



## What's great about the Caldwell-West Caldwell Public Schools

*To foster, inspire, and champion learning for all*

December 2021

### Message from the Superintendent

On behalf of the Caldwell-West Caldwell Public Schools Staff and the Board of Education, I would like to wish you all a festive and joyous holiday season, a peaceful and safe winter break, and a happy and healthy new year!

I am grateful to the Board of Education for entrusting me to lead this extraordinary school district. I love being here, and I pledge to continue to do my best to have a positive influence on the learning and social-emotional experiences of your children.

The staff is so thankful to be part of a community that always rallies to support the students and schools. The community is blessed to have dedicated teachers and administrators who give their all to support, mentor, teach, and guide students in preparation for becoming 21<sup>st</sup>-century citizens.

Despite the many challenges over the past two years, the 2021-2022 school year continues to provide us all with abundant inspiration and excitement, along with too many successes and achievements to list. I am eager to see what amazing and remarkable accomplishments await our district, in the remainder of the 2021-2022 school year. One thing has never wavered, our determination and pledge to be student-centered every day of the week that ends in the letter "y". As the new year approaches, I find myself reflecting on the powerful words Caterina Fake, who reminds us all to, "Dream, struggle, create, prevail. Be daring. Be brave. Be loving. Be compassionate. Be strong. Be brilliant. Be beautiful."

Sincerely,

**Christopher Conklin**

Superintendent Caldwell-West Caldwell School District



### James Caldwell High School

James Caldwell students worked hard for two months to present "Puffs." A Harry Potter parody that revolves around the House of the Hufflepuffs. The play follows three main protagonists and a cast of recognizable characters. As many Harry Potter fans know, Hogwarts, the school of magic, has four different houses including the Gryffindors, Slytherins, Ravenclaws, and the Hufflepuffs. The Hufflepuffs are accepting of everyone which is also why many consider them to be the "rejected" house. The play takes the perspective of Hufflepuffs and is a funny and sardonic look at Harry Potter. It uses a secondary character from Harry Potter and makes them the main characters in a comical way.

The cast did an amazing job at capturing the humorous juxtaposition of the play. Each member really embodied their characters and it was very well-acted. The crew members also did a



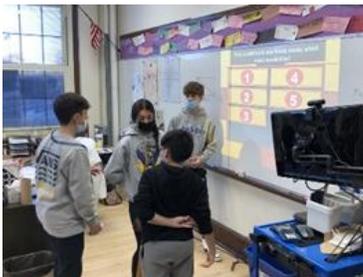
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## James Caldwell High School (continued from page 1)

fantastic job with a creative and well thought-out set. A lot of hard work was put into “Puffs” to really bring it alive. A member of the cast, Weston Ryder, said “I would have never expected that I would ever end up auditioning for the play, but I’m really glad I did. The whole atmosphere was very collaborative and you could definitely tell that the cast was having lots of fun with certain scenes with each other.” Watching JCHS students present “Puffs” was definitely an enjoyable experience for the audience since you can really tell how much fun the cast had with each other.

Excerpt from [The Caldron](#) from Wednesday December 15, 2021

By: Jessica Melnikoff



## Grover Cleveland Middle School

Grover Cleveland Middle School students took a break from their academics and focused on some social-emotional learning while participating in a House Day on our half-day on November 24<sup>th</sup>. Students participated in events such as Name That Tune, Family Feud, Charades, Fall Trivia Kahoot, and a House Tug-Of-War competition. Three students were recognized by the Student Council during the event for winning the trivia contest during the month of November. In addition, earlier in the month, students read over 17,000 minutes in our Read-A-Thon and raised over \$1,000 for the GCMS HSA. As a reward for reading so many minutes, one representative from each grade was chosen to throw a pie (one being a pumpkin pie!) in Mr. Bertollo’s face prior to the big Tug-Of-War tournament. The House of Endurance is currently in the lead, but there are many more events before the end of the year when the House Champion is crowned!



# Harrison School



**Jefferson School:**  
Collaboration by Jessie Ploscowe



**Harrison School:**  
Collaboration by Karen Schaefer

## “Wings”

Wings can symbolize many things - freedom, lightness, thought, spirituality, movement, and victory. To Plato, wings represented intelligence and understanding. In the CWC school district, beautiful “wing” art collaborations adorn each elementary school and the slogan “Spread your wings and learn to fly” was chosen (via survey) to accompany them. Our two elementary school art teachers collaborated on this project which was inspired by the well-known illustrator and interactive street artist, Kelsey Montague:

<https://kelseymontagueart.com/>. During art class, students “discussed collaboration and talked about how small art pieces can be infused into a large installation” explained Krystyn Kaufman (art teacher). This concept could correspond to individuals working and bonding together to create powerful results. Through self-expression, our students created individual feather designs which were combined to create unique wing designs in our schools. Our preschoolers at Harrison School practiced their graphomotor and bilateral integration skills during occupational therapy class groups to create their unique feathers. Please check out these masterpieces on bulletin boards located in the hallways of each school.



**Washington School:**  
Collaboration by  
Krystyn Kaufman

*By- Karen Schaefer, Occupational Therapist, CWC School District*



**Wilson School:**  
Collaboration by Jessie Ploscowe



**Lincoln School:**  
Collaboration by Krystyn Kaufman



# Lincoln Elementary School

Families in the Lincoln School community have generously donated items to two different collections. During the month of November, our 5th grade students organized a Thanksgiving food drive where we collected over 60 boxes of food to donate to the Caldwell Food Pantry. During the month of December, we are partnering with former JCHS teacher and coach, Ken Trimmer, as we collect toys and other gifts for the Leaders for Life Academy. Thank you to everyone in our community for your support! Finally, our 5th grade students performed at our Winter Concert.



# Washington Elementary School

The Washington School staff and community are always looking for ways to celebrate and promote acts of kindness. All month, teachers have been recognizing student efforts by hanging kindness leaves in honor of good deeds. Students are recognized for showing others how much they care by lending a helping hand. Students and families rally around district initiatives such as the "Make a Difference" Food Drive. Pictured here are students proudly displaying our school's donations. In addition to the food drive, students collected over 700 boxes of cereal to be donated to local food pantries and families in need. Students were able to appreciate the quantity of cereal boxes as the whole school gathered outside to watch the cereal boxes topple in a domino chain that weaved around the blacktop. Students marveled at the display and were able to experience the JOY of giving. As a school, we often partner with the Caldwell Health and Human Services department to give back to the community. Teachers are taking a staff donation of warm fleece blankets and wrapping them to be distributed as gifts to those in need in the community. We have a staff that lives the values that we work to instill in our students each day.



# Jefferson Elementary School

Jefferson's students have been taking advantage of the mild weather. On Fridays, our students have an opportunity to run a mile course during their lunch recess. Our students have really enjoyed having a go at running the course. They've learned about pacing themselves and setting their own personal goals.

Our long-time crossing guard, Mr. Kevin, is retiring at the end of December. Our students wanted to show their appreciation for his care and guidance over the years and asked to make thank you cards to tell him how much they'll miss him.

Our annual toy collection for the St. Rocco's Shelter has been a long-standing tradition at Jefferson School. Our families generously donate to those less fortunate, and our students learn an important lesson on what it means to give back to their community.

Jefferson's 5th graders were happy to perform for their parents during the annual holiday concert. The students sang a number of festive songs celebrating the winter holidays.





# Wilson Elementary School

## School Beautification

The HSA decorated our three school entrances to enhance our school's beautification. The entryways improve the climate and culture of our school building. The school beautification makes the staff, students, and families more prideful. A special thank you to our supportive HSA for making our school such a wonderful place to come each day!



## Grant Recipient

Mrs. Emmolo, our library media specialist, applied for a CWCEA grant. All children should be able to access books in which they can see themselves, mirrors that affirm their reality. All children should also be able to access books that are windows into worlds and realities that are unfamiliar to them. In order to make this possible, books must be widely diverse and inclusive, telling a multitude of stories. This grant project will increase access to inclusive books to children in grades kindergarten through fifth grade at Wilson School. Each month of the school year will feature a focus on at least one type of book so that by the end of the school year students will have been exposed to books that highlight Universal Human Rights, Native American Heritage, Bullying Prevention, Italian American Heritage, Hispanic Heritage, LGBTQ+ Pride, Mental Health Awareness, Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage, Arab American Heritage, Autism Awareness, Living to Protect the Planet, Women's History, Poverty in America, and Black History.



## Winter Chorus Concert

The fifth-grade students have been working with Mrs. Havrilla on holiday choral music. On Thursday, December 16th, the fifth-grade students performed the winter concert. Mrs. Havrilla directed the chorus with several seasonal songs: Jingly; May There be Goodwill; Nice not Naughty; Hanukkah Dreams; Here Comes Santa Claus; Winter Oh Winter; We Wish You a Swingin Holiday; Jingle Jive Bells. Students did a fantastic job learning the music and harmonizing as a group. Ms. Ploscowe worked with the fifth graders to create snowflakes and decorate the gymnasium with festive decorations.

Wilson School would like to wish everyone a lovely holiday season!

