



# SPOTLIGHT

*on New Milford Schools*

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December 2023 | Volume 14, Issue 4

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## Message from Superintendent Dr. Parlato



schools.

Hello, New Milford Public Schools Faculty, Staff, and Families, We have reached the winter break at last! Our school district was a busy place this fall with many engaging activities and experiences for students taking place. We continue to plan for the ongoing growth of our district, with our ideas of Focus, Heart, Collaboration, and Creativity at the center of our thinking on behalf of students. The end of the calendar year provides us with time to reflect about where we have been and where we would like to be in the future. We wish all of our families and staff members enjoyable days during this season, and we look forward to serving our students and families during a productive and positive year in 2024!

Thank you for your continued support of our students and our

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## Important Dates



- **December 22 - January 1** | Holiday Break
- **January 2nd** - Return to School
- **January 5th** - Townwide PTO Spirit Day | *Dress to Impress*
- **January 15th** - Martin Luther King, Jr Day | Schools Closed
- **June 15th** at 10am - NMHS Graduation

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## New Milford Public Schools



### Mission Statement

The mission of the New Milford Public Schools, a collaborative partnership of students, educators, family and community, is to prepare each and every student to compete and excel in an ever-changing world, embrace challenges with vigor, respect and appreciate the worth of every human being, and contribute to society by providing effective instruction and dynamic curriculum, offering a wide range of valuable experiences, and inspiring students to pursue their dreams and aspirations.

Email: [suptoffice@newmilfordps.org](mailto:suptoffice@newmilfordps.org)

Website: <https://www.newmilfordps.org/>

25 Sunny Valley Road, Suite A

New Milford, CT 06776

Phone: [860-355-8406](tel:860-355-8406)

**Follow our socials! Links can be found at the end of the newsletter** 

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## **New Milford High School**

860-350-6647

Mr. Raymond Manka, Principal

Mr. Kevin Best, Assistant Principal

Dr. Megan Dwyer, Assistant Principal

Mr. Anthony Blake, Assistant Principal



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## **Schaghticoke Middle School**

860-354-2204

Ms. Linda Scoralick, Principal

Mr. Michael Boucher, Assistant Principal

Ms. Shannon Surreira, Assistant Principal SMS/NES

Mr. Nicholas Manciero, Interim Assistant Principal



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## **Sarah Noble Intermediate School**

860-210-4020

Mrs. Anne Bilko, Principal

Mrs. Jennifer Chmielewski, Assistant Principal

Mrs. Jennifer Meyers, Assistant Principal



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## **Hill & Plain Elementary School**

860-354-5430

Mrs. Catherine Calabrese, Principal

Mrs. Kerri Adakonis, Assistant Principal





# Northville Elementary School

860-355-3713

Mrs. Gwen Gallagher, Principal

Ms. Shannon Surreira, Assistant Principal SMS/NES



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## NMHS News



### Happy Holidays!

NMHS Chorus caroling trip to NES, SNIS, and HPS!



### Blood Drive



SADD hosted the first Blood Drive NMHS since before Covid on November 29th with enough donations to save 147 lives!





### **French Honor Society's Star Program**

This year staff and students were able to donate over 60 pairs of winter boots and books to children in need in New Milford. This event has been going on for over 20 years!

### **Law & Order**

Mrs O'Neill's Business and Personal Law classes took a field trip to Litchfield Superior Court in Torrington to speak with lawyers, court personnel and the judge. They also were able to sit in on several cases.



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## Chinese Studies

In November and December, students in Chinese Studies were hard at work creating culture projects which included making terracotta clay soldiers, traditional clothing, models of pagodas, treasure ships, and Beijing opera masks. They also practiced calligraphy, poetry, and landscape painting with Chinese horsehair brushes and ink following in the tradition of a Tang dynasty scholar-official.





## EIC Campus Clean Up

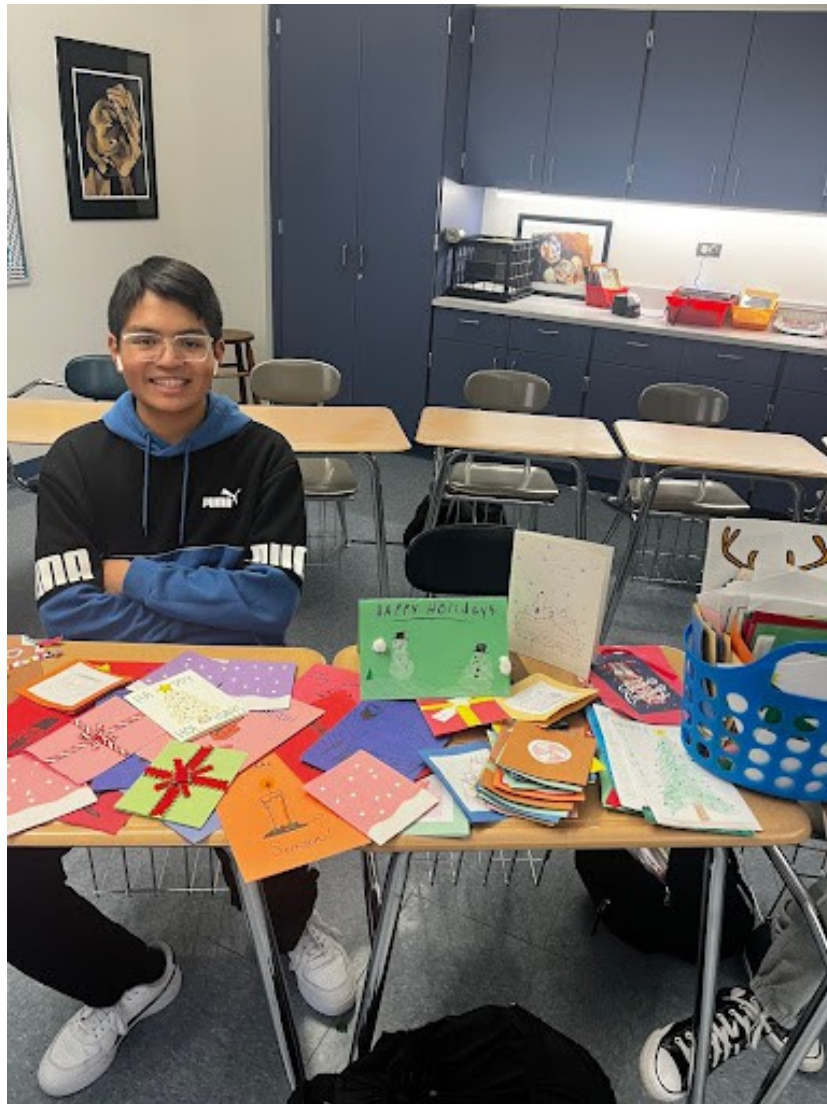
On Saturday, December 16th, members of the Environmental Impact Club were joined by friends, family, and staff members in a campus clean up at NMHS. It was a beautiful 50 degree day, perfect for crisscrossing our school grounds to pick up water bottles, food wrappers, and other trash. The club plans future clean ups in the spring and summer. They are working towards conserving food in the cafeteria and making NMHS a school that composts its food waste.





### **NHS Holiday Cheer**

In December, the National Honor Society wanted to spread some holiday cheer to the youngest and oldest residents of New Milford! Nine teams collected donations of toys, games, and snacks to fill stockings for the Camella's Cupboard Stocking Challenge. They also made over 225 handmade holiday cards for our senior citizens.



Members of the DECA Club hard at work here writing Holiday cards for the nursing home.

## SMS News

### SMS Gives Back!

6th graders in Mrs. Stoughton's Science classes made blankets for the homeless in the week before Winter Break. Students recently studied Thermal Energy in Science class. The thermal



energy blankets required students to apply their knowledge from this unit to ensure the blankets they are making will help people stay warm in winter. Students used fleece, mylar, and yarn to make their blankets. During their discussion, students were able to explain that the mylar layer will reflect energy, and the fleece layers are there to catch the energy that the mylar reflects. Ultimately the design will help reflect body heat back to the individual using the blanket and retain any heat/energy from the outside environment to help keep the person warm. During this project, students also learned important life skills - how to thread and needle and how to sew. Many thanks to Mrs. Stoughton for planning such a rewarding and meaningful way for students to apply concepts from the 6th grade science curriculum to a project designed to serve others.



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## Color Wars

In the week before Winter Break, SMS held Color Wars with each grade. During this time, students and staff were encouraged to represent their teams by wearing red, yellow, and blue. The event was MC'd by students from the grade level and members of the grade level community participated in minute-to-win it games to earn points for their team. Games included "Face the Cookie," "Defying Gravity," "Dizzy Mummy," and "Stack Attack." Students & staff had a wonderful time participating in games, cheering others on, and coming together as teams!





## The Grinch

This Fall & Winter the SMS Drama Club has been working hard on their production of "The Grinch." The entire production, from lighting and sound to set design, was student run! On Friday, December 15th we welcomed 2nd graders from Northville Elementary at SMS for a special performance! Students and teachers walked to SMS to view the play. It was great to see so many smiling faces. Many students even dressed for the theme with special shirts and sweatshirts and themed

hairstyles. Then, on the evening of the 15th, students performed one final time to a sold out crowd in the MPR. We are so very proud of all of our student actors and members of the stage crew. We are also incredibly grateful to Mrs. Beddows and Mrs. Bernard for their guidance and support.



## Concert Season!

It's concert season at SMS! On Wednesday, December 13th the bands at SMS played for a full house. The following week on December 20th was our first chorus concert. As always, our students performed wonderfully with their hard work and dedication to their craft on full display. Congratulations to Mrs. Beddows, Mr. Gregory, Mr. Polhemus, and all of our student musicians who gave wonderful performances! We cannot wait to see you in the spotlight again!



## Door Decorating

During the month of December Mrs. White organized a door decorating contest. Students and staff worked together to create festive/winter themed displays. The doors were then judged for creativity, visual impact, and craftsmanship. There were four categories for prizes: Most Creative, Best School Spirit, Best Winter Theme, and Best Subject/Content Area. In our first year, 34 doors were decorated and over 200 members of the SMS community participated. Thank you to Mrs. White for spearheading this wonderful community building activity and bringing some winter cheer to the hallways at SMS!









## SNIS News



December has been a busy month! On the 18th, we finished the last of our concerts. Students did an amazing job as each performing group performed once during the day for their peers and once at night for families.





This past month our Library Media Specialist hosted a book bazaar. Students were able to come and shop for a book of their very own from donated books. Additionally, our terrific PTO hosted the holiday shop! Students had a terrific time and really enjoyed shopping for family and friends.





Finally this Thursday the 21st, we continue our annual tradition of fundraising for Connecticut Children's' Medical Center (CCMC) with a pajama day. We ask that staff and students donate \$1.00 to wear pajamas that day. We are still counting but far exceeded our \$1000.00 goal!





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## NES News

### Rock, Paper, Scissors for All!

December began with a flourish of activity! We had a fun, school wide staff game of rock, paper, scissors right before the Thanksgiving holiday. Mrs. Olin beat Mrs. Angione in the final round to win!



## Warmth from Head to Toe

In the spirit of giving, Mrs. Tarsa and the Guidance Department collected hats, mittens, gloves and other warm items such as socks and scarves for Social Services on our tree in the main office. This is the "Warmth from Head to Toe" initiative and it's a yearly charitable drive at NES.



## December = J O Y

Our interactive bulletin board for December is a hit with the staff. How do you spread joy and what brings you joy?





Our stellar NES artists have filled the school with winter themed artwork.

On Friday, December 8, staff and students had fun dressing in PJ's on Pajama Day! The optional \$1 donation was collected from participants and given to the Connecticut Children's Medical Center. Through the generosity of our school community we were able to collect over \$700!



**Winter Themed Artwork**



**Pajama Day!**

## **Yogibo for the Win!**

A special thank you to Yogibo for donating 50 laptop "lap trays" to NES for student use in classrooms. Mrs. Gallagher helped unload the truck to distribute to teachers and classrooms.



**Yogibo Lap Trays**



## Grinch for a Day

As the holidays grew closer, students had fun dressing up for "Grinch Day." There were some fun outfits and elaborate hairstyles!

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## Helping, Creating and Singing

Our new School Counselor, Paul Laedke helped gather volunteers at the Danbury Square Mall for gift wrapping to benefit Habitat for Humanity. Several staff members, including Stephanie Heaton, Samantha Christos, and Gwen Gallagher were on hand from NES to help.

Mrs. Breidster's second graders enjoyed a fun building activity in the cafeteria. They used marshmallows and toothpicks to create

structures.

The Kindergartners enjoyed a fun sing-a-long in the school cafeteria just a few days before winter break!

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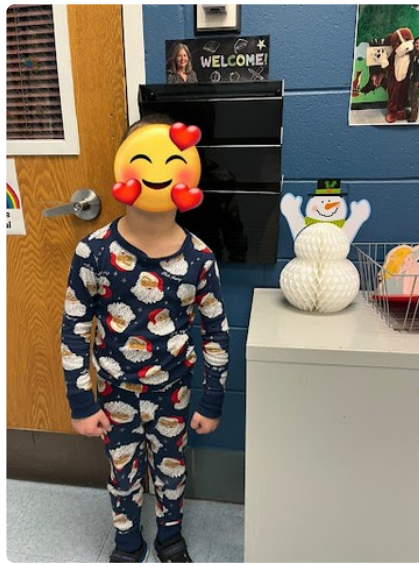
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## HPS News



### PJ Day Fundraiser

HPS's PJ Day Fundraiser brought in \$600 to help the children at the CT Children's Hospital who are battling cancer and support all of the children who are in their pajamas all day and night, while fighting the good fight.

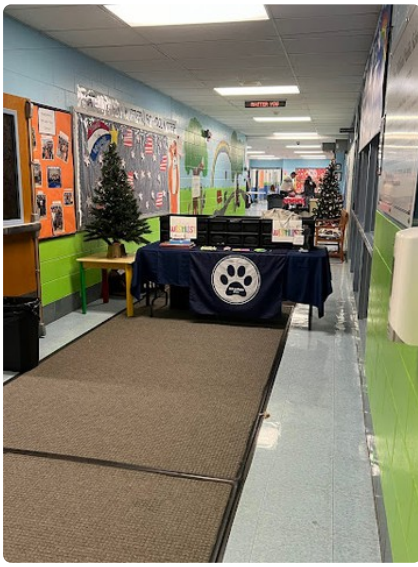


## Polar Express Movie Night

Our PTO hosted a Polar Express Movie Night where families came together to be festive and enjoy a classic. Also, PTO organized a Holiday Shop so students could independently shop for family and friends.







## Panera Fundraiser Night

Tuesday, December 12th, Food Services had someone from the UConn Extension Service come assist Hill and Plain with a local maple syrup tasting during their lunch waves. Kellon Ness, from Sullivan Farm, where the syrup is from, was also in attendance. The tasting was to help get students excited about local products and to get their opinions on the tasty syrup! In the evening there was a Panera Fundraiser Night which many families and staff attended.





## Annual Literacy Day

Wednesday, December 13th, was Annual Literacy Day with NMHS students visiting to read their published children's literature to our classes. We want to thank Mr. Bronn and Mrs. Lionetti as well as Mrs. Banko and Mrs. Sylvester for planning and organizing this lovely tradition.







## Whole School Assembly

We hosted a WHOLE SCHOOL ASSEMBLY about core values and managing feelings. Our Specials teachers teamed up to create a collaborative "Specials-Day" that incorporated music, movement, art, and media! In addition, 2nd graders walked to Kindergarten, 1st grade and EXCEL classes to sing holiday carols. Great singing!!!!



### Coffee/Hot Cocoa Bar & Cookies for Staff!

Lastly, the PTO and Administrators teamed up to treat staff to a coffee/hot cocoa bar and cookies during their professional development on December 14th. Our month ended with a NMHS sing-along for the whole school to enjoy! Thank you NMHS!!!





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# Get in the Game

## NMHS Fall Varsity Sports Awards

The Fall Varsity Sports Awards were held on December 6th where 146 Fall Varsity Athletes were recognized for their Fall Seasons including the SWC Champion Field Hockey Team, the SWC Champion and CIAC Class L Runner Up Boys Cross Country Team, and the SWC Champion and CIAC Class MM State Champion Girls Cross Country Team. Congratulations to all of our outstanding athletes!





**SWC Champions Girls  
Cross Country**



**SWC Champions Boys  
Cross Country**

## New Milford HS 2023-24 Athletic Events Schedule

[Click here](#)

### District Holiday Card

These are the two pieces of art chosen for our district holiday card completed by Kindergarten artists from Northville and Hill & Plain. Great job, friends!







## Stem News

STEM for ALL in grades K-5 enters its second year, focusing on instilling STEM Habits of Mind in students. Aligned with the four C's—Creativity, Collaboration, Communication, and Critical Thinking—these habits contribute to our vision of a successful graduate. This year, collaboration takes center stage, emphasizing

the importance of communication, teamwork, and being open to others' ideas.

In October, first graders explored pill bugs, collaboratively developing prototype pill bots to address real-life problems. Second graders tackled school-wide food waste, leading to exciting initiatives like composting at NES.

During November, Fifth graders delved into local problems using the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, employing biomimicry to engineer prototype designs. The "Shark Tank" competition, with feedback from NMHS's Environmental Impact Club, showcased commendable revisions and presentations.

Students actively practiced STEM Habits of Mind throughout these projects, emphasizing collaboration, attentive listening, and cooperative efforts. Sustainable engineering became a key



component, with recycled materials used to craft models.

In December, kindergarteners embarked on an engaging journey to solve the mystery of the missing gingerbread man, showcasing strong creativity and developing collaboration skills while using the engineering design process.

Looking ahead to 2024, fourth graders will explore sustainable design principles in toy design, while third graders will create a sustainable arcade. These projects mark creative and collaborative journeys for our students. Welcome, toy design teams and innovators!



## Food and Nutrition News



This festive month has been packed full of exciting new menu items, a taste test, and even more local produce! We featured glazed carrots on the menu that were made with carrots from March Farm in Bethlehem, maple syrup from Sullivan Farm in New Milford that was offered with french toast sticks, as well as cortland apples offered repeatedly throughout the month that were also from March Farm! A maple syrup taste test was held at Hill and Plain Elementary where Kellen Ness, the farmer responsible for making the syrup, was able to join us and explain to the



children a brief background of maple syrup production. To no one's surprise, the syrup was a big hit! Moving forward, we plan to hold even more taste tests and continue to offer such experiences to students where they are able to learn more about food and where it's sourced from!

Just a friendly reminder that from now until June 2024, breakfast and lunch will be free to all students at all grade levels!





### Letter Free Lunch Dec 1\_2023.pdf

Free Lunch Letter Effective December 1, 2023

[Download](#)

89.7 KB

## 2023-2024 Calendar



# NEW MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2023-2024 School Calendar



## 2023-2024 NMPS Calendar.pdf

Download

985.3 KB

Looking Ahead...

2024-2025 Calendar

2025-2026 Calendar

Community Corner



## 3-YEAR OLDS NEEDED 😊

**DECEMBER, 2023**  
**Hill and Plain School**

New Milford Public Schools is currently accepting applications for the **EXCEL (Experiential Center for Early Learning) 3-YEAR OLD Preschool Program at Hill and Plain Elementary School**. This program provides services for children with special needs and their typical peers together within one setting. While your child would be receiving the benefit of a high-quality preschool program he/she is also serving as a role model community friend for the special needs children. Therefore, it is important that the children who participate in the program demonstrate age appropriate skills. In particular, your child should possess strong language skills and social skills to encourage interaction among all the children. Applications are available online at [www.newmilfordps.org](http://www.newmilfordps.org) or you can call the Office of Student Affairs at (860) 354-2654. Please send in your applications as soon as possible to get a spot!!

Laura M. Olson  
Director of Special Services





2024

# Countdown Crafts for Neurodiverse Youth and Their Families

Children and teens are welcome to join  
us at the library to make a memory  
book, time capsule, and confetti popper  
to ring in the new year!

December 28  
from 2:00-4:00

NEW MILFORD  YOUTH AGENCY

**NM  
PL** New Milford  
Public Library

**\*FREE\***

Village Center for the Arts  
A Nonprofit Community Fine Art Center



# 3D Printing

**12/29**  
**Toy**  
**Making**



**11:00**  
**-**  
**12:30**  
**pm**

**860-354-4318**

Participants must bring their own devices (PC, Chromebook or MAC)  
Workshop includes instruction only. 3D printing costs \$10/hr (limit 4 hrs)  
3D Prints will be available for pick up a few business days after the workshop.





PLEASE JOIN  
LGBTQIA + AND SAFE PLACE  
AS WE WELCOME IN 2024!

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3RD  
@ THE MAXX  
5:30-7:00PM

RSVP REQUIRED  
MLEO@NEWMILFORD.ORG  
or  
SWENDROW@NEWMILFORD.ORG

PIZZA!

CRAFTS!

MUSIC!

FREE!



Come enjoy dinner with your child(ren) and learn all about the All Pro Dads program.

Participation is **FREE**

All Pro Dad's Day is a monthly gathering of fathers and their kids with the simple purpose of growing closer to each other while enjoying dinner and participating in meaningful activities.

**Monday Jan. 8th 6:00-7:00pm**

**At the Maxx, 94 Railroad Street  
New Milford**

**To register use the QR code**



For more information contact:  
Brian Hembrook @  
bhembrook@newmilford.org  
or (860) 210-2030

This meeting is brought to you by the New Milford Youth Agency and  
Families Network of Western CT, Inc.



**Superintendent's Office**

<https://www.newmilfordps.org/>

