

The Comstock Communicator

COMSTOCK HIGH SCHOOL | COMPASS HIGH SCHOOL & ADULT EDUCATION | NORTHEAST MIDDLE SCHOOL | NORTH ELEMENTARY | STEM ACADEMY | GREEN MEADOW ELEMENTARY



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MORE NEWS

*Turn over to read
Center Point*

A newsletter about the
Comstock
Community Center



From the Superintendent

Greetings to the Colt Educational Community!

School Board Organizational Meeting

The Comstock Public School Board of Education recently convened its annual organizational meeting which kicks off the Board's calendar year and provides an opportunity to adjust its leadership and committee structure as a result of the November general election. This election added two new Board members to the CPS team - Dori Scholly and Saralyn Brown. A hearty Colt welcome to our newest trustees!

After accepting nominations, the trustees voted and I'm pleased to announce the following election results:

President - Pamela Dickinson

Vice President - Shirley Amos

Secretary - Karen Howes

Treasurer - Dr. Brandy Brown

Congratulations to all of our new officers!

Subsequently, President Dickinson named Dori Scholly the Legislative Network Liaison and the Board charged the following sub-committees:

1) Facilities - Karen Howes, chair; Dori Scholly; and Saralyn Brown

2) Personnel - Shirley Amos, chair; Dori Scholly; and Pamela Dickinson

3) Performance - Matt Schreiner, chair; Shirley Amos; and Dr. Brandy Brown

4) Policy - Dr. Brandy Brown, chair; Karen Howes; and Saralyn Brown

As Superintendent, I look forward to working with the entire Board, the sub-committees, and the individual Board members in ensuring the best possible outcomes for our students, staff, administrative team, and community.

Later School Start Times for the 2019-20 School Year

In the October/November *Communicator*, I outlined the Comstock Public Schools Superintendent's Vision. The center of the model consisted of the District's Mission surrounded by four major components or quadrants - *Instructional Vision, Leadership Principles, Leadership Vision, and Organizational Goals*. Per the Instructional

Vision, my expectation is that our entire district will use practices that are relevant, progressive, and evidence-based. Essentially, all of the educators serving our students will "use what works" and a key aspect of this approach is that there must be research that supports the instructional strategy, student program, or educational decision. We will not engage in outdated, obsolete, or ineffective practices that are shown or demonstrated to be ineffective or even harmful to kids.

With this in mind, I want to address our school start times. Simply put, science clearly indicates that we are starting school in our district much too early in the morning for all of our grades but especially at NEMS and Comstock and Compass High Schools. Research on the topic has concluded the following:

- Allowing teens to sleep in a little longer has positive effects on behavior and academic performance particularly for poor and minority students;
- Later-starting students are less likely to be suspended than their early-starting counterparts;
- Later start times are associated with slightly higher first period grades for all students and with higher GPAs and Algebra 1 scores for disadvantaged students;
- Not getting enough sleep among high school students is associated with several health risks including being overweight, depressed, drinking alcohol, smoking, and using drugs as well as poor academic performance, and that a contributing factor was early school start times;
- Increasing sleep is associated with improved attention rates, higher student retention, improved mood and health, and even a reduction in vehicle accidents during school commute times.

Schools across the country are re-examining traditional start times and we are not alone in considering the change in Michigan. This year, Oakland County's Berkley School District moved the start time at their high school 40 minutes from 7:40 to 8:20 a.m.

Those who oppose changing to later start times use several arguments. Some disregard the science and research and assert that later start times coddle



COMSTOCK PUBLIC SCHOOLS
A SCHOOL DISTRICT DEDICATED TO KIDS
www.comstockps.org

Dr. Jeff Thoenes
Superintendent

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Pamela Dickinson, President

Shirley Amos, Vice President

Karen Howes, Secretary

Brandy Brown, Treasurer

Saralynn Brown, Trustee

Matt Schreiner, Trustee

Dori Scholly Trustee

Ken Greenwood, Appointed Treasurer

Faye Goldner, Appointed Recording Secretary

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Comstock Public Schools is to serve our community by supporting, inspiring, and challenging every person within the school district to reach his/her full potential through education.

VISION STATEMENT

The vision of Comstock Public Schools is to be an educational community where every person is empowered to reach his/her full potential.

QUESTIONS?

If you have questions concerning your schools, the answer is only a telephone call away:
269-250-8907

STORIES OR INFORMATION

The Comstock Communicator is published by Comstock Public Schools. Information may be sent to Dr. Jeff Thoenes at thoenesj@comstockps.org or by fax at 250-8908. It may also be e-mailed to Phyllis Rose at phyllisarose@aol.com.



or spoil teenagers who need to learn to operate in the adult world. Concerns also arise regarding after-school athletics and early dismissals to arrive at competitions on time.

However, with advanced notice, start times for athletic events are also moved back and with flexibility on part of the staff and coaches, students and parents have overcome these initial concerns.

Ironically, student athletes are the type of student who will keep up with their school work and are a subset of the student body. Keep in mind that the tremendous benefits of later start times impact the entire student body.

As a final thought, in 2017 and for the first time in history, the American Academy of Sleep has issued a position statement declaring that middle and high school students should start school no earlier than 8:30 a.m. Currently NEMS starts at 7:35 a.m. and Comstock and Compass High Schools start at 7:30 a.m. and 7:40 a.m. respectively.

Within the district, we have already begun this conversation. Early in January, I surveyed our district's employees and asked the following question which garnered 139 responses.

For the 2019-20 school year, I support...

- i. Starting and ending school up to 15 minutes later.
- ii. Starting and ending school up to 30 minutes later.
- iii. Not changing the start time.

The results are as follows:

- i. 21.7%
- ii. 34.8%
- iii. 43.5%

Adding the portions together that supported later start times equals 56.5 percent. As a result, we will continue the conversation and look more closely at our start times using research as our guide.

When I have more information, I will report back to our community with a specific recommendation. If you want to share your thoughts with me about this topic, feel free to email me at thoenesj@comstockps.org.

Sincerely,
Dr. Jeff Thoenes
Superintendent

"It's a great day to be a Colt!"

Board Briefs

REGULAR MEETING

October 8, 2018

- Ratified the 2018-19 Para-Professionals Agreement which included a two percent base salary increase.
- Heard a proposal from STEM Academy teacher, Karyn Medendorp, and STEM Academy director, Chris Chopp, for a trip to Washington, D.C., in May, 2019, for sixth, seventh, and eighth graders.
- Approved holding a regular meeting on the fourth Monday of the month and conduct work sessions only when necessary.

REGULAR MEETING

October 22, 2018

- Heard a proposal from NEMS sixth grade teachers, Mike Thiel and Holly Verdon, regarding a proposed trip to the Shedd Aquarium in June. They are raising funds through grants and fundraisers for the trip.
- Approved the STEM Academy trip to Washington, D.C. in May, 2019.
- Approved the retirement request of Shelley Esman, effective December 1, 2018.

REGULAR MEETING

November 12, 2018

- Heard a sinking fund presentation from Ian Kofler, bond attorney from Thrun, and Jesse Nelson, CPA from Umbaugh. If the Board decides to place the issue on the May, 2019, ballot, a resolution will need to be passed in January, 2019.
- Approved the June trip to the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago for the NEMS sixth graders.
- Approved Leighann Emrick for the Green Meadow first grade teaching position.

REGULAR MEETING

November 26, 2018

- Heard the audit report from Doug Harvara, assurance partner with BDO, and Jason Kelly account manager.
- Approved the bid from Bell Ford Lincoln for the purchase of two 10-passenger transport vans at a cost of \$60,622.
- Approved the bid from Krum Chevrolet to purchase a Nissan work van for approximately \$25,000.

Hazardous Weather Communications



With hazardous weather conditions just around the corner, Comstock Public Schools is encouraging all parents to talk with their children about the possibility of school closing due to bad weather. In the event that school must be closed early on any given day, please have a plan developed with your children so they arrive home safely.

Every effort is made to make a decision to close school by 5 a.m. and to notify the news media immediately. However, the district has no control over how quickly the information is disseminated by the media.

Below is a list of the multiple ways you can be notified of early closings, or school closings:

You may sign-up to follow Tweets at <https://twitter.com/ComstockPS> regarding school closings or go to our website at www.comstockps.org.

Make sure your Infinite Campus portal is current with correct contact information in order to receive ShoutPoint notification.

For the latest school closings, turn your radio or television to the following stations:

CALL LETTERS

98.5 FM, 96.5 FM (WNWN, WFAT)
100.9 FM (WQXC)
903 AM, 1400 AM (WBCK, WRCC)
106.5 FM, 590 AM, 1470 AM (WQLR, WKZO, WQSN)
107.7 FM, 103.3 FM (WRKR, WKFR)
TV 3 WWMT-TV
TV 8 WOOD-TV
TV 4 WOTV

Comstock High School

Alumni Talk to Students About Life after High School

Twenty-three CHS Alumni returned to the high school before the holiday break to discuss their personal post-secondary journeys. Current students signed up for two different breakout sessions to listen in on a topic of interest.

Breakout sessions included Four-Year Schools, Two-Year Schools, Highly Selective Schools, Out of State Schools, Early Middle College, The World of Work, Funding College From a Low Income Background, University of Northwestern Ohio, The Black Experience on a College Campus, The LGBTQ+ Experience on a College Campus, College Athletics and the Military.

These sessions allowed students to visualize themselves on a specific post-secondary path, and learn how to successfully navigate the process.

We thank the following alumni who participated in this event:

Angel Bell (Michigan State University), Morgan Watson (Saginaw Valley State University), Abbi Jepkema (Western Michigan University), Donovan Saunders (Tuskegee University), Wyszell Wicker (Michigan State University), Cornelius Parker (Central Michigan University), Fred Ouding (University of Michigan), Vincent McNelis (Williams College), Jorence Quiambao



(Kalamazoo College), Justin Bray (University of Kentucky), Kendall Green (Purdue University), Cal Ormanovich (Butler University), Emily Fletter (Kalamazoo Valley Community College), Miranda College (Early Middle College KVCC/WMU), Shane Easter (Eastern Michigan University), Ari Stewart (Hope College), Victor Plascencia (Kalamazoo College), Travis Neal (Michigan State University), Jimmie Brand (PhD Candidate

at Osborne College of Audiology), Dino Sivley (National Guard), JT Branch (Roto Rooter), and Connor Nolan (Pennzoil).

Comstock High School

Band of Blue Forms Drumming Ensemble

The Comstock Band now has a new drumming ensemble. Focusing on African Hand Drumming techniques, the ensemble will be using drums recently shipped in from Ghana.

The instructor is Landon Ewers, the drum line coordinator for WMU as well as the percussion supervisor for the Legends Drum and Bugle Corps. Mr. Ewers has spent considerable time studying traditional hand drumming techniques in Ghana.

Band director Jason Fritz hopes to collaborate with the Education for the Arts (EFA) Dance Program to put on a combined performance this spring.

Five drummers and a small group of dancers will participate in this first season. If you are a current Comstock student and are interested in this ensemble, please contact Mr. Fritz at fritzj@comstockps.org. Auditions will be scheduled if necessary.

Community Auditorium Events Open to the Public

February:

2 - Comstock Athletics Father/ Daughter Dance: 5:30 p.m. - Tickets: 250-8712.
6 - Compass High School graduation: 6 p.m.
16 - Traci Phelps Dance Studios Competition Showcase: 2-3:30 p.m.
Call studio for details.

March:

8-9 - Heritage Christian Academy Musical: March 8-9: 7:30 p.m. There's also a matinee on March 9 at 2:30 p.m. Tickets: 372-1400.
14-16 - Kalamazoo Christian High School Musical Schoolhouse Rock- 7 p.m. - Tickets: Call: Kalamazoo Christian High School: 269-381-2250.

23 - HPA Kids-*The Frog and Toad* Home-school Performing Arts - 5:30 & 7:30 pm. Tickets: 1-855-472-1472.
26 - STEM Academy Music Program: 7 p.m. FREE.

April:

6 - Borgess Marathon Run Camp - 7 a.m.- Noon, Colt Center.
9 - West Michigan Homeschool Fine Arts Spring Band/Choir Concert: 7 p.m. (includes band, orchestra, choir) \$3 at the door.
13 - Comstock Senior Oscar Night - 7 p.m. FREE.
17 - Green Meadow Music Program - 7 p.m. - FREE.

Comstock High School

Students Win Robotics Competition



Matthew Searles, Jasmer Clare, and Domenic Putti recently won a Vex robotics competition.

Three Comstock freshmen won a Vex robotics competition in Lansing which qualified them for the state tournament. In this competition, students build and program a robot that they control to score points during the games designed for the tournament.

The team of Matthew Searles, Jasmer Clare, and Domenic Putti beat out 48 other teams to take home the tournament trophy, said Ryan Warner, math teacher. It was their first tournament as a team.

During the tournament teams participate in eight qualifying matches to score points and be seeded for the final elimination rounds, he said.

"This team won the tournament and performed the best at the skills competition which is a timed event where you try to score as many points as you can with your robot in a minute," said Mr. Warner.

However, as the students went into the tournament, they were a bit nervous and lacking confidence.

"We thought we would crash and burn," said Matt. "It was our first competition so we didn't know what to expect."

At first Domenic didn't expect that they would win but that changed when he arrived at the competition.

"Once we got there and saw how our robot ran compared to the competition, we felt a lot better," he said.

Added Jasmer, "It was our first competition so we didn't know what it would be like. I didn't think we would win, but we were hoping to place highly. Our goal was to be in the top half."

The hardest part of the competition, according to Matt, was adjusting the robot between matches when there wasn't much time.

"Also, working with other people during the competition (was hard)," he said. "Other teams weren't as prepared and that showed."

For Jasmer, one part of the competition was the hardest.

"The semi-final match was nerve wracking and probably our toughest match of the day," he said.

The best thing about the day, of course, was winning, but also meeting with other teams was enjoyable, too, the students said.

Mr. Warner is extremely proud of the students and what they accomplished as he watched their hard work and use of problem solving skills as they prepared for the tournament.

"All of the hard work, struggling, and problem solving paid off and I couldn't be more proud of our robotics teams at Comstock," he said.

Compass High School

Staff Prepares Breakfast for Students



Connie Brown, Alexis Jordan, Bryson Carter, Martell Wiggins, Aaron Martin, and Josh Ehrmann enjoy the breakfast cooked for them by their teachers at Compass High School.

Compass High School students were recently treated to a special breakfast prepared by the Compass staff.

For the students, it was about both the food and the fun they had interacting with each other and the staff.

Student Alex Harper loves the food so much, he doesn't eat before he comes to school so he can enjoy the special breakfast.

"They have like three different bacons, normal, turkey and one other," he said. "Also, they have eggs, sausage, and fruit. The eggs and sausage are very good, one of the best parts. The best part, though, was Chris's (Coash) pancakes. I don't know what it is about them or what he does, but they are always a banger. If I were able to take all of them, trust me, I would."

The social aspect is also an enjoyable part of the breakfast for the students. Alex notes how everyone is chilling out and in a good mood.

"The student breakfasts here at Compass are always a blast," he said. "So mostly, it's just all around a really fun time."

Student Autumn Thompson enjoys the socializing as well.

"I love how we can put aside the regular teacher-student thing and just actually have a good time together," she said. "I like it a lot. I had a lot of fun and I think we should do this all the time."

The students appreciate the staff's efforts in preparing the breakfast.

"I thank all of the staff that helped get it all together and make the food," said Alex. "It was a really good morning and way to end off the week before winter break."

Comstock High School

Psychology Students Learn Relaxation Techniques

Students in Kimberly Adams' psychology class recently learned relaxation techniques from Dr. Richard Dama, counselor and clinical psychologist/hypnotherapist.

Dr. Dama explained various techniques for dealing with stress and anxiety due to such things as fears and phobias, depression, public speaking, test-taking, and even stage fright. One of those treatments, he explained, is hypnosis, considered by many professional and medical associations to be a valid treatment for many different conditions.

To demonstrate, Dr. Dama placed a volunteer into a trance state or hypnosis, an activity students had been informed about and/or agreed to prior to Dr. Dama's visit.

Some students participated in the hypnosis experiment while others decided to simply observe.

Among those who participated was junior Kylie Stafford who said, "It was a mind blowing experience. I went under (hypnotic trance) and felt like I was on a whole different universe. When I came out of it, I felt like I could do so much more."

Senior Abby Kleyn added, "I was mind blown to see how he hypnotized most of the class with very little effort!"

Still there were some skeptics like senior Jeztrelle Abella.

"I'm still a bit skeptical of hypnotherapy, but that may be because I do not like to not be in control," she said.

Others weren't so skeptical after seeing the experiment.

"It was an interesting experience that would be hard not to be skeptical of if I didn't see it with my own eyes and how it can help," said senior Michael Rooney

Dr. Dama also told students about his professional journey and how he came to use hypnotherapy, something which Jeztrelle found inspiring.

"I was so inspired by his lecture to us on his own educational pathway and the stories he told and that it's not too late to start a new career or something new," she said. "Being a hypnotherapist wasn't his initial career choice, but how he was inspired to help so many through this type of therapy."

Whether they were skeptical or not, students



Dr. Dama tells the psychology students how he got into psychology and eventually hypnotherapy.

enjoyed Dr. Dama's presentation and learned something from it.

"I really liked how he used hands-on activities and experimental techniques with us to show how hypnosis works," said senior Jesse VanAvery.

For senior Dayse Sweet, the presentation wasn't what she expected.

"He totally surprised me with how easy he makes hypnotherapy seem, but I now realize through his lecture, how much training you actually have to have to be of service to clients," she said.

Added senior Katie Smith, "He is really good at what he does and how he approaches psychology."

Mrs. Adams invited Dr. Dama to speak to help them learn some of the practical applications of psychology.

"I believe my students learn so much more from a speaker in the field of study, that supports what I or the book may present in class," she said. "And he is a lot of fun!"

Dr. Dama, a board certified advanced clinical hypnotherapist with over 35 years of experience, is a regular presenter at colleges and universities



Students in the third hour psychology class participate in a hands-on test conducted by Dr. Dama to see who could be quickly hypnotized quickly for class purposes.

and at regional, national and international conferences. He also writes a blog on Facebook and is the Contributing Associate Editor of *Reframe Magazine*.

Abby House Sets School Record

By Pam Shebest

As a freshman, Abby House could not decide whether to play volleyball or golf, so she compromised and did both.

Little did she know that first dual-sport fall season would put her on track to Comstock High School history.

She will graduate in May with a school-record 22 varsity letters — 21 for sports and one for band.

The previous record, set by Robert Bellisle in 1943, was 17. Bellisle was inducted into the Comstock Hall of Fame in 2011.

“I just really like sports and starting freshman year with five, I didn’t really know there was a record for it,” House said.

She has four letters each in bowling, golf, basketball and softball, three in volleyball, two in soccer and one in band.

The school supports dual-sport athletes under specific conditions, athletic director Justin Ansel said.

“Primary and secondary coaches have to agree on the details before it can happen,” he said. “If we don’t have their agreement along with the player understanding of expectations, we don’t allow it.

“I think it’s important to just give the kids opportunity. It works best with picking a team sport as the primary sport and then an individual sport as secondary.”

House’s father, Rich House, said he and his wife have no problem with their daughter playing six sports a school year.

“It wasn’t really ever a plan; it just kinda happened,” he said. “She was always good at it and has always been a good student.

“We always told her as long as she could handle it and keep up – the school work is most important. She always seemed to do a good job at that.”

Schoolwork has not been a problem for House, who carries a 3.88 grade-point average.

This year, she has just one class at Comstock – band – but took psychology, physics and accounting at Kalamazoo Valley Community College. This semester, she is studying sociology, chemistry and medical terminology at KVCC, working toward a degree in nursing.

Although House plays sports for fun, her dad said his daughter is a high-level competitor in all of them.

“She has multiple conference titles, qualified

for state twice in golf, once in bowling, all-District catcher two years in a row,” Rich House said.

This year, she was Comstock’s top golfer and is the bowling team’s top female bowler, carrying a 150 average.

As a freshman, House earned varsity letters in golf, basketball, bowling and softball.

She played the same sports the next year, but also was moved up to varsity in volleyball, giving her five letters.

Her junior year, House added soccer, and is continuing to play six sports her senior year.

She chose volleyball because “I played (volleyball) with my teammates since middle school and I’ve enjoyed it when I played in season,” House said.

Golf is a family affair for the House family, including her brother, Mason.

“My parents are big golfers and we’re a big golf family and the coach was really into wanting me to golf, so she talked me into it and I thought it would be fun to try,” Abby House said.

Since she started playing basketball in elementary school; it was a no-brainer to continue in high school. She was called up to varsity after a month during her freshman year.

The bowling coach had an inside track to recruiting her – it’s her dad.

Softball was her only spring sport until her junior year.

“When I was younger, I played softball and soccer, but I chose softball because I liked it more,” House said.

“We had a softball coach who wanted us to concentrate only on softball, so I didn’t play soccer.”

Her junior year, the softball coach left and House decided to add soccer, giving her two sports in each of the three seasons.

Everything falls into place

House is an expert at time management.

“In school, whenever teachers get done with notes and we have homework I try to do it,” she said. “Or with any free time I’ll do it and what’s left, I do after practices.

“Freshman, sophomore year I did a lot on the bus.”

Choosing a favorite sport is not possible.

“Everybody asks me that,” she said. “I can choose one per season, but not one overall.

“Basketball, golf, softball have always been my top.”



Abby House playing basketball, one of the many sports she lettered in during her high school career.

House has stepped up this year, helping lead the basketball team to a 3-0 overall record, 2-0 in the Berrien-Cass-St. Joseph Conference Red as a point guard, her fourth position in four years.

As a freshman she was a post player, as a sophomore she shifted to forward, and then to shooting guard last winter.

Last season, she averaged seven points and seven rebounds per game. This year, it’s 18 points, eight rebounds and nearly six assists on average, she said.

“Abby has always been a solid player even since fourth grade when (she and Daisy Ansel) started playing some travel ball together,” said Justin Ansel, who also coaches the girls basketball team.

“I think Abby has always been a very coordinated athlete, and it doesn’t surprise me that she does so well in so many different things. She has contributed at a high level in a lot of sports.”

Ansel said he thinks House could be extremely good if she focused on a particular sport, but “I think she just loves competing so much that she would rather play all kinds of sports all the time.”

Ansel said House complements leading scorer Daisy Ansel well.

“Abby’s start to this season from an offensive standpoint has been tremendous,” he said. “Both girls are shooting very well from the outside, and both girls are able to attack so defenses can’t just key on one of them – which is amazing for Daisy.”

House will not go into sports withdrawal once she graduates.

She hopes to continue to play in college, but just one sport, either basketball or golf, she said.

Used by permission of Pam Shebest, freelance writer; and Geoff Kimmerly of the Michigan High School Athletic Association where he is media and content coordinator, and editor of MHSAA Second Half.

Northeast Middle School

Students Win NEMS Geography Bee

Taking the top three places at the recent NEMS Geography Bee were Dominic Langdon, first place; Nate Matthews, second place; and Zoe Engelman, third place.

The competition tested the geography knowledge of all sixth, seventh and eighth graders.

Participants in the finals were eighth graders Alex Ballesteros, Kaia Laarman, Zoe Engleman, Nate Matthews; seventh graders Caleb Againeses, Ava Dalton, Tianna Ryan-Murphy; and sixth graders, Kylie Schascheck, Breeze Van Horn, and Dominic Langdon.

Dominic has taken the State Qualifying portion of the Bee as the next step in qualifying for the state Geography Bee.

Finalists in the NEMS Geography Bee were (Back row, left to right) Kylie Schascheck, Kaia Laarman, Tianna Ryan-Murphy, Nate Matthews, Dominic Langdon and (front row, left to right) Caleb Againeses, Ava Dalton, Zoe Engelman, Breeze Van Horn. (Not pictured: Alex Ballesteros). The winners were Dominic Langdon, first place; Nate Matthews, second place; and Zoe Engelman, third place.



Funds Raised for Sixth Grade Field Trip

Fundraising efforts are underway at NEMS for sixth graders to visit Chicago's Shedd Aquarium in June. Staff and students are working hard on securing funds to help pay for the trip. This has included writing grants, seeking donations, and fundraising with students during school hours.

Students are doing much of the fundraising for the trip themselves by selling items during lunchtime, keeping finance logs, and tracking individual savings accounts. Students have also engaged in activities focusing on marine life, the Great Lakes, and environmental protection, including starting a school recycling club.

"Watching the students get excited about this project, water life preservation, fundraising, and keeping track of their own progress has been very uplifting," said Margaret Munger, NEMS teacher, who is helping to organize the trip. "I hope to travel with the group to see the culmination of all their work."

Donations for the trip have been received from several sources. Special thanks to Karen Raymond, store director at the Meijer on Gull Road for

helping to secure a \$500 donation. The Sunrise Kiwanis Group of Kalamazoo has also donated \$500 towards the trip.

In addition, NEMS received a \$1000 grant from the Ann Arbor Awesome Foundation. The grant money will be used for transportation to Chicago. Thanks to Patrick Dunn, director of the foundation, and to NEMS physical education instructor, Margaret Munger, for writing the grant.

The Ann Arbor Awesome Foundation is the Ann Arbor chapter of the Boston-based micro-philanthropic organization known as the Awesome Foundation. Each fully autonomous chapter supports awesome projects through micro-grants, usually given out monthly. These micro-grants, \$1,000 or the local equivalent, come out of the pockets of the chapter's "trustees" and are given on a no-strings-attached basis to people and groups working on awesome projects.

To contribute to the fundraising efforts, contact NEMS Principal, David Kirksey, at kirkseyd@comstockps.org or by calling 269-250-8600.



SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS NEEDED

Become a School Bus Driver! METS, the transportation employer for Comstock Public Schools, is currently hiring school bus drivers for part-time assignments starting at \$14.75 per hour.

No experience is necessary and training will be provided to qualified candidates. Apply today by sending your resume to: recruiting@contractbusdrivers.com.

For more information, please call (269) 250-8690, or toll free at (888) 996-8586

STEM Academy

Comstock Teacher Named to Innovative Educator Corps

Ann Swinehart, STEM Academy teacher (pictured at right), will receive a \$5,000 stipend to expand innovative practices in Comstock and throughout Michigan. She is one of seven educators chosen by the Michigan Department of Education to be part of the new, statewide Innovative Educator Corps (IEC).

The IEC, authorized under the Marshall Plan for Talent (Public Act 227 of 2018), is a new recognition program for Michigan teachers who employ an innovative educational program, methodology, or strategy to help prepare their students for future career success in high-demand fields.

“To continue building Michigan to become a Top 10 education state in 10 years, we need to take innovative and effective teaching practices and share them with every teacher in the state,” said interim State Superintendent Sheila Alles. “Teachers play a key role in preparing Michigan’s students for successful futures and developing innovative ways to deliver instruction, ignite a passion in students to learn, and to be innovative themselves.”

IEC members will receive a \$5,000 stipend as recognition for their innovative instruction, and will also be provided an additional \$5,000 to be used in partnership with an Intermediate School District to expand, replicate, and share innovative



practices.

Applicants were nominated by peers, students, parents, community members, and school district administrators. Educators were required to document pupil academic achievement and successful implementation of innovative instructional methodology in preparing pupils for 21st century careers; and exemplify the passion, energy, and professionalism of the teaching profession.

Due to the overwhelming number of applications received, the Michigan Department of Ed-

ucation will continue reviewing applications and anticipates additional IEC members will be added in 2019.

Each year, up to 100 educators who have implemented innovative learning practices and strategies in their classroom to help their students become career ready in high-demand fields will be named to the IEC. For more information on the Innovative Educator Corps, please visit the MDE Recognition Programs Page: https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-5683_13651---,00.

STEM Sixth Graders Excel at WMU Innovation Day

Four STEM Academy sixth graders won prizes for their innovations presented at WMU’s Innovation Day where students present prototypes or models that could solve a problem of fulfill a need in society.

Taking first place were Olivia Peterson and Ava Schreiner whose innovation was “Oxygen Alert,” an idea for an oxygen sensor that sends Bluetooth notifications to medical staff when the levels in an oxygen tank run too low.

Third prize went to Madi Hosbein and Sophia Moncel for their “Cooling Helmet,” an idea for a softball helmet with a solar-powered fan to cool softball players during warm weather.

Overall, 38 Comstock STEM sixth graders presented their innovations, which they worked on for two weeks. All students did an excellent job on their projects and communicating their ideas.

The event is open to the public and attendees can invest “Innovation Dollars” in the ideas they find most innovative. Students are also judged by engineers who currently work in Kalamazoo.

Innovation Day is a unique opportunity that allows participating students to show their ability to think like engineers. This event truly allows students to grow outside of their comfort zone.



Olivia Peterson and Ava Schreiner took first place for their innovative idea, Oxygen Alert.



Sophia Moncel and Madi Hosbein took third place with their Cooling Helmet.

STEM Academy

STEM Academy Students Win \$20,000 for STEM

The STEM Academy has received a \$20,000 prize package from Samsung thanks to the creative idea of sixth graders Aiden Wall and Crosby Taylor. The two students developed a “Solar Sunroof,” a hat to capture the sun’s energy to give warmth to homeless people by using the energy from the sun to charge batteries which would power warming units in the hat so it can be used when the sun isn’t shining.

While the idea was originally developed for Western Michigan University’s “Innovation Day,” their teachers at STEM also submitted it to Samsung’s “Solve for Tomorrow” contest. It was selected as one of five finalists in the Michigan contest and then on January 3, their idea was named the state winner.

Now, Aiden and Crosby will be working on a project video which must be submitted in order to move on to the next round of competition. Online voters will select ten of the 50 state winners who will earn a \$50,000 prize package for their school and a trip to present their idea to judges in April. The winners of the national event will win a \$100,000 prize package for their schools.

The “Solve for Tomorrow” contest challenges STEM students in grades 6 through 12 to show how science, technology, engineering, and math can be used to help improve local communities.



Sixth graders Crosby Taylor and Aiden Wall display their Solar Sunroof hat which won a \$20,000 prize package for the STEM Academy through Samsung’s “Solve for Tomorrow” contest.

The \$20,000 prize package which the STEM Academy received will be used for Samsung technology and classroom resources.

For more information on the Samsung “Solve for Tomorrow” contest, visit their web site: <https://www.samsung.com/us/solvefortomorrow>.

To see Aiden and Crosby explain their idea, visit our YouTube channel: <http://www.YouTube.com/ComstockPS> — Direct link to video: <https://youtu.be/s3I93adXaNI>

STEM INFORMATION

For more information about Comstock STEM Academy, visit our web site: <http://www.ComstockPS.org/STEM>
To make arrangements for further interviews, contact Chris Chopp, Director of the Comstock STEM Academy by e-mail at ChoppC@ComstockPS.org.

STEM Academy Students Donate Stuffed Animals

STEM Academy middle school students donated stuffed animals to young survivors of the Camp Fire in Paradise, California, which displaced over 52,000 people and burned over 95 percent of the town.

Students wrapped and sent the gifts in an effort to help provide holiday happiness to those displaced by the wildfire.

STEM Academy school leaders also made and sent “cards of joy” to survivors to spread messages of hope. These students are selfless, giving role models in our community, and the STEM Academy is very proud of them.



Comstock STEM Academy eighth graders with donated gifts and handmade cards of joy sent to survivors of the Camp Fire in Paradise, California.

Green Meadow Elementary

Green Meadow Enjoys Colt Corral

Green Meadow has established a Colt Corral to give students the opportunity to discuss the leadership principles of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* in a casual setting. Staff members had seen these types of groups being used in other schools and wanted to do something similar at Green Meadow.

At the first meeting of the Colt Corral, 30 groups throughout the school participated in two lessons where students were introduced to their adult leader and peers. Staff and students sat in a circle with a ball of yarn and shared something about themselves. They then rolled the ball of yarn to another person without letting go. Soon, they had created a giant web.

After everyone had a chance to share, the group leader led a discussion about how this activity related to the group, the idea being that the group creates a web and will be “webbed” together each month during Colt Corral. They will be using proactive language, making friends, and understanding the importance each person has in keeping the web together.

Colt Corrals will be held at least once a month. Upcoming meeting dates are February 8, March 8, April 12, and May 31.



Green Meadow technology teacher, Ashley Hufnagel, leads her Colt Corral group.

Green Meadow Works with Jeter's Leaders

For the third consecutive year, Green Meadow Student Lighthouse Team Members have worked with Jeter's Leaders and the Turn 2 Foundation. Derek Jeter's Turn 2 Foundation gives promising local high school students the resources to promote leadership, character, teamwork and philanthropy to others in the community.

Twice a month, the Jeter's Leaders volunteer their time at Green Meadow to teach important lessons of leadership which enhance Comstock's Leader in Me process. Each session involves fun, engaging games where students and Jeter's Leaders work together to synergize and complete tasks.

The Jeter's Leaders build great relationships with the Student Lighthouse Team and are amazing mentors and role models. Green Meadow and the Student Lighthouse Team are grateful for Derek Jeter and his leaders.

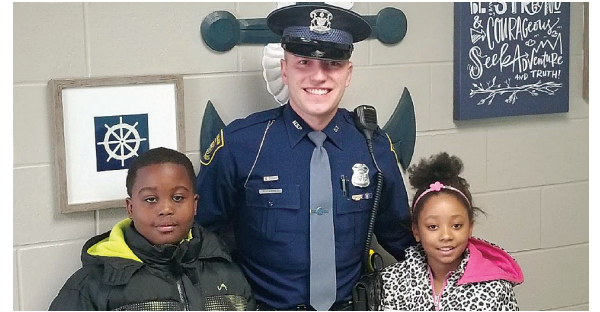
Thank you to the Turn 2 Foundation for making the lights of our young leaders of tomorrow shine even brighter.



Jace Plane shows off his new Jeter's Leaders swag during the holiday celebration.

Green Meadow Elementary

Students Shop with Cops



Michigan State Trooper, J.J. Arnold, took Devon Robinson and Araiya Welch out to lunch and for an afternoon of Christmas shopping.



Sergeant Megan Malz and Carlos Campbell shop for Christmas gifts as part of the Shop With a Cop program.

Three Green Meadow students were chosen to “Shop With a Cop” during the recent holiday season.

Carlos Campbell shopped with a Kalamazoo County Sheriff's deputy while Devon Robinson and Araiya Welch had pizza with a Michigan State trooper and then went Christmas shopping.

This annual program helps law enforcement officers and first responders to make a positive connection with children in the communities they serve.

North Elementary

Breakfast with Santa

Over 200 family members and friends enjoyed North's annual Breakfast with Santa before winter break.

A pancake and sausage breakfast was provided by Julianna's Restaurant.

Children visited with Santa to share their wish lists. Children also participated in various activities, including crafts such as reindeer flower pots and paper snowmen.

Every child also chose a book to take home.

It was a wonderful morning filled with children's laughter and holiday cheer.



Green Meadow Elementary

Operation: Santa Paws 2

Green Meadow's Student Lighthouse Team (SLT) recently raised \$400 for the Humane Society through the school's second annual Operation: Santa Paws 2.

The team also collected hundreds of dollars' worth of pet supplies.

Students who contributed to the event were rewarded with a holiday-themed dance party in the gym on the last day of school before winter break.

The Student Lighthouse Team

encourages everyone to help ensure the safety and happiness of animals in need in the surrounding area. Visit www.kazoo humane.org or call 269-345-1181 to learn more ways in which you can make a difference, too.



SLT Member Shaelyn Miskowski (in the doorway) escorts Ms. Stacy and her class to the gym for the dance as Ms. Odell in a Santa Hat welcomes them.

Students Pick Up Trash



Students who participated in the trash pickup were (left to right) Taleana Cieslak, Darren Cox, Alyssa Gettys-Lewis, Jaiviana Heath, Araiya Welch, Cayla Nash, Rajanae Durden, Shaelyn Miskowski and Davin Jarret.

The Green Meadow Student Lighthouse Team (SLT) recently showed school pride by picking up trash found on the playground and in school hallways. These young leaders had a terrific time together as they made their school more beautiful.

It was a perfect day to get some fresh air and exercise, while helping the environment. The Student Lighthouse Team is working on more ways to keep Green Meadow a clean place to learn and play as they enter the second half of the school year. #kidskeepingComstockclean #synergy #thefutureisbright

Athletic Department News

Hall of Fame Induction Banquet

Congratulations to Rich Bailey, Comstock Teacher & Coach 1983-2018; Bryan Crosby, Class of 1985; Ayanna Wilson-Byrd, Class of 1993; Jennifer Layne, Class of 2002; and the 1987 State Championship Volleyball Team comprised of Sherry Anderson, Becky Carlson, Pam Davan, Sue Jackson, Angela Jones, Pam Siwik, Connie Thomas, Dawn Vandyk, Keri Wallace, Joy Watts and Coach Jeff Borr for being voted into Comstock's Athletic Hall of Fame.

Hall of Fame Induction Banquet

The Hall of Fame induction banquet will be held on Saturday, April 27, at the WMU Fetzer Center. Doors will open at 5 p.m. with dinner starting at 6 p.m. and the induction to follow at 6:45 p.m. Tickets to this great event can be purchased from the Comstock Athletic Office for \$25. Come support these great Comstock alumni and visit with family and friends. The deadline to purchase tickets is April 22.

Father-Daughter Dance

The Father-Daughter Dance is Saturday, February 2, from 6-8:30 p.m. at Comstock High School. Pictures can be taken at 5:30 p.m. and food will be served from 6-7 p.m. Call the Athletic Office at 269-250-8711 to register. The competitive cheer team will be hosting the event this year. Please call Tinessa Lewis at 269-779-1734 for more information.

Mother-Son Bowling

The Mother-Son Bowling event will be Saturday, February 9, from 2-5 p.m. Check-in begins at 1:30 p.m. at Eastland Bowl. It includes three hours of bowling, shoe rental, pizza and cookies. Please call Shirley Doorlag at 250-8712 with any questions.

Winter Sports Awards Banquet

The winter sports awards banquet will be Wednesday, March 20, at 6:30 p.m. in the Comstock High School Auditorium.

High School Spring Sports Start Date & Physicals

A reminder that your son/daughter has to have a physical on file with the athletic office in order to participate in a spring sport. All spring sports at the high school begin on Monday, March 11. Middle school track will begin Monday, March 25..

Spring Sports Parent Meeting

Spring sports programs will conduct their parent meetings individually. Please stay tuned for that information from each program.

COMSTOCK HIGH SCHOOL WINTER SPORTS SCHEDULES

Boys Freshman Basketball

Thu, Feb 7	@ Brandywine High School	6:15PM
Mon, Feb 11	Paw Paw	7:30PM
Fri, Feb 15	@ Berrien Springs HS	4:30PM
Mon, Feb 18	Plainwell Schools	4:30PM
Wed, Feb 20	Bridgman Public Schools	6:00PM

Boys JV Basketball

Thu, Feb 7	@ Brandywine High School	7:45PM
Mon, Feb 11	Paw Paw	6:00PM
Fri, Feb 15	@ Berrien Springs HS (at MS)	6:00PM
Mon, Feb 18	Plainwell Schools	6:00PM
Wed, Feb 20	Bridgman Public Schools	7:30PM

Boys Varsity Basketball

Fri, Feb 1	Buchanan HS	7:30PM
Tue, Feb 5	Constantine High School	7:30PM
Fri, Feb 8	@ Brandywine High School	7:30PM
Tue, Feb 12	@ Paw Paw	7:15PM
Fri, Feb 15	@ Berrien Springs HS	7:30PM
Mon, Feb 18	Plainwell Schools	7:30PM
Thu, Feb 21	Bridgman Public Schools	7:30PM
Mon, Feb 25	MHSAA District Quarter	TBA
Wed, Feb 27	MHSAA District Semi	TBA
Fri, Mar 1	MHSAA District Final	TBA

Boys Varsity Wrestling

Sat, Feb 2	BCS Conference Meet - River Valley	9:00AM
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Girls JV Basketball

Fri, Feb 1	Buchanan HS	4:30PM
Tue, Feb 5	@ Harper Creek High School	5:30PM
Thu, Feb 7	@ Brandywine High School	4:45PM
Tue, Feb 21	@ Paw Paw	6:00PM
Fri, Feb 15	@ Berrien Springs HS (at MS)	4:30PM
Tue, Feb 19	Otsego HS	6:00PM
Thu, Feb 21	Bridgman Public Schools	4:30PM
Tue, Feb 26	Parchment High School	5:30PM

Girls Varsity Basketball

Fri, Feb 1	Buchanan HS	6:00PM
Tue, Feb 5	@ Harper Creek High School	7:00PM
Fri, Feb 8	@ Brandywine High School	6:00PM
Tue, Feb 12	@ Paw Paw	5:45PM
Fri, Feb 15	@ Berrien Springs HS	6:00PM
Tue, Feb 19	Otsego HS	7:30PM
Thu, Feb 21	Bridgman Public Schools	6:00PM
Tue, Feb 26	Parchment High School	7:00PM

Boys & Girls Varsity Bowling

Mon, Feb 4	Martin Public School	4:00PM
Wed, Feb 6	Hackett Catholic Central	4:00PM
Mon, Feb 11	@ Parchment High School	4:00PM
Wed, Feb 13	Schoolcraft High School	4:00PM
Fri, Feb 15	KVA Bowling Tournament - Airway Lanes	9:00AM
Fri, Feb 22	MHSAA Regionals - Team	TBA
Sat, Feb 23	MHSAA Regional - Individual	TBA

Girls Varsity Competitive Cheer

Sat, Feb 20	BCS Conference Meet - Parchment	10:00AM
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Comstock Public Schools 2018-2019 School Calendar

February 22	MID-WINTER BREAK		No Students / No Teachers
March 5	High School Conferences	4:00-8:00 p.m.	Full Day Students K-12
March 18	Green Meadow, North and STEM Conferences	4:00-8:00 p.m.	Full Day Students K-12
March 19	NEMS Conferences	4:00-8:00 p.m.	Full Day Students K-12
March 20	Green Meadow, North and STEM Conferences	4:00-8:00 p.m.	Half Day Students K-12
March 21	NEMS Conferences	4:00-8:00 p.m.	Full Day Students K-12
March 22	Half Day Students A.M./ Teacher PD P.M.	4:00-8:00 p.m.	Half Day Students K-12
March 29 – April 5	SPRING BREAK		No Students/ No Teachers
May 7	High School Conferences	4:00-8:00 PM	Full Day Students K-12
May 27	MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCE		No Students / No Staff
June 10	Half Day Students K-12 (High School Exams)		Half Day Students & Teachers K-12
June 11	Half Day Students K-12 (High School Exams)		Half Day Students & Teachers K-12
June 12	LAST DAY FOR STUDENTS (High School Exams)		
	Records Day P.M.		Half Day Students K-12
			Last Day for Teachers

Comstock Township Library Events

ADULT DEPARTMENT

Homebound Delivery Services... The Homebound Delivery Service seeks to provide library materials to Comstock Township residents who are unable to visit the library according to the criteria listed below. Homebound delivery includes the selection of materials by library staff and delivery of those materials by library employees.

Residents are considered homebound if they have a condition (due to illness or injury) that restricts their ability to leave their place of residence, except with the aid of a supportive device such as crutches, canes, wheelchairs, and walkers, the use of special transportation, the assistance of another person or if leaving home is medically contraindicated. In most circumstances, if a resident drives, he/she would not be considered homebound. Call 345-0136 for further information.

Adult Craft: Sea Glass Wind Chime, Wednesday, February 20, 5:30 p.m. Make a nature-inspired wind chime to decorate your home or yard. Signups for this free craft begin on February 4 at the adult reference desk, or you may sign up online through the link on our home page. Space is limited.

Adult Craft: Bird Feeder Tea Cup, Wednesday, March 20, 5:30 p.m. Slam together a tea cup and a saucer to create a vintage-inspired bird feeder. Spring is coming and signups for this free craft begin on March 4 at the adult reference desk. You can sign up online through the link on our homepage. Space is limited.

Computer Help: Have a question about the computer? Would you like to learn how to use the computer, download eBooks, use M.S. Word, M.S. Publisher, Ancestry, get resume help, etc.? Please call 345-0136 to "Book-a-Librarian" for one-on-one help. Must be a Comstock Library cardholder.

Youth and Teen Events

Storytimes at Comstock Township Library will run through May 2, 2019. Register via our online calendar or call the Youth Department for more details.

Mondays: Preschool Storytime (recommended for 3-5 year olds) from 10:30-11:15 a.m.

Tuesdays: Wee Ones (recommended for birth-2 year olds) from 10:30-11:15 a.m.

Wednesdays: Toddler Storytime (recommended for 2-3 year olds) from 10:30-11:15 a.m.

Thursdays: Preschool Storytime (recommended for 3-5 year olds) from 10:30-11:15 a.m.

Thursdays: STEAM Storytime (3-6 year olds) from 1-1:45 p.m.

STEAM Adventures: Wednesdays, February 20, March 20 and April 17, from 4-5:30 p.m. This new monthly program is open to all K-5 elementary students. Explore a new STEAM topic every month with hands-on experiments. Register on our online calendar or call the youth department for more details.

LEGO dates: Wednesdays, February 13, March 13, and April 10. LEGOs will be out in the Children's Department all day. Come and build something awesome to display until the next meeting. No registration required.

T(w)een Tuesdays: Open to all middle and high school students (or ages 11-18). Join us every Tuesday at 4 p.m. for games, crafts, anime, snacks and other fun activities. No registration required.

Teagan's Animal Experience: Saturday, February 9, 11-2 p.m. Local student, Teagan, will be in to show and tell about some of his amazing and unique pets! This is a drop-in program for children of all ages. No registration required.

Dr. Seuss' Birthday Party! Saturday, March 2, 11-12:30 p.m. Celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday with us! Whether your favorite is "The Cat in the Hat," "Horton Hears a Who," or another timeless classic, join us for a story, crafts, and birthday cake!

CLOSINGS

The library will be closed on Monday, February 18, for Presidents' Day.

*During bad weather, please call to see if the library is open.



Call the library to make sure we are open if there is inclement weather.



We now have tutor rooms and Wi-Fi available! Call 345-0136 for more information.



We now have a fax service! Must use credit or debit card to send.



Now Available

OverDrive! Download free audiobooks and e-books from home using your computer, MP3 player, e-book reader, and other compatible devices. Check out our OVERDRIVE eBooks and audiobooks! <https://smdl.overdrive.com/>



Computer Help

Have a question about the computer? Would you like to learn how to use the computer? Please call 345-0136 to set up a block of time for one-on-one help. Must be a library cardholder.



Need Resume Help?

Please call to schedule an appointment or visit the adult reference desk to do so. We will help you write a cover letter or resume, or just proofread one you already have. Call 345-0136 for further information. Must be a library cardholder.

