



Pond Hill Focus

Fall 2014 Newsletter



At Pond Hill, we are a community committed to the academic, social and emotional growth of young children, is to develop, capable and confident students, who respect others, value learning, think critically and creatively, in safe, nurturing environment supported by home and community collaboration.

Upcoming Events

11/31: Character Assembly

11/3: No school for students

11/4: Election Day—No School for student

11/5-11/7 School Book Fair

11/6: Family Night Book Fair

11/7: Veteran's Day Assembly @ 9:00am

11/11: Veteran's Day—No School

11/14 Look for Good Assembly 9:00--9:30

11/17-11/21 American Education Week

11/21: Special Person Luncheon

11/26 Early Dismissal @ 1:20

11/27 & 11/28 Thanksgiving Break

Dear Pond Hill Families and Friends,

October is upon us and our students have settled nicely into their daily routines. Pond Hill is bustling with activity and alive with learning. Below students in Grades 3, 4 and 5 who were recognized for showing what it means to be *responsible*. The month of October we are working as a school on what it means to be *respectful*. November and December we will launch a *Be Kind* campaign.

I hope your child has a great month of learning at Pond Hill.

Mrs. Bellizzi



Grade 3 News and Announcements

The third grades are busy as can be! The children are settling into classroom routines and really beginning to be third grade students. In reading, we are working on identifying books that are 'just right' for us. We are also learning how to write summaries of what we've read. In math, we are finishing up a unit on addition and subtraction. In the unit we also learned how to round to the nearest 10 and 100. Problem-solving was also a focus. We are learning how to read a problem and identify important information as well as how to use it to help us solve the problem. In writing, we have been building our stamina for writing. Personal narratives have been the focus for the first few weeks of school. We are learning how to use details to 'stretch' out our writing so it appeals to the audience reading it. In social studies, we are learning about different types of communities. We are also learning about important parts of communities. In science, we are learning how to make observations and write about them. We have planted seeds and are watching what happens each day. As you can see, the third grades are busy, busy, busy!



Pond Hill Elementary School
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Phone: 203-294-6230

ARRIVAL TIME AND PROCEDURES

The school hours for elementary school are 8:55 – 3:20. Students may arrive starting at 8:40 a.m. All car drop-offs are done near the sidewalk in the parking lot. Students are tardy at 8:55 a.m.. Student attendance is critical to school success so please be on time each day.



News from STEP

Greetings from STEP! There is a lot of problem solving going on in the STEP room! The 4th graders are working on a combination Game/math unit this term. They are discovering that there is more to a game than simply “having fun!” Games involve strategy, complex thought and logic. They are trying their hand at a variety of new and unique games to understand how different strategies are employed in gaming and how they can apply these strategies outside the STEP room and into their classrooms.

The 5th grade STEP students are just beginning their Raising Awareness unit. They will be identifying something in society today that “bothers them” and then working to find their voice and do something about it! Their inspiration? Why the Ice bucket challenge of course! If you discover a problem in your life, you can’t just sit back and let it happen, you have to DO something about it, take action and effect change!

Hopefully the 5th graders will find their own personal voices and realize no matter how young you are, you can effect a change in your own school community, town, state and even the world!

Karen Ripa, STEP Teacher

Look For the Good Project

The founder of Look For the Good, Anne Kubitsky will be in to do an assembly at Pond Hill and Parker Farms schools about GRATITUDE (in November – the time of thanksgiving) and her personal story of discovery and how it has grown throughout the world. Following the assemblies the students will be doing their own gratitude messages to be submitted. A few will be chosen from each grade level to be included in an art show at the HUBCAP before being placed in a permanent installation at the school (Gratitude Walls) . Parker Farms will be displayed inside while Pond Hill will be part of an outdoor classroom installation in honor of a former teacher we lost last school year. In addition, we will be doing an art demonstration with artist Diana Lyn Cote on November 18th at the Hub for art teachers and other teachers interested in teaching the paint stick technique she utilizes and used to create her year of gratitude paintings in 2012. As a follow up after the new year, 5th grade students will be taught the technique and be able to take a canvas home with them as a final wrap up to their elementary school years and all that they were grateful for. Why are we looking at gratitude- it changes EVERYTHING! It is what gives us courage to accept ourselves, confront our problems, learn how to be part of the solution. It opens doors to creativity, connection and kindness as well!

-Cindy Sultini, Social Worker

Physical Education Update for Fall Semester:

The fall semester is a very busy time in physical education. During the fall semester, third grade students participate in four square, soccer, fitness training and flag football. A majority of the fourth grade fall semester consists of training and administering the Connecticut Physical Fitness test. The fifth grade students participate in Ultimate Frisbee, soccer and flag football.

Joe Paul, P.E. Teacher

Grade 4 News and Announcements

Our field trip to the Connecticut River Museum was a huge success! We enjoyed the day by the River. The children learned a great deal about keeping the Connecticut River clean and the way in which Connecticut was settled. Everyone had a chance to experience hands-on activities such as planning their settlement on a large map as farmers or fishermen. They also followed the Scientific Method to experiment with materials that could help filter pollutants out of water. In reading, we are focusing on looking at text structures – particularly comparing and contrasting and sequencing. Our Writers' Workshop has provided an opportunity for each child to work on composing a personal narrative. The children have been writing in the first person about a time or experience that was important to them. In math we continue to focus on place value, multiplication and division. Please continue to have your child practice their math facts so they become fluent. Our 4th grade wishes everyone a Happy Halloween!

Grade 5 News and Announcements

The 5th grade students had an amazing time at Nature's Classroom! Nature's Classroom was a unique opportunity that the students will never forget. While there, students took an active role in their education by participating in exciting, hands-on, motivational activities which are both academic and enjoyable. One example of this was a Science Fair Night, where the students participated in fun and exciting science stations. Another example was QUEST; a series of team building activities that fostered cooperation and teamwork. The project oriented classes helped students realize the importance of their classroom subjects. Some examples of classes were Shelter Building, Mentos Explosion, Dissecting, Fungous Among Us, Camouflage, Fire Building, WWF, Search and Destroy, Glow Party, and Get Lost to name a few! After spending a few days at Nature's Classroom, living and learning together, the students developed a sense of community, a confidence in themselves and an appreciation for others that will carry over to the school community. Every year, the students say the most memorable time spent in fifth grade was at Nature's Classroom and there is no doubt, this will be the same this year!



The fifth graders have been working hard in their investigations of the Sun, Moon and Earth, and how they interact with each other in space. Through their studies they are determining how moon phases occur, and how the motions of the earth impact the seasons, and day and night. In math, the students are taking their knowledge of place value and applying it to computation skills with whole numbers and decimals. Finally, in language arts, the students are reading a variety of nonfiction texts and starting to look at forming strong opinions in order to take a stand and write a persuasive piece.

"Treat Our Troops"

It's that time of year again! Help us at Pond Hill treat our troop members. We once again are looking for candy donations to send to the troops. Don't just throw away those great candy or non-candy items just because they are not YOUR favorite. Bring in any of these items to our school from now until Wednesday, November 5th. And let's not forget for all those sweets and treats we are also looking for toothbrush, toothpaste and floss donations. Also, take some time to write a letter or make a card that we can send with our care packages to troop members to let them know how much we appreciate them. Monetary donations are greatly appreciated to assist with postage! Any family or business that is interested in handling postage and bringing packages to be shipped, please contact us at fhart@wallingford.k12.ct.us We are collecting: (unopened) Halloween treats of all types; Toothbrushes; Floss; Toothpaste ; Money for Shipping Costs; Letters/ Cards to thank the troops

Send all items to the boxes outside of room 14. Remember just a little thought to make a big difference! All donations will be sent to OPERATION GRATITUDE. Take a look at Operationgratitude.com for more details.

Thanks so much for all you help!

Instrumental Music Update

Instrumental music lessons have been underway for a few weeks now. Second year students have been reviewing notes, rhythms and techniques they learned last year, and first year students are working hard to learn proper playing technique and how to read the first few notes on their instrument. Many students have demonstrated great progress in only a few lessons! I'd like to ask parents/guardians to please remind students that home practice is required for instrumental music. It is recommended that students practice EVERY DAY. Obviously this is not possible all the time, so please try to have your child practice at least 3 days per week for 10-15 minutes each time. A more detailed letter on home practice will be sent home soon. As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions regarding instrumental music." - Tim Kansler, Instrumental Music Teacher

*Tim Kansler
Instrumental Music
Pond Hill School*

Hola a Familias!

Hope you had an absolutely fabuloso verano! This year in Clase de Español, vamos a tener another fantástico year! This year, we will continue to build our vocabulario and start to speak in sentences in Spanish! Look forward to your child teaching you all about *la familia, los números, los adjetivos*, clothing, seasons, and even sports in Spanish! For vocabulary lists, interactive Spanish games, songs and videos, please visit the Elementary Spanish website at www.wallingfordespanolgrades345.weebly.com.

For families of 3rd grade students, here is some information about the Elementary Spanish program: Students have 45 minutes of Spanish instruction during each 6-day cycle this year. Last year was our first year of Elementary Spanish, and the response on the part of the students was tremendous. Students excitedly learned new words and associating actions with words and phrases to help them remember and understand. Students say, "¡Español! ¡No ingles!" Based on an immersion model that emphasizes communication over grammar, this program has students communicating in Spanish for about 90% of each lesson using gestures, pictures, facial expressions, and games. The goal at the elementary level is to create excitement about the language and help students foster the desire to become lifelong learners of language and other cultures. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to e-mail me at sfallahi@wallingford.k12.ct.us.

Muchas Gracias,

¡Señorita Sara Fallahi

Pond Hill Library

Pond Hill Library invites students to read **all 10** Nutmeg books. After reading each book, come to the library and answer 3 easy questions. All students who read and answer questions on **all 10** books will become a Nutmeg Star Reader with all sorts of prizes and an invitation to a pizza party in June. Come on – join the Nutmeg Pizza Pal

Computer Class Update

In the computer lab, students in grades 3-5 are all learning about digital citizenship. They are learning how to use technology in a positive and responsible manner. They are all completing various activities online so that they can earn their digital passport.