

# PARENT NEWSLETTER

5808 Oregon Ave. ~ Portage, MI 49024 ~ (269) 323-5700

HOME OF THE JR. HUSKIES

## PORTAGE NORTH MIDDLE SCHOOL

*where... "Failure is NOT an Option!"*

November 2011

Later this month, we will be celebrating *American Education Week*, as well as conducting our fall Parent Teacher Conferences. At North Middle School, our goal is to create a school culture of reading that promises to bring a lifetime of returns to students.

It is our desire to encourage every student to enjoy reading for the sake of reading and to help each student reach his/her highest level of reading...for proficiency and enjoyment.

At NMS, we have multiple ways to create a valuable school culture of reading. Our special thanks to our community members who made donations through the 'Bouquet of Books' 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. As the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Barnes & Nobel Book Fair approaches, kudos also are extended to our PTO members who consistently support our literacy and reading initiatives/efforts. As a result of these partnerships and financial contributions, we are able to increase our media center inventory; as well as our Literacy Focus Center. Without your support, our reading initiatives would not be possible.

*To our Jr. Huskies Families, you are the best!*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

PTO News	2
P-T Conference Info	3
Grab-N-Go Breakfast	4
In the Classroom	5
Athletics/Club Info	6
Events Calendar	7

### PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

#### Conferences will be held:

- November 16, 5:00-8:45 p.m.
- November 17, "Early Release"  
Release @ 1:20pm  
Parent Teacher Conf. 2pm – 4pm  
Break 4pm - 5pm  
Parent Teacher Conf. 5pm – 8:15pm

For more information and tips for preparing for parent-teacher conferences see page 3.

### PHOTOS FROM RED RIBBON WEEK



Top Left:  
Red Day

Bottom  
Left: Tie-  
up Drugs



Right:  
Being  
Drug  
Free is No  
Sweat



DAY 3

Top Right:  
Put a Cap  
on Drugs

Bottom  
Right:  
Lions,  
Tigers,  
Bears, oh  
my; Alco-  
hol, Drugs,  
Tobacco  
Goodbye



DAY 4



DAY 5

# NOVEMBER 2011

## November Celebrations



Veteran's Day - November 11

International Day of Kindness - November 12

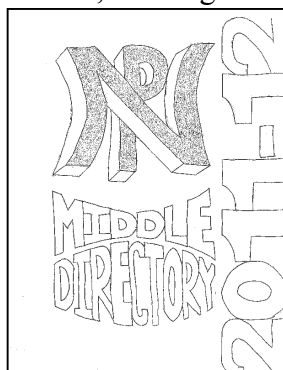
American Education Week - November 13-19

America Recycles Day - November 14

### STUDENT DIRECTORY

Thanks to all of the students who participated in the Student Directory "Front Cover" Design Contest. After a lot of deliberation, our PTO group has selected this year's winner. The winning student received a \$25 gift card to Target and will receive a free student directory. The winner for the 2011-2012 school year is... Codey Clemens, an 8th grader in Miss Rath's homeroom. Congratulations Codey!

Anyone still interested in purchasing a student directory can either print an order form off the NMS website or pick one up at NMS and submit the order along with \$5.00 to the Front Office.



### MIX-IT-UP AT LUNCH DAY

October 18th was another exciting day at North Middle School. NMS, along with thousands of other schools in the United States, participated in Mix-It-Up at Lunch. Mix-It-Up Day is a national campaign to improve peer relations in schools and is designed to reduce prejudices amongst students. Students identify the cafeteria as a place where divisions are most clearly drawn. The day was a simple call-to-action, asking student to move out of their comfort zones and connect with someone new over lunch.

For more information visit:

<http://www.tolerance.org/mix-it-up/lunch-day>

## DID YOU KNOW THAT THE PTO SUPPORTS....

### **Academic Achievement**

Each marking period, students who earn a 3.0 GPA or higher will receive a special treat during their lunch hour and a special edition wristband.

### **Books for the Media Center**

Mark your calendars for the Barnes & Noble Book Fair, Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup> in the evening, to shop for Christmas while B&N donates a percentage back to the school in cash. We'll use that money for \$1,000 in new library supplies, in conjunction with the Portage Education Foundation.

### **Drug Awareness and Safety**

Red Ribbon Week bracelets and the drug-detection canine unit that inspects our school once a year to ensure there are no drugs or other unsafe items in our school.

### **Science Experimentation**

The popular 6<sup>th</sup> grade salmon egg project, where students study the life cycle in 'real time,' from egg to adult.

### **Needy Families**

We're hosting a penny war between the grades from Nov. 1-Dec. 16 to raise money for needy families in our community this holiday. Drop in your pennies to score points...

or silver or bills in your opponent's bucket to LOWER their score.

### **Teacher Appreciation**

Parents provide snacks and meals for teacher meetings and conferences to let our staff know we support them and care about them.

**WILL YOU HELP US?** We need your contribution and your time to make these and the other events happen. We're short on our parent-contribution funding so far this year. If you have not contributed yet, would you please consider making a donation? Our donations have ranged from \$10 to \$100... make checks payable to PTO, 5808 Oregon, Portage, 49024. Thanks to all those parents who have donated and/or volunteered...we couldn't do it without you.

Julie Brown, President

Contact: [julie@easyonhold.com](mailto:julie@easyonhold.com) or 269-217-1988

# NOVEMBER 2011

## PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Conferences will be held:

November 16, 5:00-8:45 p.m.

November 17, "Early Release" (students & staff)

Release @ 1:20pm

Parent Teacher Conf. 2pm – 4pm

Break 4pm - 5pm

Parent Teacher Conf. 5pm – 8:15pm

The following traveling teachers will be available for conferences on Wednesday, November 16:

~Mrs. Goddeyne, Mr. Hazen, Mrs. Grand

The following traveling teachers will be available for conferences on Thursday, November 17:

~Mrs. DeGroot, Mr. Dee, Mrs. Sims, Mr. Bartz

## **PARENT TIPS FOR CONFERENCES:**

As the Fall Parent Teacher Conferences approach, here are a few tips to help make your conference time more efficient :

*Before the conference...*

- Talk to your child so that he/she understands that you and the teacher are working together.
- Find out your child's favorite classes and why.
- Make a list of the questions you want to ask the teacher and any information you want to share.

*During the conference...*

- Ask question - questions that you ask during the conference can help you express how you are feeling regarding a particular project, class, teacher, etc.
- Ask the most important question first.
- Expect to spend about ten minutes with each teacher. Make an appointment if more time is needed.

*After the conference...*

- Stress the positive things first with your middle school student that were covered during the conference
- Be direct about the problems and/or areas of improvement that were discussed.
- If an action plan is needed, develop it with your child.
- Stay in touch with the teacher by email and/or classroom phone.

## ADVICE FOR PARENTS

Developing good organizational skills is a key ingredient for success and life. Although some people by nature are more organized than others, anyone can put routines and systems in place to help your middle school student(s) "get it together." Here is a list of strategies that you can use to help your pre-adolescent learner(s) become more successful:

- Use checklists
- Set up a homework schedule
- Designate a study space
- Set a designated homework time
- Use and check the student planner daily
- Access the Parent Internet Viewer (PIV)
- Keep a master calendar
- Avoid finishing/completing assignments for your student(s)
- Stay connected by continuing to read the monthly Parent Newsletter
- Check out the Parent Resources: Middle Years and Reading Connection, on NMS website
- Use The Jr. Huskie Way at home and work to build Respect, Responsibility, and positive Relationships

## BOX TOPS for EDUCATION

Remember the school is reimbursed ten cents for each box top collected. All box tops may be dropped off at our Front Office. Our thanks to the PTO for coordinating this activity.

## PARENT INTERNET VIEWER

Letters with access codes for the Parent Internet Viewer (PIV) were mailed to home addresses. Questions about PIV /or to obtain your student's PIV code, please contact [pivsupport@portageps.org](mailto:pivsupport@portageps.org).

## PEST CONTROL SERVICE DATES

Due to Acts 636 and 637 of the Michigan State Department of Agriculture's Pesticide Notification of Schools, we are required to inform you of the scheduled pest control service days. This month's service will be **November 11**.

## Grab 'N' Go Breakfast

Eating breakfast is extremely important in terms of overall behavior and academic success. When students do not eat breakfast they often will be more irritable, tired, and restless. These symptoms lead students into behavior problems. Students who eat breakfast have more energy, better attitudes, and will experience fewer behavior issues.

Research shows that students who consistently eat breakfast score higher in most academic areas. It is difficult for students to focus on what is being instructed in class when the basic need of eating a healthy breakfast has not been met.

### **How Does a Grab 'N' Go Breakfast Work?**

North Middle School is implementing a new option for breakfast starting the second marking period. Grab 'N' Go breakfasts are packaged in paper bags. Students are responsible for following the school's guidelines as to where and when they can eat and for throwing out their trash. The students will be able to eat their Grab 'N' Go breakfast at the end of first hour during announcements. Food service staff packs reimbursable breakfasts into individual paper bags, usually the day before. Breakfasts are usually cold, but can include hot items as well. Students still have the option of eating their breakfast in the morning before being dismissed for the start of the day.

### **Why Serve a Grab 'N' Go Breakfast?**

Grab 'N' Go breakfasts bring breakfast to the student, making it easier for them to choose to eat breakfast. Many middle and high school students are not hungry first thing in the morning or they want to hang out with friends. Grab 'N' Go breakfasts allow students the flexibility and choice to eat breakfast where and when they want. Because it is so easy and efficient for students to grab a bag, this method also allows schools to serve a breakfast more quickly to students.



## YEARBOOK

### *Did your child forget to order a yearbook??!*

It is not too soon to start thinking about holiday gifts. For a limited time, we can order yearbooks for a small late fee of \$5. Order forms are still available in the front office. Just submit an order form along with a check for \$30 (\$25 + \$5 late fee) made payable to North Middle School, to the front office. You can also order online at <http://store.classscene.com/ssBAYB.aspx?sid=6707>. Please still submit a form into the front office once an order has been placed online. Give your child the gift of memories of their time here at North Middle School, as well as an opportunity to attend the Yearbook Signing Party at the end of the school year. At the party, students will have a chance to win an iPod and other awesome prizes.



### **ALL SCHOOL MUSICAL: HONK JR.**

Informational Meeting, November 21, NMS Choir Room, 3-4 pm; Audition Materials will be available at this meeting.

To find out more about the show visit <http://www.broadwayjr.com/store/showkitproduct.asp?oid=000189>

#### Looking Ahead:

- Dec. 5: Reading and Vocal Auditions, 3-5 pm, NMS Choir Room
- Dec. 7: Dance Auditions, 3-5 pm, NMS Choir Room
- Dec. 9: Call-Back List Posted Outside Choir Room
- Dec. 14: Call-Backs, 3-5 pm, NMS Choir Room
- Dec. 16: Pick up scripts (if casted in the show)

Just a reminder that Pay-to-Participate is also required to be a part of the school musical. Pay to Participate information can be found on the district website ([www.portageps.org](http://www.portageps.org)).

## 6TH GRADE SCIENCE CLASSES

Mr. Blackman and Mrs. Wagner's 6th grade science students kicked off the annual "Salmon in the Classroom" project early October by welcoming almost 600 live Chinook salmon eggs. "Salmon in the Classroom" is a 6th grade science project where students raise salmon and care for them from egg to the fry stage. The project is designed to maximize the integration of technology into the science curriculum and help students learn several science standards and benchmarks including replicating a natural habitat and gathering data as the fish mature. Students will then create an animation of a life cycle of a Chinook salmon using various computer software. "Salmon in the Classroom" culminates with the release of the fry at a local estuary in May and a field trip to the Wolf Lake Fish Hatchery.



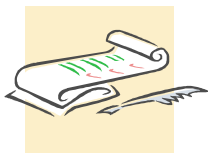
## PHYSICAL EDUCATION SWIM UNIT

We are hoping to begin the physical education swim unit soon. Swimming is a required element of the Portage Public Schools curriculum. Each 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grader in a physical education class this semester will take part in swimming. An announcement will be made to let the students know when to bring their swimming materials. Students should plan to bring a bathing suit and a towel. Swim goggles and swim caps are permitted but not required. Students may want to bring their items in a plastic bag to help prevent items in their backpacks from getting wet. We are still in search of a life-guard. If you know of someone who is available during school hours, please have them contact the school.

## ART WISH LIST

Mrs. Hilton (Anderson) and Mrs. DeGroot is requesting donations of the following items:

- Newspaper
- Large foam plates
- Kleenex
- Old Magazines
- #2 pencils



## Gryphon Place

The Gatekeeper Student Curriculum has been in existence since 1988. In 2007, this program was added to the Best Practice Registry (BPR) which means that we adhere to the current standards in the field of suicide as determined by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention in collaboration with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. The 7th curriculum teaches skills that ultimately reduce suicides, suicide attempts and violent self-destructive behaviors. It includes how to identify at-risk behaviors and that when life-threatening behaviors are identified, a student MUST share the information with a trusted adult. It is NEVER a good idea to keep a secret that involves someone's safety. The program also includes faculty training and parent education as part of the comprehensive strategy to reduce suicide. The three-day Gatekeeper program will be conducted through the 7<sup>th</sup> grade physical education classes during the second quarter.

## ATTENTION VOLUNTEERS

All regular volunteers/mentors working directly with students must have a criminal background check. Forms and letters for this to occur are available from Janet Johnstone in the Front Office. This background check must be done annually for any regular volunteers working directly with student. All volunteers/mentors should sign-in at the Front Office each time they visit and receive proper identification before traveling to school area destination.

Volunteers are also reminded that information regarding student behavior or progress observed while volunteering in our school is confidential and should not be shared with outside individuals. Just as you wouldn't want parents discussing your student's behaviors or academics with others, they don't want you discussing theirs.

*Volunteers and Mentors are greatly appreciated and a valuable resource to the Jr. Huskie Family! Your assistance is greatly appreciated by both students and staff! Thank you for being so willing to generously give of your time!*

# NOVEMBER 2011

## Jr. Huskie Athletics/Clubs

Come out and support the Jr. Huskies boy's basketball team this month. You can find a complete game schedule on the NMS athletic website.

**Wrestling (6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade):** Pre-Season Conditioning will begin on December 1 and will take place every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 3-4:30pm. Conditioning will not take place over winter break. Practice will begin Monday January 9 and will run from 3-4:30pm. Students must have a current physical on file in the office in order to practice on the first day. For more information contact coach Brad Warncke ([Blwvnpwrestling@gmail.com](mailto:Blwvnpwrestling@gmail.com)).

**Girls Basketball (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade):** Tryouts will begin afterschool Monday January 9 and will run from 3-4:30pm. Students must have a current physical on file in the office in order to practice on the first day. If you have questions or need additional information contact the following coaches. 7th grade Harold Swift ([hswift@portageps.org](mailto:hswift@portageps.org)). 8th grade Ahren Kaylor ([akaylor@portageps.org](mailto:akaylor@portageps.org)).

Pay to Participate information can be found on the district website ([www.portageps.org](http://www.portageps.org)).

### BOYS BASKETBALL:

November 1	7 <sup>th</sup> grade @ West 8 <sup>th</sup> grade vs. West 3:30pm
November 3	7 <sup>th</sup> grade @ Central 8 <sup>th</sup> grade vs. Central 3:30pm
November 8	7 <sup>th</sup> grade @ Hillside 8 <sup>th</sup> grade vs. Hillside 3:30pm
November 10	7 <sup>th</sup> grade vs. West 8 <sup>th</sup> grade @ West 3:30pm
November 15	7 <sup>th</sup> grade vs. Linden Grove 8 <sup>th</sup> grade @ Milwood 3:30pm
November 22	7 <sup>th</sup> grade vs. Central 8 <sup>th</sup> grade @ Maple St. 3:30pm
November 29	7 <sup>th</sup> grade @ Mattawan 8 <sup>th</sup> grade vs. Mattawan 3:30pm

### SKI CLUB

Attention all skiers and snowboarders!! The weather is getting colder and if you are already dreaming of hitting the slopes, then you should join the NMS Ski Club!

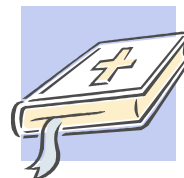


There is an informational meeting December 1<sup>st</sup> for all NMS students interested in joining ski club. The meeting will be held in the Little Theatre at NMS at 6:00 pm. Please plan on being there to find out all the expectation of NMS Ski Club 2012!

Contact Mrs. Trisha Howrigan with any questions or concerns at [thowrigan@portageps.org](mailto:thowrigan@portageps.org).

### BIBLE CLUB

The Bible Club will continue to meet on Wednesday mornings at 7:00 a.m. in Mrs. Wagner's room (#94). Snack is provided. Everybody is welcome to join even if you have never been before!



### ENVIRONMENTAL CLUB

Did you know that North Middle School has an Environmental Club? It meets twice a month (on Tuesdays) after school from 2:50-3:50 in Mrs. Toth's room ( 89 ). Please see Mrs. Toth's e-Board for more information about the club and to find a schedule of our meeting dates. Join us if you can, and, make a choice to live Earth-friendly everyday !



### GERMAN CLUB

German Club will be meeting the first and third Wednesdays of the month. The first Wednesday (from 2:50 to 3:20) is to plan an activity, which will be held on the third Wednesday of that same month. The times for third Wednesday activities will vary according to what is planned. Signs and announcements will be made; some activities will be for German students and others will be open to interested students who want to sign up. (Space will be limited.)



**NORTH MIDDLE  
SCHOOL HOME OF  
THE JR. HUSKIES**

School Address:  
5808 Oregon Ave.  
Portage, MI  
49024

Phone: (269) 323-5700  
Fax: (269) 323-5790



**Mission Statement:**  
*North Middle School is an educational community that embraces learning and celebrates achievements.*

**Administration:**  
Dr. A. Celeste Shelton-Harris  
Principal

Mr. Craig Medd, Ed.M.  
Assistant Principal

**Guidance Department:**  
Mrs. Jessie Bierlein, LPC  
Counselor

Mrs. Alysia Lehmann, NCC  
Counselor

**NMS SCHOLASTIC BOOK FAIR**

**Remember the Scholastic book fair begins November 14th !!!  
Come visit during conferences:**

**Wednesday Nov. 16<sup>th</sup> - 5:00 -8:45**  
**Thursday Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> - 2:00- 4:00**  
**& 5-8:45pm**

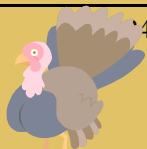
*Come to Our*  
**BOOK FAIR!**  
*Reading Is Out of This World!*

**Can't make it??? You can still get  
all the same great deals online at:**

<http://www.scholastic.com/schoolbookfairs/2886353>

**If you are interested in volunteering during the book fair  
(during the school day), please call Rebecca Hanson at 323-  
5785 or [rhanson@portageps.org](mailto:rhanson@portageps.org). We'll have a lot of fun and  
you'll get to help put books into student's hands!**

**NOVEMBER CALENDAR**

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
		1	2 ~Club Photos Day 1 ~Reading Mentoring Orientation	3 ~Club Photos Day 2	4 Records Day- <b>No School for Students</b>	5
6 "Fall Back" as DST ends	7 Reading Mentoring Program Begins	8	9	10 NHS Musical Teaser 10 a.m.	11	12
13	14	15	16 Conferences 5-8:45 pm	17 Conferences 2-8:15 pm**	18 PTO Mtg. Media Ctr. 12:00 pm	19
20	21 Honk Jr. informational mtg. 3-4 pm	22	23	24  <b>THANKSGIVING BREAK</b>	25 <b>NO SCHOOL</b>	26
27	28	29	30		**See page 3	