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Superintendent's Report

Dr. Frank Ranelli

Children's Corner Shares Book Love With Students and Families

Children's Corner Preschool opened a new lending library at both Pond and River locations, with more than 500 new books added to the current collection. Preschool Teacher Mrs. Margaret Marcinko, in collaboration with the Piscataway Township Library, selected books to support monthly learning themes and celebrate our multicultural community. Children can share what makes them special with *Hair Love* by Matthew Cherry, *I Am Perfectly Designed* by Karamo Brown, and *Just Ask!: Be Different, Be Brave, Be You* by Sonia Sotomayor, and many more. Research shows "Multicultural literature serves as a powerful tool in enabling students to gain a better understanding of both their own culture and the cultures of others. Through this deeper knowledge, relationships can be strengthened, bridging the gap between students from diverse cultural backgrounds (Hseu & Hetzel, 2000). Children's Corner Staff is excited to share this resource and a love of learning and literature with its students and families.



Randolphville Families Celebrate Fitness

Randolphville families came together to participate in the Randolphville Virtual Family Fitness Night. This virtual event combined physical fitness with nutrition and lots of fun. Randy the Raccoon made an appearance to start the evening off, leading Randolphville families in a warmup. PE teacher, Mr. Stio guided families through each event, including Zumba, Pilates, and a Dance Off with Mr. Worden. Students and families discovered some Healthy Eating Recipes and took a Food Group Challenge. The evening culminated with a relaxing Yoga session led by Ms. Kamdar. Mr. Stio will be checking in with students, encouraging physical fitness and healthy eating all year long.

Randy's Warmup: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fr7nmPsMwZI&t=2s>

Healthy Recipe: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gedGGPs4RSU>

Piscataway Schools Celebrate Black History Month

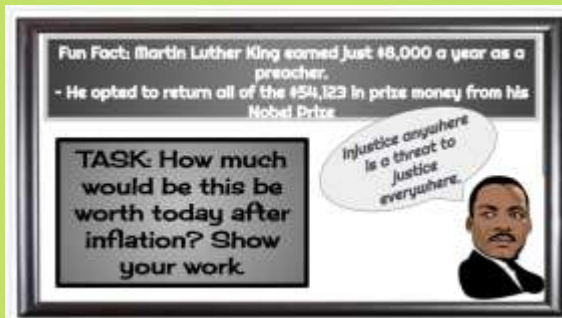
In February, Piscataway Schools celebrates Black History Month, encouraging students to learn more about the contributions of African Americans spanning politics, science, literature, the arts, entertainment, and sports. Learning takes place across all curriculum areas. This year, while engaged in remote learning, our students used technology in varied and interesting ways to share what they discovered about the work of specific individuals and historical figures, as well as issues of race, civil rights, social justice, and more.

At PHS, students take part in videoconferencing programs through [Oiada](#), an International Non-Profit Organization, view segments of [Byron Hurt's](#) documentaries on issues of race, health, and social justice, study the power and impact of African

American organizations, examine the racial wealth gap, slavery, the effects of segregation, Apartheid, and other mini-units of cultural movements. Resources include the Pulitzer Center for *The 1619 Project* and *The Great Migration/Jacob Lawrence Project*, as well as many other primary sources, books, articles, decisions, movies, works of art, and more. Additionally, through the Media Center, students had access to the curated [Collections for Black History Resources and Civil Rights](#).

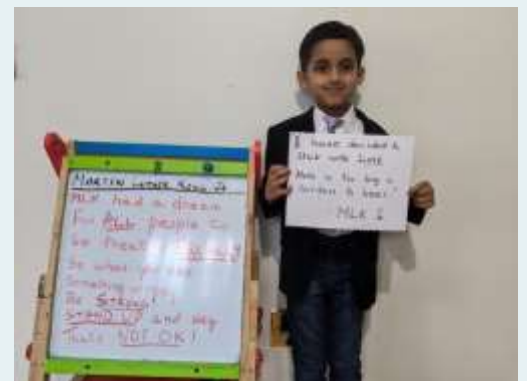
Partnering with The Diversity Organization, students attended assemblies on the Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and on fostering tolerance and unity, embracing diversity and having difficult conversations. Media Tech students film short projects based on history and historical figures, while radio students create one-minute voice-overs remembering/educating listeners about a person, group, or event. In Visual and Performing Arts, students explore the works, history, and techniques of African American artists and performers. Special Education

Individual classes at our middle schools examine a wide range of important topics in Black History, including HBCU history and contributions, the 60th Anniversary of the Freedom Riders, Civil Rights Movement, Harlem Renaissance, Motown, the Tuskegee Airmen, racism, discrimination, stereotypes, and contributions during the Revolutionary War. Students use their knowledge to create Nearpod and Padlet projects, iMovie biographies, news articles, and even digital quilt squares based on Faith Ringgold's *Tar Beach*. Conackamack PE students work out this month with a [Celebrate Black History Month's Sports, Health and Fitness Heroes Trivia Game](#).



Arbor literacy students study the origins of Black History Month and focus on notable people ranging from Ruby Bridges to Amanda Gorman. At the end of the month, students will create a poster or a poem, reflecting on what they learned. King highlights African-Americans who have made a positive impact in the lives of others. Teachers incorporate as many “young” Black figures and other African Americans who are still alive and influential in present-day American society. School-wide activities focus on two young Black women: Amanda Gorman, Youth Poet Laureate who presented at January's Presidential Inauguration, and Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett, a Medical Doctor and lead scientist behind the Moderna coronavirus vaccine.

At our Elementary schools, students study and discuss notable African American figures, including civil rights leaders, artists, educators, and inventors. Students examine the concepts of diversity and inclusion and focus on the impact Black Americans have had on innovation, civil rights, education, and the arts. Students continue their studies across the curriculum, learning about ground-breaking athletes in P.E., and the incredible contributions to music and art by African Americans.



Our youngest students at Children's Corner Preschool will experience a virtual assembly featuring the McDonald's Choir "Faces of Black History," a moving concert that salutes Black History makers, from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to present day heroes of the arts, sports and sciences through, song, dance and poetry. Each preschool class also learns about an influential leader in the Black community and contributes pictures to a virtual Black History Museum.

Quibbletown Student Shares Mental Health Coping Strategies Comic Book Style

Quibbletown students completed a "Genius Hour Project," picking a topic they were passionate about, researching it, creating a "product," and presenting it to the class in a "Shark Tank" style presentation. Eighth Grader Marcus Pinto chose Mental Health as his subject, and created a three-page comic book about mental health coping strategies for the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. He conducted research, and personally wrote, drew, and designed the entire comic book himself. The finished product has been shared with the entire student body, and is accessible to them through Schoology.



Tori Fisher Named PHS Outstanding Female Athlete

PHS Senior Tori Fisher is this year's Piscataway High School's Outstanding Senior Female Athlete. She was recognized on National Girls and Women in Sports Day. This annual day of observance sponsored by the Women's Sports Foundation, acknowledges the accomplishments of female athletes, recognizes the influence of sports participation for women and girls, and honors the progress and continuing struggle for equality for women in sports. Tori is a two-year captain of the Girls' Basketball Team and was a unanimous First Team All Red Division Last Year. She averaged 15 points per game and 5 assists per game. Tori is currently considering many schools to continue her academic and athletic career at the next level. Congratulations, Tori!



PHS Artists Win Recognition

Congratulations to PHS artists Micah Enobio, Cindy Le, and Pauline Luo Ye who had their work published in the Celebrating Art Fall edition. Thanks to Ms. Dorothy Amme for providing this opportunity.



PHS's 2020 Piscatorama Yearbook Awarded Second Place in American Scholastic Press Association's Annual Yearbook Contest

PHS's 2020 Piscatorama Yearbook was awarded second place in the American Scholastic Press Association's Annual Yearbook Contest. The Yearbook was judged against hundreds of other high school yearbooks across the country. Publications are judged on page design, story layout, graphics, headlining, cover design, advertising placement, photography, and more. With yearbooks considered the number one keepsake for graduating classes, the Class of 2020 can look back on their award-winning publication with pride. Congratulations to the 2020 Piscatorama Team, Yearbook Staff: Nida Ashad, Katlyn Gulmantovicz, Amberlynn Hriczko, Jenna Joseph, Kayla Joseph, Maya Page, Jiya Parikh, Steven Rocha, Michael Supe, Demetri Thorpe, Emily Valladares, Kayla Wyatt, and Chelsea White; Editorial Advisers: Sarah Coppola and Matt Viola; and Business Advisers: Mitch Fuhr and Jennifer O'Neill.



Conackamack Holds First Virtual Game Night

Sponsored by the Student Council, Conackamack's First Virtual Game Night was a big hit! Conducted on Zoom, volunteer teachers assisted student council members in managing a variety of games in breakout rooms, including Celebrity



Singer Kahoot, Marvel/Disney Princess Kahoot, Guess Who, Pictionary, and Jeopardy. Students were able to meet and play, enjoying pure social time together. Thanks go to Ms. Bentivenga and all the teachers who helped out that night, and to the Student Council members for creating and managing a wonderful night of fun.

PHS Welcomes New Principal, Mr. Christopher Baldassano

Mr. Christopher Baldassano began serving as PHS High School Principal on February 1, 2021. Mr. Baldassano knows the high school well, having joined Piscataway in 2015 as Supervisor of 9-12 Special Education, and serving in that position for three years before being appointed Principal of Arbor Intermediate School in 2018. Please join the PHS staff in welcoming Mr. Baldassano back and wishing him well in his new role at PHS.

Grandview Reunites

Members of the Grandview family reunited with their classmates and teachers from the 2019-2020 school year during Grandview's Reunion Day. Coordinated by Ms. Ferraz and Ms. Rooney, this reunion allowed children to visit their former teachers' classes during a school-wide virtual reunion. Last year's classes reconnected and enjoyed their walk down Memory Lane. This reunion was also an opportunity for students to share the positive things they have accomplished during virtual learning.



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