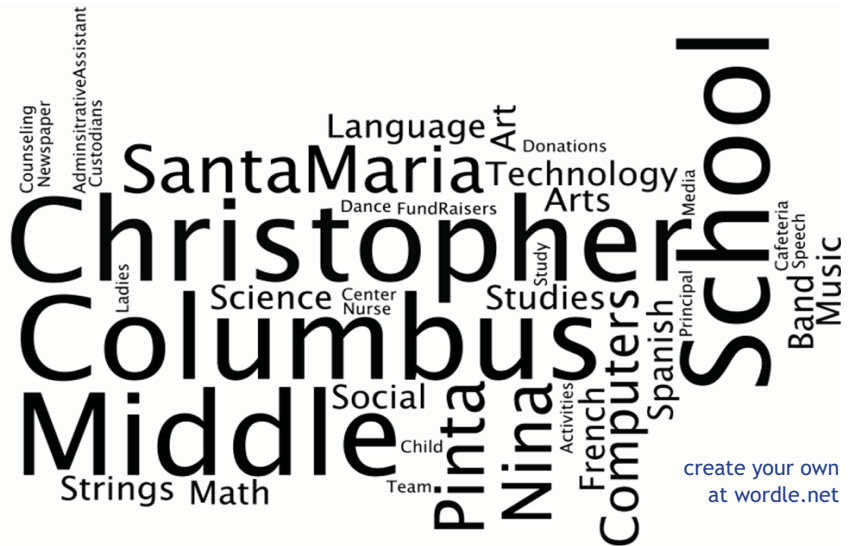


Christopher Columbus Middle School

December 2014
Volume 4, Issue 1
Ms. Lalama - Co-Advisor
Mr. Giblin - Co-Advisor



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Dear CCMS Community,

WELCOME BACK! What a great start to the year and we have a GREAT issue of the Columbus Columns to start it off. Our students are excited to share their reporting about the great activities and happenings in this wonderful school of ours.

Ms. Lalama and I are very excited to have some returning faces and a new group of students ready to help us make the Columbus Columns a reality.

We also have to thank all of the

teachers, administration, parents, and the Clifton community for giving our students the opportunity to have the great experiences that you will read about in these pages.

This issue and past issues of the *Columbus Columns* can be found online at the CCMS web site. Please visit the link to download your copy. Please share with families and friends, too!

<http://clifton.k12.nj.us/schools/columbus>

-Ms. Lalama & Mr. Giblin



A Musical Addition to CCMS: Mr. Kovatch

Dominick Elejalde

According to Bono, "Music can change the world because it can change people." I've been chosen to interview the wonderful and dedicated Mr. Kovatch. In case you didn't know Mr. Kovatch, he is one of the new music teachers here at CCMS. Mr. Kovatch seemed very nice while I was interviewing him for Columbus Columns.

He wanted to be a teacher because he wanted to do some good and teach the students the language of music. He taught previously at this school in 1984 when it was still a junior high school, so he knows the building. One of his strongest assets is perseverance because he doesn't give up easily. In order to enhance CCMS he is going to show up and teach everyday. He got into music after he went to music camp in Vermont during 1971. He encourages his students by telling them to try and never give up. When he isn't teaching he plays golf. He wants to keep himself a mystery (much suspense), so he didn't reveal anything more about himself.

Good luck for Mr. Kovatch throughout the school year and we will look forward to your teaching for years to come.



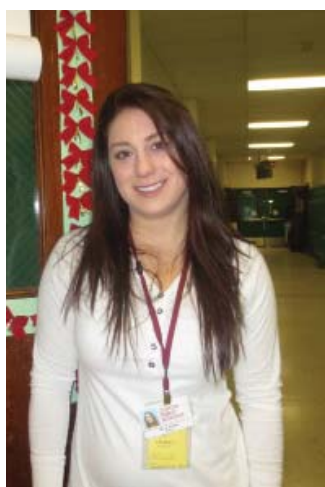
Ms. O'Callaghan is Here to Help

Victoria Cabrera

Ms. O'Callaghan is our new case manager for the Child Study Team. Previously, she used to work as a teacher in Clifton High School for fourteen years in various settings. She said, "I switched positions because I wanted to work with children and parents in a different way." She is willing to work hard and do what it takes to get tasks accomplished. Some of the ways she would enhance CCMS and make it better would be to communicate efficiently with students, parents, teachers, staff members and administrators. Working at Clifton High School impacted her to become a Special Needs teacher, then a case manager here at CCMS.

Students will know that she genuinely cares about us by getting to know you, what your interests are and speaking to you in a respectful and caring manner. Her interest is to get involved with her two children's many activities.

I hope we all welcome and give Ms. O'Callaghan a wonderfully successful year here at CCMS!



CCMS Welcomes Ms. Hicswa

Mia Dubac

Miss Ashlee Hicswa is the new 6th grade Language Arts Teacher at Christopher Columbus Middle School, and we are very happy to have her. I had the opportunity to interview Miss Hicswa and learn more about her. She shared with me that she wanted to become a teacher because throughout her entire educational career she looked up to teachers as role models. Her teachers encouraged her to be the best she could be, and she would also like to have this kind of positive relationship with her students. Miss Hicswa is grateful to have learned from Ms. Balascio and Mrs. Duffy when she was a brand new teacher because they provided her with the experiences she needed to be prepared to teach middle school students.

The strongest asset that she brings to CCMS is a smile with a positive attitude. She says, "A smile is something simple and easily forgotten to do, but it goes a long way." To make CCMS better, she would like to encourage students to participate more in activities because they are for us! Miss Hicswa adds that she wants students to remember that they are what make the school great.

She remembers when she was in elementary school, and she

struggled with getting to school on time. To solve this problem, her grandma created a list of things she needed to get done in the morning, step by step. This personal experience has impacted her life and teaching because it taught her that being prepared and organized saves time and unnecessary stress.

Her students know that she genuinely cares about them because of the little things she does such as greeting them, asking about their soccer game over the weekend, taking the time to tell them that she is proud of them, and reminding them that we are all on the same team together. She says that if people would just take an extra moment or two each day to do something for other people, that it will have a positive effect everywhere you go.

Her interests outside of teaching are reading and doing most outdoor activities. She enjoys everything from camping to snowboarding, and also enjoys indoor activities such as yoga and watching movies.

There it is in a nutshell! Miss Hicswa is a positive person who genuinely cares about her students and we hope she stays at CCMS for a very long time.

Stuff That Grinds My Gears!

Rene Cisneros

Topic 1: Stereotypes

I just hate it when people use stereotypes to pretend they know another person's life, it doesn't have to involve race or color. As a person who plays video games, once people hear that I am a so-called "gamer" they automatically think that I do nothing other than sit on a couch and play the latest Call of Duty game. Another unfortunate stereotype from ignorant people is the Latino/Mexican Stereotype. "Did your mother and father cross the border on foot or in a trunk? What is your favorite food... Oh no wait let me guess it's a taco." Even though the latter is true I just hate it when others use the stereotypical Mexican to describe me as "uneducated" and "unlawful".

Topic 2: Misleading Advertisements

I get so annoyed when I look at a commercial for a restaurant and see a perfect pizza or that perfect entrée and my mouth is watering. Then, when I go to the restaurant I see the food and it started off frozen, which is a rock hard piece of bread with cheese thrown on top of it with sauce or the food is heated up in a microwave. This disappoints the consumer and me because it is a form of "bait and switch." The movie and pictures are enhanced with a Photoshop-style program to make it seem better than what it really is in real life. Food fraud!!!

Topic 3: News in general

Yes, I'm talking about you NBC, CNN and Fox News. There are so many reasons that I don't even know where to start. First, they either have a conservative agenda or a liberal agenda. There is a good chance that what they are saying is not 100% true. Secondly, they use fear to get ratings. When some kind of event occurs you always see at first like 100+ dead then 50+ and then around 15 or 16 all just to capture ratings. Also they barely talk about things outside of the USA. While they talk about Ferguson there are MASSIVE protests in Mexico, a rebellion in Indonesia and pro-democracy movements in China and I am yet to see a full segment about one of these topics in most big news stations. This is one of the main reasons most Americans have near no clue of what is actually happening in the world that is not being spoon fed by the major news outlets. I get more of an idea of what's happening in the world from satire shows like The Colbert Report or The Daily Show that air on Comedy Central than I do on most if not all news shows.

Topic 4: Nostalgia

What I mean by nostalgia is how I always seem to overhear others say how "music nowadays is trash" and "I wish it can be more like it was back then". To my surprise, this is not coming from people in their 20s or 30s but instead people in their teens who in the so-called 90s were about 3 or 4 and haven't seen anything other than educational shows and listened to the Wiggles. They have no idea what it was like in that time and neither do I. So it bothers me when people constantly complain how the media was so much better back then and how terrible it is today.



Advice for ALL Students

Kayla & Nyla

Do you know what you can do to make our school have a better sense of community or more school spirit? Read our suggestions and prove us wrong!

- 1) Stay on the right side of the hallway when you are walking.
- 2) Do not push others.
- 3) Respect everyone.
- 4) Behave in class.
- 5) Don't talk when others are speaking.
- 6) Do not say anything inappropriate.
- 7) When you have a problem, tell an adult instead of handling the situation inappropriately.
- 8) Leave space in the halls for others to get to their lockers.
- 9) If you have a problem with someone, keep your distance.
- 10) Wear appropriate clothing!
- 11) Bullying is wrong!
- 12) Try your best in all of your classes.
- 13) Have a positive attitude!
- 14) Study in an organized way.
- 15) Make everyday count!

CCMS

Opinions



Back to School Night: A Night for Parents

Melissa Spigelman

On Thursday, October 2nd Back to School Night took place. It was a busy night full of nerves, information and wonder. This is when your parents and guardians came to meet all of our Christopher Columbus teachers, staff and administrators. The night was divided into 3 main events that your parents and guardians were able to find out specific information in each area and ask questions. The first event was a presentation given by Mr. Petrocelli, which he discussed our school rules that are in our agendas. He went over the important topics like attendance, lateness, dress code, discipline and more. The second event for your parents and guardians was to visit your academic classes. This meeting was set up by teams, so it made it easier to meet your teachers and receive a custom presentation about the rules in the classroom and the curriculum you will be taught throughout the year. The last event for your parents and guardians was held in the lower gym, where they met your Cycle and Physical Education teachers. They had great presentations too!

During the evening, the Book Sale was going on and the Home School Association was selling the CCMS gym clothes in the Cafeteria.

CCMS Mechanical Mustangs Impress at Robotics Competition

SITE Science Invention Club & Mr. Giblin

What a great day of engineering and competition! The CCMS Mechanical Mustangs competed in the annual LEGO FIRST Competition at Clifton High School for the fourth year in the row. There are three parts to this competition and the CCMS Mustangs were ready to go!

The first part is a Robotics Competition! The club spent many weeks designing and programming a LEGO NXT Robot to complete missions on an obstacle course. They had three minutes to score as many points as possible on the course.

The second part was a Science Project about how to make learning better. The team chose to improve how students learn about Healthy Living. They invented a portable device and app called a Denloh! It has games, quizzes, and can even give you rewards for being healthy!

The third part is called Core Values! This is a teamwork challenge where teams have to show they have good teamwork, professionalism, but can still have FUN! Out of the 40 teams at



As a word of advice for students, please next year don't attend Back to School night, as it is a night for your parents/guardians and not for you. It causes disorder and confusion, so please stay home.

I know the teachers and administrators were very happy to see such a large turn out for Back to School night. It is very important to maintain communication with the school regarding your child's education because they have to work together!



the event, CCMS was one of only THREE teams to win the CORE Values AWARD! You can come see this award in the Technology Lab in Room A-5!

Good Work, Mechanical Mustangs!

School Spirit Week: Did YOU have Spirit?

Juvily Sanchez and Xiomara Saavedra

What words can we use to describe School Spirit Week? Let's see... fun, exciting, rewarding and successful. On Monday, November 17th was the beginning of School Spirit Week and we had to wear neon colors, but not everyone seemed to be in the mood to participate. Moreover, many teachers gave out Champs tickets to everyone that wore their School Spirit neon clothes!

On the next day, Tuesday, November 18th, it was wear Disney clothing, which as everyone knows, is Mr. Lab's favorite day, since he is secretly known as "Mr. Disney." Who does not love the Disney characters? I know I do! There were quite a few participating but not as many as I originally thought.

On the following day, Wednesday, November 19th, we had to wear the color pink, not the musician Pink. There seemed to be more people participating than the last few days, but it would be great to see many more kids have more school spirit. We can do better!

Well, Thursday, November 20th was the best day of the week! Why? This was hat day! If you wanted to wear your favorite hat all day in school, you had to donate one dollar during homeroom. These donations were designed to help towards school funds for special activities for the students here at CCMS. There were all kinds of sports teams represented; Mr. Gengaro wore a cowboy hat, Mrs. Keenan had a different hat for each period and everyone loved this.

The last day, I believe, was designed for the teachers because it was the 1980's and not many students have clothes from that time period.

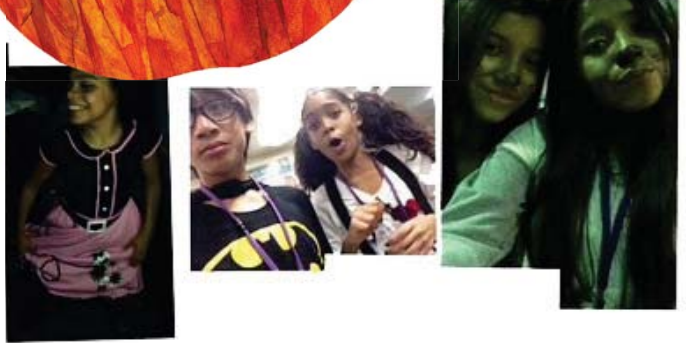
I was very proud to say, that our first school spirit week was a success! We have to have more school pride and everyone should participate next time because it was truly a lot of fun! Let's make our next school spirit week even better!

Halloween Dance: Scary, BOO-tiful and Fun!

Brianna Conlon

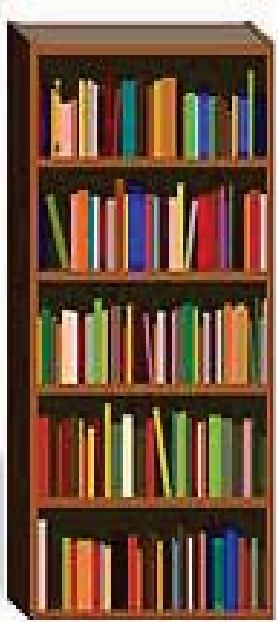
This year's Halloween Dance was a blast! Everybody was dancing and singing to the eclectic group of songs. There were teachers dancing the night away too! All of the costumes were well designed, creative and cool! There were zombies, cheerleaders, skeletons, nerds and more. The teachers were wearing costumes too! Ms. Kensicki, the 6th grade Science teacher was Rosie the Riveter, Mr. Labriola was Jack Sparrow and Ms. Lalama was Dracula. The decorations were so spooky! There were spiders, pumpkins, tombstones, and a pirate Mickey Mouse. The snacks and drinks were also delicious. The snacks were Oreos, candy, and adorably decorated cupcakes. The beverages were Arizona Iced Tea, water and Kool Aid.

The dance was awesome! Thank you to all of the staff, parents and volunteers for a successful Halloween Dance! Boo!



Happy Halloween!

BOOK REVIEWS



The Hunger Games: Mockingjay

Dominic Elejalde

Did you read Mockingjay yet? I did and as the new book reviewer guy, what a shocker! First of all, this book was the weakest book in the series. Sadly and it's even worse because this is the conclusion to the entire trilogy. To all who are reading this review- because you want to know if it's worth reading, it has no hunger games. Really? Why put Hunger Games in the title? Why not just Mockingjay; it does sound stronger. Also, since this is the weakest book in the series, why put this into two movies? Lionsgate, I'm not here to review the movie I am here to review the book.

SPOILER ALERT! STOP READING IF YOU HAVEN'T READ THE BOOK!

The biggest cliché I saw in this book was Prim's death because knowing Suzanne Collins, she is totally not going to kill a young girl that Katniss cares about and I expected Prim to die in Catching Fire, but she didn't. So I just sat there reading and waiting until Prim's death came. Speaking of deaths, why not kill Johanna, Katniss, or Peeta instead of Finnick because Finnick is literally the most insignificant surviving tribute among them and I would've much preferred a bigger plot twist such as Katniss's death. Moreover, I absolutely hate that they decided to make Johanna utterly useless; they made their strongest and most independent female character in their series useless. Johanna was my favorite character because she didn't have any love interests and she literally lost so much but still was high functioning (unlike Katniss). And another thing, why didn't Coin have one of those force fields over the ledge during Snow's execution? Didn't she think that someone would tell her that Katniss was mad at her because she thinks that she killed Prim? And the biggest thing that I had with this book was that there was no hunger games in this whole book, and the sad thing is that the only solution is changing the title, just a simple thing like that.

After all the flaws I give Hunger Games: Mockingjay a solid 6/10. Hopefully, after reading this review, you agree with me or if not... oh well. Those who just want to know whether or not to read it, go read it and complete the series.

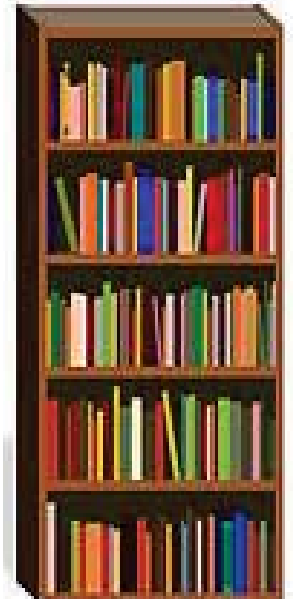
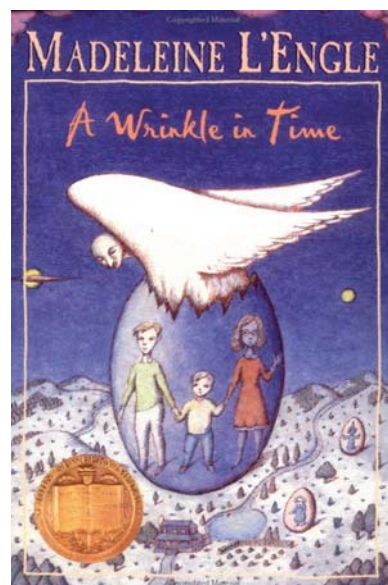
CCMS Critique

A Wrinkle in Time

Mia Dubac

A Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L'Engle was a winner of the 1963 Newbery Medal after it was published a year earlier by Crosswick Limited. Even though this novel is more than 50 years old, it is still read by many because it is phenomenal! It is a tale about a girl named Meg Murry who goes on an adventure along with her brother Charles Wallace to find their father, a brilliant scientist, who was captured a year ago. Calvin O'Keefe, Ms. Whatsit, Mrs. Who, and Ms. Witch also decide to join them on the search because they want to help, and only the three women can do so in a way that the others cannot. They travel to many planets far away by tessering (traveling and making a wrinkle in space and time) in order to save Meg and Charles' father. The humans experience conflicts with the red-eyed man, IT, and the Dark Thing that involve getting away from and defeating them. Some of the events are exciting and nerve wracking because you begin to think that Charles Wallace will be captured forever and they will never reach their father.

This book was a great read filled with many fantastic events. There are times when you feel like you are part of the book and you are experiencing everything that is happening. I enjoyed this novel because it was filled with suspense and scenes that were very descriptive. I would recommend this book to anyone in fifth grade and higher who likes fantasy and science fiction, and I give it five stars!



Big Hero 6

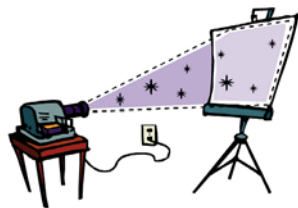
Dominick Elejalde

Okay, I'm going to discuss my review of Big Hero 6 and I believe it has flaws. It's not perfect but it isn't exactly bad either. Even though it has some flaws they won't affect the movie's overall score. I give credit where credit is due and that credit is the plot because it is pretty good. The soundtrack is also really good but I'm here to review the plot not the soundtrack.

SPOILER ALERT! STOP READING IF YOU HAVEN'T SEEN THE MOVIE!

The biggest flaw that I saw in this movie is that it went WAY too fast; if it had another extra 30-45 minutes, then this wouldn't be a problem. There were also some flaws in the plot that could not be brushed over either. When Hiro is in Wormhole and Baymax's armor is damaged, why doesn't he just get on the ship and let go of his fist and come out with him? Really? The writers of Big Hero 6 wanted this to become the next Frozen but they didn't see the most obvious thing, it is nothing like Frozen. Also, I might have liked the soundtrack, but the target audience might not and that can be a problem if you wanted this to be the next Frozen. By the way... Fall Out Boy? Really? I like the fact that Disney is recognizing popular artists, but whom in your target audience listens to Fall Out Boy? Even in CCMS there's only a handful of students that listen to them before this movie (me included). The sad thing is I can't really find a solution to this problem because you can't put Frozen songs in an action-comic film.

I give this movie a strong 8.5/10 and strongly suggest you go watch this film. If you want me to review a specific movie and see me in the hall just tell me. To people not sure if you want to see this film or not, go see it, it's really good and is Frozen worthy. So, I guess this is where I end it, so just keep on watching movies.



An End to a Legendary Trilogy: Taken 3

Emily Aldin

There are many movies that came out this year definitely worth watching like Big Hero 6, Guardians Of The Galaxy, Nightcrawler, The Hobbit, etc. As this year comes to a close, the Taken movie series makes a comeback after two years of cautiously waiting. Sadly, this suspenseful, action-packed thriller is coming to a close after 6 years of production. In early January of 2015 (the 9th), Taken 3 will be hitting theatres, starting off the year right with a good old-fashioned Liam Neeson movie. Thanks to the work of a talented production crew, and a great director Oliver Megaton, we'll be getting the last of ex-covert operative Bryan Mills' battle to keep his country, and family well and protected.

In case you haven't seen the first two movies, here's a little summary. Bryan Mills-played by Liam Neeson is a well-trained military operative that has exchanged his retirement for a body-guarding job for well-known celebrities. When he allows his daughter, Kim- played by Maggie Grace- to take a trip to Paris, she gets kidnapped. Fighting through a prowess of guards to get his daughter back, he makes some enemies along the way. When she's all well and safe, Bryan finds refuge back in his hometown. However, this pursuit is not over yet. The friends, family, and loved ones of this body-guard are seeking revenge by tracking down Bryan and his family because they are planning on assassinating them. Bryan pulls through and saves his wife and daughter once again. Now here's where we leave off. In the released 2015 trailer for Taken 3, they show that these same groups against Bryan and his family have murdered his wife, trying to pin the death on him. Bryan fights the people he used to work alongside with, being hunted down by the CIA, FBI, and the other alphabet Federal police groups. Mills is looking for vengeance and is ready to do whatever it takes to save the last of his family that he's got.

I'm personally more than excited to see what happens, and I'm sure this movie won't disappoint. If you're looking for a new year movie, or just something exciting, worthwhile, and giving you chills-while at the same time- filling your body with thrill, this movie is definitely worth a look your time! Popcorn and soda anyone?

Interstellar

Nada Awadalla

Adventure, heartbreak, thrill and fear are just a few of the many emotions that the audience will go through as they watch the movie. It is a roller coaster of emotions! Through this exploration, they will witness the direction that mankind can take to escape and discover new creations that is not in another country, continent or planet but in another galaxy! This movie is about a group of explorers that make use of a newly discovered wormhole to surpass the limitations on human space travel and conquer the almost limitless distances involved in an interstellar voyage.

Interstellar is a big budget, science-fiction attempt to make the audience have a breath taking, edgy, hopeful and a tear-jerking experience. This movie is one of Christopher Nolan's greatest achievements and deserves to be seen on the biggest screen and the best sound system in order to enjoy every single minute of this movie. I encourage you to watch it, but be aware... it does contain some intense hazardous actions and brief strong language. Popcorn anyone?

An Introduction to Voting at CCMS

Mr. Callaghan

Many CCMS students participated in the National Mock Election during the last week of October. We live in the greatest country in the world, with many rights given to American citizens. Sadly, many Americans do not realize that with those rights come responsibilities. Voting is one such responsibility and in order to expose students to the voting process Social Studies teachers at CCMS took the time to allow students to vote in this year's election.

The National Mock Election began in 1980 with 250,000 student voters that year. There have been as many as five million voters in recent years. CCMS students were asked this year to choose a United States senator from New Jersey, and also a member of the House of Representatives from N.J.'s 9th congressional district. Although there were other political parties on the ballot, the most familiar were the Democratic and Republican nominees. For the Senate the choices were Cory Booker, the Democratic incumbent, and the Republican challenger, Jeff Bell. In the 9th district students chose between

the Democrat Bill Pascrell, and his opponent was Deirdre Paul, a Montclair State professor.

Members of the "one Person Can Make a Difference" club worked hard to inform CCMS students by making posters of each of the candidates, as well as hanging them throughout the building.

Hi, my name is Kailey and I'm a member of the "One Person Can Make a Difference" club. Voting is the most important right in our country, whoever wants to take an active role in our country are in their hands. The candidates for Senate were Cory Booker and Jeff Bell. Bill Pascrell and Deirdre Paul were running for House of Representatives. These people want to make a change to our economy and we must trust one of them. We don't know who won but hopefully soon we will know who would make things better for the citizens of New Jersey. Thank you to all CCMS students who participated in the National Mock Election.



Veteran's Day 2014

Mr. D'Andrea - CCMS Counselor and Vietnam Veteran

Students and staff bought U. S. flags during a two-week period leading up to Veteran's Day.

Each flag was personalized with the names of the veteran and displayed in the front corridor of our school.

****Over 125 flags were sold and placed on display.****

This year, students received "Champs" tickets!

Every student who made a donation or purchased a flag received a ticket to place in the weekly drawing.

This was our way of rewarding them for doing a good deed.

Students and staff also participated in a dress down day on November 11th. The participants wore red, white & blue or patriotic attire to honor family and friends on Veteran's Day.

A total of \$500.00 was raised by the students and teachers at CCMS.

We are pleased to announce that Doctor Scolamiero of Medicare (Fairfield & E. Rutherford) matched the entire amount!

The total of \$1,000.00 was sent to the Wounded Warrior Project.

An organization that is committed to help returning war veterans who are recovering from catastrophic injuries.

Thank you to everyone for making this possible!





The CCMS Main Office gets FROZEN!



Hour of Code
Ms. Lalama

Ms. Lalama and a group of students participated in the Hour of Code. The Hour of Code is an initiative that encourages students to get excited about programming! This program teaches students how to program by showing students how to write the code for a fun game. The students, who had little to no idea how to write computer code, did a great job! They all created a game by the end of the hour! Imagine making a computer game in only one hour! How cool!

Congrats students! You really did something that a lot of people would be very impressed with!

Facts about Minecraft for PS3!

Richard Lazaro

Did you know that Minecraft Playstation 3 Edition was released in December 27, 2013? Also the disc version was released in May 14, 2014. In the Playstation store, Minecraft can be bought for \$19.99. This edition has recent skin packs including the Festive Skin pack, which was released the same day Minecraft Playstation 3 Edition, was released.

Soon after, other skin packs were available at the Playstation store such as Battle & Beasts 1 skin pack and Battle & Beasts 2 skin pack, which was released in May 2014. Each skin pack is said to have 40+ skins to choose from, this being said, you'll get a great deal for \$1.99 for each skin pack. There are also texture packs you could buy at the Playstation store. The texture packs are Cartoon, City, Fantasy, and Plastic, Candy, Natural and much more.



Samples from the CCMS Art Gallery