

COLFAX

COMMUNICATOR

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PITTSBURGH COLFAX K-8 PTO



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PARK
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FALL HARVEST
PARADE



IMPORTANT DATES

DECEMBER 14
PSCC/ PTO MEETING

**DECEMBER 23 TO
JANUARY 2**
NO SCHOOL WINTER BREAK

JANUARY 11
PSCC/ PTO MEETING

JANUARY 16
NO SCHOOL

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

November is the month for thankfulness. I am so grateful for the support that the Colfax community has shown our school and our PTO. It's amazing how much we have accomplished in this first nine weeks of school. And there is so much more to come!

The Colfax community yet again proved our commitment to the Boys and Girls Club of Shady-side, during the October 1 Run Shadyside. I challenged you to beat last year's numbers and you did! Approximately 200 Colfax families, teachers, and friends participated in this year's race. In addition to supporting the Boys and Girls Club, the event raised more than \$2,000 for the PTO!

Later in the month, on October 27, more than a hundred people joined the PTO for Halloween Movie Night. This event supports our Middle Level students, to help them earn money for the end-of-the-year trip in May 2017. The smaller kids laughed out loud at Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory. I'm sure I wasn't the only one to dream of candy flowers and chocolate rivers that night! The older ones enjoyed watching the equally fun classic, Young Frankenstein. Through the generosity of those who attended, the students will receive more than \$500 toward their trip.

All of our students will benefit from our fall Spirit Wear sale, which raised more than \$1500 for the school. I look forward to seeing the kids in their new apparel on our Friday Spirit Days!

I would be remiss not to thank all of the volunteers who made these events, and others, happen: VP Events Dory Levine, VP Fundraising Abbie Campsie, Anne Marie Kuchera, Sukanya Srinivasan, and Leslie Grodin.

Speaking of volunteers, in addition to those who help with events, there are so many more folks who make Colfax what it is . . . A big thank you to Leslie for all of her hard work on pulling together the directory; to Carolina Kuhn for coordinating the lunch/recess volunteer schedule (and to all those who volunteer to go on that schedule!); and to the many, many parents and friends of Colfax who volunteer with classroom and after school activities. THANK YOU!

Colfax is an amazing community comprised of many parts. And you are an important part. If you have not yet found an opportunity to participate, I encourage you to contact me or any PTO volunteer.

All the best to you and your family,

Julie Wilson



PRINCIPAL REMARKS

Dear Colfax Families,

I hope this edition of the Colfax Communicator finds you and your family well. The school year is well on its way as we wrapped up Quarter 1 with report card distribution on November 18. This edition includes many features about the exciting work happening at our school. One such article features four of our Middle Level Students who were interviewed by the BBC and will be the focus of a documentary in which they shared their perceptions on this year's Presidential election. Student news and events always seem to put a smile on our faces!

The upcoming holiday season and colder weather are quickly upon us. Despite some seasonably warm temperatures we were afforded during the first weeks of November, winter season is upon us. Weather alert apps such as WTAE, KDKA, and WPXI are very helpful in keeping you informed on any weather related closings or delays. These apps are free and can be downloaded on any cell phone or electronic device. Additionally, be sure that your children wear their coats, hats, and gloves and are prepared for the weather. Remind them not remove their coats and other weather related clothing while outside at recess and/or on the bus. Coats/jackets should have students names written somewhere on the inside in the event that they are lost or to eliminate confusion when several students have the same coat.

Academic expectations continue to remain high. Chess, Challenge 24, Battle of the Books, and Math Kangaroo are some of the many academic club opportunities made available to students during this time. Students are challenged to showcase the rigorous learning which occurs in our classrooms daily. Encourage your child to enrich their learning, make new friends, and most importantly have fun by joining one of our many lunch or after school clubs!

Please continue to reach out to teachers as a resource, support, and questions regarding your child's progress. It is our hope that your children are having a productive, successful, and positive learning year. We wish you and yours a wonderful holiday season! May these joyous days ahead provide opportunities for memorable moments and time with family and friends.

Respectfully,

Dr. Sanders-Woods

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ColfaxPghPTO

FIRST GRADE HABITAT EXPLORERS

(written by Nikole Fiedler, Colfax parent)

The Habitat Explorers program introduces 1st grade students to plant and animal communities. Students visit Frick Park three times throughout the school year to learn what makes meadow, woodland, and stream habitats unique.

Through guided and independent exploration activities, students observe the organisms that live in these three unique habitats, and then get the opportunity to improve each habitat through group stewardship projects. Through these experiences, they observe first-hand the necessary elements habitats provide the organisms that live there.

HABITAT EXPLORER GOALS:

- Introduce students to scientific inquiry
- Lead young minds to explore and discover the outdoors
- Encourage stewardship

In September, the 1st graders walked to the new Frick Environmental Center to learn about the meadow habitat. When they arrived, the students were all very excited to walk inside the building through the kid-sized door and enter the classroom to meet the instructors from the Parks Conservancy. While inside, they discussed the plants and animals that call the meadow home. The group then went outside to see the meadow habitat and to collect samples which they then brought back inside to view under a magnifying glass. The students were amazed how much more emerged from their samples when they would “shake, shake shake/ tap, tap, tap/ rub, rub, rub.” “I collected a Queen Anne’s Lace flower but then found a Milkweed Beetle and a bunch of other tiny bugs inside when I tapped my cup!” said one student.

For the second half of their lesson, the students went back outside to return their samples to the meadow. They then learned the recipe to make seed bombs to be thrown into the meadow: combine 2 parts dirt, 2 parts water, 1 pinch seeds; then shape the mud into a ball and throw.

The students then walked back to Colfax and concluded their morning with a picnic lunch in the front yard followed by recess.







SECOND GRADE FIELD TRIP

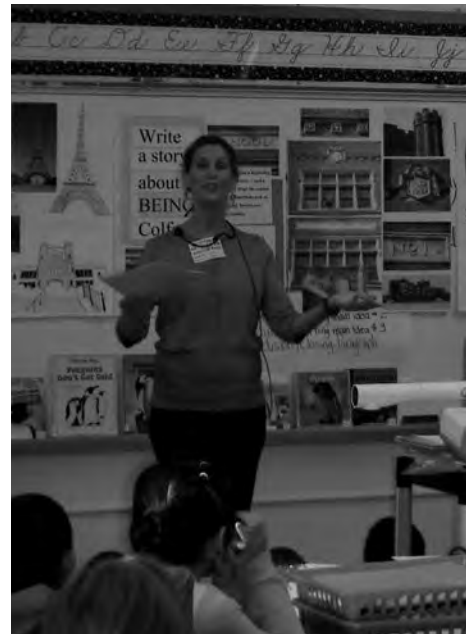
(written by Jitka Benedikova, Colfax parent)

It is a tradition that Colfax second-graders visit the Frick house and museum. This was the first of four visits they'll do this year, and it was dedicated to fall.

The kids had a great time listening to a story and then loosening their creativity by playing with colorful tree leaves. They then had the opportunity to make incredible collages with them.

After touring the Frick green house and planting chives, they all sat under a big, old horse chestnut tree and each created a journal about trees in the fall.

I am sure they cannot wait for their winter, spring and summer visits.



THIRD GRADE HISTORY AND LANDMARKS LESSON

(written by Erin Dulak,
Third Grade ELA teacher)

On October 6 & 7, we were able to partake in an hour-long session with Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation. Louise Sturgess & a few volunteers came in to work with the third grade classes focusing on Colfax and utilizing personification & art. She came in and gave a brief history of our school, and we took a short walk outside to look at the front of our building. She pointed out some of the characteristics of our school and had students share their observations and different perspectives. We returned to the classroom to add character to the sketch of our school. Each student was given a copy, and it was interesting to see what types of designs they added to their picture. They were only given about five minutes for this task, and the rest of the time was spent on writing about Colfax. They had three tasks: Introduce yourself as Colfax, tell about what's inside, and tell why you are proud to be Colfax. Their goal was to write three distinct paragraphs.

PHLF took the time to edit each one of their projects, and they are working to publish a book from their assignment. I am so excited to see the final product, and to work alongside PHLF for a few future endeavors. We are so lucky to have such a valuable resource right at our fingertips!

A special thank you to all families and teachers that donated to the honorarium that was given to the PHLF for this awesome project!



FOURTH GRADE FIELD TRIP

(written by Nikole Fiedler, Colfax parent)

The Park Stewards program engages 4th grade students in comprehensive exploration activities of specific habitats in Frick Park. Three sessions of guided, hands-on activities and nature journaling, help students gain a deeper understanding of how the changing seasons affect habitats. Students also perform stewardship activities to improve habitat health.

PARK STEWARD GOALS:

- Introduce students to scientific inquiry
- Develop observational and journaling skills
- Encourage stewardship
- In Park Stewards, students:
 - Visit the park in all weather and seasons
 - Observe seasonal change and biodiversity in the park
 - Journal and observe outdoor surroundings
 - Learn about the value of parks and greenspaces

In October, the 4th graders walked to the new Frick Environmental Center for their first session. While inside the classroom, the students received nature journals to record scientific illustrations and detailed observations of the natural world. As a warm-up, the students participated in an observation activity. Mrs. Pellegrini was asked to leave the room and then the students wrote down 6 observations about a mystery object, a small magnifying glass. Students were told to think about its shape, texture, material, use. Mrs. Pellegrini then tried to determine what the mystery object was based solely on the students' observations.

After this, the students broke up into smaller groups and went outside to explore and observe an area of the forest. They practiced using all their senses to make observations by creating sound maps, collecting objects to discuss as a group, and drawing their objects in great detail. All the students left eager for their next visit to observe Frick Park in the winter.



HIT THE DANCE FLOOR



(written by Robyn Stefanyak, 5th Grade ELA Teacher)

Did you know that Pittsburgh Colfax 5th graders participate in an amazing ballroom dancing program? The students receive 19 lessons at school and learn 5 different dances. In the fall of 2009, the prevention program of Pittsburgh Mercy Health System, brought the renowned Dancing Classrooms to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. They introduced the program to 300 children in six Pittsburgh Public Schools.

Dancing Classrooms is about much more than dance. It's an innovative strategy and approach that enhances learning readiness and social development, providing students with:

- Practice in problem solving, as children are challenged to overcome personal shyness and to learn intricate dance steps and participate in a variety of performance venues across diverse audiences;
- Development of creative thinking skills, as children develop discipline in approaching the "new," and become comfortable that they can move from not knowing to knowing using their own imaginative and personal skills;
- Resiliency in facing challenges and the unknown, as children learn to improvise to correct for mistakes and come to better understand the importance of trial and error in improving performance;
- Training in professional courtesy and behavioral skills that enable children to move across and interact with various levels of society, including various workplace and educational settings;
- Appreciation for various cultural backgrounds of others and widened understanding of and support for cultural differences;
- Team building and cooperation, both of which are essential to successful workplace, educational, and social success; and
- Greater senses of self-efficacy and personal commitment to consistent effort and practice to reach a goal, qualities that are essential for anyone, but that are particularly essential for children in poverty who face far greater hurdles each day than most of us can imagine.

At Pittsburgh Colfax we embrace this program. The amazing Ms. Jen Milligan is our dancing instructor. In the beginning of the program, the 5th grade students are always very reluctant to dance. By the end of the program, the students LOVE it! So many of the students want to be chosen to go to the competition at the end. We cannot wait to see who those lucky dancers will be. The students will be inviting their parents to come and watch them perform the 5 dances they learned. Finals will be held this year in December. Stay tuned for event details.

STEAM AND PROJECT BASED LEARNING

(written by Nikole Fiedler, Colfax parent)

Last spring Colfax, as part of the PPS District STEAM grant, received \$7000 to be used to develop a pilot program to introduce STEAM curriculum at our school. The goal of this program is to nurture confident, life-long learning in our entire community. This program will allow a core team of faculty to explore what it means to engage children, experiment with methods of deep, open-ended inquiry in their classrooms, and to collaborate on their own approach of engagement by using the following strategy:

- **Professional Development:** The core team will attend professional development workshops during the summer and throughout the 2016/2017 school year to gain knowledge of how STEAM curriculum can be used to engage students in learning and how it can help to make student learning visible beyond test scores.
- **Collaboration and Experimentation:** The core team will gather regularly to share their professional development experiences and to collaborate on activities for students focused on deep, open-ended inquiry.
- **Observation and Assessment:** The core team of faculty will have release time to observe one another teaching and assess strengths and weaknesses of student activities. Release time will also be utilized for site visits to other school districts.

You can read below about some of the lessons happening now, and be sure to check out this section in our next issue for more lessons to come!

MISS MCCANN'S MAGIC MONDAYS

(written by Ms. Brittany McCann, 4th and 5th Grade Math Teacher)

Miss McCann's Magic Mondays started in early September after I spent the summer learning about Project Based Learning. Last year, I became Colfax famous when I took off my wig during after school tutoring when I overheard two students insulting each other. I knew that telling them to stop would aggravate the situation, so I simply took off my wig and said, "Miss McCann is bald, give it to me!" I could tell from the stunned look on their faces that they received the message loud and clear. I spent two days over the summer in ASSET training writing my first project for my classroom, for I wanted something to have a lasting impact on my students that could also change lives.

I started the class with an activity I read about on Facebook about a teacher using two apples to give a visual example about the harm bullying can do. Then, I posed the question, "What is normal?" We had a very lively class discussion about things that we thought were "normal", but in the end, we all agreed that there is no normal because everyone is different. We even took data to see what others thought was normal.

Through that class discussion and the data we collected, I told the students that we wanted to change the world. Students grouped themselves and started to create their projects. We have amazing projects!! The students had a brainstorming session with the team they picked. We have students working on a bully patrol, school newsletter, and even a few plays! 5th grader, Xanath Bernal, said, "I think that Magic Monday's are fun! We do a lot of fun projects." 5th grade student, Janiya Wheeler, said, "I think it is so fun. We learn very much and we can finish our projects." I cannot wait to see how these projects turn out, for I truly think they are ready to change the world!



LIBRARY UPDATE

(written by Librarian Sheila Reed, Ed.S sreed1@pghboe.net)

I am very happy to be your Colfax Librarian this year. The beginning of the year has been an exciting one and I would like to take this opportunity to tell you about our theme and some of the exciting things going on this year.

The library theme this year is, "Creativity Leads to Literacy." As a library teacher, I am to prepare our students for today's workplace. Today's high school graduate is entering a workforce that has changed drastically in the last thirty years. Employers are looking for fluency in technology, where students know how to use applications. Problem solving and critical skills are crucial to analyzing data and developing action plans. Creative Thinking requires generating new, original ideas that provide an edge for future business. Working collaboratively is also a valuable skill fostered in our library.

My love of literacy and technology has led me to incorporate both into the library program. Currently, students have dedicated library time in each six-day cycle. I truly believe that developing a love of reading stems not only from being exposed to different types of literature, but also becoming engaged with the text. Exposure to technology happens on our iPads and desktop computers, where students have the opportunity to explore different computer applications.

The library has recently received a new book order adding fresh titles to our collection. I will do my best to make sure titles students enjoy

can be located in the library. Also, if you see any library books at home please have your student return them to the library, so I can maintain accurate records.

As our international student body grows, our library will also offer books in many different languages. Our international collection is small, but growing! We currently have books in French, Spanish and Chinese. While students learn to read in English, it is important to foster their love of reading by providing materials in their ?rst languages.

In order to keep our library current, it takes money.

Save The Date!-Our HOLIDAY FUNDRAISER will happen on Saturday, Dec. 10th at Barnes and Noble Waterfront. We will have authors present from our Colfax family as well as exciting events and activities! Look for flyers coming home soon!

Finally, we are preparing for Battle of the Books at the Carnegie library in February. Our students will prepare to compete against other schools around the district.

Feel free to stop by and say hello or send an email.

Thank you for being A Friend of the Library!



COBRA CLUB - BLANKET MAKING

(written by Brittany McCann, 4th and 5th Grade Math Teacher)

Last year, Miss McCann and Mrs. Dulak hosted the Blanket Making Club. We were able to produce 14 blankets to donate! Students researched places to donate and chose Animal Rescue League and Light of Life Rescue Mission. We were able to donate half of the blankets to the Animal Rescue League at the end of the school year, but unfortunately we could not set up a time for Light of Life Rescue Mission to come before the end of the school year. However, Miss Emily was more than happy to come in September and meet our fabulous Blanket Making Club! She gave the students background information on the mission and answered all of the student questions! Miss Emily said, "I was so impressed by their questions; usually kids just look at you with a blank stare when you talk about homelessness and addiction. Thank you again for choosing us to give the blankets to; it definitely helps that they were made with love!"

HEALTH AND PE HAPPENINGS FOR NOVEMBER

(written by Daniel Lydon, PE Teacher and Coach, dlydon1@pghboe.net)

In November, we will be covering safety in our health lessons, including fire and other areas. For our PE lessons, we will be learning the games of football and volleyball, having a good time being active as well as learning how to work together. Please help with reinforcing the importance of good sportsmanship and all that we do to become better people. Thanks for all you do and for the trust you give us to do our best by your child.

GOOD HEALTH AND FITNESS TIPS:

NOVEMBER IS DIABETES AWARENESS MONTH. AS A REMINDER OF GOOD HEALTH, TRY TO LIMIT THE LEVEL AND AMOUNT OF SUGAR YOU PUT INTO YOUR BODY. THE MORE SUGAR YOU EAT OR DRINK THE HARDER IT WILL BE FOR THE BODY TO BREAK IT DOWN.

FAMILY FITNESS IDEA:

BEFORE THE WINDS OF WINTER ARE UPON US, TRY TO GET OUTSIDE AND CHECK OUT HOW THE TREES AND NATURE SHUT DOWN TO BRACE FOR WINTER. ENJOY THE GOOD AIR AND GET OUTSIDE FOR A WALK TOGETHER.

ART NEWS

(written by Gwen Miller, Art Teacher)

Kindergarten: Students are working on learning various shapes and lines. Various projects are being completed, such as Owls, Pumpkins, Scarecrows, all demonstrating lines and shapes. We're also working on scissor skills.

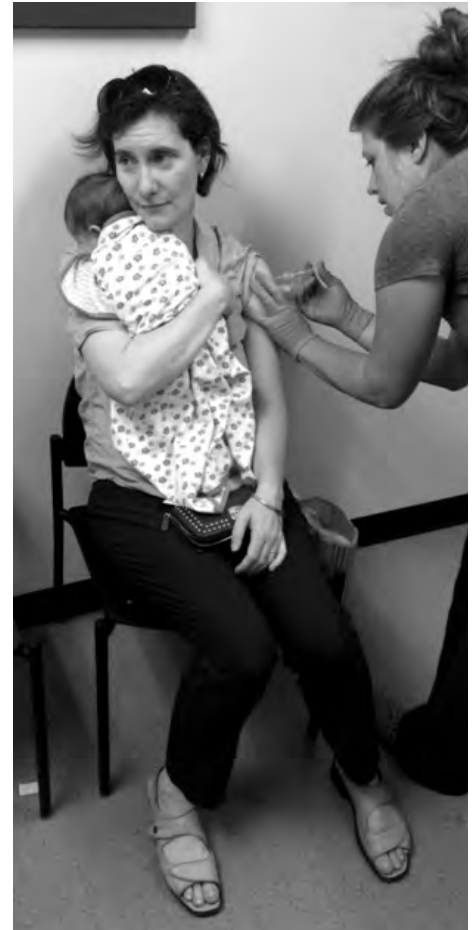
1st Grade: Students heard the story "Chicken and Salsa." They have been learning about colors and patterns, which will result in each student creating their own rooster, similar in style to the work of artist, Eric Carle.

2nd Grade: Students have been learning about the Dutch artist, Vincent Van Gogh. They have begun creating their own version of "Sunflowers," by incorporating some mosaic art, sponge painting, and mixed media in their artwork.

3rd -6th Grade: Students learned about the American artist, Laurel Burch. They have begun creating 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!

7th Grade: Students are learning about artist, Roy Lichtenstein. He created "Pop Art" thru his artwork. Students are using self-portraits and demonstrating Pop art within by creating solid areas of color and Benday Dots in various sections.

8th Grade: Students are learning about the American artist, Gerogia O'Keeffe. They are recreating various pieces of her work, using oil pastels and showing blending within their work.



GREETINGS FROM THE SCHOOL NURSE

Nurse Rachel protects the youngest member of her family by getting her flu shot!



GARDEN UPDATE FROM FARMER PAUL



This year's Chef in the Garden event took place on October 20th and 21st. The first day's weather was perfect, sunny and 65 degrees. The first chef to join us was Carlos Thomas who operates two businesses, Confluence Catering and Feed the Hood. For both of his morning classes, he demonstrated a recipe for Sweet Potatoes and French Toast, explaining that veggies can go along with breakfast, with the right combinations. He also told them about the time he first learned to cook. It was when his mother stopped making him the meals he requested in high school. He figured that if he wanted to eat the food he liked, he would need to cook for himself. He also went on to talk about how he is a graduate of Pittsburgh Public Schools and how he got his advanced degree in Culinary Arts. He finished by answering questions from the students about his favorite foods, if he cooks for his family now, and how he knew he wanted to become a chef. It was really wonderful to have a young successful PPS graduate exemplify for the Colfax audience, what you can do with a passion and how that translates that into a career path.

The second day of the event featured Chef Kevin Hermann, Executive Chef for The Porch at Schenley. Since it was raining steadily all day long, the event was moved into the art room. Chef Kevin hosted a total of 6 lessons. During the morning session he led the K-2 students through a demonstration of Cinnamon Apple Oatmeal from scratch. He also spoke a lot about his role as the Executive Chef and how he is in charge of 26 other chefs and line cooks who all work together as a team in the kitchen. In the afternoon sessions, he demonstrated a recipe for Sweet Potato Hash. He continued to share about his career and answered questions about his favorite foods to cook at home, the hardest thing about his job, and what he likes most about working as an Executive Chef. The students all enjoyed Chef Kevin's presentation and took home recipes for the foods he made, so they could try them at home.

Special thanks go out to all the teachers who helped plan this event so their class could participate, and extra special thanks to Chef Carlos and Chef Kevin for teaching our students about their careers in the Culinary Arts.



Creamy Cinnamon Apple Oatmeal

Cook Time: 25 mins, Prep Time: 5 mins, Serves: 4

- 4C Vanilla Soy Milk
- $\frac{1}{2}$ C Sugar
- 1T Cinnamon, ground
- 1T Nutmeg, ground
- 2ea Apples, peeled, small dice
- 2T Maple Syrup
- 2.5C Rolled Oats
- 2T Apple Butter

1. In a heavy bottom pot combine the milk, sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, apples, maple syrup and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Stir occasionally.
2. Once milk comes to a simmer add the rolled oats and incorporated evenly.
3. Simmer the mixture for 20 mins, stirring often.
4. Once the oatmeal begins to thicken turn down to low heat and continue to stir until it has cooked for the full 20 mins.
5. After 20 mins turn off the heat and stir in the apple butter; cover for 5 mins.

Thanks Chef Kevin from The Porch at Schenley!!

Cider Glazed Sweet Potatoes

Cook Time: 20 mins, Prep Time: 15 mins, Serves 4

- 2lb Sweet Potatoes
- 2ea Shallots, julienned
- 2T Butter
- 2T Brown Sugar
- 1C Apple, small dice
- 1C Apple Cider
- 1T Mint, roughly chopped
- 1t Sea Salt

1. In a medium sized sauté pan add the sweet potatoes and butter. Cook over medium heat until potatoes begin to brown, stirring often.
2. Add the shallots and stir to incorporate.
3. Add remaining ingredients and cook until cider reduces to a syrup consistency.

Thanks Chef Kevin from The Porch at Schenley!!





(written by Chad Hilton, Colfax parent)

The Colfax chess program is now in full swing. 125 Colfax kids are enrolled in the fall lunchtime chess program this year! The youngest kids are currently learning how the knight moves, while the older and more advanced players are learning from the games of the grandmasters who are competing in the upcoming World Chess Championship match in New York.

The Colfax Chess Club successfully launched on Wednesday October 26. Nineteen enthusiastic students attended the first afterschool meeting. National Master coach Ben Johnson led the students through challenging puzzles, basic checkmate practice, and helped students as they paired up and played matches. The club meets once weekly and is open to all students who know how to play chess and want to have fun playing and learning about chess.

Fourth graders Abigail Hilton and Solvei Islam won 1st place and 3rd place, respectively, in the U700 section at the 2016 PA State Championship Scholastics tournament held at the University of Pittsburgh on Saturday, October 29. Congratulations, Abby and Solvei!





Math Kangaroo is a once yearly math competition, held locally at the University of Pittsburgh. It is a 75-minute multiple choice test made up of 24 questions, mostly word problems, chosen by the International Math Kangaroo Committee annually.

Colfax students in grades 1-5 have begun meeting with their grade's respective Math Kangaroo team. The students are not only learning new applications of math concepts, but enjoying working on math together!

MIDDLE LEVEL UPDATES

(written by Leslie Grodin and
Sukanya Srinivasan, Middle Level
Parent Committee Co-Chairs)

The Middle Level is having a busy year! Some out-of-school activities included an 8th grade trip to the Waterfront Theater to watch a JFilm as part of their studies on the Holocaust, and a trip to Oakland to watch the Pitt Women's basketball game. 7th and 8th graders are participating in a weekly mentorship with CMU graduate students to work on their science projects for the annual PJAS competition, held each spring. Students in the Shakespeare enrichment group are also gearing up for their annual competition being held in February 2017. We know our students will do well!

Speaking of doing (extremely) well, the Colfax cross country team took home a championship trophy for the boys and girls! Our own Madeline King (8th grade) placed 1st in the whole district! Way to go! Flag football finished their season with a win. Winter sports including swimming and basketball are underway.

Here are a few reminders about the end-of-the-year trip for Grades 6-8. The Middle Level students are going to Cincinnati and Kings Island on June 1-2, 2017. The cost is \$310 per person. An initial deposit of \$100 was due on 10/21/2016. The next deposit of \$100 is due on 1/18/2017. Please contact Ms. Herr (jherr1@pghboe.net) or Mr. Schmiedlin (rschmiedlin1@pghboe.net) to get more information.

We've held a couple of fundraisers to help students pay for this trip, including the recent Halloween movie night (where concession proceeds benefitted the ML) and the Sarris candy sale. A special thanks to the ML student volunteers who sold the concessions and the raffle tickets. They did a great job!

Last year, students raised almost \$5,000 to help defray their costs. One student was able to earn enough to cover the entire cost of her trip plus expenses! She might have a future in sales!! If you have any ideas or would like to chair a fundraiser, the students could use your help! So please contact Leslie (leslie.grodin@verizon.net) or Sukanya (dr.sukanya@gmail.com).

Here's an easy one: please read the RAND corporation advertisement at the end of this newsletter. For a couple of hours of time, your 11 to 17 year old child can participate in a study to earn a \$50 gift card.

COLFAX SPORTS

BOY'S BASKETBALL

Calling all middle school boy's interested in playing basketball this winter for the Colfax Cobras! Tryouts will be held Monday November 7th (1st cut) and Wednesday November 9th (for those players who made the 1st cut ONLY) immediately after school until 4:30 pm.

Friendly reminder, Coach Boyce is only looking for Student Athletes, with the emphasis being on Student! If you're not working hard in the classroom, you won't get the opportunity to work hard on the court.

For those players fortunate enough to make the 2016-2017 Boys Basketball Team there will also be practice Thursday November 10th after school with a parent meeting scheduled at 4:15 pm to talk about expectations and to answer any questions about the upcoming season.

Coach Boyce

COED FLAG FOOTBALL

Well we are coming to the end of our inaugural season of flag football. We have been very competitive. Currently our record is 3-4 with two games left for the regular season. Playoffs are coming up fast and our involvement is dependent on our success in the last two games. The year has been a great learning experience for all involved. The fever has caught on with other students who would like to try out for the team next season. As usual our student athletes have represented Colfax in a bright light. Regardless of the results in the next few weeks, our team has set the cornerstone for future seasons.

Coach Woods

SWIMMING

Welcome back Team Cobras! We have unfinished business. Although we are very pleased with the boys finishing 1st last year and the girls finishing 2nd, we want to raise the bar both individually and as a team. Our practices will be Monday thru Thursday with an occasional Friday pending days off. Practices will be from 6 am to 7:45 am. I anticipate a great season. One that builds on our team 1st cornerstone we built last season.

Coach Woods

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Eight members of last year's girls basketball team are now in high school, and, though they weren't especially tall, they left enormous shoes to fill. Those girls won back-to-back city championships, and Colfax starts this season on an 18-game winning streak. Only four players return from last year's team, so everything will look new when the season opens November 28 against Mifflin.

Coach Cohen

CROSS COUNTRY

I could not be more proud of this amazing group of kids! Not only did they practice hard and sometimes had to deal with rough conditions but then they continued to push themselves to make themselves better each and every time. They did it all mostly with smiles on their faces and always ready to have a fun time even when the body wasn't really feeling at the time things were fun. This was the largest team we have ever had with almost 50 kids on the team! Proud most that the kids were a part of something special and secondly that they also performed very well too. Both teams for the first time in Colfax history won the championship! The boys won by a razor close margin and the girl's completed a three-peat championship! They handled themselves with grit, hard work, and good sportsmanship. Keep running for your health and for fun and I'm sure I will see many of you back next year to defend the titles!

Love you all and so very proud to be your Coach!

Coach Lydon





BBC NEWS INTERVIEW

(written by Colfax students
Adina Faeder, Michaela Krasik,
TraOnna Malloy, Abigail Segel)

Colfax was approached by the BBC, the British Broadcasting Company, to choose four female students to discuss how they feel as girls in America, especially in relation to the current presidential election. When we were chosen, we didn't really know what to expect. As it turns out, it was a great opportunity to express our feelings on the current situation for females in America. We met three members of the BBC. They were all very friendly, and to our excitement, had great British accents! ("Don't worry. You're not on live telly or anything!") They asked us many questions and filmed us answering them as a group in a discussion environment. We sat in the garden, talking about women's issues, the significance of Hillary Clinton's nomination, and how we feel as females in America. After the interview, they surprised us with Hillary Clinton and her opponent, Donald Trump, as puppets. It was a fitting end to an eye-opening experience. They will show segments of our conversation on Newsround, a show for British kids to learn what is going on around the world. People in America will be able to see it online during the week of the election.



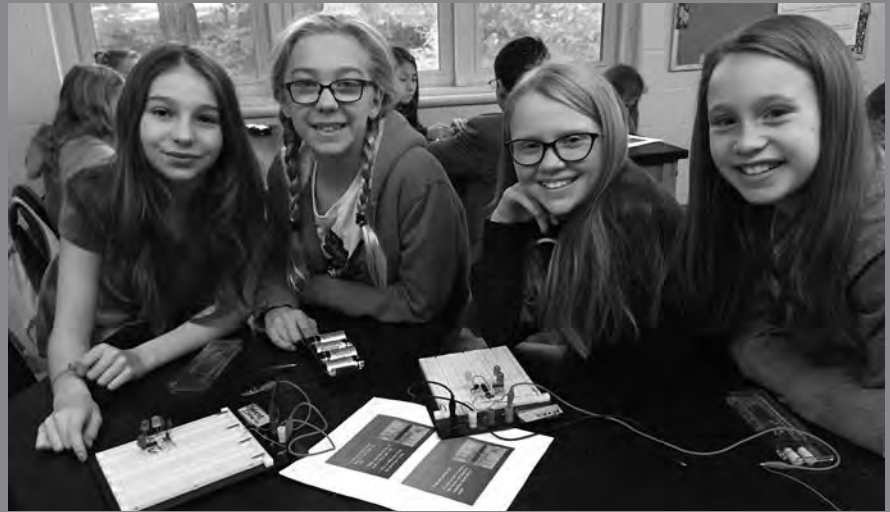
CMU SCIENCE SQUAD

(written by Doug Wolfe, 7th-8th
Grade Science Teacher)

This is a very exciting time for Colfax's CMU Science Squad. We are fielding our largest class of participants, 27 students in 7th and 8th grade. The students are working on projects for the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science Regional competition the first weekend in February. The students are partnered with an undergrad or grad student at CMU to complete a science investigation. This year's investigations involve: Magnetic Pressure in Ferrofluids, Double Slit Interferometer, Faraday's Law and Lenz's Law, Citrus Battery, Archimedes' Principle, Projectile Motion, Loop de Loop, Surfactants, Ice Packs and the Heat Capacity of Water, Angular Momentum, Kepler's Laws of Planetary Motion, Parachutes, changing the area and changing the weight, Magnetic Strength and Temperature, Buckling and Euler Critical Load, Shoot the Monkey (no actual animals are used in this experiment!), Stokes Relation, Viscosity of Sugar Water, Refractive Index of Water, Critical Angle of Refraction for Water, Wavelength/Frequency/Vibrations, Beam vs. Suspension Bridges, Creating Electricity with a Moving Magnet, Effect of Friction on Moving Objects, Soap Spreading on Water (Marangoni Flow), Elastic Collisions, and Inelastic Collisions.

The students attend CMU once a week for 1.5 hours, and have been doing so since early September. At this point, all the data is collected, and the students are working on their power point presentation. For the rest of January, we will begin practicing their presentations. If the student earns a 1st place (the competition is based on accrued points), they will then travel to Penn State for 3 days to partake in the state level competition.

Students are learning a lot of science, and working hard. Their commitment to this process should make us all very proud of them. This is our 11th year offering this program at Colfax, and we have had over 254 students participating over the years. The success of this program is rooted in Dr. Kisslinger's passion for this program, the dedication of our students, the direct support of their parents, and the support of so many at Colfax from teachers, coaches, and the administrators.



Mr. Wolfe's 6th grade science enrichment class is working with Dr. Steve Jacobs and students from the University of Pittsburgh Engineering Department to learn about integrated circuit boards. They are setting the ground work to expand their knowledge into the fields of computer and electrical engineering.

COLFAX COMMUNITY EVENTS

FALL MOVIE NIGHT



(written by Dory Levine, VP Events)

We had a great night for our Fall Movie Night! Even through the technical and food delays, everyone enjoyed our little Gene Wilder tribute.

I want to give a special thank you to the following for making the night a huge success:

- Ms. Herr and her middle level students for all of their hard work!
- Ms Pozza for keeping her cool during our technical difficulties and solving the problem along with our great parents.
- Mr. Jeff for his hard work in getting the “theaters” ready.

And of course thank you to everyone for participating and enjoying the night. We raised a lot of money for the middle level students’ end of the year trip.

I look forward to seeing you at the movies (in the Spring).

RUN SHADYSIDE

It was a beautiful morning for our fifth year of participation in Run Shadyside. Over 200 from the Colfax Community ran, walked and strolled in the footrace through the streets of Shadyside in support of Colfax and the Boys' and Girls' Club of Shadyside. Students and family members from grades K-8 crossed the finish line, many with top finishes, and headed over to the celebratory pancake breakfast. Thank you to everyone who came; together we raised more than \$2000 for the Colfax PTO!





3RD GRADE PUMPKIN PAINTING



5TH GRADE HARVEST FEST

(written by Sara Fernandez, 5th Grade Student)

At this year's harvest festival there was a lot of fun. In the morning we cut and sliced apples. We even got to eat some. We also mix it together to make apple sauce. The next thing we did was to estimate how many lollipops were in a bin and then get to eat them.

In the afternoon, Mrs. Stefanyak brought pumpkins for each table. First we estimated how many seeds were in the pumpkin. Then we estimated the circumference of the pumpkin. After that we actually figured out what they were. We did the circumference by using a measuring tape. We figured out how many seeds there were by taking them out of the pumpkin, and putting them in groups of ten and then counting them. But we had to do this in a group so it was a little harder. When we got done with that we got to watch a movie. After that we decorated our pumpkins and had a contest. We think that table three and four tied. Also Xanath brought cupcakes and candy; Honoka brought goody bags with ring pops stickers and slime; finally Isaiah brought a home baked cake. At the end of the day Ms. McCann brought us little pumpkins for treats. We can't wait to do this again!





(written by Patty Pozza, 3rd Grade ELA and Social Studies Teacher and Colfax FACE Co-Coordinator)

On October 13, Colfax staff and PTO had the opportunity to spend time at the East Hills Community Center. Teachers and administrators were happily greeted by students and were able to connect with parents and other family members, who live in the East Hills.

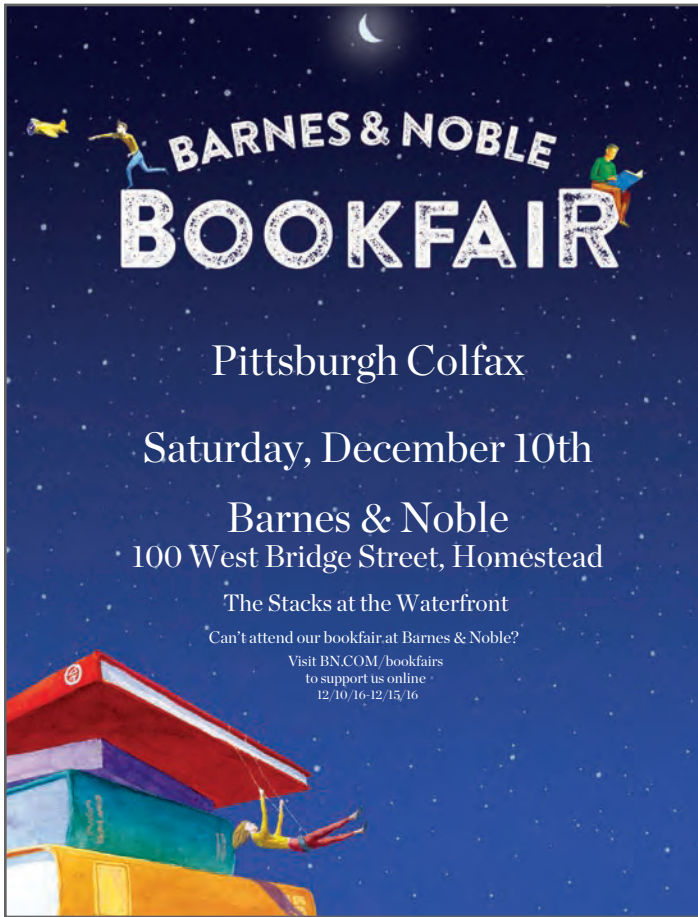
Volunteers from the PTO were on hand to share engagement opportunities at Colfax. They also led a Makers Station STEAM table, where students were able to show off their creativity. Each student who came to the event with a parent, was also able to take home a book.





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Questions? Email : Kathryn klingtonberry@gmail.com
Or Cara cd601@yahoo.com



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Look for the green Box Top inside most numbers of participating products. Each is worth \$1 for your school.

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- 2** Cut out the Box Top from each package.
- 3** Send your Box Tops to school with your child.
- 4** Your school gets cash for every Box Top collected to help buy the things it needs most. All those Box Tops really add up!

Go to www.bte.com/products for a complete list of participating box-top products.

PARTY FOR PLAY

HELP US PLAN PARTY 4 PLAY!

CHELSA WAGNER AND KHARI MOSLEY WILL BE THIS YEAR'S EVENT CHAIRS.

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 if you can share some of your talents and time. We promise the planning will be fun too! Thank you!



**Pittsburgh Colfax Parent
Teacher Organization**
2332 Beechwood Blvd.
Pittsburgh, PA 15217
412-529-3525
www.colfaxpto.org

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November 20, 2016

Dear Pittsburgh Colfax Family and Friends,

Did you know that the Colfax Parent Teacher Organization spends more than \$50,000, every year, to maintain the enrichment activities and field trips that make Colfax such an incredible place for our children to learn?

PTO-funded programs touch every grade level and every student. The PTO provides vital support for the Edible Schoolyard garden, the Frick Environmental Center programs, classroom field trips, the Middle Level theatre program, classroom technology such as computers and tablets, teacher grants for classroom supplies, chess classes, the Cobra Store, and much, much more. The PTO also provides a \$10,000 discretionary fund to our principal and takes responsibility for upkeep of the playground, which was funded entirely by PTO efforts.

Without PTO funding, Colfax would have to give up many beloved programs and activities. Indeed, this year, the Colfax PTO's financial contributions to our school are even more critical. At the beginning of the year, the Colfax administration learned that the school had lost its Title I funding, which amounted to roughly \$71,000 over the last four years. Title I funds helped, in significant part, to support Colfax's after school (academic) program.

Your support of the Colfax PTO is now more important than ever. **Every gift, in any amount, is welcomed and appreciated.** Consider, too, sharing this message with grandparents, aunts/uncles, neighbors and other friends of the Colfax community. All contributions are tax-deductible. Donors will be acknowledged in the Colfax Communicator, our quarterly newsletter.

On behalf of the executive board of the Colfax PTO, we thank you.

Abbie Campsie
Vice-President, Fundraising

Julie Wilson
President

PTO TREASURY UPDATE

Our school year is well under way, and so are field trips and extracurricular activities.

Did you know that our PTO budget for this year is about \$70,000?

That might seem like a lot, but consider all the activities enabled with this money -- activities that otherwise would not be part of our children's education:

1. Educational activities: These take up almost 48% of the PTO expenses (about \$40,000 this year).

These include:

Frick Environmental Center (Habitat Explorers, 1st grade and Park Stewards, 4th grade)

Frick House and Museum (2nd grade)

Grow Pittsburgh (gardening club)

Enrichment (special interest courses, Chess Club, etc.)

Spring Musical

2. Field trips: the PTO gives every child in our school \$10 toward their field trip. With all of our students, this totals \$10,000 (around 14% from our budget).

3. Principal's Discretionary Fund: The principal receives \$10,000 (also 14% of the PTO expense).

4. Teacher Grants: Every teacher in our school receives a \$100 grant at the beginning of a school year to buy necessary supplies for their classrooms.

5. Technology spending: (laptops, computers, and printers) is allocated around \$8,000.

6. School Infrastructure spending: In total, outside recess equipment, school supplies and items for the swimming pool receive \$2,000.

7. Miscellaneous Items: As with any budget, miscellaneous items hit our budget, such as teacher and staff appreciation events, 8th grade promotion, etc.

Thanks to our PTO fundraising, we were able to build our school playground, repair our school swimming pool, and most recently completely renovate the middle level computer lab! The PTO plays a crucial role in keeping our programs going. Especially with the yearly growth of our Colfax student population and the loss of Title 1 funding*, our principals and teachers may need to rely on our PTO budget even more than before!

(*Title 1 funding is federal supplemental funding based on percentage of low-income students. Colfax had received this funding in recent previous years, but this year did not meet the criteria.)

So where does the PTO get all its money? From all of us -- the parents and guardians of the Colfax students, through our fundraisers and your direct donations!

Throughout the year, the PTO organizes various fundraising opportunities in order to raise enough money to provide all our students with a great educational experience. Most of our funding comes in as part of two big fundraising activities: The Annual Party 4 Play (mark your calendar for Saturday 2/25/17!) and our annual Ask Drive (which will be starting in November). In these events, and with the events year-round, every donation counts.

As always, thank you for all you do! If you have any questions regarding the PTO budget, funding or spending priorities please contact us at treasurer@colfaxpto.org.

VOLUNTEER UPDATE

Looking to learn more about Colfax? Want to meet some fun people? Just want to get out of the house? Volunteer!

* Classroom volunteers

* After-school tutors

* Morning bus supervisors

* Breakfast/Recess/Lunch supervisors

* School tours

* Office assistance

* Babysitting cooperative

* Fundraising

* Special Events (Fiesta, Party for Play, etc.)

Contact VP Volunteer Coordinator Tiffany Stuckey at tcstuckey18@me.com for more information. Note that some opportunities require that volunteers have state criminal and child abuse clearances. If your clearance is more than three years old, it must be renewed to be valid. See the PTO website for more information on obtaining a new or renewed clearance.

Please note, clearance are required to be turned in to the front office to volunteer for a holiday party.

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.

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 and click on the big blue "Sign Up" button at the top of screen.

COLFAX PTO BUDGET PROPOSAL 2016-2017

INCOME	\$52,000	UP TO DATE:
General Donations	\$19,000	
Winter Fundraising Event (Party For Play)	\$20,000	
Middle Level *	\$2,500	
Other Fundraisers	\$10,500	
Run Shadyside	\$1,500	\$2,140
Plant and Bulb Sale	\$1,500	
Newsletter Advertisements	\$1,000	
Carnival	\$1,500	
Boxtops	\$500	
Movie Nights	\$500	\$619
Library Fund	\$200	
Cartridge Recycling	\$100	
Miscellaneous (e.g. spiritwear sale, restaurants, artware sale..)	\$4,500	\$1,344
Mad Max dinner		\$2,050
EXPENSES	\$69,350	UP TO DATE:
Educational Activities	\$33,900	
Enrichment Activities (teachers grants, chess club, etc.)	\$9,000	
Frick Enviromenta Center	\$5,400	\$6,575
Frick House (field trip)	\$2,500	
Grow Pittsburgh (gardening club)	\$6,500	
Spring Musical	\$6,000	
STEAM program (one time expense)	\$4,500	
Field Trips	\$10,000	
Principle Discretionary Fund	\$10,000	
Middle Level/Cobra Store	\$3,000	
Technology (e.g., laptops, tablets)	\$8,000	\$3,705
School Infrastuture (e.g., outside equipment, school supplies, pool)	\$2,000	
PTO Business Expenses (e.g., Insurance, Professional & Legal fees)	\$850	
Staff Apretiation	\$600	
Miscelanious (e.g., 8th grade promotion, artware tiles, spirit wear)	\$1,000	

* this money is actually not part of the PTO budget. It is intended for the Middle level trips.

** One time expense only

UP TO DATE: actual amount of money earned/spent as of 11/16/2016

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

A few quick reminders regarding student arrival, early releases, and dismissal procedures

By this time of year, many students have shown independence in walking to class alone. We ask that you say your morning goodbyes at the front door and allow them to walk to class on their own.

We ask that parents refrain from walking students to class after the 8:15 late bell. Enrichment time begins promptly, and many of the programs fidelity is effected when instruction is interrupted.

Due to our large enrollment and dismissal being one of our busiest time of the day, all early dismissal requests and changes in dismissals must be made by noon. Please understand that dismissals after 2 pm interferes with our attention to regular dismissal procedures and safety of our students. Please see the attached Early Dismissal Slip that can be sent in with your child or dropped off at the Main Office.

Thank you in advance for your attention and cooperation,

Colfax K-8

Pittsburgh Colfax Early Dismissal Request

Requests should be submitted to main office by 12:00PM

Date of Dismissal: _____ Time: _____

Student's Name: _____

HR Teacher: _____ Homeroom: _____

Dismissal Room: _____ Walker or Bus Color: _____

Reason: _____

Picked Up By: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____ Phone: _____

Parent/Guardian should sign out student in main office.

Pittsburgh Colfax CHANGE TO DISMISSAL

Requests should be submitted to main office by 12:00PM

Date: _____

Student's Name: _____

HR Teacher: _____ Homeroom: _____

CHANGE: *(Provide the necessary information.)*

_____ **My child will be a walker today.**

Picked Up By: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____ Phone: _____




What does your child buy at convenience stores?


- The RAND Corporation, in Pittsburgh, is conducting a research study to learn about what children, **ages 11–17**, purchase at convenience stores. Participation requires one 20 minute phone/ internet survey and one 90 minute visit to the RAND study center.
- Children who complete the study will be compensated for their time and effort with \$50 in gift certificates. Parking and travel compensation is provided.
- If you are interested and want to learn more about the study, please call 412-545-3005, e-mail c-storestudy@rand.org or visit us at www.rand.org/storestudy.




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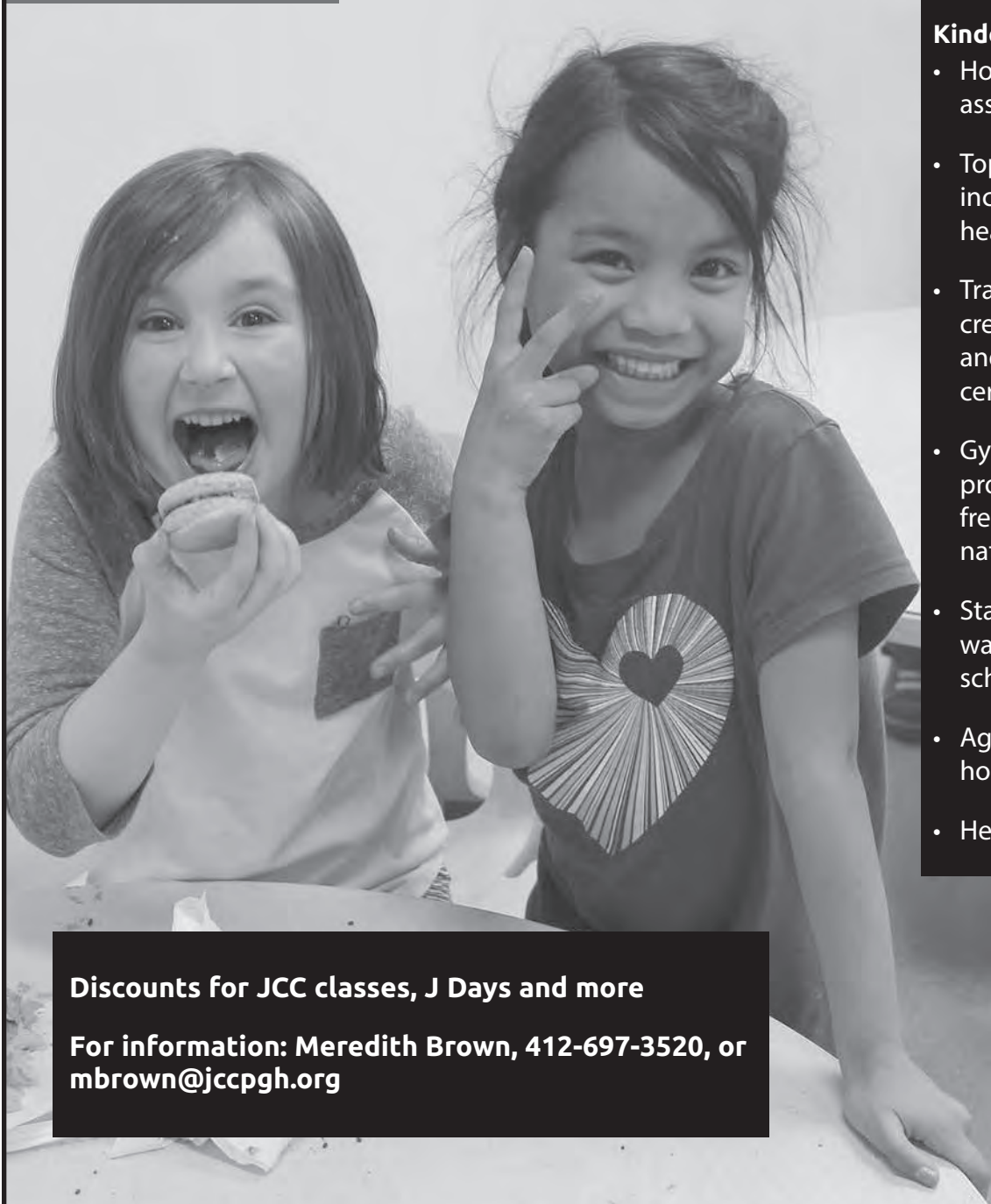


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Colfax Communicator

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