

# Education Update

March 2018

## New security measures planned

**N**EW SECURITY measures, including additional armed personnel, will be put into place over the next several months to help keep our students and staff members safe.

**“The tragic events that occurred in Parkland, Florida are a sober reminder that violence can strike anywhere, without a moment’s notice.”**

**Dr. Larrie Reynolds**  
Superintendent

Mount Olive Middle School. The MOPD officers will work with the armed security guards who are already on patrol at MOMS and MOHS.

- The **security kiosks** in each school will be upgraded. (The visitor identification kiosks require a visitor to possess a valid driver’s license or state-issued ID in order to enter a school. When a visitor scans an ID, the kiosk accesses federal and state databases to verify identification. This process includes checking the ID with a national database of registered sex offenders. The kiosks also print badges for cleared visitors.)

- New **security walls** will be constructed at MOHS.

- **Lock-down drills** will be more realistic and thorough.

- Four more armed **security guards** will be added – one for each elementary school. The guards will control access into the buildings.

- In partnership with Mount Olive Township and the Mount Olive Police Department, two full-time **police officers** will be assigned to our secondary schools, one each at Mount Olive High School and

- More surveillance **cameras** will be installed, adding to the many that are already in place and connected directly to the police department.

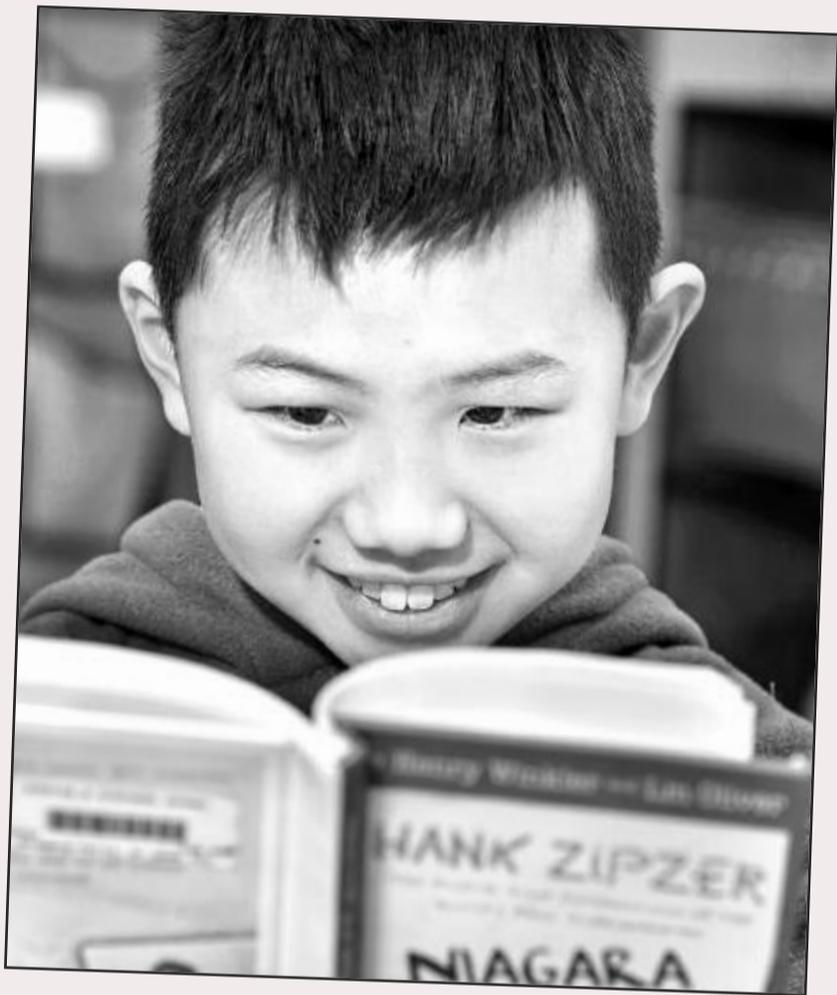
“The tragic events that occurred in Parkland, Florida are a sober reminder that violence can strike anywhere, without a moment’s notice,” said Dr. Larrie Reynolds, superintendent of schools. “The additional safeguards that are planned will provide another layer of protection and comfort to our students, staff members, and parents. Our schools will continue to be the warm and welcoming places that they are now.”

The district is also planning to implement the Say Something program. In the program, students are taught how to recognize individuals who exhibit warning signs that they may be a threat to themselves or others. Say Something was created by several family members whose loved ones were killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

Security has been a district priority for several years. In addition to the close coordination with the MOPD on emergency planning and drills, the district has implemented a series of enhanced safety measures. These include the installation of

hardened exterior doors, a set of locked interior doors at each school main entrance, lock-down magnets on classroom doors which allow them to be quickly sealed, and frequent training of students and staff.

Telephone systems with phones in every classroom have also been installed for better emergency communication.



**SKYPING WITH HENRY WINKLER:** Thomaz Honda, a fifth-grader at Chester M. Stephens Elementary School, reads a book written by actor Henry Winkler. Several fifth-grade classes recently participated in a Skype presentation conducted by the “Happy Days” star and his frequent co-author, Lin Oliver.

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## STEAM WEEKEND

**Science and tech  
skills on display**

Page 3



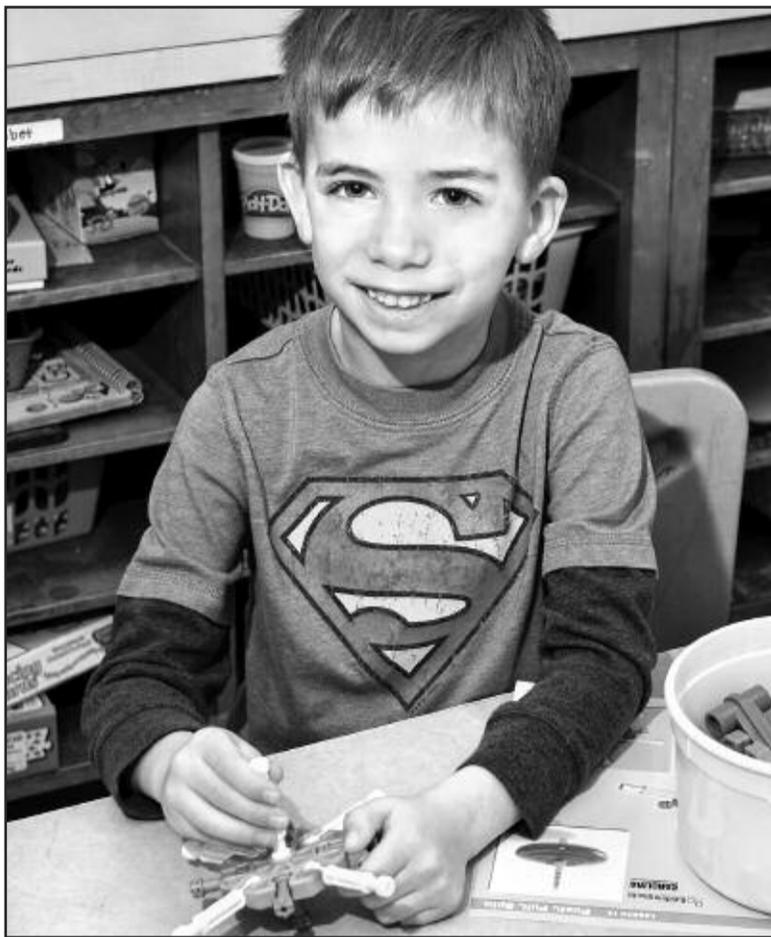
# Understanding motion

**K**INDERGARTENERS at Sandshore Elementary School recently learned about motion by building toys then examining how they move or make other objects move.

Working in teams of two, students used plastic construction blocks to make ramps and spinning tops. They first examined the effects of different surfaces such as carpet and tabletops on the motion of the tops. Then, the students pushed balls off the ramps and tracked the distances the balls traveled on the both the classroom tile floor and the classroom carpet.

“Students love to build things and this unit stimulated their curiosity and imagination,” said teacher Tracy Church. “It introduced them to scientific concepts that they see every day and it did so in a way they could understand.”

This school year, the district implemented a new hands-on elementary science curriculum that focuses on age-appropriate activities. The new curriculum engages students with



Mason Rubin prepares to spin the top he just constructed

experiments that let them learn by doing. This gives them the experience of real scientists as they make observations, perform experiments, record results, and draw conclusions.

# Dogs that help humans

**S**ECOND- and third-graders at Mountain View Elementary School recently saw first-hand how dogs use their acute senses, speed, strength, and agility to help humans.

Bunker, a yellow labrador, visited second-graders with Mike Pellek, a fire official with the Roxbury Fire Prevention Bureau. Bunker is an accelerant detection K-9 who helps the bureau with its arson investigations.

To show off Bunker's keen sense of smell, Mr. Pellek placed a single drop of gasoline on a rag which he then hid in the multipurpose room. Bunker, one of only three dogs used by New Jersey fire departments to detect accelerants, was easily able to find it. Mr. Pellek also took the friendly lab around the room to greet students.

Zander, a Belgian Malinois, and two detectives from the Morris County Sheriff's Office were the guests of the third grade. After the officers answered questions about the



Tessabelle Paetzell spends a moment with Bunker, a K-9 from the Roxbury Fire Prevention Bureau

selection, training, and daily life of the dogs, they brought out Zander who demonstrated his ability to jump, search out smells, and subdue suspects.

The visits by the two working dogs went beyond exploring how K-9s are used in detection and law enforcement. It also showed students the deep relationship between a working dog and his human partner – a relationship that the third-graders had just read about in language arts.

# NEWSBRIEFS

## Student selected for leadership award

Mariana Dubeux, an eighth-grader at Mount Olive Middle School, was selected to receive a Morris County Superintendent's Middle School Leadership Award. Presented by the Morris County Association of School Ad-



ministrators, the award is given annually to one student from every middle school in the county who best represents the qualities of model citizenship and effective leadership.

Mariana is president of the school's student council and has won numerous service awards in the past.

The Morris County Superintendent's Middle School Leadership Award will be presented to Mariana at a ceremonial dinner in May.

## Exxon awards grant to Tinc Road

Tinc Road Elementary School received a \$500 grant from Exxon Mobil. The money, which will be used to purchase STEAM-related materials, was part of an initiative from Exxon's Educational Alliance program which works to encourage students to pursue studies and careers involving math and science.

The Hackettstown Exxon station (at the intersection of Route 46 and Naughtright Road) sponsored the grant. Jacob Chaparyan, co-owner of the station, personally presented the check to the school.

A poster that acknowledges the grant and Exxon Mobil's educational outreach will soon be hung in the building. Exxon Mobil has a long history of supporting education throughout the world and has donated money for programs in pre-school all the way up to the university level.

## Using social media responsibly

Katie Schumacher, a social media expert, recently spoke to Mount Olive Middle School students and fifth-graders from all elementary schools about the responsible use of social media.

In her presentation, she provided practical tips for social media and internet safety, and encouraged positive messaging. She also stressed that before posting, students should consider how their public profiles and posts will be perceived by others.

Ms. Schumacher is the author of “Don't Press Send: A Mindful Approach to Social Media, An Education in Cyber Civics” and its free companion app.

# A weekend showcase of STEAM

*Events and competitions focus on science, technology, engineering, art, and math*

**T**HE SECOND weekend of March featured events at Mount Olive High School that showcased projects involving STEAM – science, technology, engineering, art, and math.

The Marauder Maker Fest, held on March 10, provided a peek into some of the district's STEAM projects at the elementary, middle school, and high school level. Student exploration and discovery were featured in projects that competed in the district elementary science fair. The projects, recognized for excellence at the school-level science fairs earlier this winter, showed students' mastery of the scientific method. Winning projects of note included "The Effect of Wi-Fi on Living Things" and "How Far Do Germs Travel?"

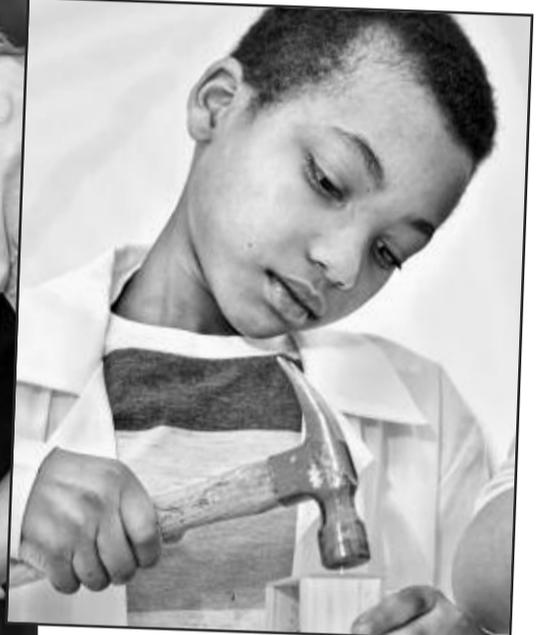
Hands-on activities were an important part of the Maker Fest and were popular with both students and adults. Visitors had an opportunity to operate robots built by the robotics classes at MOHS and also complete construction challenges and puzzles that will be featured at Mountain View Elementary School's upcoming STEAM Night on April 12. At the activity center sponsored by the Home Depot of Rockaway, one of the many participating companies and community organizations, guests practiced their woodworking skills by taking hammers in hand to build helicopters, periscopes, and sailboats.

The Maker Fest was coordinated by the district's director of science and STEAM, Dr. Gretel Pérez, and was held to coincide with MOHS' weekend hosting of the area robotics competition sponsored by FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology). The annual event pits teams of student-built robots against each other in athletic-style competition. About 40 teams from New Jersey and Pennsylvania participated on March 10 and 11 in a game in which robots fought to place the most milk-crate-sized cubes on a scale.

The high school's robotics team took home the Chairman's Award which is presented to the team that serves as the best overall organizational model and encourages young people to appreciate the rewards and career opportunities in science and technology. The Chairman's Award is considered the most prestigious honor bestowed in the competition.



**Left**, Lauren Piatti, a member of the Mount Olive Robotics Team, readies the team's robot right before competition; **below**, Amani Kurwa builds a periscope; **bottom left**, Zoya Vaidya constructs a structure using pasta; **bottom right**, Pratyay Mohapatra and Nicholas Franz operate robots built in the high school's robotics courses



Ramy Youssef stands in front of the school's kindness quilt

## Scenes of kindness

**I**T'S NEARLY 100 square feet of kindness. Measuring about 7 feet tall and 13 feet long, the kindness quilt at Tinc Road Elementary School shows what every student in the school thinks kindness is or looks like.

The quilt consists of 460 cards on which students have drawn and written specific acts of kindness that they do that spread happiness. "Kindness is helping keep the Earth clean," "Kindness is helping my mom with chores around the house," and "Kindness is sharing my toys" are some examples.

The cards were arranged and glued

onto fabric by fourth-grade teacher Rebecca Hopler. Mrs. Hopler conceived the idea with the three other staff members on the school's kindness committee, a group that works year-round to help students recognize the importance of spreading kindness and finding happiness in life.

The colorful quilt was officially unveiled at a school-wide kindness assembly and now hangs in the hallway near the gym.

Every month at Tinc Road is devoted to a different character trait; kindness was February's trait of the month.

# Learning to write the whodunit

**T**HE CRIMES ranged from the huge, such as the theft of the Mona Lisa, all the way down to the miniscule, such as the theft of pet treats.

The clues ranged from cloned passports and DNA evidence to the classic muddy footprints.

The heroes were detectives, sleuthing kids, and even a crime-solving hamster.

Kristen Hare's fifth-graders at Chester M. Stephens Elementary School recently explored the mystery genre by studying its unique elements and writing their own stories.

The mystery genre is a perennial favorite of readers of all ages and one of the most

complex to write. Not only do mystery authors have to worry about characters, setting, plot, and structure, but also the elements essential to mysteries.

Before working on their own tales, the students watched an episode of "Scooby-Doo" and read several short mystery stories, taking the time to break down the clues, motives, opportunities, and red herrings that were weaved into each one. The exercises helped the fifth-graders understand how the mystery components all work together to create an interesting and compelling adventure.

During the writing, Mrs. Hare emphasized

vivid descriptions and strongly drawn characters. She also made peer-sharing an important part of the process. The students shared their work periodically with each other to improve the clarity of the mystery and all storytelling elements.

"They loved the whole process and putting in the clues," said Mrs. Hare. "These kids read a lot of mysteries so they really enjoyed creating their own. I was amazed at how detailed and sophisticated their stories were."

There is no bigger mystery fan in the class than Matthew Koroski, an admirer of the ageless "Encyclopedia Brown" series.

"Out of all the writing pieces, I was looking forward to this the most," said Matthew. "Mysteries are cool. Sometimes I'll

Third-grader Angelina Keenan sticks a strip of tape to Cpl. Mike Russell of the MOPD



## A very sticky situation

As a member of the Mount Olive Police Department, Cpl. Mike Russell has found himself in some sticky situations, but none quite like this.

He was recently taped to a wall in the Sandshore

Elementary School gym, suspended two feet above the floor. It was all part of the Stuck For A Buck fundraiser run by the school's parent association, the Sandshore Home School Partnership.

write short ones on my own to see if people can figure out the plot."

The mystery unit spanned approximately three weeks.

# Young diplomats win awards

**M**OUNT Olive Middle School students in the gifted and talented program participated in the Junior Model United Nations conference at Drew University and took home four awards.

The model U.N. gave students an opportunity to immerse themselves in issues now facing the world and a chance to practice the art of diplomacy. The students were divided into delegations from different countries and each delegation addressed one of three global problems: education, nuclear proliferation, and clean water. The young diplomats spent months researching their countries and designated issues, then wrote draft position papers and resolutions that they would like to see passed.

Once at Drew, MOMS' delegations met with like delegations from 10 other New Jersey middle schools to hammer out the content and

wording of final resolutions that would be later voted on by the model U.N. General Assembly. It was two hours of debating, collaborating, and compromising as the delegations tried to realistically represent the unique positions and interests of the countries they represented.

"What was really interesting was how different opinions were," said eighth-grader Akila Venkatraman.

After the resolutions were finalized, it was time for the main event. One school delegation from each subcommittee spoke at the General Assembly and answered questions about its proposed resolution. Not all resolutions were greeted warmly. While it was disappointing for some students to see their hard work turned down by the other delegates, after the conference all the MOMS students understood that the experience was the important part.

"We learned what's happening in the world," said seventh-grader Molly Kahan. "It was a great representation of how the U.N. works. Before this, I wasn't really sure exactly how things got done."

Ann Greszczak teaches the MOMS gifted and talented program. Prior to the competition, she led students on a field trip to the United Nations in New York to help them better understand its importance and operation.

The Junior Model United Nations conference was co-sponsored by the New Jersey Consortium of Gifted and Talented Programs, Inc. and Drew University Political Science and International Relations department.

MOMS delegations won two awards for representing their respective countries with distinction and two awards for best position papers.

Michael Cravotta - editor

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