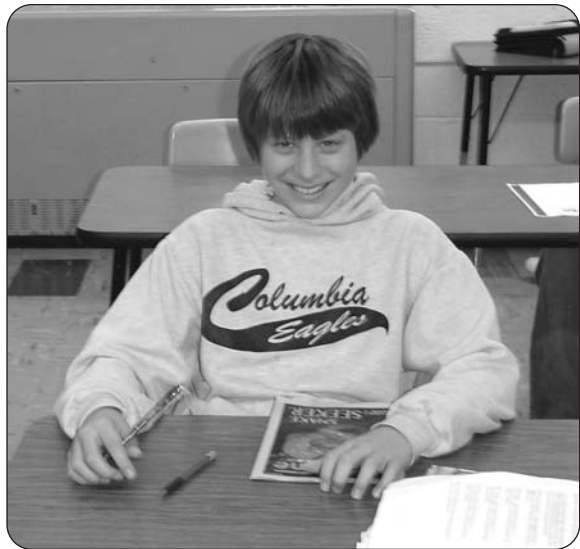


COLUMBIA MIDDLE SCHOOL



"Message from the Principal" - Mr. Greg Meschke

It seems hard to believe, but here we are nearing the start of our second semester. Our Student Led Conferences were a great success with parents sharing many positive comments. We also are starting our after-school tutoring programs the first week of December. This has been an outstanding opportunity for academic recovery. Please contact our office or our teaching teams if your child needs attention. We have many activities to look forward to. I hope you have a wonderful winter season and a Happy New Year.



As Easy as ABC

Article by: Jeff Bush, Reporter

If your child is sick and misses a few days of school, chances are he/she will probably temporarily fall behind in their schoolwork. If your child attends Columbia Middle School they have a place to go for help. The ABC (Academic Behavior Change) room is a place where students can go to take missed tests or assignments in a quiet environment. "If a student needs an assignment or test read to them for better comprehension, this room is another resource for them," states ABC room coordinator Ms. Monika Cook. Students can use the ABC room throughout the day from nine in the morning until 3:30 p.m. It's not only for students who miss days of school either. Some students simply find themselves falling behind. The goal is to keep the students focused on academic success. Middle school principal Mr. Meschke, the teachers, and the ABC room coordinator work together to make sure each students' needs are being met and that they have the necessary academic support.



Local Veteran Remembers

Article by: Jeff Bush, Reporter

When Columbia Middle School Principal Mr. Greg Meschke needed a speaker for Veterans Day he didn't need to look far. Former Army Captain Megan Spink, now known as Ms. Megan Hall, teaches special education at the middle school. Ms. Hall told stories about her 14-month stay in Kuwait and Iraq to a captivated crowd. Receiving a phone call in January 2003 informing her she was on alert, then later that night finding out via the Jackson Citizen Patriot she was activated, Ms. Hall headed to Fort McCoy in Wisconsin. After 8 weeks of intense training she was shipped off to Kuwait. "I went from 10 degrees to one hundred ten degrees," recalled Ms. Hall. The students listened intently as she told stories about the 1460th Transportation Company's endeavors. Fixing schools that were in poor shape (not from the war) was just one of the tasks her company completed. She told students that it was more difficult to buy supplies than one might think. "Kuwait people love Americans but not women who are in a leadership role," she says, "they are used to women with their faces covered." Ms. Hall admits that she was nervous at first and probably for good measure. It took eight months for the army to realize to put extra steel under and around her company's trucks and in their flak vests. "We just took it day by day," she says. It turns out that her company was in good hands though as Captain Spink was in the top 10% of her class in shooting. The army sent her to every shooting school they had. She even tried out for the Olympics but just missed making the team. Seventh grader Mason McBean asked, "What weapons have you used other than your M-16?" Ms. Hall response, "I've shot them all." Although her company was a transportation unit and was not actively seeking the enemy, Ms. Hall told the students she and her company were shot at while running missions in Iraq. As she answered question after question she also refused to answer some of the questions that were a little too personal. "We will call that classified," she said. The students seemed to get what Ms. Hall had been through for her country. Seventh grader Rebecca McComas stated, "that you have to sacrifice to be a soldier."



Engineering Marvels

Article By: Jeff Bush, Reporter

Students at the Columbia Middle School spent hours building wooden bridges only to have them destroyed...but that's o.k. because it was all part of the plan. The Industrial Technology class at the middle school learned a lesson in engineering as they tested the strength of bridges they had built. By noting at what weight the bridge would collapse students were able to determine it's efficiency by plugging that number into a formula. Determining the efficiency allows the students to understand how their bridge design might hold up in the real world. "It was probably my favorite thing we have done in this class so far," said student Connor Stewart. Conner goes on to say that, "it taught me a lot about building and engineering techniques." Students were given fifteen sticks of balsa wood to build their bridges of any design they liked. Each bridge had to be at least one foot long, four inches tall, and three inches wide. "It's all in the design," said instructor Mr. Mark Scheick.

From the Columbia Middle School P.T.O.

This years Euchre Tournament will be held at the Brooklyn Living Center on Saturday, March 3, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. There will be a silent auction and we are looking for items to include. If you are creative and would like to donate something, please call Lisa Hayes at 206-0170 or Susan Towbin at 414-3883. In past years the tournament has been a lot of fun for those who participated and a successful event for our middle school P.T.O. Tickets for the tournament are \$15.00 or two for \$25.00. Come join in the fun!

Columbia Middle School is competing for the \$10,000 grand prize in a Westwood Mall Contest. The contest is based on points. One point = One dollar. Points are assigned for a newsletter every month, bulletin board displays, electronic sign and attending events. There are only eight schools competing and we are the only middle school. We need all your receipts dated from August 1, 2007 through May 1, 2008. Westwood Mall officials accept receipts from everywhere except Walmart. Contest winners will be announced on May 22, 2008. If you would like to help us, your receipts can be turned in at the middle school or either elementary schools. At the high school, please ask that they be given to Ross Towbin. If you would like your receipts returned to you, just include a self-addressed stamped envelope and we will send them back to you. With everyone's help, the grand prize may be awarded to Columbia Middle School.



"Gotta Run"

Article by: Jeff Bush, Reporter

The Columbia Central Seventh Grade recently took a trip to the high school for a track and field day. Physical education teacher Ms. Donna Guernsey had a different perspective on the day. "It is a tradition of mine to put students through a track and field event," explains Ms. Guernsey, "we can better see if they have an aptitude for it." With the help of volunteer high school students



and several middle school teachers the event was run like a real track meet. With Ms. Guernsey's four physical education classes competing against one another it got pretty competitive. It gives the students a taste of what joining a track team might be like. Ms. Guernsey explains in the past the middle school held the event in the spring but by then track had already started and the kids had no idea of what it was about or what they could



do. Since these students will have the opportunity to join the track team this spring it was a great day for them to assess what skills and ability they possess. Of course there was a prize for the winning team. An all expense paid trip to the middle school gymnasium for dodge ball. There were no losers however as all participants were treated to a lunch grilled up on the spot by CMS teacher Mr. Mark Scheick.