



THE MESSENGER

A Publication of the Madison Central School District

DECEMBER 2021



Celebrating Veterans An Important Part Of MCS Tradition

Thank you. It's a small sentence that can make a big difference in any context of life.

That especially holds true in the Madison Central School District during the second week of November. After operating on a limited scale in 2020 due to pandemic protocols, students and staff have come back in force to say "Thank You" and celebrate veterans as part of the district's Veterans' Day festivities.

The celebration is supported in a variety of ways throughout the district, including one initiative that has taken on tremendous gravity in the community at large.

Since 2008, 7th and 8th grade students in Brian Merkt's history classes have used the Veteran's Day week to learn a firsthand lesson in gratitude, and why it can mean so much to those who have put their lives on the line in defense of the nation. Each year, Mr. Merkt's classes take the time to author "Thank You" cards for military veterans who hold ties to the MCS community.

The project was created in part by former MCS high school principal Lenny Giardino, while retired MCS staff members Mary Hewitt and Maveret Umstead have assisted in maintaining address records to ensure the cards went to the right place.

The magnitude of the project has been immense. At its humble beginnings, the students wrote 65 cards and sent them to a list obtained from the local American Legion. Very little was known about most of the veterans on that first list. Some sent back details about their service, and the following year, the classes made it their mission to learn as much as they could about each one.

As the knowledge base grew, so did the mailing list. The number of cards hit close to 100 by 2012. Each year, some get added, and others unfortunately are subtracted. This year, the students sent 87 of them.

Throughout the life of this initiative, the cards have become more than an opportunity to express gratitude. They have become an incredible living history project for students, and an opportunity to create a treasured community connection with local veterans. **(Continued on Page 2)**

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Celebrating Veterans Important to MCS Tradition *(Continued from Cover)*

Many veterans have written back to express their gratitude. Some of the recipients have asked to meet with our students directly to share their stories and their appreciation. Some others have written back stories of their time in the Armed Forces. Some of the veterans have even included artifacts, such as a flag that was carried on a mission in Afghanistan, or a Safe Conduct Certificate that allowed for peaceful surrender during the Korean War.

Some have said this is the only time they have ever been formally thanked for their service and sacrifice. Their families have written to MCS when their veterans have passed away, and many of those notes included a “thank you” back from the people closest to the veterans, in recognition that their loved one’s service was not forgotten.



The most powerful lesson that this project could ever teach an MCS student is about the power of “Thank You,” Merkt said.

That spirit of gratitude has resonated throughout the building.

In addition to the thank you cards, MCS also began hosting a veterans breakfast in 2008. The current version of that event was the donut drive-thru, held on Wednesday, November 10th.

Largely driven by our elementary staff and students, the donut drive-thru offered an opportunity to thank veterans in person. Local veterans pulled into the MCS parking lot that morning to receive a donut, coffee, and other tokens of appreciation put together by the MCS community. While some students and staff served donuts, others held up signs expressing their gratitude. Our students even made a special home delivery to a nearby veteran!

Elementary and secondary students have traditionally performed a musical program during the breakfast as well. In the current format, students, under the direction of Mrs. Winegard, did a recorded performance which is available online. Our hope is that the performance will return to its traditional format in future years.

Singing Duo Participates In Area All-State Festival

Congratulations are in order for MCS music department students Myah Hauck and Anna McNamara for being accepted to sing in the 2021 Area All-State Chorus.

Both of these seniors have participated in the New York State School Music Association solo competitions for many years, and their hard work has paid off with this remarkable achievement! They performed their Area All-State concert on November 20th at Cooperstown High School. We are very proud of them and their accomplishments!



From The Desk Of Mr. Mitchell

Dear Madison Community,

While it is so difficult to believe that 2022 is just around the corner, I sincerely look forward to a new year with excitement and optimism for MCS.

One cause for my excitement is that during 2022, we will present our community with plans for a building project that will allow us to continue to provide the best possible environment and opportunities for our students. We are in the early stages of planning for the building project with the help of our Community Facilities Committee. In late October, we sent an invitation to our community members to join our committee. If you missed the invitation and/or are interested in helping us plan for the project, it is not too late! Please let us know. We will ask our community to approve the proposed project in May 2022 and plan to begin construction on the project, if approved, in the summer of 2023. The project should be completed by the end of 2024. Our goal is to focus on maintenance of the building infrastructure and updates that will benefit our students with no impact on your school taxes. Our March newsletter will provide much greater detail regarding the project. We will also host presentations throughout the community to share details and answer your questions. We look forward to partnering with you on this exciting and necessary work.

I am optimistic that during 2022, as a community and a nation, we will be able to put the COVID-19 pandemic behind us and allow our students to return to a “normal,” pre-COVID school experience. Though we are still required to follow health and safety guidelines from the NY State Department of Health, I hope you have seen by following us on Facebook, through conversations with our students, faculty and staff and/or through our website, that our faculty and staff have done a wonderful job providing students with experiences and opportunities they were unable to have last year.

Our doors have been open for in-person instruction all year, and in cooperation with the Madison County Department of Health, we were the first district in the region to implement “test-to-stay” to allow our students to remain in school after being in contact with an individual with COVID-19. Students have been able to participate in concerts, sporting events and performances in front of audiences. They’ve been able to attend field trips, participate in Area All-State Chorus and the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana. You will see some of the other great work of students, faculty and staff within the pages of this newsletter.

The past two years have been difficult on our students and we are pleased to see things changing for the better. I cannot reiterate enough how grateful we have been for your patience and understanding as we have navigated these uncommon times together.

Please don’t hesitate to reach out to us if you have any questions about MCS. We remain committed to partnering with you on behalf of our students.

With thanks and pride,



Jason A. Mitchell, Superintendent

Kindness Spotted Everywhere at MCS

The hallways of Madison Central School have recently been brimming with signs of kindness. That has been happening due in large part to the new “Spot of Kindness” initiative by the MCS Elementary Student Council and School Counselor Jennifer Buckley.

Yellow spots documenting acts of kindness by MCS elementary staff and students have been popping up throughout the hallways as part of the initiative, which aims to reward positive behaviors and attitudes throughout the student body. When a student is spotted doing a kind deed, a yellow spot is awarded and decorated with the student’s name and the way in which they were kind.

The initiative was inspired by a 2019 book entitled “A Little Spot of Kindness.” Additionally, November 13th was “World Kindness Day”, which is regularly celebrated by schools throughout the country.

While Buckley didn’t have to look far for inspiration, the plan to put that inspiration into action came from the Student Council.

“I wanted to do the yellow spots, but wasn’t sure exactly how to do it,” Buckley said. “I took the book to student council and they came up with the idea of putting them around the school, so we can spot kindness everywhere and see where it’s happening in the school.”

In addition to the spot portion of the campaign, the Student Council also brought the book into classrooms as a way of getting students and teachers involved.

According to Buckley, the results have been noticeable.

“It’s really exciting,” Buckley said. “I know the kids get really excited when they see a dot in the hallway. When they spot a yellow dot, they’ll stop to read it. Additionally, having the kids take the lead on it is important. It gets them feeling even more excited about it.”

The initiative was scheduled to run for just the month of November, but Buckley and the Student Council have continued through December due to the positive reception.



Made in Madison

From Madison To The Midwest, Lucas Fuess '07 Turns Small Town Upbringing Into Big City Career

What an honor to be chosen as a featured Madison alumnus! It is quite humbling to follow someone as renowned in the Madison community as Mr. Ford, whose wise words were once published in this newsletter.

My name is Lucas Fuess and I had the opportunity to spend the entirety of my elementary and secondary education years at MCS, attending from grades K-12. I grew up on my family's dairy farm, one that my brother and my dad are still operating today. It is unlikely that you are unfamiliar with the Fuess name if you are reading this: Madison has educated so much of my extended family that it is impossible to count! One of my most fond memories of MCS is having some of the same teachers that both of my parents had when they were in school, a testament to the strong community and rewarding teaching atmosphere that Madison embodies.

After high school graduation, I attended Cornell University, graduating with distinction in research in 2011. I majored in Animal Science and Education with a minor in International Agriculture. I was not quite sure what I wanted out of a future career and enjoyed the flexibility in classes and curriculum that Cornell offered.

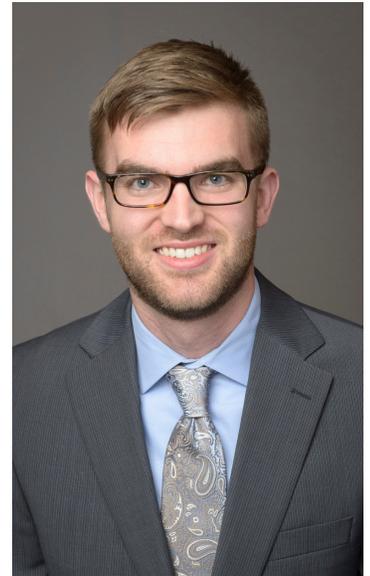
Following college, I moved to Chicago, Illinois and have resided there ever since. In my first job, I worked for Glanbia Nutritionals, one of the largest cheese, whey, and nutrition companies in the world. I worked with dairy pricing, strategy, trade, economic, and sustainability issues with the company. Glanbia has few branded products, but instead their cheese is used in restaurants or is sold under store brand names at grocery stores. I guarantee you have eaten it, but you just might not have known it was from Glanbia!

For the past four years, I have worked for HighGround Dairy, a futures and options brokerage firm trading a variety of agricultural products. I am the director of the market intelligence side of the business and spend my days writing about markets, producing price forecasts, or helping customers with pricing strategy. One of my favorite parts of my job is working with clients across the entirety of the supply chain, from dairy farmers and cooperatives all the way up to large multi-national, name brand companies with significant spending in the dairy sector.

I have fond memories of my time at Madison. The small class sizes allowed for deep connections with teachers who could share their love and knowledge of the subject matter in meaningful ways. Teachers wore many hats as well, demonstrating their commitment to learning, with students able to interact with them as coaches and advisors of a myriad of extracurricular activities as well. A complete education, in my opinion, comes not only from in the classroom, but also on the stage in band, choir, or drama, on the field or court through athletics, or in the spotlight competing in an FFA speaking contest. While small, it was exciting to be able to excel in regional, state, or even national level events through Madison's extracurricular offerings.

I visit Madison often and have been intrigued to hear about new offerings since I graduated 15 years ago. While remote or online instruction can be challenging, student access to college credits is an incredible opportunity that can provide many with a head start after Madison. Additionally, the career and technical opportunities offered both in agriculture classes and through BOCES provide a valuable career foundation as well. I am encouraged to see that, regardless of its size, Madison's top priority remains student success.

Growing up in Madison is a unique part of who I am. People are often astounded to hear of a high school graduating class size of 30-40 students! Looking back, I would not change it for the world. I hope that today's students, parents, and the broader community continue to value and contribute to what makes Madison special, now and well into the future.



Uniquely Madison

Stylin' and Smilin' Program Brings Together Past and Present to Improve Student Confidence



A popular program from the past has returned to make sure that the Madison Central School District's elementary students are entering the classroom looking and feeling their best this year. The Students are able to do so through the MCS "Stylin' and Smilin'" program.

This special program brings together MCS elementary students with their counterparts from the secondary grade levels in the morning. As part of the program, a group of close to 50 participating elementary students are able to choose from a wide range of hair supplies and styles for the school day, while a group of approximately 15 middle and high school students volunteer to serve as "Stylists" for their younger peers. Many of the volunteers come from the eighth grade.

The Stylin' and Smilin' program builds school unity between the upper and lower grade levels, while also helping our younger students realize a positive self-image for themselves.

The program has been around at MCS for quite some time. Former MCS employee Betsy Lopata started the program as a way to help every student feel good about coming to school. It was a lasting hit over the years it ran. However, it had taken a recent hiatus from 2018 onwards. Lopata moved away from the district, and the once-bustling program went silent.

Recently, MCS Reading Specialist Mrs. Jecko saw an opportunity, and took the initiative to restore the program towards its former glory. She organizes donations of supplies from numerous MCS staff members, and provides supervision and assistance to an enthusiastic group of students who enjoy making a difference in the lives of their peers.

"I'm excited to have the opportunity to bring the Stylin' and Smilin' Program to Madison because it gives students something positive to look forward to to start their day.", Jecko said. "Words can't describe how great it is to see the excitement and enthusiasm from both the middle/high school volunteers and the elementary students who participate. The middle/high school students are excited to see the younger students they know and do something to make their days brighter and the elementary students love to have some extra pampering and to get the opportunity to have positive interactions with the older students."

With the extremely strong rate of participation, it is clear that this was a welcome addition to the present Madison Central School experience.



Here's a blast from the past... MCS Student Nevaeh Millington was part of the program in 2017, and rocked this nifty hairdo during spirit week!



MCS Athletic Update

The fall sports season is complete here at Madison Central School, and students are now engaged in participating in their winter sports activities.

Leading the way among Madison athletes was freshman offensive lineman Landyn Smith, who played for the combined eight-man football team at Morrisville-Eaton. Smith and the Warriors played a perfect regular season and were 9-0 heading into the Section III finals against West Canada Valley. The team lost 38-36 in a thrilling championship game at the Carrier Dome.

Madison hosted varsity boys' and girls' soccer programs, along with modified soccer teams. The varsity girls' soccer team, coached by Herb Bingel, finished the year with a 3-1 win over Brookfield. The team was led by seniors Myah Hauck, Maria Peavey, and Stephanie Dodge. Six Blue Devils were named to the Central Counties League All-League teams, led by first team selections for Hauck and junior Hannah Canning. Peavey and junior Mara Warsuck were picked to the second team.

The varsity boys' soccer team was a combined effort with Brookfield. Coached by Michael Strong, the Blue Devils allowed just one goal in the five matches they won. The Blue Devil boys were guided by seniors Kaden Ondrako, Brian Sitts, Aiden Estes, Quinton Moon, and Grayson McBride. Five team members were selected to the Central Counties League All-League teams. Moon, a Brookfield student, was chosen to the first team, while Brookfield's Ondrako and Madison junior Colby Bingel were picked for the second team.

The winter brings basketball season. As of this writing, the varsity boys have won four of their first five games with Strong at the helm, and the varsity girls have started their season under head coach Payge Miller. Additionally, Madison students are competing in wrestling, and for the first time, volleyball, at Morrisville-Eaton.

Holiday Family Math Night a Hit

MCS Students and their families gathered for another exciting night of mathematics activities on Wednesday, December 8th as Mrs. Barton hosted her second Family Math Night! Attendees played holiday-themed math games to reinforce the concepts learned in the classroom. The night also featured math-based reading and an "Estimation Station", where students guessed how much candy was in a container. The student with the closest guess won the container and the candy inside!

Boehlert Brings Her Words To Life For Students

Madison Central School is fortunate enough to have a published children's book author on staff. Teacher Aide Mrs. Boehlert has written and published two books in her "Skyler's Travel's" series. She recently had a chance to take a classroom read-aloud to the next level. Boehlert shared her most recent book, entitled "Skyler's Travel's: Big Top Fun", with some second grade students. Her books are available through numerous online retailers.



***** ECRWSS
Local Box Holder
Rural & Star Routes

In Brief...



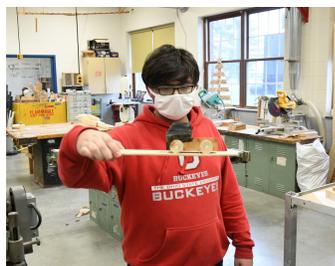
As part of their science unit on The Diversity of Life, Mrs. Bergeron's second grade class completed a science experiment with Crisco and ice to demonstrate how Blubber helps animals adapt to their environment in the Arctic and other cold climates.



In late October, Madison FFA members attended the FFA National Convention in Indianapolis. Among the trip's highlights was a chance to see MCS alumna Taylor Rollins represent New York State in her bid for a national officer post!



5th grade students had the most delicious lesson with Mrs. Nolan and Miss Leone recently! The students used half moon cookies to learn about fractions. The cookies were generously donated by North Star Orchards in Westmoreland!



Independent projects, like this model car, are a huge part of Mr. Bruno's Intro to Woodworking class. Students do their classroom instruction through homework assignments each week so that they can spend more hands-on time in the shop!

Stay Connected!

SCHOOL ADDRESS

7303 US-20, MADISON, NY 13402

SCHOOL WEBSITE

WWW.MADISONCENTRALNY.ORG

ON FACEBOOK

MADISON CENTRAL SCHOOL - MADISON, NY

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TO REACH MADISON CENTRAL SCHOOL BY PHONE, YOU SHOULD FIRST DIAL 315-893-1878, OR 315-893-1879. WHEN PROMPTED, DIAL THE EXTENSION OF THE PARTY YOU ARE TRYING TO REACH.

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PRINCIPALS' OFFICES: EXTENSION 202
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SCHOOL CLOSINGS AND DELAYS, EARLY DISMISSALS

ALL CANCELLATIONS, DELAYS, AND EARLY DISMISSALS ARE ANNOUNCED ON THE FOLLOWING RADIO AND TV STATIONS: WSYR, WSTM, WUTR, WTVH, WKTV, SPECTRUM NEWS

YOU CAN ALSO SEE THEM ON THE WEBSITES OF THESE OUTLETS, OR ON OUR WEBSITE AT MADISONCENTRALNY.ORG.

EXPECT CLOSINGS OR DELAYS TO BEGIN APPEARING ON EITHER THE 5:30 OR 6:00 A.M. NEWS. PLEASE UTILIZE THESE MEANS OF COMMUNICATION FOR GETTING CLOSINGS AND DELAYS TO KEEP THE SCHOOL PHONE LINES OPEN.

WKTV ALSO HAS A TEXT NOTIFICATION SERVICE THAT MAY BE HELPFUL IN TIMES OF POWER OUTAGE. CHECK THEIR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION.

YOU WILL ALSO RECEIVE A CALL WITH THIS INFORMATION FROM THE DISTRICT'S SYSTEM. IF YOU DO NOT ALREADY RECEIVE THIS CALL, AND YOU WOULD LIKE TO, PLEASE CONTACT TRACEY LEWIS AT 315-893-1878, EXTENSION 201.