



# CGS PTO Newsletter

## Coventry Grammar School

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Coventry, CT 06238

Phone: 860-742-7313

Website: [www.coventryps.org](http://www.coventryps.org)

CGS PTO Newsletter

September 2010

## A Memo From Marybeth Moyer, Principal

We are off to another great start at Coventry Grammar School! The sunny and warm temperatures did not hinder the enthusiasm of our 400 students as they proudly began another school year. We were so pleased with the way the eager kindergarten students rode the bus the first week, navigated through the hallways and joined their teachers for a full week of guided discovery and learning activities in their new classrooms.

Our first- and second-grade students proudly led the way by confidently joining their new teachers, quickly settling into their classroom routines, eagerly reacquainting themselves with their classmates during lunch and recess and positively greeting each other throughout the day. A new year has begun!

In addition to the hours that our teachers spent preparing for their students, the entire CGS staff spent two days involved in professional development that focused on team building, collaboration and the expansion of tiered instruction and data collection. Our goals this year will include developing intervention strategies that will benefit all learners and continuing our work across grade levels to efficiently use classrooms assessments and data collection techniques. With the support of our reading consultant and school psychologist the staff will focus on expanding student reading and writing strategies, and we will further develop our positive classroom and school culture with the newly introduced positive behavior system.

There are a variety of ways that parents can support our school efforts. The CGS PTO is an active parent – teacher collaborative that holds their monthly meeting on the second Monday of each month. There will be an opportunity at each meeting to gain insight into educational trends that are happening in our school from the principal, a team of teachers and parent members. These one-hour long meetings are open to all parents and childcare is provided. The PTO packet that recently came home is an informative resource that explains the many committees or volunteer opportunities that may be of interest to you.

In addition to becoming a PTO member we encourage parents to become active school volunteers. When you attend our annual Open House on Tuesday, September 28, please plan to pick up an informational packet that lists the ways that you can assist both the staff and students throughout the year. Consider sharing your time and talents at school or by assisting with projects that can be completed at home.

As your children settle into their school routine over the next few weeks, take the opportunity to talk to them about their new and renewed school responsibilities. *What did you learn at your Morning Meeting? Can you tell me about the rules in your classroom? What classroom centers did you visit today? Do you have a classroom job or responsibility? Did you go to a special today?* By initiating this daily dialogue, you will be connecting the key elements in your child's day and will help us by emphasizing and supporting the importance of classroom community and routines.

I look forward to meeting all of you as you visit CGS during Open House. The staff and I are excited about all that is planned for your students. Together, with your continued support, we know this will be a positive year!



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**As your children settle into their school routine over the next few weeks, take the opportunity to talk to them about their new and renewed school responsibilities.**

## Kindergarten News

### Kindergarten Team

Teachers: Wendy Bayer, Terry Bitwinski, Heidi Bosco, Eileen Hosey, and Debbie Hurlburt  
Para-Educators: Debbie Carroll and Sue Lewis



**All About Me**  
The focus will be on the characteristics that make every child special and unique.

In kindergarten, we will be exploring the theme, **All About Me** as our first unit that integrates literacy and social studies. The focus will be on the characteristics that make every child special and unique.

Children will be learning to give information about themselves ... their first and last name, address, phone number and birthdates. Please work with your child on these skills at home to reinforce their learning. It is important for your school-aged child to be competent with this personal knowledge.

Each class will have an **All About Me** project this month. Children are to design a poster or fill a box or bag with special items about themselves. This will be presented to their classmates during class sharing times. Specific information regarding these projects will be sent home with your child.

We are getting started in our math program, *Growing With Mathematics*, by building math into classroom routines. Children will be introduced to a daily calendar, collecting and representing data as part of daily routines and participating in a variety of activities that have a connection to the theme of getting to know one another.

Now that school is beginning, many parents will ask, "What can I do to help my child become a reader?" Here are some suggestions for kindergartners. Try to read together each day. Reread favorite stories. Children enjoy and learn from reading the same stories again and again. Talk about the stories. As you read, stop now and then to ask questions to get your child involved in the story. Let your child read to you. Your child may tell a story from the pictures or from memory, but s/he is using strategies that will help when s/he does begin reading words. The key is to enjoy this time together so that your child will grow to love and cherish reading. Check out the parent shelf in our school library for literacy materials. Starting Out Right and Read It Aloud! and *What Parents Can Do To Build Reading Skills* and *Read To Me* are just some of the books and videos available for parents.

Open House is a special time for your child to show you around his/her classroom and school. We look forward to seeing everyone on the evening of Tuesday, September 28. Be sure to sign-up for a November conference time on that evening.

We look forward to an exciting year in kindergarten with you and your children!



Let your child read to you... The key is to enjoy this time together so that your child will grow to love and cherish reading.

## First-Grade News

### First-Grade Team

Teachers: Megan Babcock, Bruce Gale, Colleen Hamblett, Patricia Klanski, Matthew Kyer, Cristy Rau, and Ginny Taber

Para-Educators: Laurie Darling and Jennifer Ray



... you will find all the classrooms filled with Grade One children learning, laughing, and trying to remember all the routines of a full school day.

First graders were greeted by seven first-grade teachers this year! They are: Megan Babcock, Bruce Gale, Colleen Hamblett, Patricia Klanski, Matthew Kyer, Cristy Rau, and Ginny Taber. As you make your way down the B wing hallway you will find all the classrooms filled with Grade One children learning, laughing, and trying to remember all the routines of a full, school day.

Children also met our two para-educators. Mrs. Darling and Mrs. Ray are assisting teachers once again. Although their duties are divided among the seven first-grade classrooms, their hands-on help with children is always appreciated.

Due to the large number of children in Grade One, the children will eat lunch and have recess in two teams. Team 1 (Mr. Gale, Mrs. Babcock, Mrs. Taber and Mrs. Hamblett) will be eating and playing between 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 PM, while team 2 (Ms. Klanski, Mrs. Rau, and Mr. Kyer) will be eating and playing between 11:45 a.m. and 12:45 p.m.

Our children have had an exciting (perhaps exhausting?) start of their first year of a full-day schedule. We have all been busy with class routines, rules, and of course READING. We will always encourage parents to keep reading regularly with their children. Our home-school reading programs will soon be underway.

*(First Grade - continued)*

Children will be having outdoor recess daily (except in rain), so please have them dress appropriately for cool weather. During morning recess, children may eat a snack from home. Due to possible allergies and other considerations, please discourage your child from trading or sharing snacks.

We anxiously look forward to seeing parents at Open House. Although it is very early in the school year, we need to ask parents to help us by signing up for November conferences. This allows everyone to select a day and time that is convenient for both parents and teachers. With the great parents, programs, and personnel we enjoy at C. G. S., we can truly look forward to an exciting year together!



**Children will be having outdoor recess daily ... please have them dress appropriately for cool weather.**

## Second-Grade News

### **Second-Grade Team**

*Teachers: Carolyn Bennett, Jerry Craig, Nancy Gwozdz, Erin Hazzard, Heather McPeck, Nancy Plaster, and Angela Puccia*

*Para-Educators: Gloria Barry and Heidi Holever*

We are all very excited about our beginning of the school year in second grade! Along with our new students, we have a wonderful new member to our second grade team this year. She is Erin Hazzard, and she has come to us from G. H. Robertson School with great ideas and a strong sense of team and community. We welcome her to our team.

We also have Ann Pronovost, who will be the teacher while Mrs. McPeck is on maternity leave. Ann was our wonderful permanent substitute teacher for Art last year during the preparation for the Art's Festival. We are so glad she will be with us this year.

In all of our classrooms, we have begun to get acquainted with our students as individuals, learning both their interests and their learning styles. We also have begun working on fostering a strong community in our classrooms and creating a collaborative list of rules that will help our classrooms run more smoothly for all students. This community building is part of our social studies unit during the first month of school.

In our first weeks of school, we are teaching the students how to independently select books that are just right for them, whether it be in the classroom, library, or home. Reading books that they can fluently read independently is one of the most important ways to increase both the love of reading and the ability to read. Our students have also begun talking about stories and books with partners while they have listened to stories in our classrooms. They will be exposed to many mini lessons helping them to listen more selectively and discuss specific parts of stories using various strategies. During September, students will work on the strategy of connecting the text of the story to their own experiences and lives. Our students will also connect their writing to their reading and work on creating complete simple sentences while recognizing their connections to text.

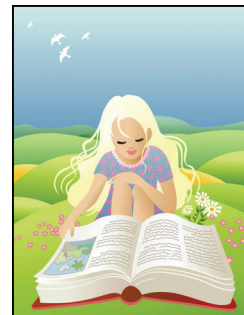
During this month, our students will be introduced to our formal spelling program. Each lesson is built on a phonetic element or syllable. In the initial lessons, the students will work with words that contain short vowels. Although a spelling list will be sent home each week, the students will learn the patterns and structures used with these words, and they will be exposed to many words that will follow these patterns and structures.

In math, students will work on daily math skills such as using information from a calendar and a thermometer. Throughout September and into October, the students will develop strategies to add and subtract then apply these to real life problems. Helping your child become more confident with the basic addition and subtraction facts through games such as *Concentration* or rolling dice and adding them to move on a game board, will assist them with accuracy.

Our science unit for the first quarter is about soils. Students learn to sort soils according to their color, texture, and water retention. Students learn to record their findings and share their thoughts in small and large groups. It is a fun, but sometimes messy unit and one the students really enjoy!

During each morning throughout the year, we will have a snack time, which is incorporated into the morning break. We thank you in advance for providing healthy snacks rather than sugary snacks to help the students maintain a high level of energy throughout the entire morning.

We, as the second-grade team, are looking forward to an exciting year working with your children and you, and we look forward to meeting you on September 28 during Open House.



**Reading books that they can fluently read independently is one of the most important ways to increase both the love of reading and the ability to read.**



**During this month, our students will be introduced to our formal spelling program. Each lesson is built on a phonetic element or syllable.**

## From Our School Nurse ~ Mrs. Paula Curtiss



***"It is so important that we have current phone numbers and contact information in the event of an illness or injury, so please update the office with any changes that may occur during the school year."***

Welcome to Coventry Grammar School. I want to thank you all for completing and sending in your student's Emergency Card.

It is very important that we have current phone numbers and contact information in the event of an illness or emergency. Please update the office with any changes that may occur during the school year.

Remember if your child will be absent from school, it is required that you notify the Health Office at 860-742-4558. Please call by 9:30 am. A call will be made to your home if you have not contacted us.

Students are not allowed to carry medications of any kind either to or in school. Any medication that may be required during the school day must have a written authorization form (available from the nurse) completed by your child's physician and the medication must be brought to the Health Office by an adult.

There are many students at Coventry Grammar School with life threatening food allergies and other dietary concerns. Always check with

your child's teacher several days before sending in birthday or celebration food to share with the class.

Due to the age of the students at CGS, we have many "accidents" during the day that may require a change of clothing. I encourage all parents/guardians to have a change of clothing in the bottom of their child's backpack should this be necessary.

I would also ask for donations of new packages of boys and girls underwear, neutral colored t-shirts, and neutral colored sweat pants. Sizes 4, 6, and 8 are appropriate for the students in our buildings. I thank you in advance for any donations.

Please feel free to contact me at any time with any questions or concerns.

Wishing all students and their parents and guardians a happy and healthy school year!

Paula Curtiss  
860-742-4558  
[pcurtiss@coventryct.org](mailto:pcurtiss@coventryct.org)

## From the Reading Room ~



***The Reading Room was so excited to see how many students participated in our Summer Reading program... Keep reading as a family and for enjoyment all year long!***

The Reading Room was so excited to see how many students participated in our Summer Reading program. Students who read twenty-five books or more received a free book on September 14! The amounts were tallied and sent to the Governor's Report for Schools in CT that participated. Keep reading as a family and for enjoyment all year long!

This school year we have some staff changes in the Reading Room. Our Reading Consultant, Sharon Dieter, retired. We wish her the best and thank her for her contributions to CGS in the area of best reading practice. Jennifer Jones, working as our Reading Teacher for four years at CGS, received her Reading Consultant endorsement and will now be our acting Consultant. She is very enthusiastic to be a new leader and put her training into practice. Eileen Hosey, who contributed eight years as a reading para-educator, went back to school and received her teaching certificate in CT. We will miss her in the Reading Room but are happy to know that her expertise will still be shared with CGS as a part-time Kindergarten teacher. Nan Kandolin, working as a Para-Educator in the Coventry Public School system for twenty-one years, will now join our Reading Room staff. We welcome her experience and dedication to Coventry Public Schools. We are delighted to still have Carol Bittner, Hannah Pietrantonio, and Mary Talaga working with our CGS students in the field of literacy. Their wealth of knowledge and love of reading is a gift to all those students who need the extra support.

The Reading Room works with students in Kindergarten for support in phonemic awareness and guided reading, in First Grade with our one-on-one Supporting Literacy Competence program, and in Second Grade during guided-reading groups targeting specific skills and strategies. The Reading Consultant models current, best reading practices for teachers and provides in-house professional development. The Reading Room also assists the school in administration of literacy assessments, data collection, and intervention.

We look forward to working with your children in reading! If you have any questions, please call the Reading Room 742-7313 ext. 195 and ask for Jennifer Jones. Also, be sure to look on CGS's website under the Reading Tab to find additional reading resources.

We would love for you to come visit the Reading Room (room 4A in the Kindergarten wing) at Open House on September 28.

## From Our School Psychologist ~ Mrs. Heather Zilora

As a Coventry Public School Mini-Grant winner, I am helping to implement a Positive Behavioral Support program at Coventry Grammar School. Last year I began reading the book [Have You Filled a Bucket Today?](#) in the classrooms. It was well received by the students and teachers. This year we will continue to use “filling a bucket” as our theme for a Positive Behavioral Support program (PBS). Bucket filling means that we are being kind to others. In return for filling someone’s bucket then we fill our own bucket. When we help others feel good then we feel good too.

All of the students have heard the book and will have an opportunity to bring the book home and share it with family members. Throughout the day and throughout the school students will be “caught” filling a bucket. It could be that they were helpful to someone on recess. They might have used good manners in the cafeteria. They never know when someone might “catch” them filling a bucket! The stu-

dents will receive a ticket that is put into a class bucket. At the end of the week, on Friday morning, I will draw several names from each grade level to be our Bucket Fillers of the Week. They can choose a Bucket Filling prize. There will also be a Golden Shovel award for the class caught filling a bucket by being well mannered in the cafeteria, quiet in the hallway, etc.

Ask yourself and ask your child if you have filled a bucket today. As the book states, “Bucket filling is fun and easy to do. Bucket Filling makes our homes, our schools and our neighborhoods better places to be!”

For more information check out: <http://www.bucketfillers101.com>.

Heather Zilora  
School Psychologist

*The graphic to the right of this article  
is being used by courtesy of  
<http://www.bucketfillers101.com>.*



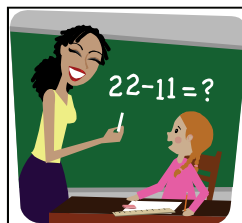
**Bucket filling means that we are being kind to others. In return for filling someone’s bucket then we fill our own bucket. When we help others feel good then we feel good too.**

## From Our Math Corner ~ Mrs. Stephanie Wissler, ASSIST Program

ASSIST stands for Academic Student Support Intervention Service Team. This year, my team and I will provide math services for Grade 1 and 2 students. I will be working with two paraprofessionals who will help instruct the children needing math services. Some students will come to my room for math services and other times my team and I will be going into the classrooms for support. These children are selected through assessments and receive the same math skills as all grade-level students. The students who work with me will work at a pace that allows for individual growth and confidence building.

Our school uses the *Growing with Mathematics* program. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) has identified five content strands that form the basis of an exemplary mathematics curriculum. These strands are: Numbers and Operations, Algebra, Geometry, Measurement, and Data Analysis and Probability. Each grade will be covering these math strands. In first grade, a major focus is on developing early mathematical language, and in second grade, the program provides a range of activities that ensure children are constantly discussing, representing, and reasoning mathematically. In *Growing with Mathematics*, language development is viewed as a spiral. The child’s everyday language is the starting point from which mathematical language and symbolic language grow.

Please feel free to contact me at any time this year if you have questions or comments: [swissler@coventryct.org](mailto:swissler@coventryct.org).



**The students who work with me will work at a pace that allows for individual growth and confidence building.**

## Donuts With Donna

The Superintendent of Schools is available for casual conversations with community members during the school year. “Donuts with Donna” is a way for you to greet your school superintendent, ask questions, and keep informed about education in our town. Please feel free to stop by, where there will be an informal atmosphere with an open dialogue and no set agenda. The next session of “Donuts with Donna” is Wednesday, September 29, from 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. at Lisicke Beach Pavilion located on Route 31.



## *From Our School Librarian ~ Mrs. Annette M. Christie*



*We also have mailed in the over 9,000 Box Tops for Education points that everyone earned last Spring.*

Welcome to a new school year! We have been busy getting ready for students and preparing new materials for borrowing.

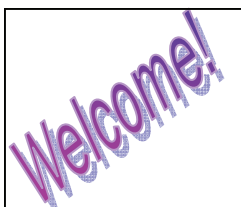
This week we began classes and are learning where the books are located, how to use a shelf marker, and how to be kind and respectful to people and our books. We are reading books or playing a game that reminds us of the things we should do to take good care of our books so we can all share them.

We have many new books we will be putting out in the following weeks. We also have mailed in the over 9,000 Box Tops for Education points that everyone earned last spring. The due date for mailing Box Tops is October 31. We will receive a check for all of these Box Tops in December.

Thank you to everyone who has supported our school!

Annette M. Christie  
Library Assistant  
Coventry Grammar School

## *A Warm Welcome To New Staff*



We have new faces in new places at Coventry Grammar School!

- Eileen Hosey has joined the kindergarten team and is teaching an A.M. class.
- Heidi Bosco has joined the kindergarten team and is teaching a P.M. class.
- Erin Hazzard has joined our second-grade team this year.
- Nan Kandolin comes to us as a para-educator.

We wish these fine teachers all the best in their new roles this year!



## *Weather-Related/Emergency Closings, Delays, and Early Release Notifications*

Announcements regarding these closings, delayed openings, and early releases will be made via our ALERTNOW calling system. In addition to broadcasting this information on selected TV and radio stations, all student homes are now phoned by ALERTNOW. If families would like a list of the selected media outlets, please see the website at [www.coventrypublicschools.org](http://www.coventrypublicschools.org).



Coventry Grammar School

3453 Main Street  
Coventry, Connecticut USA  
06238  
Phone: 860/742-7313

**CGS Open House**  
**Tuesday, September 28 ~ 6:30 - 8:00 PM**

## PTO News

A huge welcome from the PTO to new parents, returning parents and students. We are excited to meet a lot of you at Open House on Tuesday, September 28. Please stop by and visit our table, and share your ideas and thoughts to make this an exciting and fun school year. If you haven't already, please be sure to fill out your membership and volunteer form. This will get you added to the PTO email distribution list so that you can stay on top of what is going on in your child's school and what fun activities will be held.

The PTO will be sponsoring the annual Scholastic Book Fair during Open House in the CGS gymnasium. This is a great time to see friends and get some great reading material. A few other upcoming events: Picture Day September 29, Welcome Back to School Family Fun Bingo Night - date to be announced, Fall Fundraising information will be coming home in October. We will be doing a pie fundraiser with delivery before Thanksgiving, and the Original Artworks fundraiser (turning your child's artwork into items that you may purchase as gifts) with delivery in time for Christmas. Our next PTO meeting is Monday, October 4 at 7:00 p.m. Free babysitting is available.

**HELP NEEDED:** We are in need of a new School Rewards Chairperson. This will involve staying on top of the clipping and submission of Box Tops coupons and overseeing the coordination of the Box Tops Contests (we would like to hold two this year). If interested, please talk to Beth Hassett or Carrie Houk.

**Beth Hassett, Co-President**

Phone: 860-742-5605; Email: [bhassett5605@charter.net](mailto:bhassett5605@charter.net)

**Carrie Houk, Co-President**

Phone: 860-498-0189; Email: [chouko189@charter.net](mailto:chouko189@charter.net)

**Anita Hilinski, Secretary**

Phone: 860-742-1907; Email: [doggroom21@cs.com](mailto:doggroom21@cs.com)

**Camilla Byam, Treasurer**

Phone: 860-742-8682; Email: [camillabyam@hotmail.com](mailto:camillabyam@hotmail.com)

### PTO Treasurer's Report

As of September 8, 2009



Beginning Balance	\$ 5,767.27
Income	\$ 546.37
Expenses	\$ 5,104.23
Ending Balance	\$ 1,209.41



**For an electronic copy of this newsletter,  
or for additional information about the  
Coventry Grammar School,  
please visit our website:**

**<http://www.coventryps.org/cgs/cgs.html>**