

Merrick Messenger

Student Councils Learn & Lead



GOALS

- Giving students a chance to practice and build leadership skills.
- Promoting kindness and a culture of service at school and in our community.
- Supporting ideas and events that make our school an even better place.

Through citizenship and service, the Student Council clubs at Birch, Chatterton and Lakeside aim to foster leadership, life skills and community engagement.

Serving in a student council helps students grow as leaders and work on skills like communication, problem-solving and decision making.

At Chatterton last Thanksgiving season, student council members publicized and organized a food drive to help 16 Merrick families.

"I like being able to help people," said Elise, a sixth grader and the Student Council president.

Sixth grade teacher Laura Bonet serves as a faculty adviser, along with co-teacher Lindsay Zender and school social worker Marisa Taddeo.

"We talked about helping the school community and connected that to helping the local community and then the global community in an effort to address the impact community service can have," Bonet said.

Debra Vernice and Jessica Giovino, faculty advisers for the Birch student council, focus on several goals for their group of fifth and sixth grade student council members, including responsibility, creativity and leadership.

"As faculty advisers, our job is to support and inspire these students," Vernice said. "We encourage them to lead with kindness, think creatively, and always look for ways to help

others."

"We also want them to know their voices and ideas matter – and that they can make a difference," Giovino added.

Their group created a veteran wall in November that included photos and biographies of family members of students and staff who have served or are active in the military. They also led a successful toy drive for the Kiwanis Club of the Merricks ahead of the holiday season.

In addition to hosting collection drives, the Lakeside Student Government, led by Soo Becchina, has worked closely with Hewlett House for more than 15 years. Hewlett House supports cancer patients at every stage of treatment, and the community resource center provides services without charge. Students have volunteered or organized to clean up, plant and do other gardening chores each spring.

"Service is something you can teach your kids," Becchina said. "You can start in school, but you can always carry it on and continue it in your life."

Open to fifth and sixth graders, representatives are elected at the classroom level. Once in sixth grade, students may run for the executive roles of president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. This helps introduce the various roles of an organization, as well as teamwork and collaboration.

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Embracing Tech During COMPUTER SCIENCE WEEK

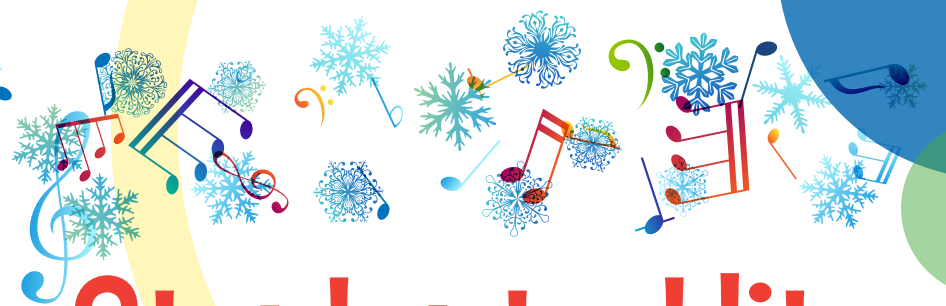
During Computer Science Week in mid-December, Merrick students learned foundational skills and concepts that can inspire curiosity and excitement about the field.

From programming robots to solving coding challenges on their devices, learners across all grades embraced the magic of technology. These lessons brought more opportunities for collaboration and teamwork among the students as well.

Technology teachers Keri Sabella of Lakeside, Melissa Froehlich of Birch and Mackenzie Venezia of Chatterton, along with STEAM Coordinator Jaclyn Greenblatt, planned and executed hands-on lessons that enhanced the regular technology curriculum students learn throughout the school year.



BIRCH



Students Hit High Notes at Winter Concerts

Students' musical talents were showcased at winter concerts throughout December. Students performed daytime and evening concerts for peers, family and school staff.

The concerts were the culmination of months of preparation under the guidance of dedicated music directors and teachers Elizabeth Comito, Ivy Chatanow and Jeffrey Glemboski from Lakeside; Paul Graham and Robert Normandeau from Birch; and Jennifer DiGangi and Dr. Richard Nasto from Chatterton. Thomas Velsor works at both Birch and Chatterton.

CHATTERTON



LAKESIDE



NEWS Around the Schools



Birch Students Learn About Wind Speed

On a breezy winter day, third graders at Birch created anemometers to test wind speed. Using paper cups, straws and pencils, their hand-crafted devices were able to measure wind speed by counting how many times the cups spin when exposed to wind. This exercise allows students to learn about wind force and how to collect data through observation.



Chatterton Students Create Flipbooks

Third graders at Chatterton learned about nonfiction text features by creating flipbooks. This activity integrates science and reading to make for an exciting and engaging unit, while helping students better understand informational passages.



Lights, Camera, Action at Lakeside

Lakeside second graders know what it takes to be a movie director. Since the beginning of the year, students have learned the process behind creating a stop-motion movie. Students put their skills to the test and used Lego pieces to create their own stop-motion stories.

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