

Canterbury

TALES

A Publication of Reaching Heights

Welcoming New Students Over Lunch

by Michael Collins, Canterbury parent

Adjusting to a new school is always easier with help from someone who knows the ropes, and sharing a meal is a time-honored ice breaker. That's why Betsy Vegel, child specialist and counselor at Canterbury Elementary School, invites a mix of new and veteran students to join her for lunch each week. The lunch gatherings — held in the guidance office — help students get to know each other, while Mrs. Vegel hears first-hand accounts of how things are going for the 65 students who are new this year.



Veteran students brainstorm with the new students to solve problems and act as Canterbury ambassadors. Most issues or concerns are minor and easily resolved. Students typically talk about differences between Canterbury and their previous school, teachers' expectations, activities offered at Canterbury, making new friends and fitting in.

The lunches have been a great way for students to form friendships. Classroom teachers join Mrs. Vegel in welcoming and orienting new students to Canterbury. They remind veteran students what it felt like to be the new kid and encourage welcoming behavior when work groups are formed in classrooms. By January, Mrs. Vegel will have had lunch with all of Canterbury's new students. ☺

Canterbury students were part of a district-wide contingent that took part in Parade on the Circle in June.



Photo by Jay Levan

A Shared Quest for Excellence



By Kevin Harrell, Principal

Expecting excellence from ourselves and from our students, while carefully executing a thoughtful academic achievement plan, earned Canterbury Elementary School an Effective rating from the State of Ohio last year. Teachers, students, administrators, dedicated volunteers and supportive families proudly share in this achievement. As I start my second year as principal at Canterbury, we are working together to achieve an Excellent rating.

Working smart and working hard go together at Canterbury. As a professional learning community, we apply new strategies that are well-grounded in research. Teachers collaborate with each other at grade level, across grades levels, and with literacy and math coaches. Teachers focus on student assessments to determine which students got the information, who didn't, and why. Ultimately, teachers can differentiate the curriculum more effectively— teachers introduce new approaches to help students master material they didn't grasp the first time, *{continued on page 2}*

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Newsletters featuring news and features about each elementary school are written and distributed by Reaching Heights and a team of parent and community volunteers, under the direction of Reaching Heights Assistant Director Joy Henderson. Florence D'Emilia is the lead writer.

We welcome your ideas and help. Contact us at 216-932-5110 or joy@reachingheights.org. Learn all about Reaching Heights and see how you'd like to become involved, visit us online at www.reachingheights.org.

Canterbury School is located at 2530 Canterbury Road. To contact the school, call 371-7470.

{Excellence continued from page 1} while allowing other students to forge ahead. Students are becoming more self reflective as they graph their own progress, set personal goals and make decisions about their own growth.

Great things are happening at Canterbury in part because we work to create a collegial atmosphere. Our teachers don't hesitate to collaborate, dialog, and try new techniques to improve achievement. It is an atmosphere that encourages learning at all levels.

Canterbury is truly a community with a shared vision and a shared goal. This year we are pushing ourselves to earn an Excellent rating. 🌟

SmartBoard

A Tool That Helps Make Learning Fun

by Marla Fleischer, Canterbury parent

Ask any Canterbury student in Terry Rounds' third grade class what the most amazing part of their classroom is, and you will hear a resounding cheer for the SmartBoard.

My own daughter, Molly, came home the first day of school and could not stop talking about it. She told how Mr. Rounds could show ideas on the SmartBoard in an almost magical way, manipulating elements on the board. Of course, the SmartBoard was described as "really cool" – every parent who hears this knows that their child is excited about learning.

The SmartBoard is like a computer screen at bigger than life size – much like a blackboard in front of the classroom, but it is so much more. The SmartBoard is connected to the teacher's computer, and the teacher can project any kind of learning software from the computer to the large screen for viewing and use. Much like the use of a mouse and cursor with a regular computer screen, the teacher or students using the SmartBoard can manipulate what is on the screen with their hands, and add to it with special colored pens.

The SmartBoard is truly a sensation in the classroom. I have seen it in action. Children who grow up in the age of computers and computer games are more engaged when using a SmartBoard. And for good reason – this is no ordinary blackboard. Mr. Rounds has demonstrated its use for showing math concepts. He stood in front of the board and touched elements on the screen, such as groups of cubes in sets of tens and hundreds, and moved them around with a wave of his hand.

Using the Elmo, an additional tool, it's possible to project ordinary worksheets onto the SmartBoard, allowing the teacher to demonstrate assignments with the pens, just as the old overhead projectors may have allowed with clear transparencies and markers. The SmartBoard, however, makes this much easier to accomplish through direct contact with the screen as opposed to the worksheet on a transparency. The Elmo also allows the projection of images and other documents onto the SmartBoard. Best of all, the board is easy enough for any seven- or eight-year-old to use.

The children have all had a chance to use the Board to demonstrate their understanding of what they are learning, and unanimously agree that it is fun to use. They are eager to use the Board to demonstrate what they know. The beauty of the SmartBoard is that students can interact with the Board to solve problems. 🌟

the Colorful Way



By Shelly Schneider, Canterbury parent

Your child is a student at Canterbury Elementary School. What has he learned? How do you know when he needs a little extra help?

Last year, the principals and data liaisons at Canterbury, Noble and Boulevard schools created the Red-Yellow-Green Academic Progress Program. Third-grade students taught by Mr. Terry Rounds, Canterbury's data liaison, now chart their own progress.

This is how it works. The Ohio Achievement Test in Mathematics is based on more than forty learning goals indicators. During the school year, Mr. Rounds assesses student performance in each area. Daily, his students are given a five-question test related to one of the indicators. Research shows that you need to ask at least four questions to obtain reliable results. The fifth question is for good measure.

Now to make sense of the color code: red, 0-2 correct answers; yellow, 3-4 correct answers; green, 5 correct answers. Mr. Rounds' students have their own data wall outside the classroom. Each student colors his area of the graph after every assessment. This way every child can measure his own progress over time.

Mr. Rounds has the master list that directs daily review of math. In what specific areas of math are students struggling the most? The master list of test results shows the areas in red.

Mr. Rounds notes that the results of the various assessments serve to determine daily instructional groupings and those

His students celebrate green, of course.

They accept red or yellow. Mr. Rounds

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to learn.

students who will receive an individual one-on-one learning session. A bar graph guides the efforts of volunteer tutors.

Educational efforts at home are bolstered by progress reports from teachers. Every six weeks, Mr. Rounds sends home the individual student data graph, a bar graph showing values 0-5 for each math indicator being assessed to date. The graph is cumulative. In bright red, green and yellow, parents get an immediate sense of how their child is performing.

His students celebrate green, of course. They accept red or yellow. Mr. Rounds says that red is an opportunity to learn. It is also an opportunity for volunteer tutors and caregivers to step in and help students. There are multiple benefits of the Red-Yellow-Green graphs; they are concrete, current, direct, and provide a narrow focus from which to target specific skills. When does my child need extra help? When it comes to third grade math being taught in Mr. Rounds' class, now parents

Fun and Learning In the Afternoon

By Florence D'Emilia, Canterbury parent

Hissing cobras and barking dogs may not be the first things that come to mind when thinking about an after-school program, but they're part of the fun that Canterbury students are having in the afternoon hours.

Don't worry; real snakes aren't part of the program. The cobras and dogs are yoga positions children assume as part of improving awareness of their bodies and breathing. Other activities also combine learning with fun. Children use brightly colored picture dominoes and bingo sets, and in the process forget their shyness about speaking Spanish. Young scientists explore the three states of matter by turning water to ice in 30 seconds, carbonating tap water, and creating the same smoke illusions that are used in the movies.

Canterbury's after-school enrichment offerings for kindergarten through

fifth graders have expanded as parents expressed a desire for a wider variety of programs. Organized and administered by PTA volunteers, the program features hands-on science, French, yoga, theater, chess and Spanish during Fall, Winter and Spring sessions. The hour-long classes vary in cost from a \$40 for an 8-week yoga class to \$80 plus a book and CD fee for the newly introduced Spanish program. The program is self-funding, and the PTA offers \$25 scholarships to students requesting financial aid.

The enrichment program has spread to other elementary schools. When the elementary school reorganization began to take shape last year, some Canterbury families destined for a change of schools began working with Gearity volunteers to organize a similar enrichment program at their new school. That program is up and running and thriving. 🌟

Teachers COACHING Teachers

by Florence D'Emilia, Canterbury parent

Classroom teachers have a new resource at Canterbury this year – literacy and math coaches. The newly created positions emphasize collaboration and peer support as teachers work together to help students learn.

Literacy coach Sharon Hughes and math coach Brad Hallam function as partners and resources for teachers. They began the school year by building relationships with teachers and observing students – an opportunity to see the data in action. Working with grade level teams, they looked at school-wide data on achievement plus data from short term assessments. The process helped identify strengths and weaknesses. At professional development staff meetings and grade level meetings, the coaches provide resources and strategies to meet clearly identified challenges.

In some cases, teachers invite the coaches into the classroom to model a lesson. The collaborative process includes a pre-planning session to discuss the teacher's concerns and to discuss what has been done to teach the lesson. In a debriefing session, teacher and coach analyze whether the modeled lesson met the students' needs and determine whether follow-up sessions might be helpful. The modeled lesson brings energy, focus and a fresh strategy into the classroom.

Improving instruction and classroom achievement is also supported by a growing collaboration between Canterbury and Noble Elementary. Hughes and Hallam serve as coaches at both schools, doubling the opportunity to share ideas and strategies. 🌟

Vertical Alignment Teams

by Dori Zicari, Canterbury parent

One way that professional learning communities are becoming embedded in the fabric of teaching at Canterbury School is through the establishment of vertically aligned teaching teams. The traditional horizontal approach brings together teachers on a specific grade level; vertical teams comprise content area teachers across grade levels.

Fifth grade teacher Jan Kurtz appreciates that staff meetings have formalized the exchange of information among grade levels. Teachers from different grades meet in small groups to look at questions from the 5th grade Ohio Achievement Test (OAT) and discuss what portions of the question are being taught at various grade levels. Discussion about a graphing question from the OAT reveals that students begin mastering the common language of graphing in kindergarten when they graph the types of apples chosen on a field trip and culminates with 5th graders who are able to graph positive and negative points on a four-quadrant graph. Each small group reports back to the entire staff. The process ensures that teachers share what they know and children use common language.

The goal is to make sure students get what they need each year as they progress through each grade level and to make clear how lessons taught in one grade are the building blocks for later learning.

Vertical alignment for math doesn't mean waiting until just before the Ohio Achievement Test to review skills that are tested. "Fifth grade is a benchmark for math," explained Brad Hallam, teacher and math coach. Throughout the school year, fifth grade teachers look at the foundation skills and knowledge needed to succeed on the OAT, and incorporate those skills into their lessons. 🌟

Student Governments Join Forces

by Bill Kramer, Wiley parent

Wiley student council president Geoffrey Golden watched the meeting and was impressed by the efficiency and order. No one spoke on at length, and no one spoke out of turn.

Of course, he was watching a student government meeting at John Carroll University, and those were college students running the show.

“What impressed me was how quickly they moved on,” said Golden. “So when one thing was approved, they moved on to the next issue. It was quiet and people talked when they were called on.”

Golden and seven other student council members were observing the meeting as part of Wiley’s ongoing relationship with John Carroll University. On this occasion, the idea of conducting joint service projects arose, and the following week, John Carroll student government president, Andy Costigan, came to Wiley to engage in a brainstorming session. Three ideas emerged: a community-based effort, a national project, and an international endeavor.

The community service project occurred on November 9. Members of John Carroll’s student government joined Wiley students in their annual leaf-raking day, where students bring rakes to school and put them to use on lawns in the surrounding neighborhoods.

“What impressed me was how quickly they moved on,” said Golden. “So when one thing was approved, they moved on to the next issue. It was quiet and people talked when they were called on.”

But the leaf-raking effort took up only half the day. The other half was devoted to the international project. Wiley student council members taught fellow students how to make beaded bracelets and special ribbons that were sold on December 1st - World AIDS Day. All the proceeds from the sale will go to an orphanage in Kenya for children who have lost parents to AIDS. The sale was conducted at Wiley, John Carroll University, and Gearity Professional Development School.

The national joint service project is set for April. Wiley students will join the John Carroll student body in an 18-hour fundraising event – either a dance-a-thon or a rock-a-thon with rocking chairs. The contest will be open to anyone in the community who wants to assemble a team, and all funds will go to Relay for Life, which benefits cancer patients throughout the country. 🌍

by Bill Kramer, Wiley parent

“It’s a whole new cafeteria,” said Steve Shergalis, Director of Business Services for the CH-UH School District. “There are a lot of exciting selections out there.”

Out there means right here: at four onsite kitchens in the three middle schools and at Heights High, where lunch is prepared daily for all 12 buildings in the district.

Chartwells School Dining Services is the new food sheriff in town. It’s providing more than a million meals this year to CHUH students — with an emphasis on choice and nutrition. At the middle schools and high school, five stations are available daily.

- **Origins** has hot lunch and food bar selections that are Balanced Choices;
- **Trattoria** offers three different pizza selections;
- **Fresh Grille** serves up hamburgers, chicken sandwiches and fries;
- **Sandwich Central** gives students whatever they want in a sub sandwich;
- **Garden Emporium** has fresh salads like chef and chicken caesar, fruit salads, and veggie plates.

Although the elementary schools still have a monthly menu of hot meals, each will soon add a food bar with cold selections.

“We’re making sure that every child has a decent meal for lunch every day,” said Allison Hager, Chartwells’ Director of Dining Services. “We’re working hard to have nutritionally sound selections.”

Let’s face it: it’s hard to get kids to eat nutritious food. “But what Chartwells brings to the table,” said Shergalis, “is a wealth of experience in 1,200 other districts throughout the country. They’ve learned ways to cook nutritious foods that kids will actually buy and eat.”

And this comes without having to raise prices for school meals. It’s a win-win deal for the district and parents.

“Parents want kids to eat nutritious foods and so do we,” said Shergalis. “This is a chance for kids to try something new. They may be pleasantly surprised.” 🌟

Twelve Heights High seniors were recognized as Merit and Achievement Scholars based on their PSAT scores.

Heights Scholars Excel

The National Merit Semifinalists are Andrew Brandt, Sarah Dion, Andrew Donley, Alexander Kraus, and Jane Lindsay. The National Merit Commended students are Maria Evangelista, Owen Lowrie, Chelsea Steffen, Hannah Tatar, Victoria Williams. The National Achievement Semifinalist is Victoria Williams, and Daley Baker and Adam Katt are Outstanding Achievement Participants.

Making the Leap to High School: Teachers Help Freshmen Succeed

The transition from middle school to high school can be challenging. Teachers in the PRIDE and Legacy schools are making that transition more comfortable and successful.

PRIDE School:

One element of the plan, Freshmen with PRIDE, has the 85 PRIDE freshmen spending half of their lunchtime in a classroom with a PRIDE teacher and other PRIDE students working on habits of success. Students identify their academic goals and the actions they will take to achieve them.

Freshmen with PRIDE teachers — Jenel Chang (social studies), Melissa Egbert (math), Judy Goral (English), and Lorna Coffey (science) — work with teachers in the targeted classes to help the students craft an action plan to meet their goals.

Other elements of Freshmen with PRIDE include:

- Online grade books students and families use to check student progress;

- A common organization system for all students;
- Daily informal meetings and more formal meeting two or three times a week to plan for student success;
- Proximity; teachers' classrooms are adjacent to each other; and
- A Family Room stocked with school supplies for after school homework help

Legacy School:

Legacy Teacher Leader Karen Kastor and science teacher Stephanie Loncar coordinate the Legacy Freshman Seminar that is held in the 25 minutes before students' lunch period. "Often the fear of the unknown and lack of knowledge about high school creates frustration, resentment, and apathy in students," Mrs. Kastor said. The seminar content is designed to help students gain skills that will defuse hostility, frustration, and negativity.

One of the first activities was designed to familiarize students with the school's basic layout and services. They

went on a scavenger hunt to find the main office, where they bought workbooks, to the nurse's office, and to meet the small school secretaries and guidance counselors.

On Wednesdays, students form study groups for specific subject areas. Some days are spent in team activities.

Other elements of the Legacy Freshman Seminar include:

- Development of organizational and study skills using the Cornell Notes system;
- Lessons on conflict resolution — dealing with disrespect;
- Instruction on how to be an effective member of a team; and
- Help in making a four-year high school plan. 🌀