

M.S.A.D. No. 75 Foundations Newsletter

"News Around the District" Winter 2011

Bowdoin • Bowdoinham • Harpswell • Topsham

West Harpswell School Referendum February 1, 2011

The M.S.A.D. No. 75 Board of Directors has again voted to close West Harpswell School as of the end of this school year in order to consolidate the two Harpswell elementary Schools into one at the Harpswell Islands School site. This decision was made at its June 10, 2010 meeting, with a vote of 12 to 2 in favor of the consolidation. An application to close West Harpswell School was then made to the Commissioner of Education. The decision is now in the hands of Harpswell residents.

M.S.A.D. No. 75 will hold a referendum in Harpswell on February 1, 2011. In approving the application, the Commissioner of Education determined that should the Harpswell voters vote "no" and choose to keep the school open, it will cost the town an additional \$190,954.74. Going forward, this number could change dramatically from year to year. As the building continues to age, capital maintenance costs could cause large fluctuations in the amount Harpswell would have to pay to keep West Harpswell School open. Last year a similar referendum was held in Harpswell asking the same question. The Town chose to keep the school open and has paid the District an additional \$219,030.60 this fiscal year to do so.

In 2002, Harpswell elementary students K-5 reported to the State on the October 1 required census numbered 267. In October of 2010 that number was 170. Enrollment projections provided by Planning Decisions in an analysis dated March 2009 see a continued decline of total Harpswell students, predicting 24 fewer students over the next five years. Even if combined, the population of the two schools together would be the smallest school population in the M.S.A.D. No. 75.

The Board of Directors feels strongly that the closing of West Harpswell School and the consolidation of the two schools into one is in the best interest of Harpswell students.

In order to maintain comparable resources across District (as required for federal funding), student/teacher ratios must be similar at all M.S.A.D. No. 75 elementary schools. The effect is that current classroom teaching staff at West Harpswell School is now four teachers K-5. Every teacher teaches a combination grade. Harpswell Islands School currently has four combination grade classrooms. Consolidating students at one school will benefit all Harpswell elementary students, allowing for single-grade classrooms again, greater flexibility in scheduling, different teachers for different years, and more options to address individual student needs.

Another effect of making resources comparable at District elementary schools is that art, music, physical education, and library services at West Harpswell School are only available one day of the week. Guidance and support services time has also been reduced. A similar reduction in time for specials has been experienced at Harpswell Islands School. Consolidating the schools will combine the time for these programs and, consequently, provide greater access for all Harpswell students.

Many teaching strategies and student educational opportunities are best offered with larger, developmentally similar groups of students. Small grade level groups severely limit the range of physical education activities, cooperative learning strategies, groupings for instruction, socialization skill instructional practices, and band and chorus opportunities, to name a few.

Teacher collaboration and collegial problem solving is also limited when professional peers are few and teaching dissimilar content and skills. Teachers benefit from consultation with and support from colleagues. While the District has worked hard to bring the two school staffs together, more immediate and accessible support and collaboration are clearly more valuable. The Response to Intervention approach, required by State Law, asks for greater professional collaboration to support student learning. District elementary schools have moved aggressively to provide organizational structures within the school day for this and have seen noteworthy gains in student proficiency using this structure across the District. The Harpswell schools with small staffs have much less capacity to function this way.

Please see **Referendum** on Page 2



Stained Glass Art by Doug Chess
Photo courtesy of Rick Dedek

Doug doesn't consider himself much different than the students who ride his bus and make little drawings with their fingers on the window next to their seats; he has just been doing it longer.

Woodside is grateful for the District employees who bring many gifts to the school community every day. Doug agrees that everybody has infinite talent and that district employees are "more than just our job descriptions." Just as the WOW program was the inspiration for this piece, he hopes that viewing this piece will inspire others.

6th Graders Take Virtual Tours of the World Using Technology

By Alison "BB" Adams, Cultural Literacy teacher

Technology and student engagement is alive and well in Cultural Literacy at Mt. Ararat Middle School. After receiving lessons regarding laptop computer use from their homeroom teachers, sixth grade students are eagerly diving into world culture exploration in the World Language department. Using programs called Culturegrams, Google Earth, and Skype, the students travel virtually to different countries.

Arriving in my classroom with two crates of computers in tow, the students are divided into teams of two or three members. Each team has a pilot who gets to "drive" the computer for the duration of one class. They switch drivers each class.

First, my students find their school on Google Earth and then virtually fly around the Earth to the country of study. Then, having provided the students with a graphic organizer for collecting information, they explore the country in depth on Culturegrams.

All students are involved, helping each other with the technical part of the exploration and discussing their findings with their teammates. The students move freely around the website reading information to each other aloud, taking notes, listening to traditional music and looking at pictures of different countries.

After gathering information, the teams formulate questions they would like to ask someone who has lived in that country. Next, I set up interviews with guest speakers who come into the classroom or we chat "real time" via Skype in the classroom with someone overseas. The students are able to pose their questions to real people and enjoy comparing their own culture with very different countries around the world. So far the students have researched Germany, Denmark, Japan, and Cambodia.

Be Inspired!

By Doreen Brown and Kim Tanguay,
Woodside Elementary School

There's a new addition at Woodside. It is a beautiful stained glass piece of art created by M.S.A.D. No. 75's own Doug Chess. A bus driver in the District for 10 years, Doug contributes much more than the important work of transporting students to and from school. He received his inspiration one day as he watched a student arriving at school with her unicycle. The scene depicted is of Woodside Elementary School with a unicyclist riding in the foreground.

Doug studied art for seven years and is skilled in different mediums, but he considers himself a painter. He works from a home studio that he shares with his wife, who is an architect student. This project took a year to complete and is only the fifth work Doug has done in stained glass. He studied sketches of the school and watched the Woodside One Wheelers practice their cycling.



Mt. Ararat Middle School Students in Cultural Literacy class
Photo courtesy of "BB" Adams

M.S.A.D. No. 75

Bowdoin • Bowdoinham • Harpswell • Topsham

Assistant Superintendent
Brad Smith

Business Manager
Steve Dyer

Human Resources Director
Debbie Anderson

Special Services Director
Patrick F. Moore, Ph.D.

Superintendent
J. Michael Wilhelm, Ed.D.

M.S.A.D. No. 75
District Office

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Topsham, Maine 04086
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Website: www.link75.org
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. M-F

Director of Technology
Kerry Gallivan

Director of Facilities
Chris Shaw

Director of Transportation
Bill Donovan

Director of Food Services
Scott Smith

Referendum from Page 1

The bullets below address more specifically the education value of a school with sufficient numbers of students and staff to organize most effectively for instruction.

- More robust teacher collaboration with professional peers to improve instruction with same developmental level students
- More robust professional interaction regarding student learning results and progress monitoring
- Greater flexibility to group and re-group students for instruction within and across classrooms
- Greater ability to focus on specific student needs through professional peer consultation and collaboration
- More opportunity for group learning practices like Cooperative Learning and group problem solving, as well as peer models for learning
- Greater opportunity for co-curricular activities and experiences
- More and different group activities in PE due to increased class sizes
- More opportunities to play musical instruments with others for ensemble and band experiences,
- More exposure to vocabulary and knowledge from peers as models; more exposure to peer differences as learning opportunities for social skill development
- A broader range of instructional material resources and the combining of library and technology resources
- Greater flexibility in scheduling academic programming and balancing classes, including opportunities for more varied teacher options
- More opportunities for group counseling
- Increase of social exposure that broadens student view of the world and capacity for understanding

Should the Town vote "yes," the District will bring the parents, teachers and students together in the creation of a new consolidated school. It will immediately begin a search for a school administrator who will reflect the vision of the Harpswell educational community, involving stakeholders from the two current schools. It will ask students, parents and community members to consider a new name for the school. It will bring the two parent-teacher organizations together into one to support these efforts and the more mechanical aspects of the consolidation.

The referendum for Harpswell residents to decide whether or not to close West Harpswell school and to bring the two Harpswell elementary schools together will be held on February 1, 2011. Voting on February 1 will be at the Merriconeag Grange Hall, Cundy's Harbor Community Building and the Old Orr's Island School House. Absentee ballots are available from the Harpswell Town Office. You can find the Lack of Need report and accompanying documents on the District Web site: www.link75.org. On the District web page, click on "Board" in the left-hand column. In the left hand column of the "Board" page are the report and documents.

Williams-Cone Students Recognized for Maine Recycles Artwork

by Mike Hickey, Art teacher

I would like to recognize the phenomenal effort and remarkable creativity that all of the third through fifth graders put into their artwork recently submitted to the Maine Recycles Week calendar poster contest. The Maine Recycles Week Steering Committee received over 1700 entries from all across the state of Maine, and had to decide upon one picture per grade per month. Including the cover art, that's only 13 pictures! Williams-Cone student artists had TWO pictures chosen for these thirteen.

Congratulations to both Morgann Allard in third grade and Lyndsey Hanna in fourth grade who were selected to have their artwork in the 2011 Maine Re-

cycles Week calendar. Lyndsey's work, entitled "Good Kitty," (below) is featured for May; and Morgann's piece, entitled "Save the Earth," is featured in October.

Thank you also to the Friends of Williams-Cone, especially, Monique Barker, for taking the time to take the photos of the work (that you can see on the blog), and for filling out the entry forms and mailing out the work so that our students could follow through with this opportunity.



Although the MRW Steering Committee keeps original artwork, you can view the images of all of the submitted designs at the Williams-Cone Healthy Learning Environment's blog: www.wconnections.blogspot.com.

If you attended the annual "Pasta Dinner and Basket Raffle," you may have seen these amazing pieces in the Williams-Cone hallway!

Digital Learning at Harpswell Islands School

by Darren J. Akerman, Principal



Students Use Garage Band for reading Fluency

for its support.

There are a number of ways digital learning helps students. Kindergarten, first and second grade students have all participated in using animated gifs (moving images) to create short narratives on the computer. Most recently, some fourth grade students in Ms. Burt's classroom worked with Technology Integrator Kate Greeley with an on-line narrative/graphic program called Storybird. Ms. Svenson's fifth graders regularly use Garage Band (a MacBook application) to record their reading and check for fluency. Most recently, fifth graders created 'green screen' book reviews, in which they highlighted their reading much as a weather person might present the latest news.

Currently underway are projects with such applications as Comic Life program, imovie, and Glogster. We invite you to check in with us in the coming months to see how students and teachers are using digital learning. To learn more about our use of technology and see examples of student work, please visit: <http://www.link75.org/his/gallery.htm>

Woodside Crowns Spelling Bee Champion

By Chris Lajoie, Assistant Principal, RTI Learning Strategist

On the 22nd of December in front of 300 students, teachers and parents, Junie Nelson correctly spelled the word "grievance" to become Woodside School's first-ever Spelling Bee champion. Junie, a fifth grader in Ms. Dow's class, was the last student standing at the end of Round 10, after an epic duel with fellow classmate Joshua Thibeault. Junie's next stop is the State-level spelling bee sponsored by the Portland Press Herald, which will be held at Hannaford Hall on the campus of the University of Southern Maine on March 19.

This is the first year Woodside is an official school in the Scripps National Spelling Bee Program, joining Georgetown Central School as the only participating schools in Sagadahoc County.



Junie Nelson Photo courtesy of Chris Lajoie

During the month of December, students in Grades 2-5 worked hard and practiced spelling words from the official Scripps list, utilizing online resources like SpellingCity.com and WordCentral.

Bowdoin Bookworms

by George Jenkins, Principal

The Bowdoin Bookworms, a book club for fourth and fifth graders, was first organized as a student-parent group seven years ago. The group of four or five families discussed books over cocoa and cookies one evening a month. As schedules changed and students became more active in evening activities, the book club adapted and became a "breakfast and books" club that meets at eight o'clock in the morning. Tyler Norko, now a sophomore at Mt. Ararat, named the group when he was in fourth grade.

The group continues reading a menu that includes many genres. Selections include mystery, fantasy, sci fi, historical and realistic fiction. Some examples include:

The Breadwinner by Sarah Ellis (a glimpse of life in Kabul, Afghanistan as seen through the eyes of an eleven-year-old), Hoot by Carl Hiaasen (a rollicking quest to save the burrowing owl), and Sea Legs by Alex Shearer (a mystery set upon the high seas with modern-day pirates on the loose).

Marianne Haughwout, librarian at BCS, started Bookworms when the new school opened. Three years ago, she was joined by Jayne McPherson, literacy specialist. Marianne and Jayne lead the discussion but encourage student ownership as the year progresses. They also plan the morning breakfast, often pairing foods with the story. Many students ate naan, the Afghan flat bread, for the first time while discussing *The Breadwinner*.

Each year the group grows in number filling the library with enthusiastic voices. Because of the group's size, this year's fifth graders have formed a small group of their own that will discuss different books and will continue a video project started last year by their predecessors. The video highlights reviews of their favorite stories and will be available on our web site.

From its quiet beginnings, Bookworms has developed into a book club that meets the interests and needs of its members. Jayne and Marianne both agree that these dedicated students make their day! It truly is a delicious beginning; challenging books, excited students and good eats.

Classroom spelling bees were held, with two champions from each homeroom in Grades 3-5 representing their classes in the Woodside school bee. Fifth grader Maranda Burgess, fourth graders Emma Pottle and Zoe Pinkham, and third grader Alexa Eaton rounded out the Top 5.

In addition to remaining in the running for a \$30,000 cash prize at the national level, Junie already qualifies for a free online foreign language course through the website K12 (www.k12.com). When she is taking a break from spelling words meticulously, Junie can be found practicing her fiddle or playing with her dogs, Tess and Ruby.

Reading Workshops

by Judy Evans, Literacy Consultant and Brad Smith, Assistant Superintendent

Your memory of learning to read in the elementary school may be of students sitting at their desks, all in a row, reading from the grade level basal.

A visit to a third grade classroom in any of the M.S.A.D. No. 75 elementary schools this year would present a startling contrast. Let's visit a Reading Workshop. Children are gathered closely around the teacher who is providing explicit instruction in character analysis. Students are taught to think "deeply" by comparing, inferring, and drawing conclusions. Students are taught skills including determining main idea, vocabulary, and reading fluently. These build upon the phonics skills taught in grades K-2.

Later you notice every child in the room reading intently from a classroom library book. The room is quiet... "you could hear a pin drop." Suddenly, the room bursts into conversation as reading partners discuss the characters in the book they are reading.



Shana working with 4th Grade students in Debbie Dunn's room

What's going on?

During the 2010-11 school year, teachers in grades 3-5 are strengthening their reading programs through a major professional development effort through



the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. TCRWP is a research and staff development organization housed at Columbia University. Shana Frazin, TCRWP staff developer, is working closely with our teachers in and out of classrooms a total of 49 days this year. You can find her teaching model lessons with students, offering master classes with teachers, leading District-wide workshops in the teaching of reading and writing, as well as teaching administrators and Literacy Teacher Leaders highly effective coaching and supervision strategies.

Research has shown that certain structures are important to the teaching of reading:

- Learners need explicit instruction in the skills of proficient reading
- Learners need to read high interest books that they can read with relative ease
- Learners need to read for long stretches of time
- Learners need teachers who demonstrate their love of reading

- Learners need opportunities for structured conversation about their reading and thinking.

Reading Workshop provides a structure that ensures whole group explicit instruction, a community of readers—excited about reading, individual and small group instruction, as well as periods of time to read smoothly and read deeply. Our teachers are working hard to learn and provide these research-proven instructional techniques.



Shana working with Marianne Warner and Kevin Ridge (Grade 5)

Why this work? Why now?

There is an increasing sense of urgency in the air. Today's information age requires that young people develop literacy skills that are significantly higher than those that have ever been required previously, and not just for some students, but for all.

Children who leave the school system without strong literacy skills will no longer find a job waiting for them. The new mission is to get all students to meet high standards of education and to equip them to be lifelong learners.

Breakthrough, by Fullan, Hill and Crevola, Corwin Press, 2006

News from West Harpswell School

At West Harpswell School we have been involved in the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP). Teachers College is part of Columbia University and is based on the work of Lucy Calkins and other experts in the fields of reading and writing. Teachers in grades 3-5 are now in their second cycle with staff developer Shana Frazin. Both Harpswell schools join together to learn, practice, discuss skills and techniques (also with children). The "labs" have been an incredible tipping point for our teachers. We are learning many techniques that will only strengthen the reading and writing program in our schools. We have leveled our classroom libraries, ordered more books, and asked children to set goals around their reading and writing. This is a multi-year project. Next year the K-2 staff will receive their intensive staff development

in reading. This year they will have several opportunities to meet with Erik Lepis, also from TCRWP. Our Literacy Teacher Leaders and principals are also involved and are receiving additional training so they can support the effort in classrooms. K-2 teachers have also been involved in the writing project for a couple of years. This year they have been implementing Foundations, a phonemic awareness, penmanship, vocabulary, and spelling program. Teachers and students have been learning together.

In February, WHS will be featured on WGME (Channel 13) Kid Correspondents. Two fifth graders represented our school and were filmed talking about the great things that happen at WHS. Our salt water tank, playground, library, sports are a few things about which Ryan Mello and Abigail Nordwall

discussed. After the several schools the WGME (Channel 13) team filmed are aired, the viewing audience may vote on their favorite segment. Who knows? WHS may win! We would like to thank Jeff Peterson and the technician for inviting our school to participate.

At WHS we now have 25 Bowdoin College mentors. That means 39% of our students have a mentor. Each Friday these Bowdoin College Students come to WHS to work with our students in a program we call sMART. This is our fifth year! It focuses on art as the students build a healthy and supportive relationship with another adult. The children can't wait for Fridays. They do incredible projects. We are very grateful to these wonderful individuals who donate their time and energy to work with our young people.

WorkReady Certificate Program a Success at Merrymeeting Adult Education

Merrymeeting Adult Education's WorkReady Certificate Program is a 60-hour, three-week training that provides participants the skills employers are looking for in today's challenging job market. The training includes-job related skills, building self esteem and self confidence, problem solving, computer skills and communication. The program also includes mock interviews, cover letter and resume writing, and how to find and keep a job. To date, Merrymeeting Adult Education has had 65 students graduate from the WorkReady Certificate Program; and many of the graduates have found jobs.

The following is from an interview with Kim, a recent WorkReady Graduate: "I feel the experience I received from the WorkReady Program in the past three weeks was very educational for me. The program taught me how to do resumes and cover letters which I never needed before. When I came to Merrymeeting Adult Education, I didn't know very much about computers; but through this program I've learned so much more

than I could have imagined. I plan to continue and improve my computer knowledge by taking additional computer courses through adult education. The mock interview process was great, and I learned so much from WorkReady that I now feel confident to go look and interview for a job! I was very skeptical about the WorkReady Program and didn't think it was for me. However, I gained so many skills from the program; and my self confidence and self esteem are so much better now that I'm confident I can get a good job and succeed in my job. The only regret I have is I wish WorkReady was a longer program because I feel this is such a great course and can't thank Merrymeeting Adult Education enough for offering the program."

by Michael Myers, Community Education & Marketing Coordinator Merrymeeting Adult Education

The next WorkReady program starts February 28th for more information please call 729-7323 extension 1.



Pictured are the eager WorkReady Graduates on December 16, 2010 along with their instructor, Bob Deady-Schultz.

Photo courtesy of Michael Myers

PARTNERSHIP FOR REAL WORLD MATHEMATICS

by Joe Furrow and Julie Williams, Mt. Ararat High School teachers

The collaborative partnership between Mt. Ararat High School (MTA) and Maine Region Ten Technical High School (Region 10) continues to flourish. This summer, two teachers from MTA, Joe Furrow and Julie Williams, and two teachers from Region 10, Terry Brackett and Marcel Giroux, attended a week-long conference at Sunday River. The teachers worked together to map the Building Trades curriculum and identify areas in the existing instruction where mathematics are embedded. The Math-in-Career and Technical Education (CTE) is a national program that relies on a partnership between the vocational teacher and mathematics teacher to improve vocational students' vocational mathematics achievement. Students who are able to benefit from the collaboration have been shown to perform significantly better in the mathematics sections of the Terra-Nova and Accuplacer, two types of standardized assessments.



Photo by Julie Williams

This year, MTA and Region 10 have made a commitment to this collaboration. The four teachers participate in ten days of professional development and collaborate on an ongoing basis. The teachers are involved in curricular mapping and lesson plan development efforts integral to student achievement. The teachers work together to create lesson plans, which incorporate the "seven elements" of the CTE lesson. The lesson is introduced to the students, with the objective explicit, but not related to math. Secondly, the Vocational teacher introduces the math vocabulary through a variety of methods and techniques. Then the lesson bridges the gap between the Vocational subject area and traditional math language. Varieties of examples with varying degrees of difficulty are shown to the students. The students are offered the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding and a formal assessment is given at the end of each unit. MTA teachers Joe Furrow and Julie Williams have visited Region 10, teaching lessons to the students, modeling the traditional math examples to students and teachers. The opportunity has given the MTA teachers a broader perspective of the complicated curriculum the Region 10 teachers offer. Region 10 teachers do not become math teachers, but gain confidence and competence covering math concepts in their related field. Likewise, math teachers gain perspective of how related math concepts have real-world applications.

The pilot program has begun with the partnership between math teachers and Region 10 teachers in the Building Trades and Welding programs. Going forward, Math-in-CTE will be extended to Culinary Arts and Auto Tech students.

**M.S.A.D. No. 75
FISCAL YEAR 2011-2012
BUDGET PROCESS
SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**
*Please note meetings will be held at
Mt. Ararat High School, Room 201
(Unless Otherwise Noted)*

- 26-January (Wed) 6:00-8:30 p.m. Capital Maintenance Plan Review - District Office, Topsham
- 27-January (Thurs) 6:30 p.m. Superintendent's Presentation
- 2-February (Wed) 6:00-8:30 p.m. Maintenance of Effort Budget Overview & Proposed Budget Adjustments
- 9-Feb (Wed) 6:00-8:30 p.m. Proposed Budget Adjustment Discussions
- 14-February (Mon) 6:00-8:30 p.m. Proposed Budget Adjustment Discussions
- 2-March (Wed) 6:00-9:00 p.m. Review Complete First Budget Draft
- 9-March (Wed) 6:00-8:30 p.m. Continue Budget Review & Prepare Smooth Budget Draft Prior to Budget Forums
- 14-March (Mon) 6:30 p.m. Meet with Town Selectmen
- 23-March (Wed) 6:00-8:30 p.m. Continue Budget Review to Prepare Final Budget Draft Prior to Budget Forums
- 30-March (Wed) 6:30 p.m. Public Budget Forum - Harpswell
West Harpswell School
- 31-March (Thur) 6:30 p.m. Public Budget Forum
Bowdoin/Bowdoinham - **Bowdoinham Community School**
- 6-April (Wed) 6:30 p.m. Public Budget Forum - Topsham
Woodside Elementary School
- 13-April (Wed) 6:00-8:30 p.m. Finish Final Budget Draft
- 28-April (Thurs) 6:30 p.m. Formal Budget Approval
Region 10 Technical High School
- 12-May (Thurs) 6:00 p.m. Budget Public Hearing
- 26-May (Thurs) 6:30 p.m. District Budget Meeting at the
Orion Performing Arts Center
- 14-June (Tues) **Budget Validation Referendum**

M.S.A.D. No. 75 Education Fund: Trust for Our Future

Given the rate of change in the world, we know that a first grader will face a very different Maine in 12 years. The education of M.S.A.D. No. 75 students needs to keep pace with this rapid rate of change; and given the current economy, the District finds it difficult to access the resources necessary to develop new opportunities to address these needs. Formed in December of 2007, the Trust for our Future has supported exciting new opportunities for students. It is a non-profit, public foundation whose mission is to provide resources for student opportunities outside the school budget to help prepare students for the 21st century. Trust projects ask for creativity, leadership, financial acumen, adaptability, civic engagement and technological literacy that reach beyond that found in the classroom and give students opportunities for authentic, hands-on learning experiences.

The Trust for our Future raises funds through generous private sector contributions, fund-raising events and an annual appeal. Created to support M.S.A.D. No. 75, it functions independently of the School District.



The Trust provided the resources for the "Grandfriends" project which linked M.S.A.D. No. 75 students with the Highlands to foster relationships between generations to learn from one another and create student written biographies.

Trust for Our Future Donation Statement

Name: _____ Address: _____
City _____ Zip _____ Phone: _____
Email: _____

I am enclosing my total gift of \$ _____ Please make checks payable to: Trust For Our Future

To donate by credit card, please visit <http://www.trustforourfuture.org> and click on the **Donate Now** link.

Special Instructions:

- I prefer to remain anonymous.
 I agree to have my (our) gift acknowledged in publications and press releases.
 I agree to have my (our) gift acknowledged in publications and press releases, however, I want my (our) gift amount to remain anonymous.

The full amount of your donation qualifies as a tax deduction. Thank you!

**Responsible Student Citizens
with a Civic Action Plan**

By Donna Brunette, Co-Principal

In an effort to have seven South Humanities' students experience the concept of "being a responsible citizen" Ms. Bray taught a Civic Action unit with support from Ms. Singleton and Mr. Burns during the three weeks leading to the winter break. Each student identified a problem to which they had a connection or a burden for in our society. Students researched the problem using the Big Six Steps of Good Research Skills and located an organization working to help the problem with fundraising, educational outreach, and involvement of citizens in a charitable manner.

Selected problems ranged from animal abuse/adoption; disease or medical issues; hunger; the homeless; clean drinking water filters; and others. Students explored websites and were encouraged to get specific questions answered via e-mail, phone calls, or even visiting the charity. Students incorporated information about the problem, the charity and its history, programs sponsored by the charity, and how teens could offer a helping hand in an effort to alleviate the problem into persuasive writing pieces. Students presented orally to students in their class allowing students to hear of the many ways charities established work to solve society's problems, and suggestions of specific ways teenagers could be involved.

During the unit a "Penny War" was organized. In this seven South competition between homerooms, each penny collected counted as a point; and silver or paper money counted as a deficit. Students developed strategies with negative points by contributing to other homerooms and keeping watch of posted daily totals. Mrs. Singleton's homeroom won. A total of about \$300.00 was collected between homerooms.

Democratic voting was used to determine the charity that should receive the funds. Each of three Humanities classes first chose the top two charities they supported based on student presentations of persuasive papers. The six winners then presented to the entire team before a final election was held to determine the top two winners. The Autism Speaks organization was the top winner with 36 votes, and the Coastal Humane Society in Brunswick was second with 34 votes. The funds were split evenly and donated to these charities.



Fifth graders at Woodside Elementary School and Bowdoin College art students have had the opportunity through the Trust to work together using digital photography to learn how to apply a critical analysis of images to their expository writing.

**The Bowdoinham Community
School's D.A.R.E. Program**

By Diane Stahl, Principal



Making informed choices is a critical 21st Century Skill. To support the Bowdoinham Community School fifth Grade students as they prepare to leave our school and be involved in more social situations that could involve access to drugs and alcohol, Mrs. Diana Marc-Aurele, Mr. Steven Howe and I stand committed to our collaboration with the Sagadahoc Sheriff Department to utilize the D.A.R.E. program to give our students knowledge and skills that will affect their lives. We appreciate Officer Fleck's effective teaching of this program and dedication to our students.

A wonderful D.A.R.E. Graduation was held on December 13th (see picture) to celebrate our students' hard work and completion of this fall's program. Sherriff Joel Merry joined Officer Fleck to honor our students; give them their certificates; and encourage them to use the D.A.R.E. principles in the future.

The final assignment of the D.A.R.E. program requires each student to write an essay about what he or she has learned from the program. Then students choose four classmates (also pictured) to read their essays at the Graduation.

The following excerpts (with slight editing) certainly capture the "voice" of the selected four students:

"D-A-R-E that spells dare and D.A.R.E. means define, assess, respond and evaluate. What D.A.R.E is about is ... to tell you not to smoke or take drugs and that will help you get through life." (Dalton Streeter)

"One of the first things we learned was the many dangers of alcohol and tobacco. For example, smoking is one of the most sickly and addictive things out there. At first, I thought Nicotine was just a chemical not the thing that makes smoking so addictive. And some people actually think that if they drink an alcoholic drink that it will calm them down but inside their heart is beating like a race horse. I would think that my heart would jump out of my chest. (Mae Flibotte)

"A big reason people make these ignorant choices is peer pressure. It might start out as an offer like, "Have a cigarette," but in some cases it ends up with teasing such as "What are you, chicken?" Personally I think chickens are great but your mind might give in to those harsh words. Remember you have a voice, so use it! SAY NO!

Thanks to Officer Fleck and the D.A.R.E. Program I've found the strength to take a stand to these vile substances that have snuck there way into this world. I'm talking to you drugs, alcohol and tobacco. I'm not afraid of you and to prove it. I pledge to never, ever abuse alcohol, let peer pressure get the best of me and never use other drugs for this is my body; this is my life and no one has a loud enough voice to tell me otherwise." (Caroline Gill)

"To end this, I pledge not to abuse drugs in anyway. I won't let any other people make me do drugs if I don't want to. And I will encourage others to do the same." (Ricky Mann)