

*"Together we can and do  
make a difference!"*



# The Globe

## CHARTER OAK INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY

425 Oakwood Avenue, West Hartford, CT 06110 • Telephone: 860-233-8506 • Fax: 860-231-9654

Issue No. XVII.

May 15 2017

Juan Melián, Principal

Dear Charter Oak Families:

We are fast approaching our last four weeks of the school year engaged in many school events and meaningful work for our students. As an IB school, the arrival of May marks a very important time for our 5th graders. As you probably know, 5th grade students end the year with *Exhibition*, a true opportunity for our children to apply what they have learned and demonstrate who they have become in our school environment as an International School.

If the topic selection is any indication of the impact the International Baccalaureate Program has had on our students I believe it is safe to say that it has been remarkable. Our 5th graders are working on issues that demonstrate how internationally minded they are and how aware they are of their surrounding world. Our students are researching on LGTBQ issues, the topic of Refugees, the impact of technology on jobs under the topic of Automation, Siblings, Homeschooling, and Literacy for All.

*Exhibition* is a true celebration of our students, our school, and our approach to teaching and learning. The impact goes well beyond our fifth graders, and to some extent, it involves everybody at Charter Oak. My special gratitude to our mentors and the many experts visiting our school to talk to our IB learners. Mentors play a huge role in this process, celebrating our students, asking them about their topics, encouraging them through the process and sharing ideas, resources and contacts with the children.

The list of experts is too large to include everybody here but just to give you a few examples, the Literacy group interviewed a literacy volunteer and a grandmother who just learned to read; the Homeschooling group is meeting with a family who has chosen this model and are planning to meet with our Assistant Superintendent for Instruction; the Siblings group created a school-wide survey to be administered here at Charter Oak; the Automation team visited a Coca Cola plant in the area; the Refugees group interviewed our Board of Education Chairman and UConn professor. Finally, the LGTBQ group interviewed a transgender student from Conard.

Please make sure you mark Exhibition Night in your calendars. It will be on Monday June 12th at 6:30. I hope to see many of you at this event which explains so much of who we are as a school, as a community, and the type of learning experiences our students enjoy at Charter Oak International Academy.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Melián'.

Juan Melián  
Principal

Queridas Familias de Charter Oak:

Nos acercamos rápidamente a las cuatro últimas semanas del año escolar con una gran cantidad de eventos escolares y trabajo relevante para nuestros estudiantes. Como escuela IB, la llegada de mayo significa un momento importante para nuestros estudiantes de quinto grado. Como probablemente saben, los alumnos de quinto grado terminan el año con *Exhibition*, una oportunidad para nuestros chicos de aplicar lo que han aprendido y de demostrar en quiénes se han convertido en nuestro ambiente escolar como escuela internacional.

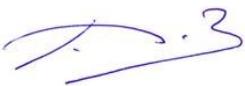
Si los temas seleccionados es indicación del impacto que el Programa de Bachillerato Internacional ha tenido en nuestros estudiantes, pienso que es justo decir que ha sido significativo. Nuestros estudiantes de quinto están trabajando en temas que demuestran su conciencia internacional y su entendimiento del mundo que les rodea. Ellos están investigando temas relacionados con LGBTQ, Refugiados, el Impacto de la Tecnología y la Automoción en el trabajo, Relaciones de Familia, Enseñanza en Casa y Alfabetismo.

*Exhibition* es una auténtica celebración de nuestros estudiantes, de nuestra escuela y de nuestra filosofía de enseñanza y aprendizaje. Su impacto va más allá del grupo de quinto. En gran medida involucra a todos en Charter Oak. Mi gratitud especial para los mentores y los muchos expertos que nos están visitando para hablar a nuestros estudiantes IB. Los mentores juegan un papel fundamental en este proceso, celebrando a nuestros estudiantes, guiándoles en sus temas, animándoles durante el proceso y compartiendo con ellos recursos y contactos.

La lista de expertos es demasiado larga para incluir a todos aquí pero, como muestra, el grupo de Alfabetismo entrevistó a un voluntario y a una abuela que acaba de aprender a leer. El grupo de Enseñanza en Casa se va a reunir con una familia que eligió este modelo. El grupo de Relaciones Familiares creó una encuesta que va a ser administrada en nuestra escuela. El grupo de Automoción visitó una planta industrial de Coca Cola en nuestra área. El grupo de Refugiados entrevistó a nuestro Presidente del Consejo Escolar y Profesor de UConn. Finalmente, el equipo de LGTBQ entrevistó a un estudiante transgénero de Conard.

Por favor, marquen en sus calendarios Exhibition Night. Espero verles a todos en este evento que explica de modo tan poderoso y real quiénes somos como escuela, como comunidad, y el tipo de experiencias de las que nuestros estudiantes disfrutaron en Charter Oak.

Gracias,



Juan Melián  
Principal

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## Curriculum Matters

What does *Transdisciplinary* mean? Transdisciplinary learning at Charter Oak refers to the way we develop and teach our curriculum. We begin with the Connecticut State Standards, and embed these important concepts and skills within rich themes. These themes allow us to connect what children are learning to important issues on a local or global level. When we think about global themes, connections between disciplines become relevant -- and learning takes new and unexpected directions. Since becoming an IB school, teachers have worked collaboratively to create, reflect on and continually revise curricular units to make relevant and timely connections, and to follow the lead of children as they inquire about their world.

This year, our entire staff focused on inquiry -- asking, "What is true inquiry?" "How can inquiry look in different settings?" "How can we elicit deeper questioning from children?" "How can we make thinking more visible?" These questions are inspired by one of our school-wide goals: *to collaboratively seek deeper understanding of inquiry elements that support teaching and learning throughout our building and curriculum.* We have gathered incredible resources and have started to delve into these for our own edification. This professional line of inquiry will sustain us in upcoming years, as there is a wealth of knowledge for us to incorporate into our work. This is part of the ongoing journey of an IB school.

As we have acclimated to our new building, we have grown -- both in physical size of the building and in the number of students. We will continue to grow, and with this growth, to take on additional challenges. Another school-wide goal outlines our focus on social and emotional growth, in addition to academic growth: *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 have begun to revise our practices throughout the building, re-envisioning how we engage in each procedure throughout the day and throughout the building. We drafted protocols to help us open the school-year and to help students transition safely throughout the day, and we held a "New Building Forum" to gather feedback from staff and families. The comments and ideas shared will help us to continue to refine our practices.

Again, in the transdisciplinary nature of Charter Oak, this goal reaches well beyond the aspects of procedures and protocols. If we are truly going to realize the stated "*special emphasis on sustainability, mindfulness, and the teaching of peace.*" This goal encourages us to reflect on our "Approaches to learning."

How we approach learning affects how we learn about the world (**Research Skills**) and how we comprehend or think more deeply about knowledge and ideas (**Thinking Skills**). Sustainability, mindfulness, and peace require us to also reflect more deeply on our **Social Skills**, how we communicate with each other (**Communication Skills**), and how well we manage ourselves (**Self-Management Skills**). These "Approaches to learning" are also key aspects of the IB curriculum. And although they are not academic in nature, they are crucial to a peaceful learning environment.

Teachers have spent time this year developing a draft Belief Statement, which has been shared with families through the PTO. We encourage and appreciate the Charter Oak community's input in creating this belief statement. Our collaborative, conscious and cohesive beliefs on how we will best support all children build the necessary skills that help them succeed in the school environment and throughout life will help us meet the needs of all learners in the best manner possible.

**Social Skills:** accepting responsibility; respecting others; cooperating and resolving conflict; group decision-making;

**Communication Skills:** listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, presenting and non-verbal communication;

**Self-Management Skills:** gross and fine motor skills; spatial awareness; organization; time management; safety and codes of behavior; healthy lifestyle and informed choices.

Helping each of our children develop strong skills in these areas will help them succeed in life and will support an amazing learning environment at Charter Oak!

Kate Jerram,  
Curriculum Specialist

## TALENT SHOW

Talent Show permission slips went home last week and all students in grades K-5 are invited to participate. The Talent Show will be on Monday, June 19<sup>th</sup> at 9:00. (Outside, weather permitting)

Parents are encouraged to assist their children in selecting appropriate music to be used in the show.

The auditions will be held on Friday, May 19<sup>th</sup> in the auditorium from 3:20 to 4:20. (Parents are not required to attend) Rehearsal date is Friday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> from 3:20 – 4:20 in the auditorium. It is important that children are picked up promptly at 4:20.

Costumes are not required, but students may wear them, if they choose. Costumes must follow the school dress code. Permission slips are due back by Thursday, May 18<sup>th</sup>. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 860-233-8506. Thank you for your support. I'm looking forward to working with your children to put on another great show. This will mark our 20th year!

Janet Fournier

## KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Thursday, May 18, 2017

If you were unable to attend the Kindergarten Parent Orientation night, please stop by the office to pick up your packet of information and sign up for a registration day and time.

## Spring Picnic Help Needed!



The annual **Spring Picnic** will be held **Friday, June 2, from 5:30 to 8:00**. There will be inflatables, hot dogs and hamburgers, and so much more! The PTO can use your help planning it and volunteering that night for a 30-minute shift. We will send out an online sign up link in the coming weeks. You may also email us at [CharterOakPTO@gmail.com](mailto:CharterOakPTO@gmail.com) if you are interested. Please put Spring Picnic in the subject line. (Thanks to those who have already responded.)

One dad has stepped up to be our grill master, but he'll need help cooking and serving food. We need parent and adult volunteers to supervise the inflatables. We have one set aside for our PreK and Kindergarten friends – and two for the bigger kids.

We will also need ticket sellers, popcorn makers (after all this is a PTO event), and various other volunteers. As always, we will have a DJ spinning music to set the scene.

Importantly, we could use folks with ideas. There's an expanded PreK and K student population. We want to make sure this event is fun for them, too!

## **Charter Oak Sweatshirts for Sale**

A parent has asked that we re-open our sweatshirt sale. Are you interested? Did you miss them the last time they were offered? We need to sell 12. They cost \$22 each for children and adult sizes. Orders only available via cash or check made out to the Charter Oak PTO. You can send in a note to your teacher indicating size, along with payment and contact info.

**STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<b><u>Monday, 5/15</u></b> Monday Mindfulness	8:00	Auditorium
<b><u>Wednesday, 5/17</u></b> Kindergarten Registration	8:45-12:10	PK Commons
<b><u>Thursday, 5/18</u></b> Kindergarten Registration Gr. 5 Field Trip - Hawkins	8:45-12:10 9:00	PK Commons K.P. & Sedgwick
<b><u>Friday, 5/19</u></b> Principal's Breakfast PK Field Trip McMurray/O'Connell & Barron/Benner Gr. 5 Field Trip - Lizon Inter-El Tour Day	8:35 8:50-12:00 9:15 1:20-2:20	FRC Auerfarm Sedgwick & Bristow Auditorium
<b><u>Monday, 5/22</u></b> Monday Mindfulness STAR Assembly Pk-Gr.1 Gr. 2-5 PK Field Trip - Cannone/ Dustin K Field Trip - Felicissimo	8:00 2:00-2:30 2:45-3:15 8:50-12:00 9:00-11:00	Auditorium Auditorium Auerfarm CT Shower & Bath
<b><u>Tuesday, 5/23</u></b> K - Field Trip Cool & Habif	9:30-11:30	Auerfarm
<b><u>Wednesday, 5/24</u></b> Gr. 3 - Birds of Prey K Field Trip - Cool	8:00 9:00-11:00	Auditorium Larson Ace Hardware
<b><u>Thursday, 5/25</u></b> Iner-El Rehearsal Gr. 1 Field Trip K Field Trip Felicissimo/Salerno	8:45 9:00-1:45 9:30	Bushnell Memorial Sturbridge Village Auerfarm
<b><u>Friday, 5/26</u></b> PK Book Celebration	9:00	Auditorium

**"Public Act 16-189"**

We believe that it is vital for all students in West Hartford Public Schools to be able to efficiently and effectively use digital tools that empower them in all phases of the learning process, including research, problem solving, content creation, communication, and collaboration. We also believe that we must be committed at all times to protecting students' privacy and providing them with a powerful and safe educational experience. To that end, the West Hartford Public Schools follow the legal requirements of Public Act 16-189 to promote the safety and security of all students and staff.

In compliance with Connecticut State Law, we update online programs used within the district that house student data. The programs may be used district-wide, in a very small number of classrooms. The list will be updated each time the district enters into a new contract where student data is housed. For more information on the specifics of Public Act 16-189 and updates of vendor agreements, visit [www.whps.org/pa189](http://www.whps.org/pa189).

**SAVE THE DATES**

**Family Picnic**

Friday, June 2: 5:30-8:00 p.m.

**Fifth Grade Exhibition & Recognition**

Monday, June 12: 6:30-8:00 p.m.

**Talent Show**

Monday, June 19: 9:00-12:00 p.m.

**MEMORIAL DAY**



**Monday, May 29th**  
**NO SCHOOL**

## From The Nurse's Room



### Tick Season is Here!

Along with the beautiful spring weather come ticks. It is predicted to be an extremely heavy tick season because of the mild winter. Some ticks carry tick-borne diseases such as Lyme Disease. It is very important for families to get in the practice of conducting daily full-body tick checks on all members of your family during this season.

The following is adapted from the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/>

These important reminders can help reduce the chances of you and your family members contracting tick borne illnesses:

- Avoid wooded areas and areas with high grass and leaf litter.
- Use tick repellants - you can consult your healthcare provider.
- After being outside, conduct a full-body tick check, under the arms, in and around the ears, around the waist and in the hair.
- Examine your pets frequently.
- Remove ticks found by using tweezers: grasp it close to skin surface and with gentle, steady pressure pull the tick upward away from skin until it releases. If parts of the tick are left in

skin and not easily removed, leave it alone and let the skin heal. Watch for signs of infection.

- Dispose of tick by flushing it down the toilet or sealing it in a bag.
- Cleanse area of tick bite with soap and water, rubbing alcohol, an iodine scrub.
- Observe tick bite area for any signs of infection (increased redness, swelling, drainage)
- If the person with a tick bite develops a fever or a rash anywhere on the body over the next 35 days, call your healthcare provider to report the tick bite and for further assessment.

Eileen McCormick  
School Nurse

## LOST AND FOUND



Our lost and found is currently located in a silver container located inside the school near the front entrance. 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.

## WHPS Online Resources for Parents

West Hartford Public Schools have recently developed a wonderful online resource for parents to use as part of their website. You will find links to articles, videos, book lists, and more that you can use to help support your child's learning at home.

Have you ever found yourself asking the following questions?

- What does reading look like at each grade level?
- Do you have a list of books I can suggest to my child?
- What questions should I ask my child when we are reading together?
- Should I be reading to my child every night?
- How can I support my child's oral language development?
- What are ebooks and where can I access one with my child?
- What apps/websites can my child use?
- Should my child read both fiction/literature and nonfiction?
- What can I do at home to support my child?

You can find answers to these questions and more by going to [www.whps.org/academics](http://www.whps.org/academics) and clicking on "Elementary Literacy Resources for families." In addition to answers to these FAQ, you will also see links on the left for information about background knowledge, comprehension, phonics, phonological and phonemic awareness, reading fluency, sight words, spelling, and vocabulary. When going to the website above, you will also find resources on writing, math, and elementary curriculum. Have fun exploring the many resources that have been gathered to support our families. Happy Reading!

Leigh Eppinger  
Early Intervention Reading Teacher



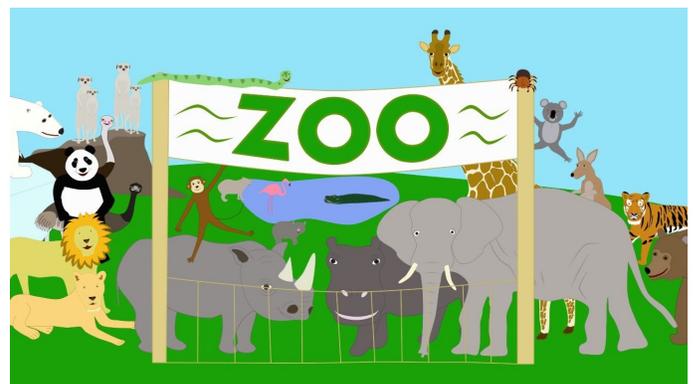
## First Grade Inquirers

What do animals need to survive? How does an animal's habitat help it to get what it needs? Our first graders have asked these questions and many more as they researched individual animals in their classrooms. Students learned how to ask deeper questions like: I wonder if...

and I wonder why...

During this transdisciplinary unit, students worked with our guest author, Rick Labadia, on a variety of interdisciplinary projects including art, publishing, and creating products to reflect individual learning. Yesterday, students continued their inquiry into How We Share the Planet by traveling to the Forest Park Zoo in Springfield, MA. While there, students became scientists and asked a lot of questions about the animals. They used what they heard and saw to draw conclusions about what the animals needed to survive (food, shelter, water and some good hiding places).

Upon returning to Charter Oak, the children eagerly shared their newly learned knowledge with friends and other teachers. This experience will directly link to our current unit in Writer's Workshop on writing opinions. First grade is a very busy and exciting place to be!



### DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Changes in dismissal plans do occur. Please make every effort to contact your teacher(s) with any changes.

Students must leave school grounds immediately each afternoon, unless accompanied by an adult, as schools are not responsible for supervision of children after dismissal. Children will:

- Take the bus home.
- Walk home with written permission from parents.
- Be picked up promptly by parent or designated adult.
- As the weather becomes warmer, families (children accompanied by an adult) often choose to stay and play on the playground. Please make sure children have used the bathroom before leaving school. The school bathrooms are not available after hours.



#### **MOVING OR CHANGING SCHOOLS?**

If you have moved or are planning on moving to another address, it is necessary to contact the Residency Office and inform them of your new address. You may reach them by calling (860) 561-6620 or stop by their office at the Town Hall.

### ATTENDANCE

If your child(ren) will be absent or tardy from school, please call our school office at

**(860) 233-8506.**

Press 1 to leave a recorded message. Please include the reason for the absence. This procedure will eliminate incorrect absence reporting as well as unnecessary phone calls to your home.

### SAVE THE DATE



STAR Assembly  
Monday, May 22, 2017  
PK-Grade 1: 2:00-2:30  
Grade 2-5: 2:45-3:15

### Last Day of School



**Monday, June 19, 2017**

**2:00 Dismissal**



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

## What's Cooking at the FRC



Congratulations to our UConn People Empowering People (PEP) parent leadership group. The 12 women who are graduating from this program have met weekly since January and discussed topics including communication skills, problem solving, values, advocacy and parenting.

PEP is facilitated by Parent Educator Robin Drago. The 10 week program culminates in community service projects chosen by the participants. The group has decided to host several PEP alumni workshops, prepare meals for the girls in one of the Bridge Family Center's shelters and craft bracelets for mothers and children in Haiti.

Kudos to the UCONN PEP class of 2017: Tracy Amato, Phuong Chiem, Karen Fusari, Catherine George, Whitney Guida, MiSoo Kang, Yuling Li, Cathy Rion Starr, Emiko Shin, Jennifer Smith, Rachel Tenney and Ann-Triet Truong.

Deborah Zipkin  
Director - Family Resource Center



## Art News

Congratulations! Every year Charter Oak International Academy has the opportunity to showcase their talented artists at the West Hartford Town Hall. Student art pieces were selected and they are now being displayed at Town Hall, located at 50 South Main Street in West Hartford on the fourth floor (hallway is on the South Main Street side). The artwork will be up until May 30<sup>th</sup> and everyone is welcome to stop by anytime to view the talented artists work! The W.H. Town Hall hours are Monday-Friday 8:30-4:30.

Enjoy!  
Mrs. Drown

Congratulations to the following students:

### Pre-K:

Abigail D.  
Jude E.-S.  
Sophia M.  
Om S.  
Edward Z.

### Kindergarten:

Danielle B.  
Adelaide H.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Grade:

Lazare B.  
Cora C.  
Emilia D.  
Evana M.  
Katheryn M.  
Sabrina M.  
Kai S.  
Sejin S.  
Zhara W.  
Mrs. Collins'  
Group Collage

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade:

Jordyn G.  
Fatima W.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade:

Samaria G.  
Jade G.  
Lasya P.  
Victorya Z.  
Mrs. Giammatteo's  
Group Collage

### 4<sup>th</sup> Grade:

Violet B.  
Liam G.-C.

### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade:

Sophia C.  
Emily F.



# West Hartford Cultural Council

*campaign for the Arts*

May 10, 2017

Dear Members of the Charter Oak International Academy Community,

We would like to take this time to express a genuine and heartfelt **THANK YOU** ☺ for your support and donations towards this year's West Hartford Cultural Council fundraising campaign. As parent and teacher representatives on The West Hartford Cultural Council, we want to congratulate the entire Charter Oak Family for raising over \$1,700.00!! Whether you contributed money, expressed appreciation for the cause, or talked with your child about what was learned from this year's performance, all efforts are greatly appreciated and demonstrate the commitment our community has to the arts and recognizing the important role it plays in our children's education.

This year we were so excited to see Lou Del Bianco, an actor, story-teller and musician, represent our 16<sup>th</sup> president of the United States of America, Abraham Lincoln. Through his performance entitled *From Railsplitter to President*, his interactive performance educated us all on the humble beginnings and inspiring journey President Lincoln had that led him to the White House. A huge take-home message from the performance was no matter how difficult times get, don't give up!

**Thank**



**You!**

**Thank you** to all parents/caretakers, teachers and staff at Charter Oak International Academy, as well as the generosity of Charter Oak's PTO, Farmington Avenue Pizza, and Mr. Horowitz for your continued efforts to enhance and enrich our children's cultural education.

Below are the winners of the Cultural Council participation awards:

**1st Place:** Mrs. Hawkin's 5th grade class! (Pizza party donated by Farmington Avenue Pizza)

**2nd place:** Ms. Navarra's 4th grade class! (Ice cream social donated by Charter Oak's PTO)

**3rd place:** Mrs. Behlman's 4<sup>th</sup> grade! (Extra P.E. time donated by Mr. Horowitz)

Thank you again and enjoy the rest of the school year! ☺

Sincerely,

Lorna Farquharson  
Cultural Council Parent Representative

Penelope Drown  
Cultural Council Teacher Representative

Juan Melian  
Principal



## Charter Oak Community - Let's join together for: "MINDFUL MONDAYS"



**Mindfulness** is paying attention to our experience in the present moment with kindness and curiosity. As we cultivate the "muscle" of mindfulness, we increase our capacity to be calm, compassionate, focused and effective in the midst of every day stressors. Come start your week with ease and connection - learn simple, fun mindfulness exercises that you can continue as a family and in school throughout the week!

**WHO:** The **WHOLE** Charter Oak community is welcome: Students of all ages, parents and family, teachers and staff!

**WHERE:** Auditorium, Charter Oak International Academy, West Hartford CT

**WHEN:** Mondays, 8 - 8:25 AM (Please arrive a few minutes early to get settled. We will start and end on time. Staff are welcome to leave at 8:15 if needed).

**DATES:** March 27, April 3, April 17, April 24, May 1, May 8, May 15, May 22  
(Note: Come on days you are free. No need to attend every session.)

Facilitated by [Joanna Curry-Sartori, LMFT](#), The Bridge Family Center, Community Therapist and Educator

A West Hartford resident and Charter Oak parent, Joanna has been enthusiastic about studying and sharing the benefits of mindfulness for over 20 years. Since joining the Bridge Family Center 4 years ago, she has presented to faculty and parents in over 25 schools and implemented mindfulness in 20 elementary classrooms.

# SPRING ALERT

Does your child know what this sign means?



Spring is here, and our kids are outdoors playing on lawns. While this is a healthy activity for children, parents need to be aware that many lawns are treated with potentially harmful chemical pesticides. **Please make your children aware of the meaning of the yellow pesticide application warning flags** and tell them to stay off lawns where they are displayed.

The unique behavior of children as well as their developing physiology make them more vulnerable to these chemicals than adults, and studies have shown that even small exposures to pesticides at critical periods of development may cause acute or long term health problems, including asthma, neurological and endocrine problems and certain cancers.

Many commonly used lawn pesticides can remain on the grass long after the warning signs have been removed. Pesticides can be inhaled, absorbed through the skin, or inadvertently ingested when children put unwashed hands in their mouths. They can also be tracked indoors on shoes, where they do not break down quickly, and can remain an exposure risk for months.

*“As a pediatrician I urge all parents to reduce pesticide use as much as possible, especially lawn services. Children’s health is more important than a few weeds.”*

**Philip J. Landrigan, M.D.**  
Director, Children’s Environmental Health Center  
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai



To limit your family’s exposure, stop using lawn pesticides and keep children away from treated areas in parks, playgrounds or on neighbor’s lawns. Even commonly used consumer “weed and feed” products contain harmful pesticides. If a neighbor is spraying their yard, close your windows and bring moveable items inside, especially children’s toys and animal food dishes.

*For more information on lawn pesticides and other environmental health issues, please visit the web site of Grassroots Environmental Education*  
**[www.grassrootsinfo.org](http://www.grassrootsinfo.org)**

Created for  
**grassroots**  
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by Grassroots  
Environmental Education  
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## *A Great Year End Gift For Teachers*

The Foundation for the West Hartford Public Schools' *Teacher Thank-You Gift* program is a great way to acknowledge wonderful and talented teachers.

Make a tax-deductible donation to the Foundation of \$10 or more per teacher. Teachers receive a special card indicating a gift has been made in their honor. These gifts support our Teacher Grant program investing funds back in our schools for various educational programs.

The Foundation is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization dedicated to raising money from the community to invest in our schools. For more information, visit our website at [www.fwhps.org](http://www.fwhps.org), call 860-561-8755 or email us at [fwhps@westhartfordct.gov](mailto:fwhps@westhartfordct.gov).



### Teacher Gift Order Form

Enclosed is my gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Send certificate to me OR  Send to my teacher

Please make checks (\$10 minimum per teacher) payable to Foundation for West Hartford Public Schools and send to 50 S. Main St., Room 420, W. Hartford, CT 06107. Contributions are tax-deductible. **DEADLINE: 6/9/2017**





## Co-Parenting During and After Divorce

Parenting is among the hardest things one can do. It requires a focus on creating balance and well-being on a daily basis, and for adults coping with divorce, this job becomes even more challenging. Parents are re-negotiating their relationship from one that was highly intimate to one with more distance; yet, they still need to agree on how to meet their children's needs. To do that well requires that hurt feelings be put aside when necessary to support children through a divorce. Easier said than done, we know, but the following tips can be helpful as a new normal is created.



Martin Smith, LMFT  
Clinical Director



### CREATE SUPPORT SYSTEMS

A variety of support systems are critical for both parents and children to meet changing needs and to support the adjustment to a major shift in family structure. Counseling can be helpful. It creates an opportunity for children to talk about their feelings, normalize what they are experiencing, and have the presence of an impartial adult in their lives. For parents, counseling is vital. Parents often get so focused on their children that they delay acknowledging that they are processing intense loss and grief. The hurt and anger they feel can easily get filtered through their children and unintentionally place children squarely in the middle of conflict. This upheaval affects a child's feeling of safety, security, and routine, all of which are critical for healthy development.

When parents get support, they can be calmer and more collected for their children. Parents should work together to find support for themselves and identify

the people in their child's life whom they trust to be constants, e.g., close friends, neighbors, religious leaders, teachers, or coaches. A child's school can also direct parents to school counselors, mentors, or groups like K.I.D.S. (Kids in Divorce and Separation), where children can share the experience they are going through with peers from their own school community. And the power of consistency cannot be underestimated. Routine is very calming for kids. It helps them know what to expect, to have things they can depend on, and know when and where they will see particular people should they need something.

### AGREE ON THE BIG THINGS

Co-parenting is greatly influenced by the reciprocal interactions of each parent. In other words, if one parent is parenting in a healthy way but the other is not, children are at greater risk for developmental problems. Co-parenting requires empathy, patience, and open communication for success—not an easy thing to achieve for couples who are managing marital issues—but it can be done. Making children's emotional health and wellness a shared goal can help create mutual respect. Parents should strive to be as consistent as possible with the major things, but give themselves wiggle room on the minor things. This will model for children that flexibility is needed when life throws a curve ball.

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*“By keeping yourself intact, you are better able to care for your child.”*

## PRIORITIZE SELF-CARE

Divorce is difficult and if adults are not deliberate about managing stress in a healthy way, they open themselves up to substance abuse, reckless behavior, depression, and malaise. If you are a parent going

through a divorce yourself, remember this: by keeping yourself intact, you are better able to care for your child. An important part of parenting is harnessing the ability to remain calm moment by moment, so managing your own emotional rollercoaster and anxiety is vital.



### BEFORE YOU REACT, P.A.U.S.E.

**When you find yourself in a stressful moment, pause. Give yourself a minute to recognize what you are feeling and realize you have control over how the next moments will play out.** Joanna Curry-Sartori, one of our Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists, presents widely on the topic of mindfulness and offers the P.A.U.S.E. strategy to help you stay calm and plan reactions that will be productive and not reactive.

#### PAUSE

Breathe. Step back. Be mindful.

#### AWARE

Notice your thoughts, feelings, and sensations. Accept them.

#### UNDERSTAND

Listen. Acknowledge the perspectives of others. Express empathy. Be responsible for your words and actions.

#### SEEK SOLUTIONS

Review expectations and boundaries. Be open to new ways to interact or resolve concerns.

#### EXPERIMENT

Agree to consider something new. Implement a realistic plan. Reflect on results.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- The Bridge serves as the Youth Service Bureau for the town of West Hartford. As part of that role, we offer in-school counseling, groups, and mentoring. We also coordinate the West Hartford Community Network for Children and Families, a network of professionals who work with children and families in the area, to help us keep our finger on the pulse of what's happening with kids in town.
- We run the Family Resource Center, the West Hartford Teen Center, and Great by 8, and we coordinate the Substance Abuse Prevention Commission.
- We run many groups at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, including Kids in Divorce and Separation (K.I.D.S.), Friendship Group, Lunch Clubs, Boys Groups, Girls Groups, and a Mindful Classroom Series.
- We have three Counseling Centers located in the centers of West Hartford, Avon, and Rockville, and our therapy team includes a licensed substance abuse counselor, as well as therapists specially trained in LGBTQ identity issues for individuals and families.



### STRONG RELATIONSHIPS HELP PREVENT SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Influential adults continue to play the most vital role in determining how young people manage the lure of substances. Talk about substance abuse issues and connect meaningfully with kids on a regular basis. Simple things such as tucking them into bed the same way every night makes them feel secure and allows them to anticipate when they will have opportunities to talk about things on their minds.

Join Us For  
**A View of the Bridge**



Take an hour to relax with a cup of coffee and learn how we support adults, children, and families in West Hartford and the region. Our program directors will talk about our counseling and support services, emergency shelter options for children and teens, our Teen Center, our Family Resource Center, and how we support independent living for youth throughout our state.

Wednesday, May 24, 2017 6:00-7:00 p.m.  
Family Resource Center 425 Oakwood Avenue  
RSVP to [aaronson@bridgefamilycenter.org](mailto:aaronson@bridgefamilycenter.org)