Dear Charter Oak Families:

As I write my November communication, we are days away for our student-led conferences where our children will demonstrate their best reflective skills as IB learners. I hope you continue to find this experience informative and rewarding. If you are new to Charter Oak I am confident that you will be impressed with the process. Our staff and the students have been preparing for their conferences with great focus and excitement. This is a unique experience at the elementary level in West Hartford and a wonderful feature of Charter Oak International Academy. Please don’t hesitate to let us know your opinion about student-led conferences. We are always looking for ways to improve! Please make sure that you mark conference days on your calendar since dismissal time changes during Conference Week.

November also marks the beginning of Explorations, our after-school enrichment program. Under the leadership of Ms. Coyne, this year we have made an effort to increase the number and variety of courses offered. We are very happy with the outcome and we look forward to seeing the students in action. The interest for the courses has been outstanding and for this first session of the year, more than 200 students will be involved. Those who did not get into courses will have preferential selection in our next round in January. Please consider becoming an instructor for the next session or send us ideas or topics of interest you and your children would like to see.

Finally, I would like to officially share with our school community the three major goals contained in our School Development Plan. This year we will collaboratively seek deeper understanding of inquiry elements that will support teaching and learning throughout our building and curriculum, we will embrace the opportunities the new building provides to create an environment that is welcoming, inclusive, and supportive of our mission as an IB school with special emphasis on sustainability, mindfulness, and the teaching of peace. We will support our staff by providing specific professional development in the areas of inquiry, mathematics, instructional practices and cultural competence.

Like last year, the School Development Plan references a parent survey that will be administered to our families. In that survey, we will ask our community about their level of satisfaction with our magnet school program. This will allow us to reflect and improve on our work of supporting our current and future students to become active, compassionate, lifelong learners.

On behalf of the entire Charter Oak staff, I would like to wish our families a wonderful Thanksgiving break that marks the beginning of a holiday season that we hope is full of joy and peace for all.

Juan Melián
Principal
Queridas Familias de Charter Oak:

Al escribir esta comunicación para el mes de noviembre, estamos a días de comenzar nuestras conferencias en las que sus hijos les guiarán sobre el trabajo que han hecho en los dos primeros meses del año. Esperamos que ustedes continúen valorando esta experiencia como informativa y satisfactoria. Si usted es nuevo en Charter Oak, tengo la convicción de que estarán impresionados con nuestro modelo de conferencias. Nuestros profesores y estudiantes han estado preparándose con gran interés y dedicación. Es una experiencia única en el nivel de enseñanza primaria en West Hartford y un rasgo distintivo de nuestra escuela como Escuela Internacional IB. Por favor, no dude en hacernos saber su opinión sobre su experiencia con las conferencias. Siempre buscamos modos de mejorar.

En noviembre también empezamos con nuestro programa de enriquecimiento después de la escuela, Explorations. Bajo el liderazgo de la Señorita Coyne, este año hemos hecho un gran esfuerzo en incrementar el número y la variedad de los cursos ofrecidos. Estamos muy satisfechos con los resultados y esperamos con ilusión el momento de ver a nuestros estudiantes en acción. El interés por los cursos ha sido fenomenal para esta primera sesión en la que más de 200 estudiantes estarán involucrados. Aquellos que no entraron en los cursos tendrán tratamiento preferencial en la próxima ronda de enero. Por favor, piense en la posibilidad de convertirse en instructor o envíenos ideas o temas de interés para usted o sus hijos.

Finalmente, me gustaría compartir oficialmente con todos ustedes los objetivos del año contenidos en nuestro Plan de Mejora de la Escuela. Este año trabajaremos en obtener un mejor entendimiento de lo que es la enseñanza inquisitiva, buscaremos desarrollar todas las posibilidades que ofrece el nuevo edificio para crear un ambiente cálido e inclusivo en apoyo de nuestros ideales como escuela IB y nos centraremos en la idea de sostenibilidad, mindfulness, y la enseñanza de la paz, y apoyaremos a nuestros profesores ofreciéndoles desarrollo profesional en las áreas de enseñanza inquisitiva, matemáticas y competencia cultural. Como el año pasado, el Plan de Mejora de la Escuela, incluye una encuesta que será administrada a todos los padres relativa al grado de satisfacción de nuestras familias con nuestro programa IB. Esta encuesta nos permitirá reflexionar y mejorar nuestro trabajo en ayudar a nuestros estudiantes a convertirse en personas activas, compasivas y amantes del aprendizaje.

En nombre del personal de Charter Oak, me gustaría desearles a todos un Feliz Fin de Semana de Acción de Gracias que marca el principio de la temporada de fiestas y celebraciones que esperamos estén llenas de felicidad y paz para todos.

Juan Melián
Principal
Benchmark assessments, teacher observation, and additional developmental assessments help us determine when conceptual gaps in understanding may be inhibiting a student’s learning. Students who demonstrate gaps in numerical understanding are supported through small group instruction within the classroom, and at times additional tutoring to close these gaps. When number concepts are developed, these students will be better able to access classroom learning more fully. All students, starting in Pre-K, are developing their sense of number; and we encourage students to use efficient mental-math strategies; their understanding of number relationships, place value concepts, and magnitude of number, to support computation. This focus on number relationships supports mathematical achievement for all students.

We are further supporting all learners through a school-wide enrichment model, using “push-in” problem-solving that meets each learner where they are. This model is focused on building problem-solving stamina and students’ acceptance of “productive struggle”. Problems, connected to the curriculum, are intended as an opportunity for students to learn math through necessity brought on by the problem situation. Problems are developed with a low floor (so all students can access the problem) and a high ceiling, allowing for appropriate challenge for all students. Problems will focus on the following areas:

- Number Concepts
- Magnitude of number
- Modeling and interpreting using place value
- Addition and subtraction situations
- Multiplication and division situations
- Modeling and solving problems with fractions and decimals

Students are expected to struggle, make mistakes, and figure out strategies that get them closer to a solution. Students are given the opportunity to share their strategies and learn from each other. They use a range of materials and models that bring their thinking to a visible level, and to use drawings and appropriate mathematical vocabulary to explain their thinking. The teachers conclude each problem-solving session connecting strategies and concepts with current curricular goals, and clarifying any misconceptions that have been uncovered during the students’ work. “Number Talks” are promoted throughout the grade levels, supporting mathematical vocabulary and mental math strategies, that will support this problem-solving and children’s confidence as problem solvers.

All grades from Kindergarten through grade five are also piloting an Internet-based math support program called “DreamBox” that enables students to receive continuous focused practice of the standards-based concepts being taught in our curriculum. Dreambox is aligned with our curriculum and can be manipulated by each teacher to provide an additional layer of focused practice for areas of need specific to an individual. Dreambox does not take the place of sound instruction, but provides each teacher with active scaffolded practice for students. This leaves more time for teachers to focus on their initial instruction of curricular concepts and the implementation of rich collaborative problem-based learning.

Research has shown this program to be effective in helping students achieve yearly mathematical goals with about 60 minutes’ use per week. Within the first few weeks, and throughout the program, lessons adjust to each student’s strengths and needs. Dreambox is sensitive to subtle misunderstandings, and can identify and remediate gaps in mathematical understanding. It is important that students work at a level that is challenging for them, and that they make mistakes -- these let the program know what their needs are. Errors are responded to first with a repeated opportunity, and then a hint. If the student continues to make errors, the program elicits responses that either show understanding or continued misconceptions. The program analyzes the student’s responses and goes back to an earlier skill -- to correct a misconception. When the student shows understanding of the earlier skill, the program resumes forward progress. The program will alert the teacher if a student continues to demonstrate a misconception after support has been provided.

Our focused, multi-faceted approach to mathematics will continue to strengthen our ability to meet each student where they are, and to challenge the mathematical mindset of all students.
STUDENT ACTIVITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday, 11/7</td>
<td>7:45</td>
<td>Instrumental Room</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orchestra - Gr. 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 11/8</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, 11/9</td>
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<td>Auditorium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Band - Gr. 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, 11/10</td>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>Music Room</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chorus Gr. 4&amp;5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Various Rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explorations</td>
<td>3:20-4:20</td>
<td>Various Rooms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homework Center</td>
<td>3:20-4:20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, 11/11</td>
<td>8:30-10:30</td>
<td>Flagpole</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veterans Day Ceremony</td>
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<td>Courtyard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Photo Re-takes</td>
<td>10:00-11:00</td>
<td>PK Commons &amp; Stage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pie Fundraiser Pickup</td>
<td>3:20</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Band - Gr. 5</td>
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<td>Chorus Gr. 4&amp;5</td>
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<td>No Explorations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explorations Parent Information Session</td>
<td>3:30</td>
<td>Technology Room</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, 11/18</td>
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Veterans Day Ceremony

Please join us on Friday, November 11, 2016 at 8:30 am, as we gather around the flagpole to honor local veterans and military personnel. Students will read their writing and poetry and will perform musical tributes. As a school community, we will be making cards to send to Veterans at Bethesda Naval Hospital. Veterans will also be visiting classrooms to share their experiences with students.

All Veterans Invited:

We would be honored to include any Charter Oak parents or family members, who are currently serving or who have served in the armed forces, with recognition at our ceremony. Please contact Janet Fournier with their names and contact information.

Bakers Needed:

After the flagpole ceremony on Veterans Day we will be hosting a breakfast for our veterans. I am looking for volunteers to bake or send in breakfast items (Danish, muffins, fruit, bagels, cream cheese, doughnuts, breads, juice, etc.) After breakfast, our guests will visit classrooms to talk to the students. Donations for the breakfast can be dropped off in the office before school on November 11th.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (860) 233-8506. Thank you for your support.

Janet Fournier
Second graders Really Dig Soil!

This year’s second graders have just finished their unit on soil. Our soil unit was packed full of great learning experiences. We started off with a visit to Westmoor Park, followed by a trip to Roaring Brook Nature Center and even got a visit from Mr. Ianni, a real soil scientist.

We were very excited to see so many students go home and take action based on their new learning. We had classroom discussions which revealed that second grade has quite a few families that already compost. We visited the Inquiry room and worked with Mrs. Sanderson investigating 5 soil samples. Then students planted seeds in the 5 soils using plastic gloves. Each finger held a different type of soil. Then students made predictions about which soil would grow plants best. Many students were risk-takers, when investigating soils, by handling worms. It was a great unit to start the year.

The Second Grade Team:

Mrs. Dunn
Ms. Stewart
Mr. Williams

WELCOME FROM THE LITERACY CENTER

Reading with Young Children

As the Early Intervention reading teacher here at Charter Oak, I support many of our young readers. I encourage parents to support a love for reading at home. The Literacy Center is located in suite 143. Please feel free to stop by if you have any questions about your child’s reading. Here are some tips for how to help your young readers love reading at home:

- Set a good example. When children see people reading around them, they often want to read, too.
- Praise your child for showing effort with reading. Your patience and willingness to let them take chances builds confidence to keep trying.
- Practice is especially important in reading. Vocabulary is built by seeing the same words in stories many times.
- Find time for reading. Even on the go you can practice reading signs, billboards, recipes, food labels, and menus.
- Think about limiting TV time to make time for reading. Sometimes you can even use a favorite show to build interest in reading about a topic like nature or sports.
- Take time every day to read aloud with your child. They will learn to love books and get to hear good reading modeled for them. Be sure to use expression in your voice as you read.

Make it fun. Build a curiosity about books. Look at the covers and pictures in books to see what’s to come. Ask questions, discuss stories, and connect them to your own lives.

Make reading a part of the day you and your child can look forward to! I look forward to working with parents and young readers this year.

Leigh Eppinger
Early Intervention Teacher

Picture Retake Day
Friday, November 11, 2016
Kids Group will meet after school on Tuesdays from 3:20 to 4:15. The Group is for children at Charter Oak International Academy whose families are experiencing separation, divorce, death of a loved one or other circumstances of loss. Children are often in need of extra caring at a time when parents are also struggling with difficult issues. KIDS join together in a safe and positive club-like setting with other children experiencing family adjustments. The group is now forming. There is no charge. Parent/Guardian permission is required. The program is facilitated by Mrs. Colleen Murphy Hilliard, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist from The Bridge Family Center. For information, please contact Mr. Chuck Hummel, School Social Worker at Charter Oak at 860-233-8506 Ext. 5562.

What’s Cooking at the FRC

The Family Resource Center is delighted to announce that once again we have been awarded funding for our two parent leadership programs. UConn People Empowering People (PEP) and the Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) will each begin in January.

PEP will meet on Friday mornings at Charter Oak and PLTI will meet Thursday evenings at Conard High School with dinner and child care provided. Both programs provide parents with opportunities to connect with others, to develop leadership skills to learn about our community and to participate in a meaningful community service project. Please stop in the FRC, Room 150 and we can give you all the details or plan to join us for a parent leadership information session on Fri. Dec. 2 at 9:00 am in the FRC. Come and meet the parent leadership staff.

During PEACE Place the FRC provides childcare both before and after school for children who attend the pre-k program at Charter Oak. We have room for a couple of additional preschoolers in our morning program which opens at 7:30 AM. If you need childcare for your preschooler, before school begins, stop by or give us a call at 860-929-5575.

Please save the date- Family Academy, Saturday, Dec. 3. Your whole family is invited to join us for a morning of hands-on IB activities. There will lots of fun and food. Registration forms will come home next week.

Deborah Zipkin
FRC Director

Pies !!!

Reminder: If you ordered pies, they must be picked up immediately after school on November 11th. No exceptions as we have no freezer availability. Thank you!
Speaking Another Language at Home Helps your Child in School

Hello!  
Bonjour!  
¡Hola!  
Ciao!  
您好

Do you speak another language at home besides English? Excellent! Don’t stop speaking your native language at home!

Here are some ways you can contribute to your child’s education and speak your native language at the same time:

1. Tell your child stories. By telling your child stories, you are developing their vocabulary and oral language skills.

2. When your child brings home a library book from school, sit with them and talk about the pictures. You can understand a great deal about a story by looking at the pictures and talking about what is happening on each page, what will happen next and what happened at the end of the story.

3. Sing songs and share nursery rhymes in your native language.

4. Go to the public library and get a library card. There are many wonderful, free resources at the library. Make it a family “field trip” and get in the habit of going on a regular basis.

5. Talk, talk, talk to your child. A meaningful conversation at the dinner table, grocery store or a family event can help a child develop their ideas and questioning skills.

6. Watch educational television programs together and talk about the shows.

7. Read books in your native language to your children. Faxon Library in Elmwood has books in many languages. Check them out!

8. Start a home library for your child. The Family Resource Center has many books in English for 25 cents a piece or 10 books for $1.00. Let your child pick out some books and begin their own library at home.

9. Talk to your child about the importance of being able to speak more than one language. Each and every world language has value, and speaking more than one language makes them a “world citizen”.

If you would like to gain a better understanding of English, The Family Resource Center offers a class, “English for Families” on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings from 9-11. Sign up in the Family Resource Center if you are interested.

Lillian Rausch  
ESOL teacher.

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**LOST AND FOUND**

Our lost and found is now located underneath The staircase in the center hallway near the office. Please check for any missing items your child may have lost. Each Friday, any unclaimed items will be donated to charity.

Please clip Box Tops and drop them into the containers in the office. These earn money for our school.
**Explorations Update**

We had a great response from students interested in our first Explorations session being offered this year! Unfortunately, we were not able to give each interested student a spot in one of their choices. Don’t worry though - anyone not placed for this session will be placed on a waitlist and given priority for session two! Session two will begin in late January, keep your eye out for brochures and sign-ups which will be sent home in December!

We are also seeking parent volunteers who are interested in running their own Exploration session. We know that we have a community full of parents with special talents and passions! Explorations is intended to provide an exciting and challenging after-school enrichment program for Charter Oak students. All classes are created with our school goals and mission in mind. They provide further opportunities outside of the regular school day for students related to being: Internationally Minded, Inquiry-Based Learners, Action-Oriented and Physically and Mentally Healthy. Do you have an idea of a session you could offer related to our goals? We’d love to work with you to make it happen! An information session for anyone interested will be held on Thursday, November 17, 2016 at 3:30 p.m. in the technology room.

**Reminders for Session One of Explorations:**

The Exploration program begins on Thursday, November 10th. We will NOT have Explorations during Conference Week November 14th-18th. The dates Explorations will be held for session one are as following:

- **Monday sessions** (Cardboard Challenge, Yoga, Express Yourself, Be a Fit Kid! & Scarf Crocheting) are: 11/21, 11/28, 12/5, 12/12.

- **Tuesday sessions**: (Play Around the Room, Hula Hooping, Be a Fit Kid!, Action Club, Maker Space) are: 11/22, 11/29, 12/6, 12/13. ***Reader’s Theater will meet on both Tuesdays & Thursdays.

- **Thursday sessions**: (Play Around the Room, Dash & Dot, Science Sleuths, Mindfulness, Animal Adventures, Get Cooking! & Virtual Reality) are 11/10, 12/1, 12/8, 12/15. ***Reader’s Theater will meet on both Tuesdays & Thursdays.

**Pick-Up for Explorations is at 4:20pm in the lobby by the main office.** Students are not able to leave unless accompanied by an adult. We cannot allow students to walk home. Please communicate your pick-up plan with your child. If you have not contacted us about bus transportation, as indicated on the course selection form, and you have been unable to arrange pick-up plans for them- you need to contact us immediately at 860-233-8506.

Diana Coyne
ICT Teacher - Explorations Coordinator

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**SAVE THE DATE**

**Election Day**
Tuesday, November 8, 2016
NO SCHOOL

**Veterans Day Celebration**
Thursday, November 11, 2016
8:30-10:30
Flagpole near playground

**Coffee Pond Re-take Day**
Thursday, November 11, 2016
10:00-11:00

**Parent Conferences**
Tuesday, November 15–
Friday November 18
Various Classrooms

**THANKSGIVING RECESS**

Thursday, November 24, 2016
Friday, November 25, 2016
Make Learning Language FUN!

Sometimes teaching children fundamental language skills is a challenging task. As therapists, teachers, and parents, we try to help our children learn in the best possible way while keeping the activities easy, practical and fun. Also, in today’s hectic world where our schedules are full, we want to keep language-building opportunities with our children short or incorporate them into everyday activities. You may ask, “How do I do this?” Follow the suggestions below to make learning language fun! Many of these are everyday activities and some are common children’s games that don’t require a lot of specialized materials or planning.

Cooking— To elicit language skills, allow your child to participate in a variety of cooking activities. Allow the child to be in control of some of these activities. Make some Jell-O™, a sandwich, or some other easy-to-make foods and allow the child to “take charge.” This addresses such areas as requesting help, sequencing, giving directions, adjectives, asking for information, following directions, categorization, and helps to build vocabulary. A parent, teacher, or therapist can attempt to build on this language opportunity by elaborating on a child’s utterances. To do this, if the child says, “Give me the spoon,” you can respond by saying, “Do you want the short, red, spoon closest to the bowl?” This introduces concepts and enhances a child’s auditory processing skills.

Pretend Shopping— Children with the ability to do so love to pretend and take on adult roles. Allowing a child to pretend to do the shopping for the family builds on such language skills as recognizing and understanding nouns, requesting assistance, using negative statements, asking questions, categorization, and vocabulary development. Set up the situation for the best language-building opportunities by allowing the child to categorize plastic food into semantic categories such as fruit, vegetables, cereals, etc. Help the child formulate all ingredients needed for a meal (i.e., breakfast) and let him/her find and “buy” all the necessary items. Again, build on the child’s language skills by providing him/her with additional information. If the child says, “It’s not a strawberry,” you might respond by saying, “No, it’s long, yellow, and has a peel. It’s a…”

Dress-up – Provide the child with a large box of old clothing, hats, shoes, and costumes. Allow the child to choose the articles of clothing he/she would like to put on for dress-up. As the child dresses up, encourage him/her to tell you colors, names of items, and where he/she would put the object. Activities like this encourage development of such skills as understanding and using adjectives, prepositions, articles, nouns, categorization, and sequencing. Make each activity a “talking” one by encouraging the child to provide more information about his/her actions and objects.

Playing with the Telephone – This is a great activity that encourages verbalization from all children. It is also a great activity to promote turn-taking skills and the use of pronouns such as you, I, me, and yours. It also promotes skills such as asking questions, requesting information, and the formulation of negative statements. (“It’s not for you.”) Also, the difficult area of presupposition is addressed by the speaker providing information based on the needs of the listener. (Since no visual information is provided, this makes it more difficult.)

Playing Games – Playing a game that requires the child to pretend being an object and describing him/herself to the listener is a great game that addresses many areas of language development. It encourages and promotes creativity and describing skills as well as helps the child understand and use grammatical structures: nouns, pronouns, adjectives, prepositions, and articles. The child must provide information based on the listener’s needs (presupposition). This game also promotes an understanding of categories. A sample game might sound like this: “I’m a red fruit.” “Are you a strawberry?” “I’m not a strawberry. I have a peel.” “Are you a cherry?” “I’m not a cherry. I am made into sauce.” “Are you an apple?” Allow the child to provide as many clues as possible before guessing the correct answer.

There are many ways to build strong language skills in children of all ages and educational abilities. By playing with children in a non-threatening environment, you can help build strong language skills that are important in every aspect of a child’s life.

Alanna Goldberg
Speech-Language Pathologist
West Hartford Community Theater Invites You to Be Our Guest at
Disney’s Beauty and the Beast this fall

Step into the enchanted world of Disney’s Beauty and the Beast this fall as the West Hartford Community Theater (WHCT) proudly presents its fall musical this November. Based on the Academy Award-winning animated feature, the musical features a cast and production team from West Hartford and surrounding communities. The cast of more than forty performers, ages 10 to 65, includes a dynamic mix of amateur and professionally trained actors, singers and dancers working side-by-side to present a high quality production.

The musical will be performed at Hall High School, with six performance dates scheduled:

- Friday, November 11, 2016 at 7:00 PM
- Saturday, November 12, 2016 at 7:00 PM
- Sunday, November 13, 2016 at 1:30 PM
- Friday, November 18, 2016 at 7:00 PM
- Saturday, November 19, 2016 at 7:00 PM
- Sunday, November 20, 2016 at 1:30 PM

Tickets are on sale now and can be purchased by calling (860) 992-9428 or online at westhartfordtheater.org.
TRAIN SHOW
In West Hartford
November 12, 2016

Conard high school cafeteria
110 beechwood Road, West Hartford, CT 06107
(Exit 41 off Route 84)

Featuring

MODEL RAILROADERS

Displays & Demonstrations
Snack & Bake Sale

Saturday Only: 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Admission: Adults $ 5.00
Students $ 3.00
Seniors $ 3.00
Children Under 10 Free

Sponsored by: West Hartford technology student association
HOLIDAY STROLL 2016
First Church, West Hartford
12 South Main Street
Auditorium in rear, off parking lot
Thursday, December 1st
5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Come view Holiday trees decorated by local businesses, organizations, and families and get a chance to win one!*

Enjoy live holiday music

$5 Suggested Donation to enter

*Bid on Trees:
$10 sheet of 10 raffle tickets or
$20 sheet of 25

Proceeds to benefit local community outreach programs that include: Gifts of Love, Interval House, Foodshare, Habitat for Humanity, Covenant to Care for Children, Freshplace, My Sister’s Place, South Park Inn, Bridge Family Center

Cookies & Hot Cocoa!