

# COFFIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER

Issue Two 2012-2013

November 2012

Dear Coffin Families,

I hope that this finds all of you well

The other day a first-grader came up to me on the playground and said, "You know, Mr. C., you're still pretty new as principal here, but I know that you're going to do a great job." Words can't describe how appreciative I felt and still do about this young child's thoughtful assertion.

When one thinks about it, as a K/1 building, there are quite a few in our school community who will always be "pretty new" at Coffin. Knowing the power of formative years to set the tone for a lifetime of learning, we all have multiple opportunities every day to follow the lead of this first-grader. Just think about the positive impact of sending the constant and consistent message to our children at home and at school that we support their hard work and believe in their success.

I've recently been re-reading Carol Dweck's book, *Mindset*, in which she offers some worthy insights on the importance of meaningful praise. She points out that long-term success (and what she calls a 'change mindset' - in short, includes resiliency, flexibility, and 'stick-to-it-iveness') can be developed in part by praising both effort and outcomes. She would recommend a heavy bias to the former, especially in the formative years. As a parent who's often trying to 'encourage' his children in the evenings to practice their violins, finish their homework, clean their rooms, take care of the guinea pigs and chickens and myriad other tasks, I'll admit praising effort isn't always my first inclination. It takes work, but it's moments like the other day on the playground that remind me of the importance.

In this season of thanks, there are many things in my life that I deeply appreciate. Here at school, I am thankful to be working with such a talented and hard-working staff and parent community, all deeply committed to the success of our wonderful students and our school. I am a very fortunate "new" principal.

Most appreciatively,

Mr. C.  
sciembroniewicz@brunswick.k12.me.us

## Coffin School Activities

### November

- November 15-21, Book Fair
- Monday, November 19, Town Council Mtng - Facilities Plan
- Tuesday, November 20, **Early Release**, Conferences
- Wednesday, November 21, No School, Conferences
- Thurs/Fri, November 22 & 23, No School, Thanksgiving
- Tuesday, November 27, Kinderkonzert for Grade 1

### December

- Tuesday, December 4, CFC Meeting
- Wednesday, December 12, **Early Release**, Professional Dev.
- December 24—31, No School, Holiday Break

### January

- Tuesday, January 1, New Year's Day - No School
- Tuesday, January 8, Community for Coffin Meeting
- Monday, January 21, Martin Luther King Day - No School
- Wednesday, January 30, **Early Release**, Prof. Dev.

## Welcome New Staff!!



**Mrs. Peggy Packett** has spent the bulk of her professional career providing physical therapy services for children and their families in the greater Brunswick area. She believes that every child deserves and has the right to move. She comes to our school with enthusiasm and excitement and looks forward to re-establishing old connections and making new ones with the students and families of the Brunswick School District.



October's Walk/Bike was another huge success - thanks Mrs. Peck-Moad and Mr. Hutchins!

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## A Message from Mrs. Bradley

Coffin School Counselor

Although the school year is well under way, I would like to introduce myself to any parents who may not have met me yet. I am Rachael Bradley, the Coffin School Counselor, affectionately named the "Feelings Teacher" by many of the children. My services are available for all children and their families. I came to Coffin School after seven years as counselor at Longfellow School. Before that, I served as elementary counselor for a total of 12 years in Phippsburg and Portland schools.



I am at Coffin five days a week and offer services in many capacities. I teach social/emotional skills in all classrooms K-2 monthly with an emphasis on



prevention. I facilitate small group support as well offering short term individual counseling. I work in collaboration with parents, teachers, specialists, the school nurse, the Sweetser social

worker and our principal Mr. C regarding issues that impact students' learning and emotional well-being here at school.



I have enjoyed meeting our new Kindergarteners and reconnecting with First and Second graders during my classroom visits in September and October. We learned there are many words for our feelings and that these words can help others understand us and solve problems peacefully. We will continue to learn skills that strengthen communication, friendship and cooperation. If you have any questions or concerns about your child please to not hesitate to call me.

I will be available during parent/teacher conferences. I look forward to meeting more families and learning about your child this year.



## Library News

Mrs. Ruth Wilson

### November Newsletter - Library

Parents! Did you know that you are able to check books out of the Coffin library? You need to stop by the library or email us to give us your email address so that we can set up an account for you. Parents are allowed to check out 7 books at a time, for a period of two weeks. Parents must appear in the library in person to check out books. We hope to see you!

Margy Soule and Ruth Wilson would like to thank all of the people who made the library book sale such a success. We could not have put it all together without the help of some of our very valuable volunteers. Thanks also to all of you who attended and purchased books. Our library will be able to purchase over \$300.00 worth of new books with the money that was raised.

Mrs. Croston, our ESL teacher and friend, presented Mrs. Kavanaugh's with a homemade 'Thank You!' card after they surprised her on her birthday. She even incorporated 8 leaves creatively into her card, encouraging the students to figure out why. They realized quite quickly that our 'target number' for the week in math had been 8. Thank you, Mrs. Croston!



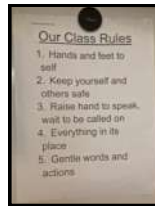
*A community of learners founded on safety, gentleness, kindness and the pursuit of quality work.*

# spaces

## A Quick Visit to Mr. Funderburk's Classroom



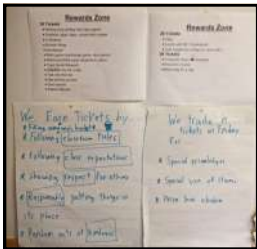
An iconic **positive message!**



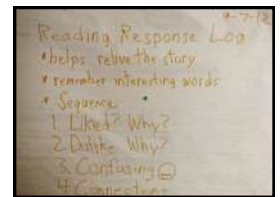
Classroom **expectations** posted throughout the room



A **simple visual** reminding students how to line up (one of many visual 'social stories' throughout the room)



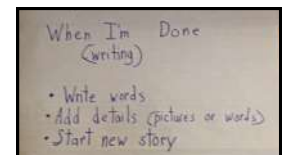
**Positive behavior plan** with lots of student input and motivators



An **anchor chart** prompting children around reading log responses



**CAFÉ Bulletin Board** - Comprehension, Accuracy, Fluency, Expand Vocabulary (more on this in a future newsletter)



Quick **list of reminders** around what to do when finished writing.

As principal, one of my favorite things to do is visit your children's classrooms. As I was walking through the other day, I photographed Mr. Funderburk teaching an engaging mini-lesson on nouns. Looking at the walls in his classroom (and all the others, too), one can easily see why Reggio Emilia calls the classroom environment a "third teacher" (first teacher being the parent and second teacher being the classroom instructor). Above are just a few noteworthy visuals that stand out in this very limited snapshot. During our upcoming parent conferences, I encourage you to notice and celebrate the visually rich environments where your children learn every day.



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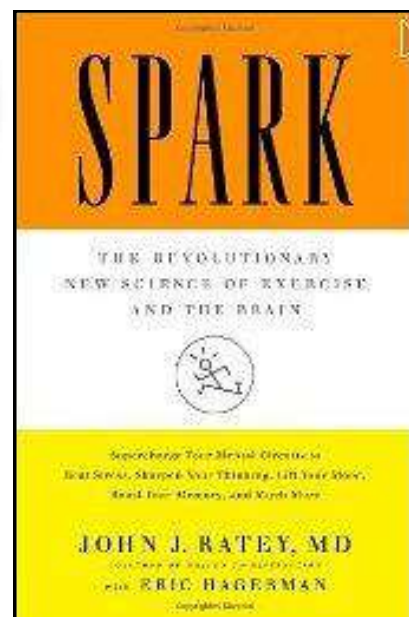
We are fortunate at Coffin School to maintain a robust collaboration with Bowdoin College. Here, Alex, a student from an environmental education class teams up with Mrs. Rickards to teach a lesson on seasonal change.



Sammie and Keegan work together to sort a variety of Halloween erasers using chopsticks during Table Time in Mrs. Kavanaugh's class. Students are working hard to strengthen all of the tiny muscles in their fingers and hands, and thus their overall fine motor skills, as well as thinking about attributes as they decide how to sort materials during fun activities like this one!



Mr. Lion (the Lego Party), Mr. Pig (the Pancake Party) and Mrs. Rabbit (the Recess Party) pitch their prospective platforms to students in Mrs. Lucas', Mrs. Stinson's and Mrs. Gallagher's classrooms. While the Kindergarten electorate was amicably divided, I'm pleased to report that Mrs. Rabbit, a strong proponent of multiple recesses (in the spirit of 'Spark') prevailed. What a fun way to engage young students in the voting process!



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HEALTHY HABITS FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

## Healthy Celebrations Letter to Parents

Date:

Program:

Dear Parents and Families,

Our program is participating in an exciting initiative called 5-2-1-0 Goes to Child Care, a program that is part of a larger project called Let's Go! which is a nationally recognized childhood obesity prevention program. Let's Go! is a program of The Kids CO-OP at The Barbara Bush Children's Hospital at Maine Medical Center, and is implemented in partnership with MaineHealth. To learn more about Let's Go! visit [www.letsgo.org](http://www.letsgo.org). The program emphasizes the importance of:

- 5** or more fruits & vegetables
- 2** hours or less recreational screen time\*
- 1** hour or more of physical activity
- 0** sugary drinks, more water & low fat milk

\*May TV (computer use) of the bathroom. Be your own onto the top of it.

As a part of our efforts towards health and wellness, our program is addressing the kinds of celebrations we have. Celebrations and events are exciting and important for children and staff. Birthday parties and holiday celebrations provide a unique opportunity to help make healthy eating fun and for children to practice wise food choices.

As a program, we are encouraging **healthy celebration treats**, like:

- **Fruit and Cheese Kabobs** – Put grapes, melons, cheese cubes, and berries onto a wooden kabob stick.
- **Make Your Own Trail Mix** – Provide bags of granola or whole grain dry cereal, dried fruit, and nuts for students to make their own trail mix.
- **Fruit Smoothies** – Show up at snack time with a blender, frozen fruit, and yogurt! (Be sure to make arrangements with the program first!)
- **Yogurt Parfaits** – Layer granola, fruit, and yogurt in plastic cups. Send in on a tray covered with plastic wrap
- **Vegetable or Fruit Platters with Low Fat Dip**

As a program, we are also focusing on nonfood ways to celebrate our children. On your child's birthday, we will celebrate them in nonfood ways, like having them wear a special hat, sash, or letting them lead age appropriate activities. Please help us promote a healthy environment and healthy kids!

Sincerely,

Please Note: A modifiable version of this letter can be found in the online toolkit on our website.



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## Halloween Candy Buy Back!



Coffin parent Mike Scholl from Coastal Maine Pediatric Dentistry weighs Halloween candy as part of this year's 'buy back'. Over 50 pounds of candy and some very nice letters were collected and will be sent over to our troops in Afghanistan.



October's Math in Focus staff development included morning in-class 'lab site' lessons taught by a MIF trainer. In the afternoon Coffin teachers met with the trainer for additional sessions.

# Arts are Elementary



spindleworks



Artists from Spindleworks are working with first graders to construct banners that will be on display at next spring's All Species Parade.



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## 2012 WINTER HOLIDAY RESOURCES



### **Sagadahoc County, Brunswick, Harpswell, and Freeport**

#### **American Legion Post #21 Thanksgiving Dinner**

*Thanksgiving meal served Thursday, November 22, 2012 at noon. Call 443-9804.*

#### **Bath/Brunswick Santa Claus Fund**

*Holiday toys, mittens, hats, and bicycles for children birth to 13 years available by written request through December 17, 2012. Letter of request, written by parent or guardian, should be mailed to the Santa Claus Fund, Inc., PO Box 278, Brunswick ME 04011. Include child's name, sex, date of birth, residential address, and phone number. Call 389-4553.*

#### **Bath Elks: Christmas Baskets**

*Christmas food baskets available by application starting Monday, November 5, 2012. Call 443-9852 to provide name, address, and number of family members and for delivery schedule.*

#### **Bruce Roberts Toy Fund (Cumberland, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, and York)**

*Public donations are used to purchase new safe toys. Visit website [www.BruceRobertsToyFund.com](http://www.BruceRobertsToyFund.com) or call 791-6672 for application or donation information. Social Security Numbers required. Deadline December 5, 2012.*

#### **Freeport Community Services: Holiday Helpline, Thanksgiving Baskets and Meals**

*Community meal served Thursday, November 22, 2012. Thanksgiving food baskets available. Call 869-1005 to register for Thanksgiving meal or food basket. Food and gifts available for pickup December 13, 2012, with complete application and proof of residency. Call 865-3985.*

#### **Mid Coast Hunger Prevention Food Pantry: Thanksgiving Boxes**

*Thanksgiving boxes available by application through November 21, 2012. Call 725-1151.*

#### **Salvation Army of Bath/Brunswick: Holiday Food Baskets and Toys**

*Thanksgiving & Christmas food baskets & Christmas toys by application from November 5 to December 6, 2012. Call 443-3611.*

#### **The Neighborhood Café in Bath: Thanksgiving and Christmas Dinners**

*Thanksgiving meal served Tuesday, November 20, 2012. Call 443-2187. Christmas meal served Tuesday, December 18 and December 25, 2012.*

#### **Toys for Tots (Cumberland and Sagadahoc)**

*New toys, collected in the community, are distributed as Christmas gifts to children in need. For information on requesting a toy for your children, or children in another family, call the Salvation Army 443-3611.*



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# Community for Coffin

<http://www.brunswick.k12.me.us/cof/community-for-coffin/>



CFC volunteers have been BUSY this fall! We can't THANK YOU enough for the hundreds of hours you've dedicated to Coffin School to make it all possible!

## September and October initiatives included:

~ Kindergarten screening ~ Greeting students on the first days of school ~ Afternoon dismissal and bus duty on the first days of school ~ Teacher & Staff Welcome Back Breakfast ~ Cafeteria duty ~ Helping Hands (teacher prep) ~ Classroom helpers ~ Coffin Student Directory ~ Open House welcome table ~ Indoor and outdoor garden tending ~ Snack Shack ~ Library helpers ~ Read-A-Thon with Celebrity Readers ~ School Portrait Day helpers ~ Box Tops for Education ~ October Walk/Bike To School Day ~ Hannaford Helps Schools ~ Bus Driver Appreciation Day ~ Harvest Festival ~ Winter Gear Give & Take ~

## Upcoming CFC Events:

All Elementary School Craft Fair at HBS: Saturday, November 10, 9AM-2PM

Scholastic Book Fair in the Coffin gymnasium: November 14-20

November Walk/Bike To School Day: Friday, November 16

December Walk/Bike To School Day: Friday, December 21

January Movie Night: date TBD



A few snapshots of Celebrity Readers from this fall's Read-A-Thon. This event was a HUGE SUCCESS thanks to everyone's active participation. Thank you!!!



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