



## Special Points of Interest:

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January 2019



## Principal's Corner

*A message from Thomas Einhorn, Principal, Newtown Middle School*

As I write this column, after our winter break, I am reminded of the "gift" our parent community becomes for us each and every week. These are "gifts" not dependent on a season. Whatever would we do without our parent volunteers who "gift" us regularly with their time and talents?

For example, many thanks to parent volunteers **Lee Elkins, Amy Fralley, Viviana Aldana, Lynn Edwards, Lauren Weiss, Melinda Cash, Nora Murphy, Kristen Powers**, who distributed 2399 tubs of cookie dough recently for our 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Our current PTA officers, President- **Melissa Beylouni**, First Vice President **Kristen Bonaccii**, and second Vice President **Beth Hegarty**, Treasurer **Jennifer Chaudhary**, and Secretary **Janet Ziperstein** – devote countless hours to help the middle school be a great place for our students and staff. This board also oversees and distributes invaluable PTA Grants to our Staff.

Our recent successful Book Fair was chaired by **Stephanie Burns**, and made possible by numerous parent volunteers. Our student assemblies, such as Internet Safety speaker Scott Driscoll would not happen if our PTA did not research, screen, and book them. (As you may be aware, the PTAs have arranged to bring in Scott Driscoll on January 17, Newtown High School, at 7:00 p.m. to talk to parents about students' use of social media and Internet safety). **Janet Ziperstein** chaired our PTA membership and our Directory Committee once again this year. Our Welcome Back luncheon was graciously coordinated by **Melissa Beylouni and NMS PTA**, and special to **Melissa Beylouni, Kristen Bonnaci, Jennifer Chaudhary, Janet Ziperstein and Mai Tran** for presenting and preparing a delicious array of desserts and appetizers for a staff holiday treat. Many thanks go to countless parents who shopped and baked for this highly anticipated event!

Big thanks to **Dawn Roaman-Weide** for her work with our Spirit Wear Sale this year, and also to **Jill Baimel**, who facilitated our PTA Reflections Contest. In addition, no matter which cluster requests parents to accompany them on field trips, or for classroom assis-

tance, the volunteer list is long, with many parents even willing to take time off work in order to join their child's class adventure. And the list continues...

Your "gift" of volunteer time is **deeply** appreciated by our entire school community. If you are reading this and have an idea about some way you'd like to help and get involved, please telephone me at 426-7642 and share your idea. What a difference you, our volunteers, make to our school! My warmest thanks on behalf of our students and staff!

As you well know, it seems that technology is playing a larger and larger part in our daily lives. Unfortunately, this can also lead to distractions that can interfere with teaching and learning. To that end, we would like to remind our school community of our expectations when it comes to cell phone and electronic devices brought from home. We ask that students put away these devices and only take them out when a teacher indicates that it is appropriate to do so. Students are not permitted to use their cellphones during the day. In the event of extenuating circumstances where a student does need to contact a parent, we are more than happy to allow the student to use a phone, they need only ask. This also applies to text messaging, we ask that you not text your children during the school day. If you have an urgent message that you need to share with your child, please call the Main Office, and we will get the message to them. All the best!

Tom Einhorn, Principal

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# Assistant Principal's Message

*By James Ross, Assistant Principal*

## Newtown Middle School Homework Guidelines and Tips

Homework allows students the opportunities to practice and apply their learning. On average, students should have ten minutes of homework per night for each grade level that they are in. For example students in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade should expect to have an average of 70 minutes of homework.

### **Homework: A Guide for Parents**

**By Peg Dawson, EdD, NCSP**

**Seacoast Mental Health Center, Portsmouth, NH**

### **Homework Routines**

**Step 1. Find a location in the house where homework will be done.** The right location will depend on your child and the culture of your family. Some children do best at a desk in their bedroom. It is a quiet location, away from the hubbub of family noise. Other children become too distracted by the things they keep in their bedroom and do better at a place removed from those distractions, like the dining room table. Some children need to work by themselves. Others need to have parents nearby to help keep them on task and to answer questions when problems arise. Ask your child where the best place is to work.

**Step 2. Set up a homework center.** Once you and your child have identified a location, fix it up as a home office/homework center. Make sure there is a clear workspace large enough to set out all the materials necessary for completing assignments. If possible, the homework center should include a bulletin board that can hold a monthly calendar on which your child can keep track of long-term assignments.

**Step 3. Establish a homework time.** Your child should get in the habit of doing homework at the same time every day. The time may vary depending on the individual child. Some children need a break right after school to get some exercise and have a snack. Others need to start homework while they are still in a school mode (i.e., right after school when there is still some momentum left from getting through the day). In general, it may be best to get homework done either before dinner or as early in the evening as the child can tolerate. The later it gets, the more tired the child becomes and the more slowly the homework gets done.

**Step 4. Establish a daily homework schedule.** In general, at least into middle school, the homework session should begin with your sitting down with your child and drawing up a homework schedule. You should review all the assignments and make sure your child understands them and has all the necessary materials. Ask your child to estimate how long it will take to complete each assignment. Then ask when each assignment will get started. If your child needs help with any assignment, then this should be determined at the beginning so that the start times can take into account parent availability.

## Counseling Office News

### Career Day

A tremendous thank you to all of the parents and members of our community who helped to make this year's Career Day a success! Each year, our 8th grade students have the opportunity to hear about such wonderful careers with hands-on, engaging presentations, and this year was no exception. The students had 20 different occupations to choose from ranging from the Coast Guard to Global Diversity to Precision Machining. We are grateful to our parents and Abbott Tech for taking the time to share their knowledge and expertise with our students.

The Counseling Office would also like to thank the 7th grade students who assisted our presenters that day. Eamonn Abdulrahman, Howard Schuster, Adelyn Skerik, and Adrian Totir were extremely helpful in greeting, checking-in and setting up our guests in their classrooms that day. Thank you!



## Counseling Office News - Continued

### Transition to High School

With the start of the new year, it's time to begin thinking about the transition to the High School! Starting on February 4th, teacher recommendations will become available on Power School in preparation for the high school open house on February 6th. Please be sure to mark your calendars! The evening begins with tours of the building at 5:30PM and there will be a presentation in the Auditorium beginning at 6:30PM. Following the presentation, elective teachers will be available to showcase some of their elective classrooms.

In March, each 8th grade student will meet with their high school freshman counselor for a 10 minute appointment to begin choosing their 9th grade electives and answering any questions. Please refer to the Middle School Counseling website for a detailed breakdown of dates, the invitation from the high school to their open house, and the course criteria recommendation sheet that 8th grade teachers will use. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact your student's Middle School Counselor.



## Yearbook Club



# YEARBOOKS

On 1/12/19, the cost will go from \$36 to \$38 -  
**ORDER YOURS TODAY!!!**

**Don't miss out on the memories!**

jostens.com

or 877-767-5217 during regular business hours.

Email Miss Lang if you have any questions.

## January Yearbook Club meetings

We will meet on 1/7 and 1/28, a change from the original schedule. Please arrange a ride home.

See Miss Lang if you have any questions.

# Student Council News

**By:** Susan Musco, Shari Oliver, Advisors



Student council members developed a winter theme, as seen on the sign in front of NMS, "Kindness is a gift that everyone can afford to give!".

Student Council members took great pride as they embodied this message by donating money to the NMS Holiday Cheer for Families Fund this holiday season. Additionally, they spread this message to the NMS community by making magnets that were put on every student and teachers locker that shared a variety of positive messages for all to follow.

Student Council members have many ideas planned for 2019. Look for additional information to be shared in future editions of The Lion's Roar.



*Thanks for all of your continued support.  
We wish all families a peaceful and healthy new year; may 2019 be your best year yet!*

**Happy  
New Year!**

## Nurse's Office



### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Field Trip to Washington D.C. Medication Information

If your child is going on the 8<sup>th</sup> grade trip to Washington D.C. in April and will need to take daily medication or need to bring “as needed” over-the-counter medication, it is required that a medication authorization form be completed and signed by the child’s physician and parent. The medication authorization form can be picked up in the health office or downloaded from the school website under “department” then drop down to “health office”. This includes “over the counter” types of medication, such as Claritin, Zyrtec, Benadryl, vitamins, hydrocortisone cream. Controlled medication will need to be kept with the nurse assigned to your child’s cluster and will be administered at the prescribed time. All other daily medication or “as needed” medication will be kept with the nurse as well, unless the physician and parent feel the child can carry their medication and self-medicate, if so, the physician and parent must sign the agreement at the bottom of the medication authorization form.

All medication must be sent in the original container or package and only the amount needed for the duration of the trip should be sent. Parents should administer AM dose on the day of the trip. It is not necessary to send Tylenol, Ibuprofen or Tums if you have already given the health office permission to administer as we will supply those medications. If your child already has medication in the nurse’s office, we will send the medication and the nurse will carry the medication. Remember, medication forms must have both MD and parent signature so it is recommended that enough time is given to complete this process. ***ALL FORMS AND MEDICATION ARE DUE NO LATER THAN APRIL 3, 2019.***

Please call the health office with any questions or concerns so that we can help you and ensure that your child will have a safe and enjoyable trip!

Andrea Trager, RN  
Jocelyne Taweh, RN  
(203)426-7636



## Special Thanks

Happy New Year! I hope you all had a fantastic time with your families over the holiday season. The Newtown Middle School PTA had a great December with one of our favorite events of the year — the NMS Staff Holiday Luncheon! I would like to give a big SHOUT OUT to YOU...our NMS Parents who took the time to cook, bake and WOW the staff with your generosity.

They simply loved the Luncheon and it made them feel very special. I would also like to thank Kristen Bonacci, Jennifer Chaudhary, Janet Ziperstein and Mai Tran for set up and clean up. It takes many hands to make this event successful and it really helped get everyone in the holiday spirit.



Newtown Middle School PTA along with the Newtown PTA/PTSA's are excited to bring Mr. Scott Driscoll of Internet Safety Concepts for a PARENTS ONLY forum this January 17th, 7:00-8:30 at the Newtown High School. Mr. Driscoll will be discussing everything from cyber bullying, sexting, social media, and other internet dangers that our children are exposed to every time they are on the internet. You will not want to miss this very important forum. We hope to see you there! This month we will also be having our 3rd General Meeting of the year on Tuesday

January 22, 2019 from 7:00-8:00 at the Newtown Middle School in our Library Media Center. We love seeing new faces...please join us! Thank you for your support of our PTA!

The NMS PTA will be providing important information about the upcoming BOE Budget and how you can get involved in your children's education in Newtown. You may also attend a BOE Meeting to show your support for our education budget. A list of upcoming dates will be listed below.

BOE Meetings are held in Council Chambers at 7:30pm in the Newtown Municipal Center unless noted next to the date:

January 8th

January 15th (Budget overview)

January 17th (Budget)

January 22nd (Budget — Reed Intermediate School LMC)

January 29th (Public Hearing and discussion)

Thank you all so much for your support!

Best always, Melissa Beylouni - NMS PTA President (proud Mom of David grade 8 and Andrew grade 5!)

Kristen Bonacci — First Vice President

Beth Hegarty — Second Vice President

Jennifer Chaudhary — Treasurer

Janet Ziperstein — Secretary



# School Based Health Center



## School Based Health Center



### Adolescent Depression

Teenage depression is no different medically from adult depression. Symptoms in teens may differ somewhat than in adults due to the different social and developmental challenges facing them due to peer pressure, sports, changing hormone levels and their developing bodies.

Depression is connected with high levels of stress, anxiety, and often affects their personal life, school life, work life, social life and family life.

Many adolescents experience some symptoms of depression.

**Depression in adolescence typically includes some or many of the following symptoms:**

- \*appearing sad, irritable, or tearful
- \*changes in appetite or weight
- \*a decreased interest in activities your child once found pleasurable
- \*a decrease in energy
- \*feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
- \*difficulty concentrating
- \*major changes in sleeping habits
- \*regular complaints of boredom
- \*talk of suicide
- \*withdrawal from friends or after-school activities
- \*worsening school performance

Some of these symptoms may not always be signs of depression. Still, looking out for changing signs and behaviors can help them to successfully cope with this difficult aspect of adolescence that some experience.

For proper assessment of depression, it is helpful for your child to be evaluated by a Clinical Social Worker, Psychologist, or other mental health therapist.

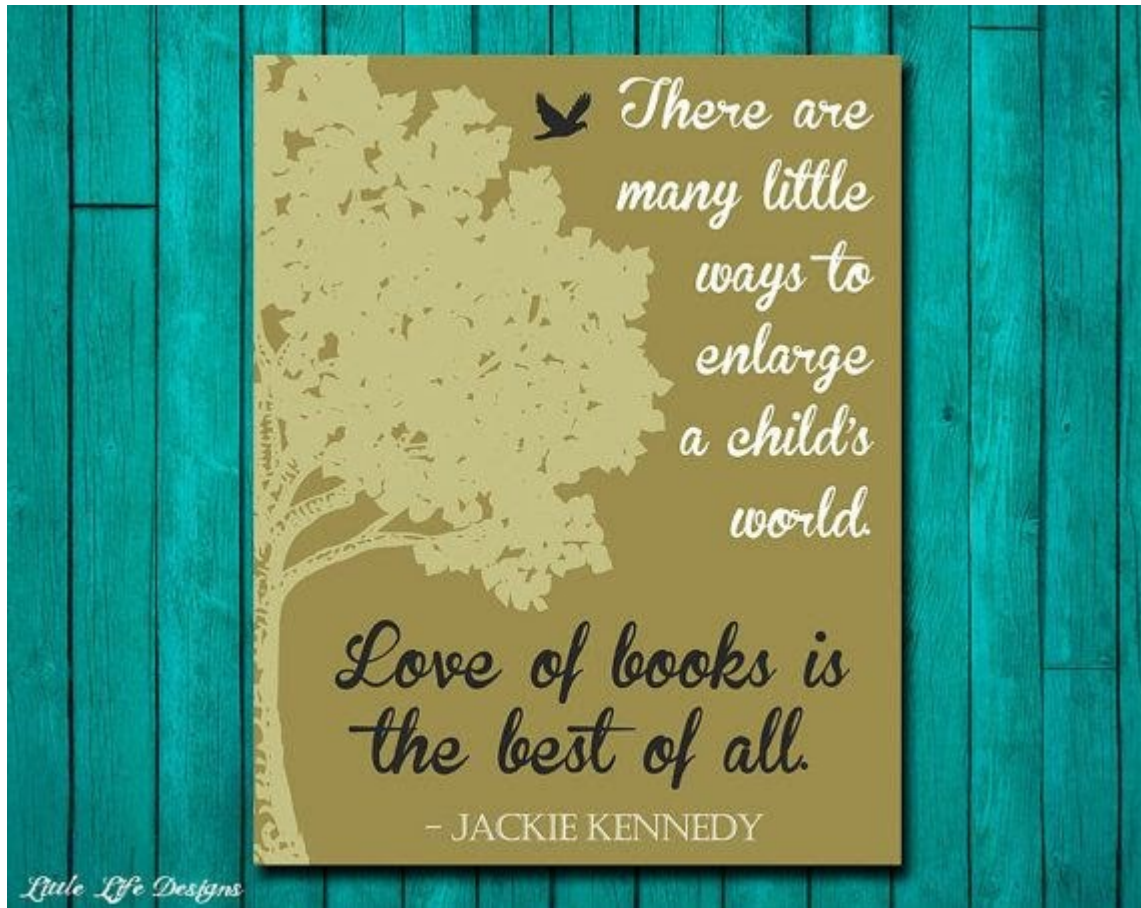
**Teenagers must meet the criteria outlined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual to be diagnosed with major depressive disorder (DSM). Their episode must involve at least five of the following symptoms for at least two weeks:**

- \*agitation or psychomotor retardation noticed by others
- \*a depressed mood most of the day
- \*a diminished ability to think or concentrate
- \*a diminished interest in most or all activities
- \*fatigue
- \*insomnia or excessive sleeping
- \*feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- \*recurring thoughts of death
- \*significant unintentional weight loss or gain

If parents are concerned about the possibility that their child might be experiencing depression, they are encouraged to contact Jennifer J. Sawyer, LCSW in the School Based Health Center. Please feel free to contact Ms. Sawyer in the event of any questions.

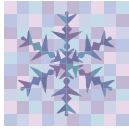
*As a student at Newtown Middle School (NMS), your child has the opportunity to take advantage of medical and mental health services offered during school hours, through the School Based Health Center (SBHC). To take advantage of the SBHC services, please complete, sign and return the 2-page Permission/Medical History Form on the NMS website. Please call us with any questions at (203-270-6114).*

## Library Media Center

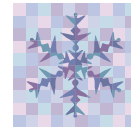


*Friday, February 1, 2019 is designated as World Read Aloud Day. Since 2010, World Read Aloud Day (WRAD) has been celebrated to mark the powerful and transformative qualities of reading aloud. Our school community will be participating in this worldwide event with opportunities to read aloud, and more details will be shared as the date approaches. We invite you to celebrate WRAD during the week of January 25 by finding some time to share the spoken word together with your children.*

*Andrew San Angelo, Library Media Specialist*



## Winterfest Door Decorating Contest Winners



A big shout out to all the participants in our Winterfest Door Decorating Contest! The creativity and talent were highlighted in the 23 entries and the judges had a very difficult time deciding on the winners. Special thanks to the NMS PTA for your support and sponsoring the prizes. Also, thank you to all of our judges.



### Winter Sports

Created by:  
Nick D'Amico  
Connor Sinapi  
Spencer Jorgenson



## Winterfest Door Decorating Contest Winners



Snow Globe

Created by Keeley Green, Rachael Shepard, and Mr. Epply

## Winterfest Door Decorating Contest Winners

**Most Creative Winner**



**Willy Wonka**

**Created by Alyssa Beatrice, Eleanor Cruwys-Hayes, Annika Utsogn  
and Ms. Stevens**

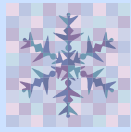
## Winterfest Door Decorating Contest Winners



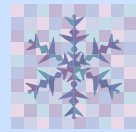
Elf Breakfast

Created by Alison Bottone, Abi DaRocha, and Mrs. Pereira





## Winterfest Door Decorating Contest Winners



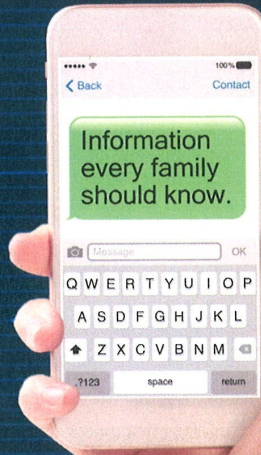
**Staff Decorated Winner**



Created by our Art Department Teachers  
Leigh Anne Coles and Kristen Ladue

# INTERNET SAFETY

- Overview of popular apps, programs and online trends
- Cyberbullying, sexting and other dangers
- Social networking and your digital footprint
- Using technology while keeping your family safe



A workshop hosted by

**Scott Driscoll**  
Internet Safety Concepts

## Newtown High School

12 Berkshire Rd, Sandy Hook CT

**Thursday January 17 7 P.M. - 8:30 P.M.**

**This presentation is for parents only.**

**Sponsored by Newtown PTA/PTSA's**



**INTERNET SAFETY CONCEPTS**  
*Empowering Smart Online Choices*

[www.internetsafetyconcepts.com](http://www.internetsafetyconcepts.com)

## Dates to Remember

Look for details in the Lion's Roar or on the NMS website: <http://nms.newtown.schooldesk.net/>



# January

### January 11

Delayed Opening  
School starts @ 10:00 AM  
Lunch Served

### January 21

Martin Luther King Day  
No School



# February

### February 15

Early Release  
Students Dismissed @ 12:32  
Lunch Served

### February 18-19

Winter Break  
No School



