

Dear Center School Parents/Guardians:

Tomorrow, we get a chance to celebrate what I consider to be my favorite holiday of the year, Thanksgiving. The 2020 Edition may not necessarily be observed in a way that we're used to (even the Macy's Parade has gone virtual!), but the sentiment and spirit of this holiday cannot be lost. Now is as good of a time as ever to take stock in our own lives about the people and things that make it all "worth it".



I'd like to take this opportunity to reflect on the unbelievable community of students, families and educators that make up The Center School. Throughout all the challenges that this year has posed, every single person in this community has answered the call. Whether it has been teachers completely redesigning their curriculum to accommodate synchronous distance learning, parents assuming the teacher role at home, a student rolling with sudden scheduling changes on a nearly daily basis, or our custodial staff deep-cleaning and disinfecting every surface of this school building (and doing it all over again), there hasn't been a single thing that *we* have not overcome. The Center School has – through meticulous cooperation from everyone in this community – safely remained open for our learners.

That's something to truly be thankful for.

On behalf of Dr. Rinaldi, Mrs. Grabowski and the entirety of The Center School team, we would like to wish everyone our most heartfelt greetings this Thanksgiving. We hope you can take this time to celebrate as safely as possible with your families, however that may be this year. Enjoy the holiday.

-Mr. Erhardt

[The Mr. E's Minute for November 25th, 2020](#)

IMPORTANT: Travel over the Holidays:

As of 11/17/20 there are 46 states listed as "impacted states" with increased rates of Covid-19. This is the Quarantine recommendation as per the N. J. Dept. of Health: "Testing is available to everyone in New Jersey and is strongly encouraged for those who travelled to areas heavily impacted by COVID-19. To find a testing site near you, visit [covid19.nj.gov/testing](https://www.covid19.nj.gov/testing)."

If you travel from an impacted state and get a diagnostic/virus test, you should still self-quarantine for 14 days. If you test negative, you are still advised to self-quarantine for 14 days because you remain in the incubation period. A diagnostic test is a point-in-time indicator from the date of when you were last exposed - in this case, being in a state with significant community spread of COVID-19."

Please refer to the N. J Dept. of Health webpage for a complete list of "impacted states".

Transportation Reminder:

In the event that your child is absent from school and does not require their morning 'pick up', please remember to contact your driver and the transportation vendor. This also applies to an early pick-up at school for students leaving the building early or just being picked up by a parent/guardian.

Solar:

The Center School is excited to announce that we are "going green" and doing our part to reduce our carbon footprint in NJ. The solar system will be installed on our roof and over areas of the parking lot. Preliminary work has begun and we expect to be operational this spring. We have partnered with Eznergy, a Service Disabled Veteran Owned, Woman Owned, Family Owned solar company. Eznergy will oversee/build the project and their financial partner will finance, own, operate and maintain the solar system. The Center School will financially benefit by purchasing energy at a lower rate. As a part of the project we are having major improvements done to the roof and the parking lot. Keep an eye out for the monitor that will be set up in the lobby so you can see the solar our great school will be generating!

If you would like more information on how you or your company can take advantage of solar energy, please call Betsy Clement of Eznergy at 908-672-7852 or June Curau, our Business Manager, at 908-253-3870 x306. Eznergy will make a donation to the school if you decide to move ahead with a solar project.

FROM THE CLASSROOMS:

Elementary School

The Elementary students travelled back to Plymouth to learn about what life was like for Pilgrim and Wampanoag children! Using their Scholastic News, students compared and contrasted the chores, food and games of each group with themselves. The Pilgrim and Wampanoag children had chores like getting water from the spring, grinding corn and milking the goats. Our students shared that their chores include cleaning their room, feeding their pets and washing the dishes. We did find that pilgrim children played a game called nine pins which is like our game of bowling. They also played a game very similar to our hide and seek called "all hid". We also learned that duck and quail were popular foods for the pilgrims and for our students, pizza and lasagna are favorites. The Wampanoag children ate stew made from quail and ground corn that was cooked over an open fire.

Our students came to the conclusion that it is easier to be a child today than it was for the Pilgrims and Wampanoag. Our students also enjoyed a parade themed picture of the day and morning meeting activities this week. Happy Thanksgiving to our hardworking students and their families!

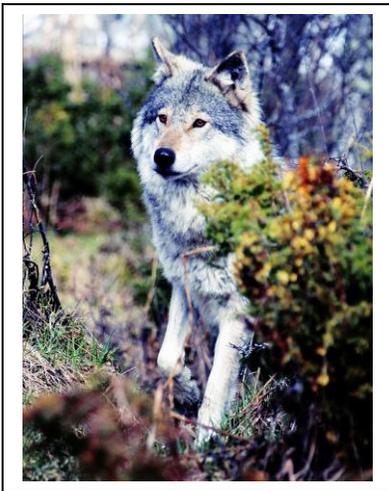


High School

The students in Ms. Harrison's Geometry class have concluded the last part of their projects. Students had to research a building that contains geometric structures and find out the reason, meaning, and symbolism of the shapes included in these often, intricate designs. A few of the chosen structures included a castle, The Great Wall of China and The Twin Towers.



The students discovered that the geometric shapes meant strength, unity, power, defense, protection, devotion, religious acknowledgement, industrial success and also what was necessary to maintain the basic structure of a building to withstand the elements and environment. Now, when students observe architecture, they will have a further understanding of what stands before them.



Ms. Gibson's science classes focused this week on learning about niches. The classes learned that a niche is an organism's specific role in their habitat. The focus was on keystone species and how they bring balance to their ecosystem. To help bring this topic to life, a discussion was had about the wolves' impact in Yellowstone National Park.

In the early 1800's, wolves were hunted to the brink of extinction by early settlers. When this happened, the deer population grew. Without the wolves to keep the deer population in check the deer caused a trophic cascade. In 1995, 14 wolves were reintroduced into the park and they had a dramatic effect, they even changed the course of a river.

Students learned that the wolves, though few in number, started to hunt the deer. The deer started to avoid certain places because it was easier for the wolves to hunt them. With the deer gone, the vegetation grew. This caused other animals to return and even helped prevent soil erosion, which eventually changed the course of the river. This study gave students concrete examples for the concepts of keystone species, ecosystem engineers and trophic cascade.

Mr. L's Language Arts classes rounded out their exploration of literary terms with "folklore". Two varieties were discussed: legends – ancient, typically religious stories that commonly explain parts of the world, and tall tales – myths built up around real or fictional people from the foundation of the United States.



The group harkened back to old stories they had heard before, including Paul Bunyan and Davy Crocket. Both were made larger than life, whether real or fictional. Also, the class is scaffolding legendary stories off students' work with Greek mythology from last year, refreshing ideas around the origins of the seasons, explanations of the afterlife, and other aspects. Students then explored a Seneca legend and applied their learned concepts to "Godasiyo, the Woman Chief," which sought to explain how the Native American peoples came to be so deeply divided by language.

In US History I, Mr. L's students completed the exploration of the Bill of Rights. Students worked to discuss, describe, and summarize the important aspects of these first ten amendments to the US Constitution. Much like Constitutional scholars and court justices, they debated over the specific meaning of different clauses. Students also analyzed the Bill of Rights through an EdPuzzle video, answering questions on its content as they watched and played Kahoot!, a class-wide quiz game that tests their knowledge.

Dr. R's Algebra 2 class continues to go from descriptions of a problem situation to generate systems of equations that describe the problem situation. MathLab alternates between real world problems that can be solved using understanding of the decimal system and card games to help remember number facts. The Algebra 1 class is now applying knowledge of equations to solve percentage problems.



Transition

Transition students continue to develop their resumes with Bridges to Employment. They discussed the purpose of a cover letter and reviewed several samples. They are now in the process of composing a sample cover letter based on a job they found posted on *indeed.com*.

Students in Money Management and Consumer Math continue to work on unit pricing and comparison shopping.

Middle School

The Middle School ended this short week with a reward movie. They enjoyed watching the movie while on the bean bags. It was a nice way to end the week. Classes also discussed what staff and students are thankful for. We all agreed that this year hasn't been "normal", however we still have a lot of things to be thankful for. It led to interesting discussions.



Mrs. Burak's Social Studies class spent the week learning about Ancient Greece. We discussed how Greece's geography impacted the culture. We learned about the various landforms of Greece. Using map skills, we found waterways that enabled them to establish foreign trade. Students also studied the ancient Greek alphabet which is solely symbols not letters. Students were given the assignment to write a sentence using the alphabet. They then created their own alphabet using symbols. Utilizing this alphabet, they wrote a sentence and challenged me to decode it. It was a fun creative activity.

In Mrs. Akushie's Language Arts class students continued their creative writing stories. Each student was given a picture prompt that required them to use their imagination and create a descriptive story. Students enjoyed this assignment because they were able to redesign the picture as an option. The students were also able to share their stories with each other.

In Mr. Duffy's Social Studies class students answered the question: Do other countries celebrate Thanksgiving? Students answered the question using previous knowledge and then as a class we researched the answer. We learned that a bunch of other countries celebrate some type of holiday where the theme is "giving thanks". Last, students did learn that there are a few other places around the world that celebrate Thanksgiving like we do, including Canada, the UK, and Norfolk Island, a small island off the coast of Australia!



Ms. Small's LAL (Literature Language Arts) class reflected on what they are thankful for via writing. Students expressed the people and things they are grateful for and why they are thankful for these particular people and things. Additionally, students participated in a gratitude meditation. During this mindful activity, students thought about the different, wondrous people/things they are grateful to have in their lives, as well as how their lives would be different without these people/things.

Reading/Literacy Support

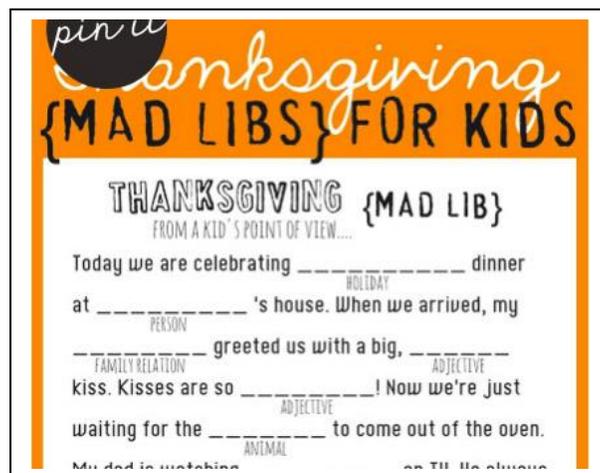
For students in Reading/Literacy Support, Functional Communication, and CPLAL, this shortened week has been 'business as usual'. The diligence and student learning behaviors that all of them demonstrate in class is testimony to their desire for improvement and success.

During this upcoming holiday season, I count among my blessings, the engagement of my students and the support of their families. Wishing you all continued safety, good health and Happy Thanksgiving!

Speech and Language

Center School students in the Speech and Language Program have been busy during this short week. Many of our students have been brushing up on parts of speech while having fun filling out a Thanksgiving Day Mad Libs!

High school and Middle school students have been reading a variety of expository text, such as, "Thanksgiving- Fact or Fiction", "Trapdoor Spiders", an article about the respiratory system, and completing comprehension; vocabulary and written language follow up activities.



One student has been reading a "Minecraft" book while focusing on more accurate articulation skills. Another student researched "Helping Hands", an organization that trains capuchin monkeys to assist disabled individuals. A few Elementary students have been finishing up a unit on "long i" patterns, a few High School students are brushing up on the soft sounds of "c" and "g", while a Middle School student is learning a variety of non-phonetic suffixes that all say /shun/ (-tion, -ssion, -sion, -cian)!

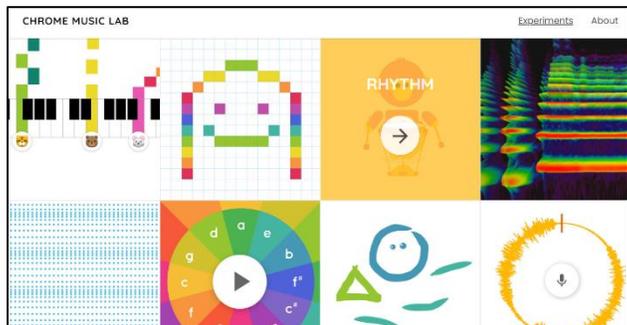
Hopefully, Thanksgiving will be less complicated and more relaxing than spelling. Wishing a Happy and Healthy Thanksgiving for all our families!

OT

This week in OT we wrapped up our Thanksgiving themed Sensory Diet course. Students participated in activities that worked on various fine motor, gross motor, and visual perceptual skills. One activity involved clipping feathers onto turkey cutouts, which worked on fine motor manipulation, hand strength, and bilateral coordination.

We hope everyone has a safe and Happy Thanksgiving!

Music



Middle School students played online music games naming instruments from each of the Four Families of Instruments which include The Woodwind Family, the String Family, the Percussion Family and the Brass Family. Students also played with the glockenspiels. We were also able to try out an online music site called [Chrome Music Lab](#), which has numerous interactive games to experiment with. The Music lab has rhythm games, piano games, voice games, a melody maker and a chord maker to name a few of the activities.

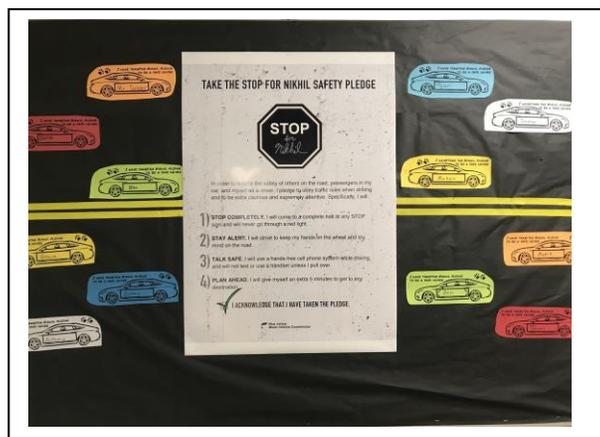
In High School Music Appreciation class, we are reading and listening to songs about Patriotism. These songs include marches, folk songs, and pop and country songs ranging from Pre-Civil War to Modern times.

Elementary students are working on keyboards and we are working on reinforcing our note values which include quarter, half, dotted half and eighth notes and corresponding rest values.

Phys. Ed./Health

Our Health classes are learning about the critical role certain nutrients play in human health. We examined our food groups and learned how to evaluate our own eating patterns to make improvements in our own individual diet.

Driver's Education classes completed Chapter 2 of the manual and took the [Nahkil Safety Pledge](#).



The Middle School Physical Education class started their workout with a ten minute cardio portion which included squats, jumping jacks, sit-ups and burpees. We also worked on developing our eye-hand coordination and social interaction with the game "Four Square".

Elementary Physical Education incorporated mirroring each other's movements while participating in a relay race. They were challenged by using plastic scoops to throw and catch their carry bean bags. We witnessed some very creative dance movements by our students.



Art

Elementary students worked on turkeys in honor of the Thanksgiving holiday.

Middle School began work on various zentangle turkey or lizard assignments, to be completed by Wednesday.

High School students created Pop Art assignments, or constructed 2 by 4 wooden turkeys.

Industrial Arts

First off, Industrial Arts would like to wish everyone a happy and safe Thanksgiving! We hope you have the best of days!



Industrial Arts shop, students made headway on their projects. Currently under construction is a bread rack, coat hanger and mid-sized cabinet! Students also learned how to correctly glue and clamp pieces of wood.



In the Elementary Woodshop class, students practiced hammering nails, using screwdrivers and sawing pieces of wood! They had an amazing time and we are very proud of their accomplishments!

Therapeutic Dept.

A reminder that our next Parent Therapeutic Meeting is scheduled for December 3, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. The topic for this meeting will focus on Oppositional Defiant Disorder, led by Ms. Maresco and Mr. Coronado. If you'd like to attend please RSVP with Dwayne Lumbsden, dlumbsden@center.school or Kristen Cantillon, kcantillon@center.school.

Mr. Coronado's Middle School groups discussed the meaning of gratitude. Each student took time to reflect on their life. Through reflection, students were able to share about some things that they are grateful for. Each student sharing allowed for the group members to learn about the things that are near and dear to them!

High School students discussed how different Thanksgiving felt this year compared to other years. Some students expressed their reluctance to travel because they wanted to stay close to home and did not want to become infected, while other students admitted that the pandemic was getting to them and found it challenging not to dwell on it. The important points stressed were that their feelings were valid, and that they could have discussions with each other about how the pandemic was affecting their Thanksgiving this year. As we got closer to the end of our sessions the students realized that they had to create a "new normal" for themselves and focus on the things that they could look forward to right now.

School News



eSports Team

Congratulations to The Center School Cerberus eSports for making the Rocket League Playoffs on Tuesday, December 1st in their very first appearance in the league play!

They will have to be sharp as they will be playing the number one team --- Carmel High School of Indiana. Please wish our athletes good luck as they prepare for their toughest challenge yet.

Good luck from Coach Cardona and Coach Dobler.

The Center School Foundation

The Center School Foundation is a group of devoted individuals who volunteer their time and talents to raise money for The Center School Community. Our sole purpose is to give back to the school!

We had our first meeting of the year this week and are in the process of planning some very exciting fundraising opportunities. Look for information in the weeks ahead on how you can purchase holiday items for your friends and family and support the Foundation.

If you would like to know more about the Center School Foundation, please contact Kerri Spotts at 908-253-3870 x 303.

Cards for a Cause Fundraiser

Our Cards for a Cause fundraiser is still going on. You get 30 beautiful cards for only \$30. There is also a new Holiday box with 50 cards for the same \$30. All card sets come in a gorgeous reusable box. Flyers were emailed home earlier this week.

Contact Marcia Lees at mlees@center.school if you have any questions or to order. Cash, or checks payable to The Center School PTO will be accepted.



The TCS Foundation Holiday Fundraiser

THANK YOU to ALL who already purchased a Holiday Tray. There is still time to place an order and receive it before the Winter Break.

The TCS Foundation fundraiser is under way. DON'T MISS OUT! This custom-made tray, created by The Center School High School and Transition students as part of their woodworking curriculum, will make a wonderful addition to any holiday table. Use it as a cheese or fruit platter. Fill it with candles and holiday greens for a lovely centerpiece. Can be personalized with your name or favorite saying. Ex. "The Smiths", "Happy Holidays", "Enjoy"



Cost -- \$20 Plain \$25 Personalized

Cash or checks payable to: The Center School Foundation

Please email Kerri Spotts at kspotts@center.school to order.

Krispy Kreme Fundraiser

The famous Krispy Kreme Doughnut fundraiser is back at The Center School! Families will be able to purchase the famous doughnuts for a price of \$12 per dozen. Students will be given order forms where they can log their orders and return them with the payment to their homeroom teachers. The deadline for orders is Friday, December 11th and doughnuts will be distributed to students on Monday, December 21st. This fundraiser will benefit the 2020-21 Senior Class Trip/Activity. Any questions related to the fundraiser can be directed to Mr. Miller at jmiller2@center.school.



Clubs:

Fallout RPG Club

Fallout is almost here! Members should get ready to build your characters on Thursday, December 3 at 4pm on Google Meet! We'll be discussing the world of the role-playing game, details around rules and setting, and how to build the character that you want to play. Remember to come on time, already with your snacks and drinks!



IMPORTANT DATES:

Wed. Nov 25	Early Dismissal
Thu. Nov. 26, Nov. Fri. 27	Closed Thanksgiving Holiday
Thu. Dec. 3	Parent Therapeutic Meeting 7pm
Wed. Dec 9	Early Dismissal
Wed. Dec 23	Early Dismissal
Thu. Dec 24 – Sun. Jan 3	Winter Recess
Mon. Jan 4	Classes Resume

Sincerely,

Daniel Erhardt

Daniel Erhardt
Principal