 years of teaching with the district.





# ART NEWS

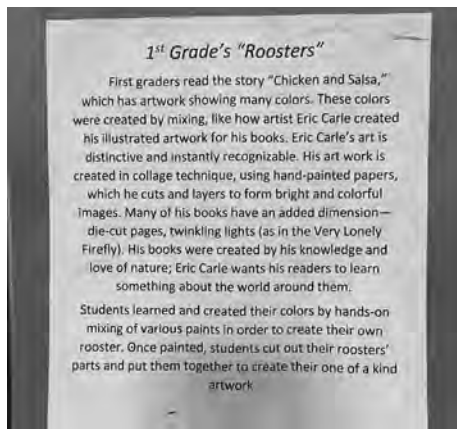
(Ms. Miller)

Kindergartners created cups of hot cocoa just before the holiday break.

First graders read the story "Chicken and Salsa," which has artwork showing many colors. These colors were created by mixing, like how artist Eric Carle created his illustrated artwork for his books. Eric Carle's art is distinctive and instantly recognizable. His art work is created in collage technique, using hand-painted papers, which he cuts and layers to form bright and colorful images. Many of his books have an added dimension - die-cut pages, twinkling lights (as in the Very Lonely Firefly). His books were created by his knowledge and love of nature; Eric Carle want his readers to learn something about the world around them.

Student learned and created their colors by hands-on mixing of various paints in order to create their own rooster. Once painted, students cut out their roosters' parts and put them together to create their one of a kind artwork.

Fourth grade students learned about the American artist, Laurel Burch. They have created their version of Burch's cats through the demonstration of lines and patterns, along with watercolor usage. Fifth and sixth graders are creating their cats in 3-D!



# HEALTH AND PE HAPPENINGS FOR NOVEMBER (Mr. Lydon)

The bad weather has definitely created some challenges for PE classes, but we are keeping our efforts up to do the best we can. In our health unit, we are covering illnesses and how to avoid them. Basketball is the focus of our PE unit. Just covering the fundamentals with some healthy competitive spirit is a challenge. It is really important to see that there are steps to improving in everything we do. Having fun, giving our best effort, and being okay with that is a healthy thing for us all.

January has a few causes that I'd like to mention. It is national blood donors and national mentors' month. These both ask us to think how giving of ourselves to help other people is a good thing. Try to think how you can help other people as you go through the first days of 2017!!!

Family Fitness Idea: Try not to let the cold weather keep you stuck inside. There are still plenty of ways to get out and play! How about a sled ride or a good old fashion snowball fight?! Or just check out a trail in winter. What differences do you see? Any animal tracks? Have a fun time and stay warm!

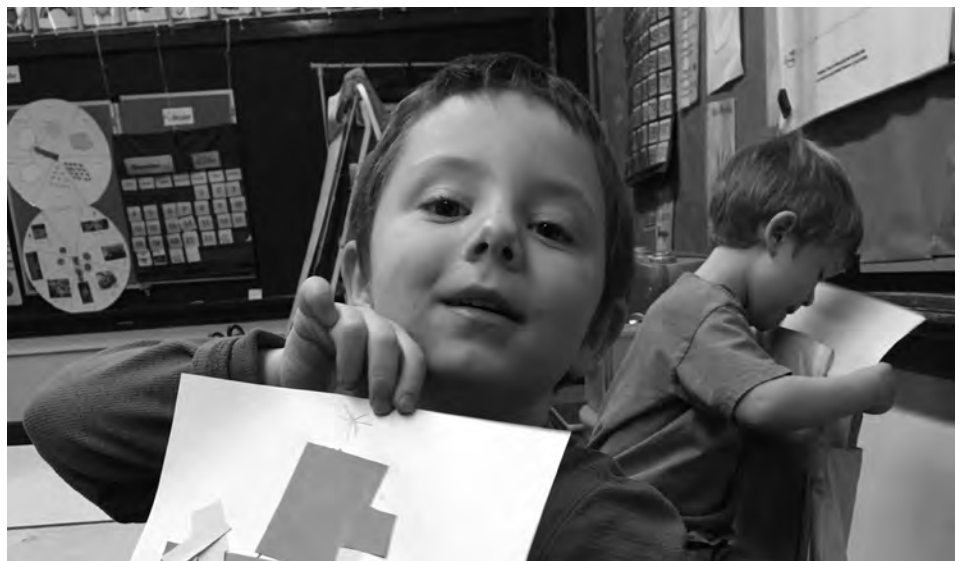






## KINDERGARTEN

Prior to the break, the Kindergartners learned about various holidays around the world. They also enjoyed a pajama party and movie!





# FIRST GRADE

First grade has been reading and learning about animal habitats. As a literacy extension activity into science and social studies, the students were given the opportunity to work in groups and research a habitat of their choice. From their research, they had to:

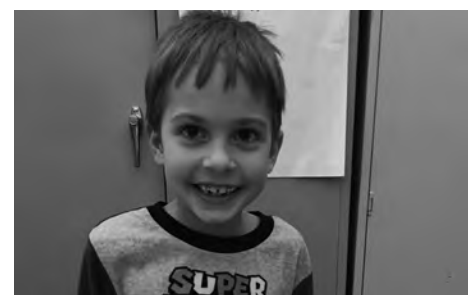
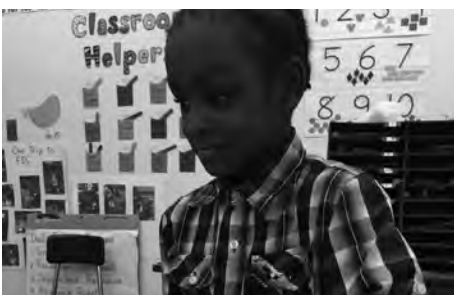
1. Identify where their habitat is located throughout the world
2. Identify at least five animals that live in the habitat
3. Identify at least three plants that are found in the habitat
4. Create a poster highlighting all of the information, as well as a picture of the habitat that includes some of the plants and animals.

In math, the students have been learning about different strategies to add numbers. They were given a differentiated snowflake and asked to add three addends together to get the sum.

During their work period, the students were asked to think about the strategies that they have been learning to add the three addends together to come up with the sum. They then colored their snowflake and cut it out.

In closing, a few students shared their snowflake with the class and explained their thinking and share the strategy they used to come up with their answer.

On the Wednesday prior to the break, the first grade students enjoyed an afternoon together watching the Polar Express. They then went back to their classroom to enjoy cookies and hot cocoa while playing lively games of dreidel.



## Habitat Research

First grade has been reading and learning about animal habitats. As a literacy extension activity into science and social studies, the students were given the opportunity to work in groups and research a habitat of their choice.

From their research, they had to:

1. Identify where their habitat is located throughout the world
2. Identify at least **five** animals that live in the habitat
3. Identify at least **three** plants that are found in the habitat
4. Create a poster highlighting all of the information, as well as a picture of the habitat that includes some of the plants and animals

CC.1.2.1.E  
Use various text features and search tools to locate key facts or information in a text.

CC.1.2.1.I  
Read and comprehend literary nonfiction and informational text on grade level, reading independently and proficiently.

CC.1.4.1.V  
Participate in individual or shared research and writing projects.

## Habitat: Grasslands

Where can it be found in the world?  
North America, Europe, Asia, South America

What animals live here? insects, horses, deer, birds, prairie dogs, coyotes	What plants live here? -purple needlegrass -Wildflowers -World flowers
--	---

Alex, Viviana, Moya

## Habitat: Mountains

Where can it be found in the world?  
North America, South America, Europe, Australia, Alps

What animals live here? -Bear -deer -Mountain lion -Eagle -squirrel	What plants live here? -Thistle trees -Spruce trees -Beech trees -Oak trees -Flowers
--	---

Luca, Mason, Roberto, Leo

## Habitat: Rainforest

Where can it be found in the world?  
South America, Africa, South East Asia

What animals live here? -Frogs -lizard -snakes -parrots -butterflies	What plants live here? -bamboos -orchids -water lilies
---	---

Henry, Robert, Noel

## Habitat: Oceans

Where can it be found?  
All around the world, Pacific, Atlantic, North Pole, Antarctica

What animals live here? Seal, shark, whale, jelly fish, dolphins, nautilus, fish	What plants live here? Sea weed, coral reef, kelp, algae
---	---

Wanda, Emma, Zion, Alessia

## Habitat: ARCTIC

Where can it be found in the world?  
Norway, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Arctic-Ocean, Canada, Russia, USA, Greenland

What animals live here? -penguin -seals -whales -narwhal -Arctic fox -fish	What plants live here? -Trees -Arctic willow -flowers
--	--

Annie, Sofie, Zuhair, Maria

**Snowflake Sums Challenge**

Student Name: <u>Adrian Pellegri</u>	1. I identified all the star sums containing numbers correctly.	2. I wrote some of my numbers correctly.	3. I attempted to solve my problems on paper.
	4. I identified how many sums missing numbers correctly.	5. I did not write my numbers correctly.	6. I did not solve my problems on paper.

## FIRST GRADE SNOWFLAKE SUMS

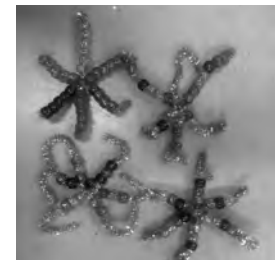
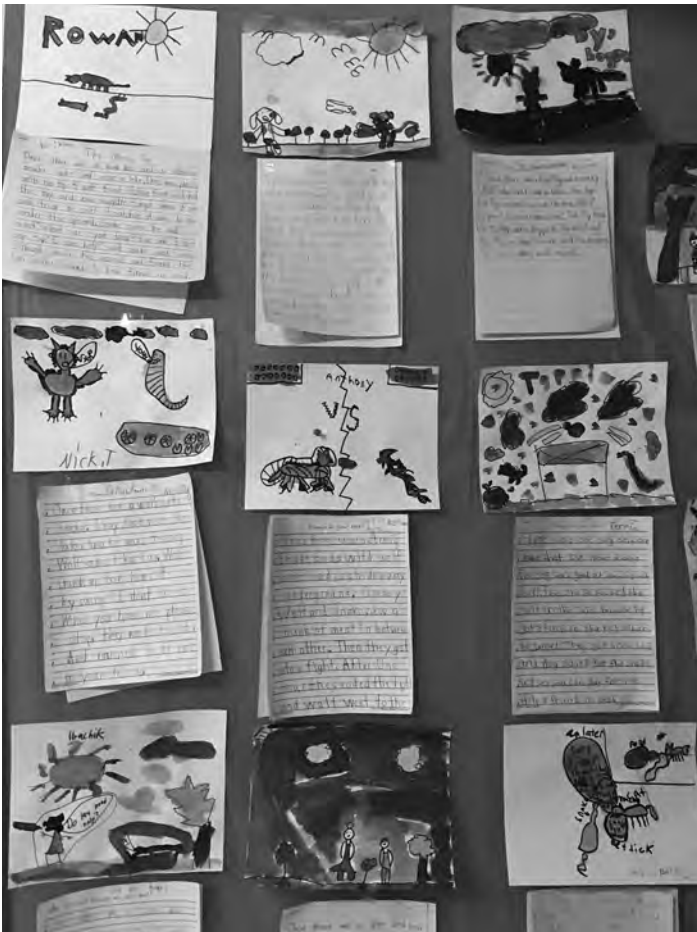
**STANDARDS**

1.OA.A.1. Use counting on to add within 10.

1.OA.A.2. Understand the relation between addition and subtraction.

1.OA.A.3. Apply the addition-subtraction fact strategies to solve word problems involving unknowns in all positions.





Beaded snowflakes in Ms. Hricik's class.

Fishing for candy canes and making beaded candy canes in Ms. Gruhich's class.

## (Ms. King)

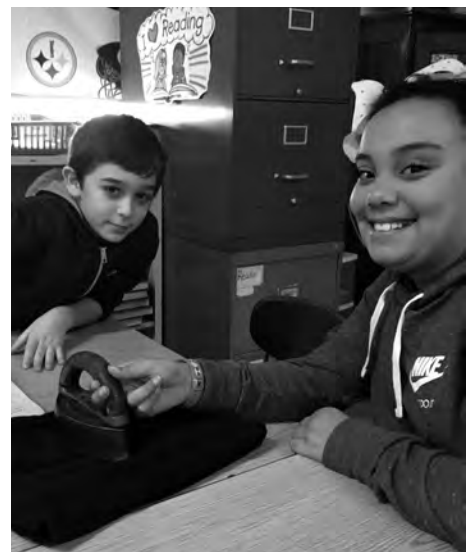
Second grade is going to be very busy this month! We will be doing a project-based learning around our reading curriculum about African-American leaders. The students will learn about several famous African-Americans and create a project about what it takes to be a positive leader for change. Before the holiday break, the kids compared several stories of Jack and the Beanstalk as well as some folktales from other countries.

We have been focusing our read-alouds on novels by Kate DiCamilla (*The Tale of Despereaux*) and Kate Applegate (*The One and Only Ivan*).

In science we are continuing our study of living things and will be pollinating our own plants! We finished our time with Farmer Paul by making roasted sweet potatoes that were grown and harvested in the Colfax garden. In math, we continue to work on our basic facts in addition and subtraction, counting money and subtraction number stories.

We will also be completing our mid-year assessments and see how far we have come since the beginning of the school year. On January 31st, Feb 1st and 3rd, we will be taking another trip to the Frick Historical Center to explore Pittsburgh History and our environment. In art, the students are using multi-media techniques to make a VanGogh sunflower. It has been a great first 70 days of school! So much learning and so much fun!





# THIRD GRADE

## ELA (Ms. Pozza and Ms. Dulak)

The third grade has the amazing opportunity to partner with the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation (PHLF) to explore the city's rich past and learn how Pittsburgh's history contributed to our unique culture. In September, Louise Sturgess the Executive Director for PHLF, engaged the third grade in a creative writing workshop. The students were able to study the architecture of Pittsburgh Colfax and write stories from the perspective of the building. The stories were then compiled and published in a book.

Karen Cahall the Education Coordinator for PHIL, visited Colfax in January, with a learning opportunity called Portable Pittsburgh. Students were able to create a timeline through artistic depictions and photographs of Pittsburgh over time. They were also able to investigate artifacts and learn how those artifacts were used Pittsburgh's past.

Later in the spring, students in the third grade will go on two field trips with PHLF. They will explore Pittsburgh's Strip District neighborhood in preparation for the novel *Macaroni Boy* that students will read after the PSSA. Students will also take a trolley tour of the city, stopping at the Duquesne Incline, the Allegheny County Courthouse, and the City-County Building.

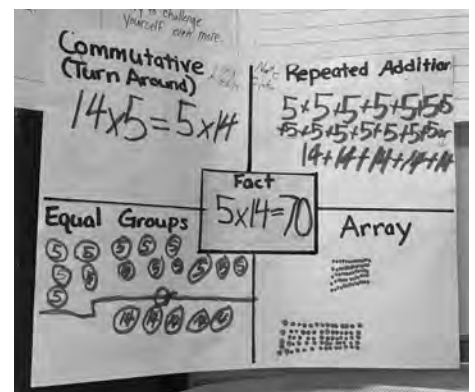
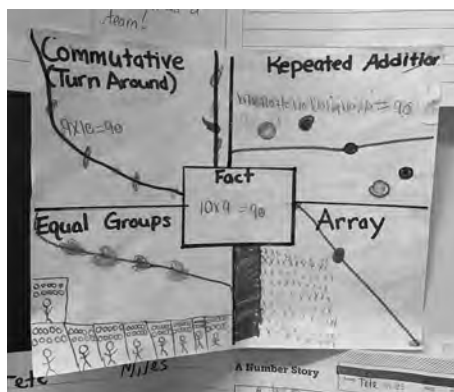
## MATH (Ms. Lasek)

There are lots of things happening in third grade math! Right now the students are finishing up their geometry units and are getting ready to tackle fractions. These are both really fun units with so many hands on activities, games, and engaging projects. The students enjoy working in groups and solving real world problems.

One of the best things in third grade is Multiplication Fridays! The kids have already developed a solid foundation on how to solve multiplication problems using different strategies. Now they are working to establish fact fluency. This year Mrs. Musyt's and Mrs. Lasek's classes will be earning belts doing Karate Multiplication. Every other Friday we will watch a Youtube video and learn a song to help us remember the times tables. We will learn a new times table group from 0 to 12 on each Multiplication Friday! Each time they master one of the tables they earn a Karate Belt.

Our Multiplication Fridays end with the students grouping themselves, writing and taping their own videos. This is our multiplication culminating project. Each group will pick a well-known tune and a specific times table. They will then write a song, make props, sing and create an iMovie! We will finish off with a celebration while watching the videos!

Ms. Lasek using a hands on lesson to teach her students about perimeter and area.





## SCIENCE (Ms. Pellegrini)

The fourth grade has been busy learning about life sciences this unit. Before the break, they were able to dissect a squid. Most recently, they completed a dissection of a cow eyeball. Ms. Pellegrini said she was so proud of the students during these lessons as they showed wonderful enthusiasm and professionalism!

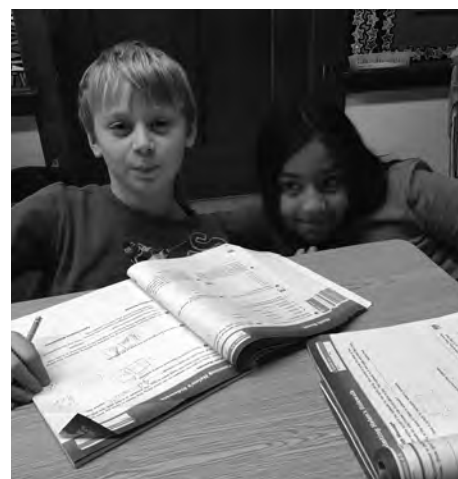
### The Science behind the Eye Dissection:

The eye is a sensory organ which changes light energy into nerve impulses that are interpreted by the brain to form an image in our consciousness. Light enters the eye through the transparent cornea, which helps to bend the light. The light then passes through the pupil. Behind the pupil is the lens; the shape of the lens focuses light on to the retina. The retina is a layer of photosensitive cells that change light energy into nerve impulses. Nerve impulses carry the information to the brain. The brain interprets this information and forms an image

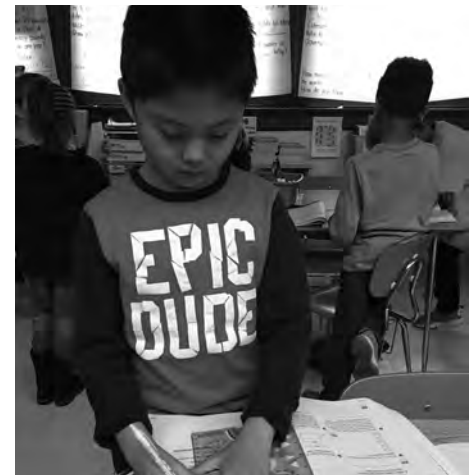
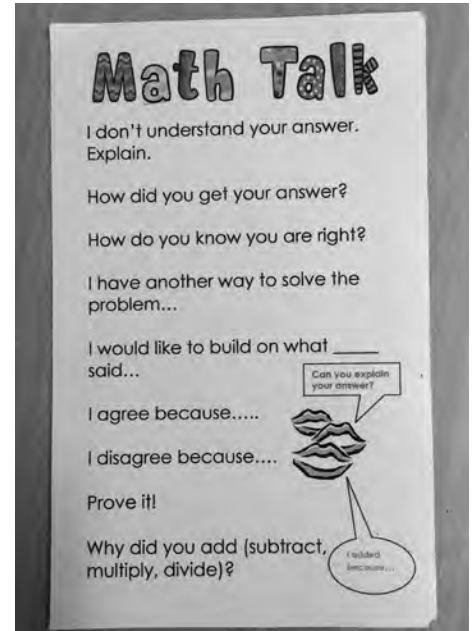
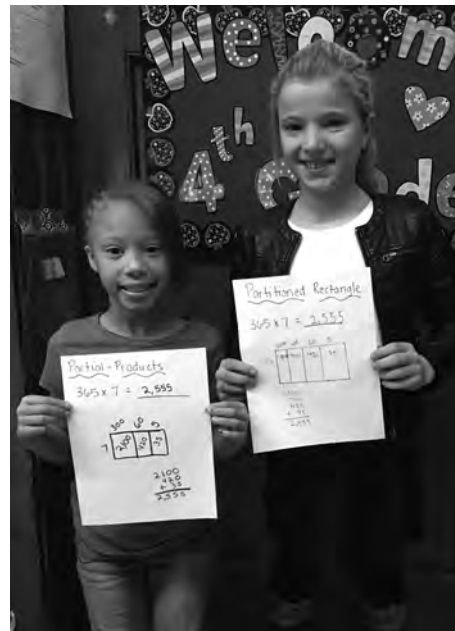
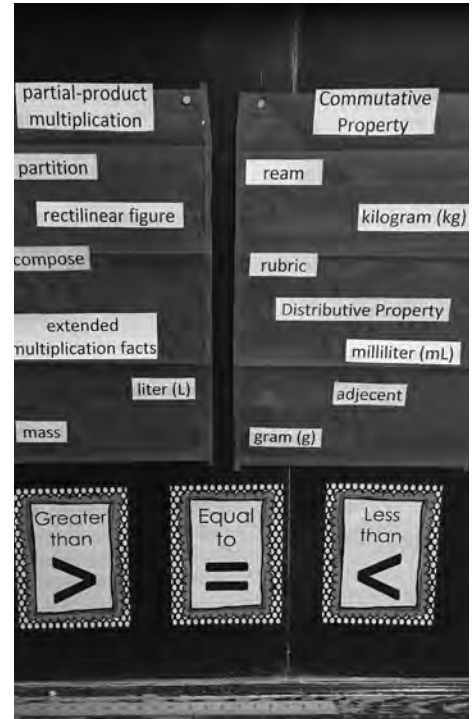
in our consciousness. Dissecting a real eye helps us to understand this process and to make better sense of scientific diagrams of the eye.

## MATH with Ms. Mlay

I had the wonderful opportunity to be a fly on the wall of Ms. Mlay's math classroom one morning this winter. Ms. Mlay was teaching her students to perform multiplication with factors of two digits or more, using two strategies: Partial-Products Multiplication and Partitioned Rectangle. These methods were not the methods used when I was in fourth grade, but they were fantastic strategies to help the students really visualize what multiplication means. After learning about the strategies, the students broke up into small groups to practice. Throughout the class, Ms. Mlay encourages the students to use "Math Talk" to not only strengthen their understanding of math, but also to enhance their communication skills. Thank you Ms. Mlay!







# FIFTH GRADE

## Science (Ms. Pellegrini)

For the second year, the fifth grade students worked with the CMU architecture department. This year's project was about space architecture. The students worked collaboratively to create a space station on another planet. Each group was assigned one room of the space station. For their final design, the students needed to think about the program of their room, the environment on their assigned planet, closed loop systems to make living possible, and different materials.

Using recycled material, each group created a scale model of their room using their assigned program (bedroom, kitchen, etc.). They then submitted a verbal and written design proposal consisting of the following components:

- 5 new vocabulary words learned during the lessons
- program of room
- at least 1 asset and 1 liability of the environment considered in the design
- at least 1 closed loop system incorporated into their design and how it works (air, water, energy, etc.)
- at least 2 materials used in their design

The fifth grade students also had the opportunity to dissect owl pellets, often finding bones from the owl's last meal.

## Mentors

The Fifth grade mentors, under the direction of Ms. Stefanyak, have been giving their time during their lunch and recess periods on Thursday and Fridays to work with Kindergarten and first grade students. They give individual attention to the younger students and help with reading and other classroom assignments.



# DANCING CLASSROOMS (Anisha Willis, 5th grade)



On January 7th, 12 lucky fifth graders were chosen to represent Colfax at the Dancing classrooms Final Team Match after having a great semester at school where all the students participated in the program. This year's team consisted of: Anisha Willis, Avi Crawford, Ella Washburn, Christivie Kombo, Jamier Johnson, Katie Morris, Keshon Mitchell, Ava Czerwinski, Jack Segal, Amiyah Nelson and co-captains Luke Hunter and Cate Guilfoyle. In the first session, the couples beautifully performed dances for the merengue, foxtrot, rumba, tango and swing. The second half of the competition was even more heated with the "dance by chance" event, where the dance was chosen at random. Wearing beautiful blue dresses and stylish yellow shirts and suspenders, our team danced their way into second place, one point behind the team from Pittsburgh Dilworth! The team could not have done it without the support of their dedicated teachers, Robyn Stefanyak and Chelsea Balik.





# FIRST IN MATH

(Ms. Lasek)

First in Math is a game that everyone in Colfax has heard of! It is a fabulous math game that is used to help strengthen facts and practice strategies. One of the best features of First in Math is as the student grows in their skills the math problems become more challenging.

Each student has their own log in and password within their class. The kids go on to the computer and practice their facts all the while earning their stickers. The stickers add up each week and the entire school competes to get the coveted First in Math Golden Trophy and a certificate to hang on their wall! Currently the trophy for Team of the Week is Ms. Phillip's second grade class Team Proof.

Not only do we earn stickers for our Team (class) we earn them to be the Player of the Week too! The Player of the Week is awarded to the student who earned the most stickers the previous week. So even if you are new to First in Math you can still win the Player of the Week! Whoever is named Player of the Week receives a certificate and a little surprise from Mrs. Lasek.

Right now we have 4 students who have earned over 10,000 stickers each! They have been given the rank of Grand Champions! The students are:

**Hoi, a second grader from Team Proof - 13,358 stickers**

**Leo, a fifth grader from Team Vault- 12,293 stickers**

**Yoonyoung, a fourth grader from Team Vault- 11,579 stickers**

**Ekow, a fourth grader from Team Dawn- 11,202 stickers**

**We are so proud of all of our First in Math Teams and Players!**

# MATH KANGAROO

## SAMPLE PROBLEM GRADES 1-2:

16. Gear A is about to make one complete turn in the direction shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1

The piece "x" moved to one of the positions *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*, *e* shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2

To which position did "x" move?

- (A) *a*      (B) *b*      (C) *c*      (D) *d*      (E) *e*

## SAMPLE PROBLEM GRADES 3-4:

19. We can fill a certain barrel with water if we use water from 6 small pitchers, 3 medium pitchers and one large pitcher, or from 2 small pitchers, 1 medium pitcher and 3 large pitchers. If we use only large pitchers of water, how many of them do we need to fill the barrel?

- A) 4      B) 5      C) 6      D) 7      E) 8

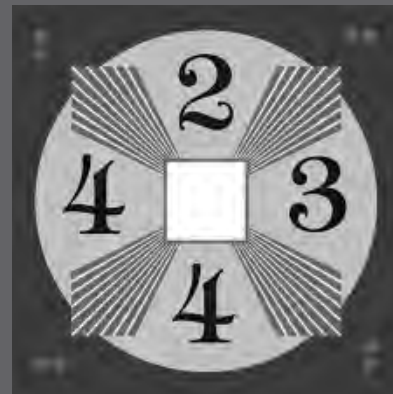
## SAMPLE PROBLEM GRADES 5-6:

4. There are 10 ducks. 5 of these ducks lay an egg every day. The other 5 lay an egg every other day. How many eggs do the 10 ducks lay in a period of 10 days?

- A) 75      B) 60      C) 50      D) 25      E) 10



Students in grades 1 - 5 have been working hard in preparation for the Math Kangaroo exam which will be held at the University of Pittsburgh on March 17th. Students meet one day each week during their lunch and recess period to review questions from previous years' exams. Test your knowledge and see if you can answer these!



## CHALLENGE 24

(Ms. Tuchin)

If you enjoy mental math, solving problems and working with others, then you may be interested in the Challenge 24 Club. Run by Mr. Cohen and Ms. Tuchin, the Challenge 24 Club has been in existence at Colfax for more than a decade.

Students in grades 4-8 are recommended by their math teacher to participate in the clubs on Wednesday afternoons. Even if not recommended, students are encouraged to attend the club and find out what it's all about.

Challenge 24 is a mental math game that requires players to use the four numbers found on the card to get to a total of 24. Students can use addition, subtraction, multiplication and/or division when using the four numbers.

The club provides opportunities to play for newcomers, seasoned players and the most advanced math brains. The game has several different levels of play from single digit numbers to two digit numbers to variables, fractions, and exponents. Any student can find a level that suits them.



THE COLFAX CHESS TEAM BEAT OUT SEVEN OTHERS TO WIN FIRST PLACE ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 7TH AT A TOURNAMENT IN MT. LEBANON, AND MANY MEMBERS HAD TOP INDIVIDUAL FINISHES AS WELL!

## CHESS RATINGS EXPLAINED (from Jerry Meyers, youthchess.net)

A chess rating is a measure of a person's current chess ability. You get a rating by playing in a chess tournament which is sanctioned by the US Chess Federation (USCF). When the tournament is finished, the director submits the results to the USCF. Their computer then uses statistical formulas to calculate the ratings of each participant, based on their performance in the tournament.

Ratings can be provisional or established. Until you have completed 25 tournament games, your rating is called provisional, and is not considered completely reliable. After 25 games, your rating is established, and considered fairly reliable. Established ratings still change with each tournament, but are unlikely to fluctuate more than 100 points or so unless your playing ability changes significantly.

Ratings can be used to predict future performance. If one player is rated 100 points more than another, he will probably win about 6 games out of every 10 they play. As the difference in ratings between 2 players increases, the higher rated player's probability of winning in any given game increases. If one player is rated 400 points higher than another, he will probably win approximately 9 out of every ten games they play. Ratings can also be used to divide people up into different skill levels. Here at the Pittsburgh Chess Club, we use the following rough categories to approximate where kids are at, skill wise:

A player's first rating is calculated in the following way: 1) list the ratings of their opponents in their first tournament (if they played someone unrated, use 1000 for that rating), 2) add 400 points to the rating of each opponent they beat, and subtract 400 points from the rating of each opponent who beats them, 3) sum up this adjusted list of opponent's ratings, and find the average. This average will approximate your first rating.

### Kid's Rating Classes/Skill Levels

Note - we have recently revised these skills levels, and will probably continue to do so as the use of the rating system in our area evolves)

Over 1100 indicates Premier

900 - 1100 indicates Advanced

700 - 900 indicates Intermediate

500 - 700 indicates Advanced Beginner

Under 500 indicates Beginner

For the first 25 rated games you play, the USCF will keep the ratings of all your opponents on file, plus or minus the 400 point adjustments described above, and will recalculate your rating after you play in a new tournament using the above the procedure for all the rated games you have played. Thus, if you have played 8 rated games previously, and you just finished a 4 round tournament, the USCF will take all 12 games you've played to date, adjust them for win or losses, and assign you the average as your new rating.

After 25 games, your rating is considered established, and the rules change somewhat. From then on, you gain between 2 to 32 points for each win, depending on the rating of the person you beat. If you beat someone with the same rating as yourself, you gain 16 points. If you beat someone 400 or more points higher than yourself, you gain 32 points. If you beat someone 400 or more points lower than you, you only win 2 points. If their rating difference is somewhere in between these ranges, the amount of points you win will be proportionally in between. The idea is it is harder (or statistically rarer) to beat a higher rated player, so you should get more points for beating them than for beating a much lower rated player. The same principles apply for losses. A loss will cost you anywhere from 2 to 32 points, depending on the rating of the person you played. You don't lose many points for losing to someone rated way above you (since they were expected to beat you most of the time), but you do lose a lot of points if you lose to someone rated way below you (since you were expected to beat them most of the time).



## GARDEN UPDATE FROM FARMER PAUL

### Farmer Paul's Lessons Shift into the Classrooms

As Winter weather has now taken hold, and not much food is growing in the school garden besides a stubborn Kale plant, Farmer Paul has moved his lessons into the classroom where the focus becomes preparing and cooking foods. These cooking centered lessons will take place in the 3rd grade during school days 6 and 1. So far the 3rd graders have leaned about chemistry while making mint tea. Next they will learn about simple machines while preparing a salad. Many other lessons are still in the works as this is a brand new offering this year to 3rd grade, but the main idea will be to use cooking to offer a hands-on way for the students to learn about science in an authentic and fun way.

Framer Paul also recently worked with Kindergartners in Ms. Jackson's room to make fresh fruit salad. The students worked as a team in small groups, each responsible for a different fruit to add to the mixture in the end. They prepared and enjoyed apples, pineapple, strawberry, watermelon, cantaloupe, banana, and dragon fruit. Many clean plates were made and seconds welcomed for the vast majority. In the spring, all Kindergarten students will work outside to help plant the next round of food for our edible school garden.



## FORTH AND FIFTH GRADE SWIM MEET



(Ms. LaVelle)

Congrats to the boys and girls 4th and 5th grade swim team on clenching first place in the district city wide swim meet. This is the 5th year in a row that Colfax has maintain this title. Every swimmer placed in the top 4 of their events and many winning first place! This was a fantastic group of kids many who this was their first experience. Mrs. LaVelle was very proud of their hard work, sportsmanship and how they represented Colfax!



## MIDDLE LEVEL UPDATES

(Sukanya Srinivasan & Leslie Grodin  
ML Parent Representatives)

Plans are well under way for the annual middle level end-of-the-year trip to Cincinnati, OH on June 1-2, 2017. Students will visit the National Underground Railroad Museum, the Cincinnati Zoo, the Great Wolf Lodge Waterpark, and Kings Island Amusement Park. Three busloads of 6th, 7th and 8th grade students are signed up to go on the trip. The final non-refundable deposit for the trip is DUE ON MARCH 30, 2017. If you have any questions about your payment, please contact Mr. Schmiedlin (rschmiedlin1@pghboe.net) to discuss.

After the success of Movie Night in October, ML students took advantage of the holiday season by selling chocolate – the perfect gift for everyone! The Sarris Holiday candy sale was a big hit with Colfax families, raising approximately \$2200 toward the field trip, with some students earning almost half of their trip costs!

Our next fundraiser was a spaghetti dinner, was held on Sunday, January 29th in our very own school cafeteria (see pictures!). The dinner was open to K-8 students, parents, teachers, friends, and neighbors to enjoy pasta, bread and salad. Our cafeteria felt like an Italian ristorante with decorations and dinner music – just ask one of the 115 people who came out for the event! Parent volunteers cooked food and twelve of our middle level student volunteers served up the fun. Donations from teachers, parents and local businesses such as Five Points Artisan Bakery made it a huge success for the ML. The next fundraiser for the year will be a popcorn sale in March! Keep your eyes on the lookout for information.

Middle Level students have been quite busy with activities from swimming to science to Shakespeare. ML swim team championships were held on January 26th, 2016 at Alderdice, with the Colfax boys becoming the district champions (for the second year in a row!) and the girls coming in second place, in a very tight race! Both teams had a fantastic season under the direction of Mr. Dominic Woods. Our ML science squad is also gearing up for the PA Junior Academy of Science competition on February 4th. By teaming up with mentors from Carnegie Mellon University, students have been working hard on their projects for this regional showcase. The annual Shakespeare monologue contest will be held on February 9th, 2017 with many of our 7th and 8th grade students registered to participate. Thanks to the PTO's funding for extra coaching sessions, Colfax is sure to do well!



# COLFAX SPORTS



**The Winter sports season has ended, but we are gearing up for our spring sports.”**

The boys' swim team finished their regular season undefeated at 6-0 and the girls' team finished with 1 loss at 5-1.

Both our basketball teams had wonderful regular season records!

The spring sports season, which is our final sports season, will begin in March. Coach Schmiedlin will be working with the wrestlers again this year. Coach Lydon will head up the boys soccer team once again and Coach Montgomery will be heading up the girls team!

If you have any questions or concerns please contact Ms. Malvin at 412-529-8398 or at [kmalvin1@pghboe.net](mailto:kmalvin1@pghboe.net).



# BATTLE OF THE BOOKS

Battle of the Books is a team trivia contest based on books sponsored and held at the Carnegie Library. Colfax has formed 6th and 7th grade teams. They are reading the selected books and preparing to compete.

Mark your calendar to attend the battles and cheer on our Cobras as they defend their first place title from last year!

## 6TH GRADE BATTLE

FEBRUARY 21, 2017 | 6 - 7:30

## 7TH & 8TH GRADE BATTLE

FEBRUARY 28, 2017 | 6 - 7:30



### 6th Grade Book List:

- The Thing About Jellyfish by Ali Benjamin
- Awkward by Svetlana Chmakova
- Chasing Secrets by Gennifer Choldenko
- The City of Ember by Jeanne DuPrau
- Inkheart by Cornelia Funke
- George by Alex Gino
- Moving Target by Christina Diaz Gonzalez
- The Nest by Kenneth Oppel
- Hoodoo by Ronald L. Smith
- The Screaming Staircase by Jonathan Stroud



### 7th and 8th Grade Book List:

- Six of Crows by Leigh Bardugo
- Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card
- I Am Number Four by Pittacus Lore
- The Young Elites by Marie Lu
- Throne of Glass by Sarah J. Maas
- A Monster Calls by Patrick Ness
- Goodbye Stranger by Rebecca Stead
- Leviathan by Scott Westerfeld
- After Tupac and D Foster by Jacqueline Woodson
- American Born Chinese by Gene Luen Yang



### COLFAX COMMUNITY EVENTS

#### TEACHER AND STAFF APPRECIATION LUNCHEON AND HOLIDAY SWEATER DAY

Thank you to all the volunteers and for all the donations for the staff holiday party. It was a huge success and the teachers/ staff really appreciated it. They loved everything! One teacher even made a comment on how nice the parents are at Colfax to do such a great party. He said the last school the parents just ordered pizza.



The day of the luncheon was also the day of the Pittsburgh Public School District's Ugly Sweater Contest. While Colfax didn't have the contest winning entry, many teachers, staff, and students participated, making it a fun day for all.



# MIDDLE LEVEL SPAGHETTI DINNER





# GREETINGS FROM THE SCHOOL NURSE



Photo Credit: Jonas Salk/ March of Dimes Foundation

## (Nurse Short)

Did you know that Colfax students were Polio Pioneers and helped test the polio vaccine in the 1950s? The polio vaccine was found to be safe and effective. The poliovirus can still be found in a few countries around the world so it's important to be up to date with all of your vaccines.



## KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 2 PLAY DATE

Feeling a bit cooped up on these cold winter days? K-2 families are invited for a play date on Saturday, February 4th!

The Colfax gym will be open from 10am to noon for K-2 students to let off a little steam. All children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Due to space limitations, attendance is limited to the first 125 students to register by Friday, February 3rd.

Please visit the website below if you would like to attend or if you have questions.



<https://goo.gl/forms/3bCSYWUlkhQLEejm1>



# PARTY FOR PLAY

Mark your calendars for our biggest fundraiser of the year, an adult only party filled with fun and prizes!

FEBRUARY 25TH AT THE EDGEWOOD CLUB

## PARTY FOR PLAY

Party for Play, which will occur on Saturday, February 25th, at the Edgewood Club, is a fun night for parents and friends to gather to raise critical funds for the PTO. Would you be willing to volunteer to be part of a committee to help plan the event with us? Please email [chelsawagner@gmail.com](mailto:chelsawagner@gmail.com) if you can share some of your talents and time. We promise the planning will be fun too! Thank you!

PLEASE CONSIDER AN END OF  
THE YEAR GIFT TO OUR ANNUAL

## Ask Drive

EVERY GIFT, IN ANY  
AMOUNT, IS WELCOMED  
AND APPRECIATED.

FROM THE COLFAX PTO



## VOLUNTEER UPDATE

Here are the areas where colfax can use parent volunteers

- late desk
- office assistant
- lunch/recess volunteering
- classroom help (please contact your child's teacher)
- special events

All volunteers must have the following forms submitted to the front office

- In-Take Form for volunteers
  - PA State Criminal History Report (obtained online; cost: FREE)
  - <https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp>
  - Child Abuse Certification (obtained online; cost: FREE)
- <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/CWIS>
- The FBI Criminal History Report (fingerprinting required - apply online FBI report access code will be provided; cost: \$27.50)
- [https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index\\_pdeNew.htm](https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index_pdeNew.htm)
- In lieu of completing the FBI Criminal History Report, volunteers who have been a resident of PA for ten consecutive years may choose to complete a signed PA Resident Form and Waiver Request

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Tiffany Stuckey ([volunteers@colfaxpto.org](mailto:volunteers@colfaxpto.org))

## STAY INFORMED ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING AT COLFAX!

Are you on Facebook? Come "like" us on our Facebook Page to receive up-to-the-minute information, connect with other parents, and communicate with your PTO. You can find us at [www.facebook.com/pghcolfax](http://www.facebook.com/pghcolfax).

We are only as successful as our audience. Please encourage others to sign up for the PTO's weekly emails. It's easier than ever! Just go to the Colfax PTO website, at [www.colfaxpto.org](http://www.colfaxpto.org) and click on the big blue "Sign Up" button at the top of screen.



# BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION

Turn in your BOX TOPS for a chance to

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Or Cara [cd601@yahoo.com](mailto:cd601@yahoo.com)



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[steelcityrowing.org/summercamps](http://steelcityrowing.org/summercamps)



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**SUNDAY MARCH 5, 2017**

REGISTRATION AND PRE-PROGRAM ACTIVITIES: 1:15PM  
PROGRAM: 2:00-3:00PM  
AT BETH SHALOM BALLROOM

Open to boys and girls in pre-K - grade 5  
All children must be accompanied by an adult  
Costs \$10 per child  
Sponsorship: \$100 (includes 4 tickets) / \$180 (includes 6 tickets)

Bring a kosher non-perishable food item to donate to families in need and receive a raffle ticket for some great prizes

RSVP required by February 27 at [kidsmegapurim.com](http://kidsmegapurim.com)

Volunteer opportunities available for students in grades 6-12  
For more information, please contact Chabad at [info@chabadpgh.com](mailto:info@chabadpgh.com) or 412-421-3561

COMMITTEE OF PARENT AMBASSADORS:  
Lauren Baldeh (Hillel Academy), Esther Elshav (Ellis), Maggie Feinstein (Colfax), Mindy Firman (Shady Side Academy), Dina Frankel (Yeshiva Schools), Karen Galor (Beth Shalom Early Learning Center), Chevid Greenwald (Yeshiva Schools), Jerry Jones (CCS), Miri Levy (Shady Side Academy), Etti Marzel (Hillel Academy), Jaclyn Moldovan (Ellis), Julie Paris (ECS), Jennie Pellet (Colfax), Jen Poller (Winchester Thurston), Bessie Rosenfeld (Yeshiva Schools), Kate Rothstein (Falk), Estee Seldite (UCC ECDC), Cara Shuckett (CCS), Deb Sindler (Winchester Thurston)

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## J&R Day Camp: age 3-grade 5

June 19-August 18  
Family Park in Monroeville  
Choose at least 2 consecutive weeks;  
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Sports, arts, nature, Judaics, cookouts, swim lessons and free swim, ropes course, biking, tennis and more. Includes bus transportation.

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412-697-3537 or [lsohinki@jccpgh.org](mailto:lsohinki@jccpgh.org)

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For information: Meredith Brown,  
412-697-3520, or [mbrown@jccpgh.org](mailto:mbrown@jccpgh.org)

To register, contact  
**Lauren Goldman,**  
412-697-3540,  
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(412) 475-8280

# Room 16 Call Backs

Room 16 Jelly bean  
C1aaaaasss Yeeees

To Infinity And Beyond

Holey Moley Guacamole  
Gummy bear gummy bear we can sit in our  
chairs

Hocus Pocus Everybody Focus

Watch me whip watch me Nae Nae

**Coo coo for cocoa puffs**

Macaroni and cheese everybody freeze

Tootsie roll, lollipop we were talking,

now let's stop

*Hakuna Matata*

**HI HO, HI HO IT'S OFF TO WORK WE GO**

Banana split everybody sit