

COLFAX

COMMUNICATOR

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PITTSBURGH COLFAX K-8 PTO



P 7
4TH/5TH SWIM
CHAMPIONS

P 8-9
MIDDLE LEVEL
WINTER DANCE

P 12-13
4TH/5TH
SCIENCE

P 14-15
4TH GRADE
FIELD TRIP

2017-2018 COLFAX PTO
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www.facebook.com/pghcolfax



*Teacher Staff Appreciation Lunch
Fourth Grade Holiday Celebration*

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 2017 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. 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, three office secretaries, two counselors, several paraprofessionals, a team of custodians, and two school nurses? 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 **2018 Party 4 Play**, to be held on Saturday, February 24 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 P4P Chair Chelsa Wagner at chelsawagner@gmail.com for more information. I look forward to seeing you there.

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

Julie Wilson
PTO President



PRINCIPAL REMARKS



Greetings Colfax families,

I hope that this edition of the Colfax Communicator finds you and your family doing well. The winter months are upon us and brings with it unpredictable Pittsburgh weather, school closings, and delays. During inclement weather, special attention should be given to weather advisories and delays on the PPS website, district robo-calls, PPS Facebook, and/or any local news stations. The decision to delay or close schools is not always a popular one, and is beyond our control at the building level. In the event of a 2-hour delay, students should report to Colfax at 10:07 a.m. Earlier access to the building will not be available and breakfast is not served on delay days. Please anticipate such delays, as we all hope for limited snow and an early spring!

I am very excited to announce that beginning in February, Colfax will be announcing a **"Student of the Month"** in each grade level. Students will be selected by grade level teams based upon recognized and observable character attributes that align with our School-wide Positive Behavior Expectations (PBIS). Students will be photographed and displayed in our main hallway across from the office. We will highlight individual contributions that positively impact, influence, and enhance our school environment. Those students will also be invited to a special luncheon with school Administrators to celebrate their success.

The second half of the school year is a time when consistent communication with your child's teacher regarding academic progress is strongly encouraged. Waiting until midterm or report card distribution to find out valuable information relating to class assignments, assessments, or grades may cause missed opportunities to rectify a decrease in a final grade for a specific class. If you don't have access to our Home Access Center (HAC) please contact the school at (412)529-3525.

In closing, I would like to extend sincere thanks on behalf of our staff for the many cards, gifts, and the holiday luncheon provided by our PTO. Thoughtfulness, generosity, and kindness never goes out of style or unnoticed...

Yours in education,
Dr. Sanders-Woods



Fifth Grade Dancing Classrooms



IMPORTANT DATES

FEBRUARY 2
EARLY DISMISSAL

FEBRUARY 7
PSCC/PTO MEETING

FEBRUARY 23
EARLY DISMISSAL

FEBRUARY 24
PARTY 4 PLAY

MARCH 1
PPS ADVISORY COUNCIL

MARCH 2
EARLY DISMISSAL

MARCH 14
PSCC/PTO MEETING

MARCH 15
SPRING MOVIE NIGHT

MARCH 23
EARLY DISMISSAL

MARCH 26-MARCH 30
SPRING BREAK



CARNEGIE LIBRARY **BLAST** PROGRAM

Submitted by Patricia Pozza, FACE Coordinator



Once a month, third grade welcomes Ms. Zia from the Carnegie Library, who spends a class period engaging students in an interactive lesson using a contemporary children's book. Ms. Zia is part of the BLAST (Bringing Libraries and Schools Together) Program. She visits classrooms around the district to offer interactive, literacy-enriched activities that nurture reading interest and development, supplement classroom lessons and provide equitable access to public library resources. The program also includes an end-of-the-year field trip to the local Carnegie Library.

STAY INFORMED ABOUT COLFAX EVENTS AND IMPORTANT DATES!

Want to stay up-to-date about the goings-on at Colfax? Be sure to sign up for our weekly emails. Simply go to www.colfaxpto.org and click on the link to register for the emails. It only takes a minute to start receiving weekly updates and reminders about important dates, special events, and important announcements.

Did you know we also have a Facebook page? Check out our page at "Pittsburgh Colfax PTO" and keep on top of the things going on at our fabulous school!

If you have any questions or would like to submit an article or picture to be considered for inclusion in our newsletter, email, or Facebook, email our VP of Communications, Jeanine Weiss at communications@colfax.org.

MIDDLE LEVEL UPDATE

Submitted by Sukanya Srinivasan, Mid-Level Parent Representative

Happy New Year! Can you believe how quickly the school year is flying by?! Reminders for Middle Level families about the end-of-the-year trip for Grades 6-8. On this year's trip, students are going to have an opportunity to tour Washington D.C. and enjoy Hershey Park! The dates are May 31 through June 1, 2018. Cost is \$320 per person. The second deposit of \$110 was due on Friday, January 19th. If you have questions about your account, please email Mr. Ryan Schmiedlin at rschmiedlin1@pghboe.net. The next deposit (\$110) will be due in March.

As you have probably noticed, the ML fundraising committee has been hard at work with several fundraisers to help students pay for this trip. We all enjoyed concessions at the Halloween movie night and the burritos at the Chipotle fundraiser, not to mention the delectable items from the Sarris Candy Sale! All our Colfax kids relished Pajama Day on December 21st as a great way to start off their holiday vacation. Middle Level also teamed up with our local Pittsburgh Popcorn Company to offer many small batch flavored popcorns for sale. 50% of proceed directly benefit our students. What a delicious and easy way to help our students!

Middle Level students had a great time during the Middle Level Winter Dance on January 19th. A winter wonderland of snowflakes and glitter pinecones as well as pizza and awesome music was all made possible thanks to student council, parent volunteers and Middle Level teachers. Special thanks to the event chaperones, Mrs. Julie Montgomery, Ms. Kipp Dawson, Ms. Vaneesha Davis and Mr. Ryan Schmiedlin.

Other possible future Middle Level fundraisers are Valentine grams, Entertainment books and drinks at Independent Brewing Company so keep an eye out for details.

If you have any other ideas or would like to chair a fundraiser, the students could definitely use your help! So please contact us (dr.sukanya@gmail.com) to get connected to the Middle Level committee and share your creative ideas!

FOURTH & FIFTH GRADE SWIM TEAM CHAMPIONS

Submitted by Erika LaVelle, Physical Education

Congrats to the fourth and fifth grade swim team who won the city championships at Allderdice on December 5th. All the kids placed in the top six in their events which lead to a championship for both teams. This group of kids represented Colfax with great pride and sportsmanship! I couldn't be any prouder.



GIRLS TEAM

Lilly Schaefer
Annabel Tew
Anna Thorpe
Talia Dubwitz
Addison Augustine
Solvei Islam
Dahlia Farkas
Zahra Nauhaus
Sadie Primack
Audrey Jiang
Esther Forker
Abigail Smith
Ivy Echols
Terresa Cauda
Caitlyn Withers

BOYS TEAM

Yoonyoung Cho
Stache Foster
Jacob Blackledge
Tobias Badino
Aaden Jacobson
Miles Bluman
Thomas Aldous
Zack Sprinkle
Zack Coffey
Eli Coffey
Salvator Rizzo
Kofi Opoke-Dakwa

VOLUNTEER!

Interested in volunteering at Colfax or on a school trip? We'd love to have you along for the fun! But first, as a volunteer, you must complete and submit the following documents to the front desk.

- A volunteer intake form (extras available at the front desk)
- A PA state criminal history record (obtained online)
- A child abuse certification (obtained online); and
- An FBI criminal history report (fingerprinting required; apply online)

Questions? See VP Volunteer Coordinator Tiffany Stuckey at volunteers@colfaxpto.org



MIDDLE LEVEL WINTER DANCE

Submitted by Ryan Schmeidler, Seventh/Eighth Social Studies Teacher

Colfax held their 2018 Winter dance for middle level students on January 19th organized by Student Council. A great time was had by all 87 students with music, lights, photo opportunities and food. A big thanks to the Colfax members who helped with organization, chaperoning, photography, riding the bus, music, lights, food, decorations and ensuring every student was having a good time. A special thank you goes out to Paloma Pelfrey, Michelle Starr and Sammie Samuels for their commitment to Student Council and putting the time into helping organize the dance and the many other involvements connected to Student Council.





FOURTH GRADE HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

Submitted by the Fourth Grade Teaching Team

All fourth grade students took part in an activity both in math and reading classes before the holiday break. Teachers collaborated and created a short activity that included some fun treats while they continued to learn.

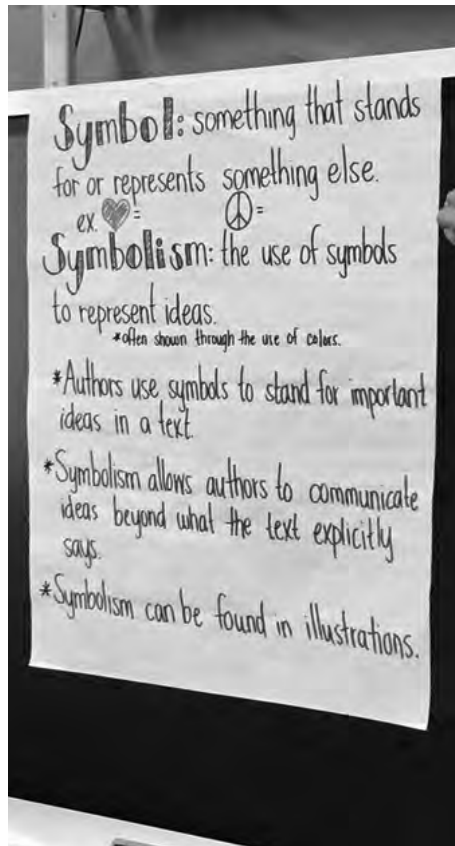
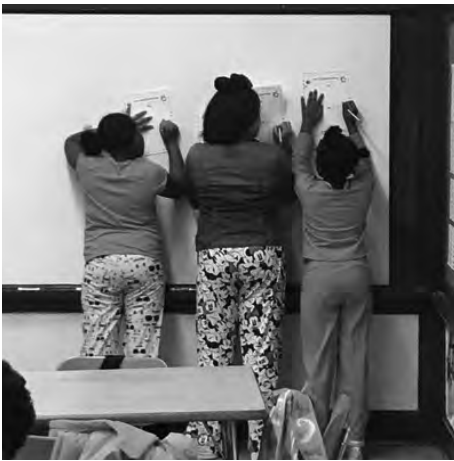
In math, students worked together to solve problems at each station. Students used multiplication skills as well as fraction-based skills to solve problems related to hot chocolate. For example, if there are 20 students in a class and each gets a cup of cocoa with 8 marshmallows, how many marshmallows do you need to buy? Students enjoyed solving math problems while sipping on a delicious,

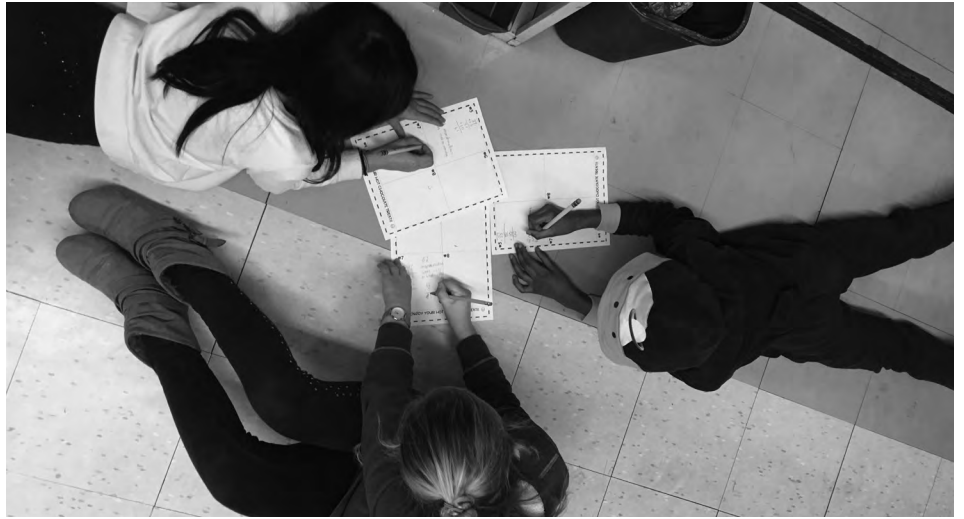
seasonal beverage!

In ELA, students learned about symbolism and designed their own version of an ugly sweater. They then used what they learned to decorate a cookie.

A special thank you goes out to all of the volunteers and donations that helped to ensure that these activities were both flawless and enjoyable. We are also thankful for another donation given to us by Eat N' Park for the festive cookies.

Most of all, we are excited to be able to share such a fantastic experience with an amazing group of students!





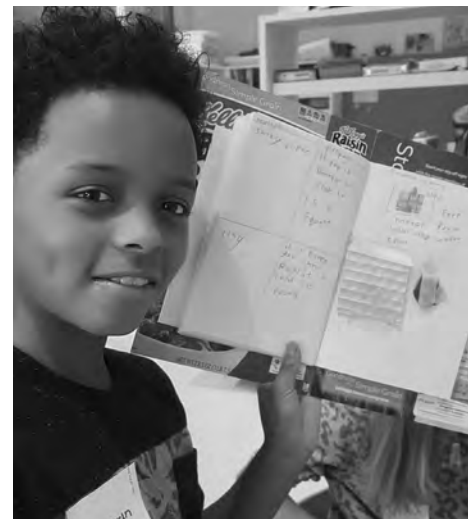
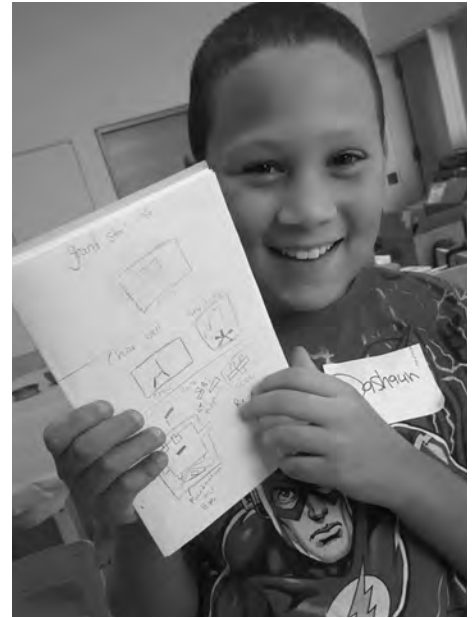
FIFTH GRADE SCIENCE: REIMAGINING HOUSES

Submitted by Beth Pellegrini, Fourth/Fifth Science Teacher

Students have been working with an architect from Carnegie Mellon University and staff from the Carnegie Museum of Art to learn about architecture. We have investigated the following topics:

- How an environment influences the design of a structure, specifically, desert, tropical rainforest, mountains, and hurricane zones;
- Scale and how to create scaled drawings;
- Architectural drawings, plan, section, and façade;
- Types of buildings;
- Features of different construction materials;
- Construction of arches.

Working with their group, students have designed a plan for a house that will be suitable for their assigned environment. Once the houses are complete, we will have a juried review, and some of the completed houses will be selected to be put on a special display at the Carnegie! The Carnegie is making a 2-3 minute promotional video about CMOA Education which exclusively features the Colfax project with my students!





FOURTH GRADE SCIENCE: LEARNING ABOUT CHARACTERISTICS AND BODY STRUCTURES

Submitted by Beth Pellegrini, Fourth/Fifth Science Teacher



Learning about animals is always a favorite! Students have done research and shared their learning about a variety of animals. In the upcoming weeks, we will be investigating the following topics:

- The major animal groups
- The 8 characteristics of living things
- Functions of specific body structures and their role in the animal's survival

Several dissections are being planned for near the end of the unit, including a squid and a cow eyeball!



Colfax fourth graders also had the opportunity to attend Carnegie Mellon University's "Moving 4th Into Science" program on Saturday, December 9th at the Mellon Institute!



FOURTH GRADE FIELD TRIP THROUGH SQUIRREL HILL

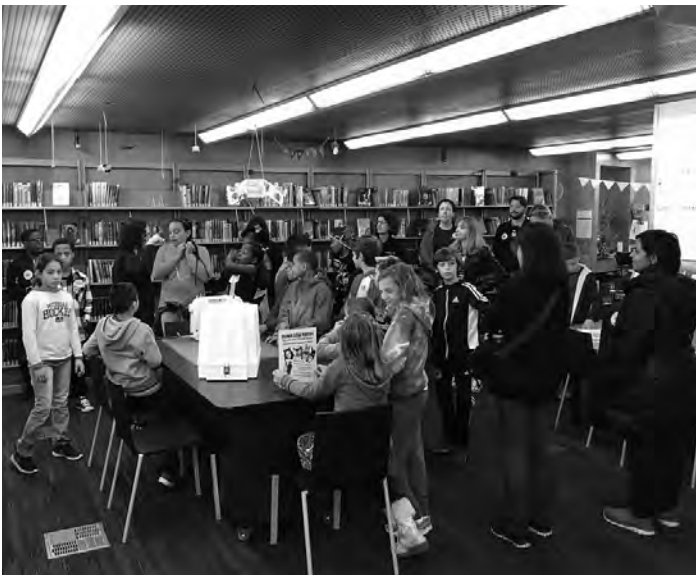
Submitted by Mrs. Dulak, Fourth Grade Teacher

On Tuesday, October 17, all fourth grade students boarded three buses to embark on a journey throughout Squirrel Hill. Our first stop was at the Carnegie Library on Forbes Ave. It was very interesting to hear about the history of the library and see the operation from the inside-out. We broke into twelve groups, where docents from Pittsburgh History Landmarks Foundation (PHLF) gave us a tour of the beautiful neighborhood; including various stores and restaurants along the way. The intent was to help our students become researchers and investigators. This two-hour field trip was tied to the curriculum (Ready Gen- Unit 1- Becoming Researchers) and helped students to make connections and experience Squirrel Hill from a different lens. The students were given clipboards and worksheets that they were to complete as they walked around with their classmates and tour guides.

Looking ahead, the goal is to have students continue this activity in their own neighborhood. Since Colfax represents multiple neighborhoods, students were asked to write about their own and act as reporters. They were also given the opportunity to interview someone within their neighborhood to help us to gather more information and different perspectives. PHLF will collect these assignments and help us create a "Neighborhood Magazine".

This was a great opportunity to take a closer look at Squirrel Hill and to begin to gain insight about the other neighborhoods in which our students live.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to all the parents who volunteered and made this event an absolute success! The families at Colfax are always ready and willing to go above and beyond, and that's what makes our school such an exceptional place to be!





Why is Squirrel Hill named Squirrel Hill?

gray squirrel

Fox squirrel



ELEMENTARY UPDATE

Submitted by Valentina Krauss, K-5 Parent Representative

December was a fun month in the elementary grades with winter holidays to learn about and celebrate in the classroom. The Barnes & Noble Book Fair gave the children a chance to shop for gifts while supporting Colfax. The choir gave a beautiful performance, and the Cobra Freeze from the cafe was a delicious treat!

The 5th grade Dancing Classrooms program finished with an

outstanding performance in the gym. Spirit Week brought everyone's favorite occasion: Pajama Day! Returning from winter break is always a bit of a letdown after all of that merriment, but this year it was extra exciting with a week of delays and a cancellation.

A winter play date for K-2 students is in the works. Please check the PTO weekly email for the details.



BARNES AND NOBLE THANK YOU

Submitted by Ms. Reed, Librarian

A BIG Thank You to everyone that came out to Barnes and Noble at the Waterfront on December 9th, 2017. Dr. Hamlet, our Superintendent had a great time reading stories and laughing with the students. The Singing Cobras (Colfax Chorus) put on a wonderful show bringing us into the holidays! Thank you for your support Colfax family!



Pittsburgh Colfax

BIRTHDAY BOOKS



Become a part of Colfax! Have a book donated in your name for your birthday!

- 1** Pick out your favorite hardcover book! Get it from the store or your book shelf.
- 2** Get the book to us! Bring it in anytime during your birthday month or have it delivered to the Colfax Media Center.
- 3** Stop by the Media Center and choose between two designs for the bookplate and fill in your name!

Your book will be displayed on the Birthday Books bookcase for your birthday month! Thereafter, your book will go into circulation and be forever on the shelves of the Colfax Media Center with your name inside!

Contact Amanda Cline with any questions at amandakasscline@gmail.com.



COLFAX PTO CALENDAR 2017-2018

FEBRUARY

February 2
Early Dismissal 11:50am

February 7
PSCC/PTO Meeting

February 9
Cobra Store Grades K-5

February 16
Cobra Store Grades K-5

February 23
Early Dismissal 11:50am

February 24
Party 4 Play

MARCH

March 2
Early Dismissal 11:50am

March 9
Cobra Store Grades K-5

MARCH *continued*

March 14
PSCC/PTO Meeting

March 15
Spring Movie Night

March 16
Cobra Store Grades K-5

March 23
Early Dismissal 11:50am

March 26-30
No School—Spring Break

APRIL

April 11
PSCC/PTO Meeting

April 13
Cobra Store Grades K-5

April 27
Cobra Store Grades K-5

MAY

May 7-11
Teacher Appreciation Week

May 9
PSCC/PTO Meeting

May 11
Cobra Store Grades K-5

May 25
Cobra Store Grades K-5

May 28
No School—Memorial Day

JUNE

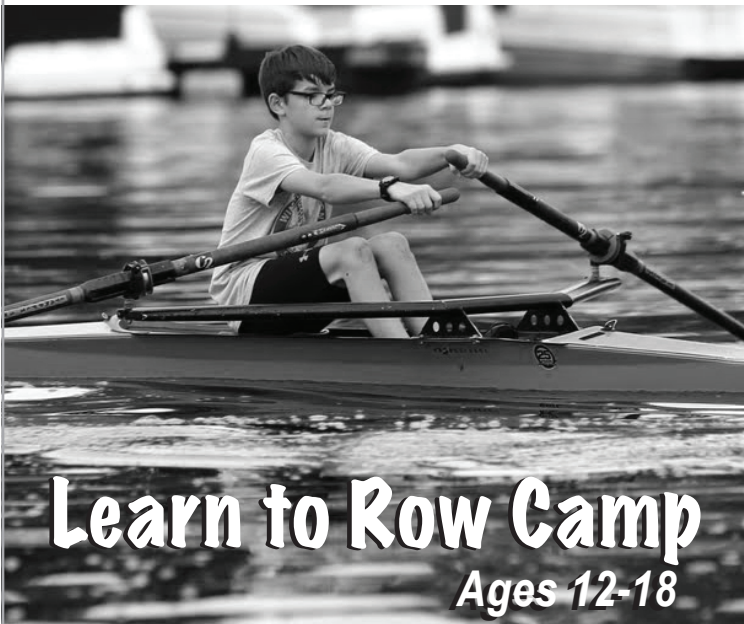
June 1
Last Cobra Store Grades K-5

June 5
Carnival

June 7
Eighth Grade Promotion

June 8
Last Day of School

The best days of summer!



steelcityrowing.org/summercamps

Put on a Show at JCC Performing Arts Camp



***Register now to get
Early Bird rates!***

**Grades 4-10
June 18-July 13**

**For information:
Kathy Wayne
412-412-339-5414
kwayne@jccpgh.org.**

**To register:
Katie Whitlatch
412-697-3540
kwhitlatch@jccpgh.org**

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Jim **SHORKEY**
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North Huntingdon, PA 15642
PH: 724-863-0600

Jim Shorkey CDJR
13230 Route 30
North Huntingdon, PA 15642
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Age 3-Grade 5

June 18-August 16

Register by the week

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To register: j&rdaycamp@jccpgh.org



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Tuesday-Friday 7am-6pm / Saturday 8am-5pm / Sunday 8am-2pm

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Reach hundreds of Colfax families and
support the Colfax PTO by placing an ad
in our newsletter! Contact our advertising
representative for deadlines and more
information:

Leslie Grodin, Leslie.Grodin@verizon.net.



Student Poem, as Featured in the Post-Gazette

DANDELION

Blooms of a sun-bright yellow,
petals that are like a lion's mane.

Trapped in a field of green,
you make my heart grow.

Yes, it is growing
high, very high.

Now pick one.

Make a wish.
Then blow.

It is in the wind,
then settles to the ground.

- Josephine Squillante, fourth grade