



Celebrating Excellence

Composing Our Future

Torrington Public Schools

SPRING 2021

Family, School, Community

Message From The Superintendent:

This has been an unprecedented year. As we look forward to spring, we reflect on all we have accomplished this year. Exciting progress has occurred. Throughout the summer and into the fall, we continued to provide all of our students with district issued laptops. In November, with the help of Torrington's amazing community, we passed a referendum that will allow for a new middle school, high school and central office to be built by the 2024-2025 school year. In spite of living in a virtual world, we were able to honor our veterans with socially distanced parades, ROTC presentations and musical tributes. Our students continue to have remarkable successes being recognized for their skills and talents. As we expand our Career Pathways, we have seen more students who are learning to express themselves through video and broadcasting. This expansion adds to existing pathways that include: Business and Marketing, Public Service/Criminal Justice & ROTC, Education, STEM and Manufacturing, Applied Arts and Health & Wellness. As we build these programs, we are offering more classes than ever that will help our students pave the way for their future journey.

In the middle of the pandemic, the staff continues to do an amazing job providing virtual and in-person instruction, moving seamlessly from quarantines and back to in-person instruction. However, even though they make it "look easy", it is a herculean effort to provide these various modes of instruction.

In this year of confusion, mixed emotions, loss, disappointments, there have been several heartwarming actions and thoughtful outreach. Our community partners have pulled together to offer vaccines, testing and health guidance, food distribution, mental health services, positive news celebrating our students, and support for students in need. The school year has brought us a deeper sense of community and a resilience that can only come from within and from support of those around us. These acts of kindness remind us that Torrington is the place to be.

As we move toward spring, each day will bring more daylight. There is hope right around the corner. The vaccine is starting to be available. We will be able to spend more time outdoors, enjoying the simple things in life. The pandemic gave us time to reflect on all that is important to us, all that we hold dear, tested our values and helped us remember what we truly believe in.

For those of us in education, we usually celebrate the year's end in June, but this year, I think we are all very happy to celebrate the end of 2020. Even though we may have experienced losses this year, by enduring them together, we have become even closer as a school family.

Thank you for being an extraordinary educational community and town who puts our children first. I am so grateful to be a part of this community. Thank you for riding this roller coast journey with me as we strive to provide the very best for our students and families each day.

They are our future and our hope for a better world.



Susan M. Lubomski,
Superintendent

Torrington School District Teacher of the Year



Christine Gamari

I love Torrington. I have lived here almost my entire life and this community means the world to me. Of the many different honors, I have received, I think I am most proud to accept this one and to represent this community as its Teacher of the Year, and to be named a finalist for CT State Teacher of the Year. Torrington is a special place - one that maybe only people who live here or grew up here can truly understand. We are fiercely proud of this community and often go above and beyond to support each other, especially during tough times. There are few things I know for certain: but I do know that like me, my children will be products of the Torrington Public School System; and I know that with whatever the future will bring, I will continue connecting with and giving back to a community that has already given so much to me.

Many teachers first learn about the art of teaching through their college education classes or student-teaching experiences. I have been learning how to teach for my entire life, studying under one of the best mentors in the profession - my mom. I witnessed early on that this calling requires a deep love of learning, compassion for children, and selflessness. My mom's passion for her life's work inspired me to become a teacher, too.

My decision to pursue education was not well-received by some of the adults around me. At the top of my high school class, some people pushed me to consider other professions. Not wanting to disappoint, I entered college as a Biology major in the Pre-Medical Program but began questioning my future goals by the end of my Sophomore year. My college, a Jesuit institution founded on the principles of social justice and equity, taught me that we must all be agents of change on our missions through life. Deep in my heart I knew I needed to make my mark on the world by improving young students' lives through education. I could not sit back and watch as certain groups of students were treated unfairly in a system that was supposed to elevate them. If you ask me, changing my career trajectory is one of the most intelligent decisions I've ever made.

Although considered one of the only constants in life, change is never easy. Last March, many of us said goodbye to our students and didn't realize it would be the last time we saw them in person that year. In the blink of an eye, students were ripped away from the safe and supportive environments we toiled tirelessly to cultivate, and we were all thrust into a time full of fear, uncertainty, and frequent frustration. As professionals, we struggled to figure out how to fill all of the roles we play for our students outside of simply 'teacher.' We missed all of our students, and we worried for those that needed the structure and stability that school provides. We tried to remain upbeat and positive, but many of us were just as scared.

As a result of Covid-19, many districts had to completely redesign their educational system. No district's move to remote or hybrid learning has been flawless, and it has taken a lot of patience on the part of teachers, students, and families to work together through this unprecedented time. We all agree; it is nearly impossible to replicate what we do in our classrooms in the online

environment. But we are trying our best to do so anyway. Many of us spend hours researching digital tools and techniques to engage our learners and provide consistency during a very trying time. We design engaging lessons, make upbeat video messages, and check-in on students to alleviate their fears and anxieties about what is happening in the world. We call, email, Zoom/Google Meet, and parade past students to try to provide a sense of normalcy, knowing full well that what we are going through is anything but 'normal.' What many people fail to realize, however, is that we are not trying to be extraordinary. We are just doing all we can for our students, as we always have and always will.

I feel that public education might improve as a result of what we have been going through. Issues such as inequitable resource distribution, the digital divide, and the important role teachers and support staff play came to the forefront of the nation's attention this past Spring. We were also able to have other valuable discussions on topics such as the importance of social emotional learning at all levels, the effectiveness of instructional models, and the use of authentic assessments at helping all learners meet learning targets. And, as we get thrust into a world where computers and devices may be replacing paper and pencil, at least for a little while, we are now recognizing the importance of building responsible digital citizens, capable of safely navigating the digital world. Finally, as a result of this pandemic, the home-school partnership may have been strengthened, as parents and teachers re-establish their shared responsibility for helping the children of this community succeed.

Our foray into distance learning last spring also highlighted some deficiencies of an exclusively digital learning experience for our students, too. The nation realized it might not just be all about the use of technology in education; students need our friendly faces, calming resolve and, most importantly, our supportive words of encouragement in order to thrive. They rely on us to teach them more than just our content or how to be good students; they need us to teach them how to be good people. Students yearn to build connections, so my colleagues and I try our best to continue strengthening these relationships, even through a computer screen. We want all of our learners to feel like they are still an important part of our classroom and school culture.

Our schools undoubtedly look very different this school year. Masks and social distancing practices are the norm. The halls and the classrooms are a little emptier and quieter. Teachers are still learning how to effectively instruct, assess, and support our students in this new learning environment. Students are trying to adjust to the new routines and expectations, while trying to cope with various other demands on their time and energy. We are all living day to day, trying to support one another during this very uncertain time. What is certain, however, is that Torrington teachers and students are resilient; they are flexible; they are creative; We will make whatever learning model we find ourselves in work. And we will do this as we always have—together.

TORRINGTON SCHOOL

800 Charles Street · Torrington, CT 06790 | 860-489-2300 | Principal: Kelly Galullo



From Principal Galullo:

The saying, "It takes a village" has never been truer than this year. The Torrington School community has come together to ensure our students are connected, engaged, and learning. Torrington parents have learned how to support their student with remote learning.

Virtual learning has allowed for us to have parents as our partners in student success and development. This regular communication and glimpse into each other's worlds have really fostered a great collaboration that we plan to grow. Teachers have rapidly accelerated their professional development in technology, taken on new responsibilities, and developed best practices for remote learning. Students have gained technology skills, independence, and mental flexibility in this new model. Our support staff is learning and growing as well. Paraprofessionals have developed technology skills and learned new methods. Cafeteria staff have decorated and dressed up in character costumes to brighten our days together. Custodians are working tirelessly to meet protocols and keep a clean and welcoming environment. Secretaries are organizing distance materials, creating virtual forms, and helping families navigate issues. Our nurses have helped with contact tracing and communicating with families and staff about health protocols. Our technology team has provided training, installed equipment, distributed devices, and continue to support technology needs each day. We know this has been a very difficult time for all or families and staff, but we are so proud and humbled by the dedication and unyielding efforts everyone has demonstrated to ensure student success.

We have strived to maintain a sense of community even when we are distant, hybrid, or in-person. Each day, school starts with a class morning meeting. We utilize our social emotional curriculum to support students, foster strong relationships, as well as teach social-emotional core competences that will support student success at school and at home. We have hosted virtual events to bring our community together. Some of these include: Veterans Day Slideshow, Virtual Bedtime Story with the Grinch, and a Directed Draw with the Administrators. We have shared a starfish award form that parents and staff can complete to recognize a staff member that has made a difference for a child this year. Our PTO is still very active. Just to name a few things, they have held a spirit week, sold spirit wear, and surprised the staff with a coffee truck to show their appreciation for their dedication and efforts.

In addition, we are researching and offering virtual enrichment events and field trips. The PTO is sponsoring a virtual trip to Roaring Brook Nature Center for all of our First grade students. In December, Kindergarten participated in a story and craft with the Audubon Society. Classes also participated in a webinar with author Alan Katz, with the message, "Be a writer and be kind". We are looking forward to more virtual enrichment opportunities this spring.

With all that is different this year, our students are exceeding our expectations. Overall, they have been so flexible, accepting, kind, and positive throughout this time. Our students are the example. Each day they enter school bubbling with excitement and smiles. They have taught me how to adjust my focus to how we are thriving instead of what we can't do this year.

Dr. MICHAEL CURI
JESSICA MAGDA
Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine
860.482.8177
www.torringtonpediatrics.com

Litchfield Hills Professional Center • 30 Peck Road, Torrington, CT 06790

NORTHWEST
INSURANCE
SERVICES, LLC
"Insurance makes all things possible"

860.613.6300

BRENDA BAKKER • KAREN BEADLE • PETER BAKKER JR.

455 MAIN STREET • NEW HARTFORD, CT 06057



Alan Katz, Grade 3



Super Hero Day for Spirit Week



Hat Day, Grade 2



Minion On A Snowy Day



Hereditary Traits, Grade 3



Show & Tell Writing Celebration, Kindergarten



Word Detectives, Grade 1



68 Church Street · Torrington, CT 06790 | 860-489-2570 | Principal: Peter Michelson



From Principal Michelson:

Around the world, nation and in Connecticut, this school year has been one that has presented new challenges for educators. At Vogel-Wetmore School and across Torrington, our staff has stepped up and met these challenges with creativity, enthusiasm, and persistence. We have made many changes to everyday activities like parent drop off, recess, lunch, and breakfast. We have also made much larger changes in order to adapt to distance learning. While we are looking forward to returning to many of our old routines, some of these changes have brought improvements to the way we learn and play at school and will continue to in the future.

The change that has been the most exciting for me has been the move to one to one devices for our students. This is something that I have wanted to see for our students for many years and is one of the silver linings that COVID-19 has brought us. Rather than having to schedule a time in a computer lab, our students will now be able to access a computer any time that it will benefit them. This will allow teachers to better meet individual student needs every day. When in school, some students may be ready to start creating a slide presentation while others might need to continue to plan with pencil and paper. This was much more difficult in the past and will be a great improvement for all students.

At Vogel-Wetmore School we have a proud tradition of recognizing our Veterans on Veterans Day each year. Usually this event involves a breakfast and a ceremony that gets just a little better each and every year. This year we were not able to have

our veterans join us in the building, but we were still able to find a safe and creative way to honor them. Our entire school made signs and banners (some honoring their favorite veterans) and we all lined the streets around Vogel-Wetmore school as dozens of veterans paraded by in their vehicles while we all cheered and clapped. Many of them drove around the building several times. This is a tradition that will not replace our traditional Veterans Day assembly, but we hope to make it an added highlight to future assemblies even after COVID.

While we are working hard making temporary changes to the way we teach and learn, we are also continuing the important long-term work that we were doing before the pandemic. One of the steps that we are taking is creating and including learning targets for our students that correspond with each lesson. You may have seen these already posted in slide shows on Google Classroom.

Learning targets are written to help students understand what they should learn that day. They all start with the words, "I am learning" and then they describe the specific learning that we want the student to do during that lesson. Learning targets do not describe the activity, but what the student should learn that day. For example, a kindergarten learning target may state, "I am learning to use exclamation marks in my writing." When the lesson ends students will know they have reached this target if they can honestly say, "I can use exclamation marks in my writing." While we are distance learning, these learning targets can be a helpful tool for families as well. If you are helping a learner at home, look for these learning targets and use them to help you to know what the teacher is aiming for.

Albreada
REFUSE & SWEEPING LLC
Locally Owned & Operated

860.482.6799 • AlbreadaRefuse.com

Bankers. Neighbors.
Friends
We are all of the above. Always.
Litchfield Bancorp
1850
EVERY CUSTOMER COUNTS™
www.LitchfieldBancorp.com

Visit one of our branches today!

- Litchfield**
294 West Street
- Lakeville**
326 Main Street
- Torrington**
1320 E. Main Street
- Watertown**
51 Straits Turnpike
- Washington Depot**
Bryan Plaza

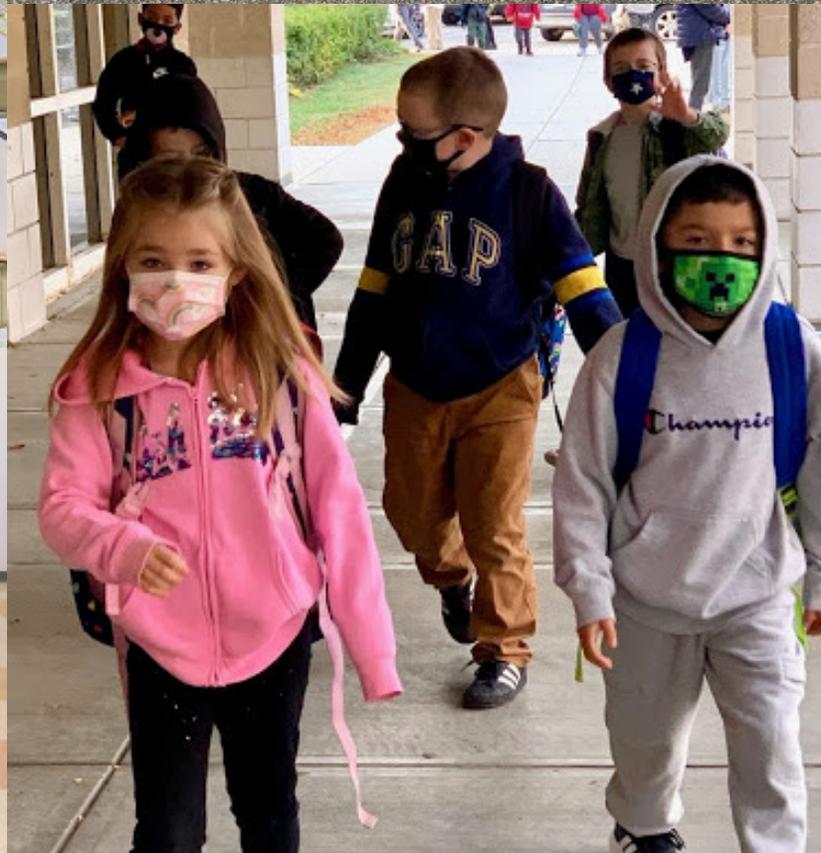
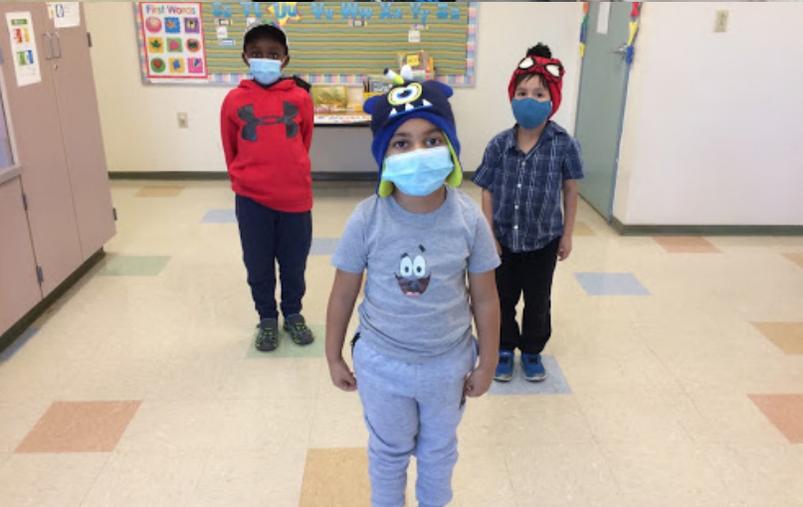
Member FDIC Equal Housing Lender

A message from our new Assistant Principal Payne:

I am so excited to join the Vogel-Wetmore School and Torrington community. I have been an educator for over 20 years. I have taught in pre-schools, elementary schools, middle schools and Adult Basic Education and GED classes. I love learning myself and nothing brings me greater joy than seeing a student light up with understanding or discovery! While I will always be a teacher at heart, more recently I have been a math coach. This is my first administrative position.

I grew up in a very rural community in New Hampshire. Torrington reminds me of the mill towns that were near me. I see so much potential here. The main street of Torrington, the church bells, and parks are so beautiful. I look forward to opportunities to support the efforts to revitalize the downtown area, and to be an all-around booster for the city!

I have been so impressed by the dedicated staff at Vogel-Wetmore. The sense of community is so strong. The pandemic has made it challenging to get to know the families of our students, but little by little at pick-up, and our many Zoom meetings, I am starting to learn some of your names and faces. I can't wait for the days when we can gather together again as a community.





500 Migeon Avenue · Torrington, CT 06790 | 860-489-2500 | Principal: Joanne R. Creedon



From Principal Creedon:

Our 2020-2021 school year is certainly a year of change, adjustment, and growth!

We started the school year with a hybrid model of delivery of instruction, and in mid-October we switched to either in-person or full distance learning in order to give our teachers the opportunity to focus on one group of students, one format of instruction. This shift required some teachers to take on new assignments, and some students to be moved from one class roster to another. Our students, families, and staff have put forth an amazing effort to make it all work!

Technology has been the name of the game, and in fact, the game-changer in allowing learning to continue despite our covid world. Our students, teachers, and parents (and this administrator!) have all made gains in learning innovative technology tools. Teachers have reported that in some cases, the students have become the tech expert assisting their peers and teacher in problem-solving and troubleshooting! Another boon to using technology: students are continuing to work on lessons outside of official “school day” hours!

Screen time is essential, but we are also keen to include physical activity every day. All teachers encourage our children to go outside and take physical activity breaks. P.E. teacher Mr. Mahar provides lots of possibilities in his virtual lessons with the goal of “Get Kids Moving”. We also take recess very seriously! Our in-person students go outside almost every day. One of our teachers,

Mrs. Hart, has been collecting donations of snow gear so that the children can enjoy frolicking in the snow when Old Man Winter gives us that wonderful white stuff!

Building relationships and fostering community is still at the heart of everything we do. The lion's share of this takes place in each and every classroom, every day, whether it is an in-person class or a 100% distance learning class. Each day starts with our Forbes News of the Day followed by a SEL (Social-Emotional Learning) Lesson. Themes of these lessons include: skills for learning, empathy, and emotion management. Teachers have reported that their students are now discussing and using these skills and strategies when faced with day-to-day struggles.

Special events have afforded us opportunities to be united for a common purpose: we celebrated Veterans Day with a virtual ceremony, conducted a Food Drive just before Thanksgiving, and enjoyed PJ Day and Snowman Day just before winter break.

Forbes always recognizes Martin Luther King Day, and this year is no exception. Students in every class have been learning about Dr. King's work for civil rights and his leadership in using non-violence to bring about essential social change. Students have shared their learning and appreciation of Martin Luther King by creating original song, writing, art, and even interpretive dance. These works are featured on the Daily Announcements so that all may enjoy.

Torrington Public Schools has earned distinction year after year as one of the Best Communities for Music Education in America.

Santoro's Cleaners

462 Torrington West Street • Torrington, CT 06790

Professional Dry Cleaning & Commercial Laundry
Shirt Laundry • Fire Restoration

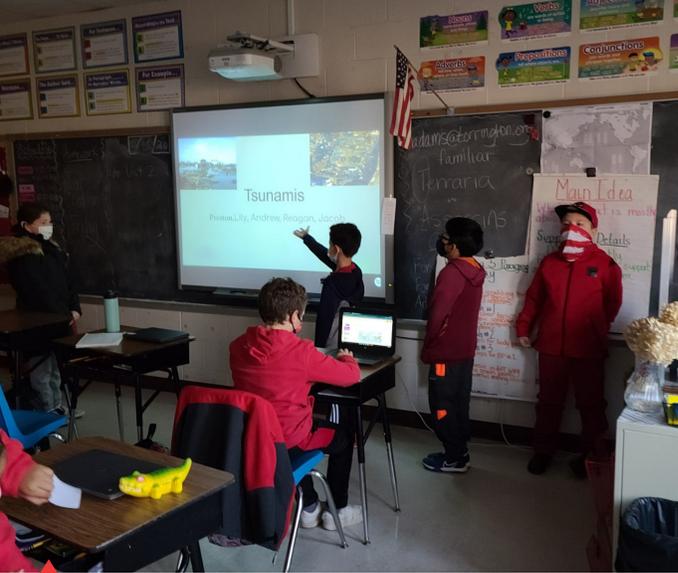
860.489.5885



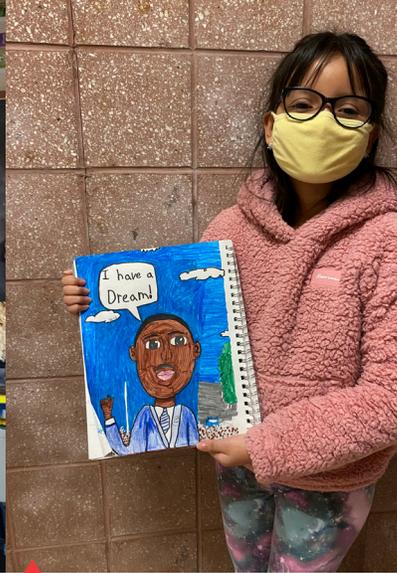
**Arum
& Associates LLC**
Consulting

2291 Torrington West Street • Torrington, CT 06790
edarum@hotmail.com

T: 860.482.7087 | F: 860.482.0687 | C: 860.309.7913



▲ *Class Presentations*



▲ *Honoring Martin Luther King*



▲ *Snowman Day!*

This would not be possible without the strong feeder program at the elementary level and ...drumroll please... beginning in January, we are delighted to be continuing band and orchestra lessons for our 5th graders, adjusted and outfitted according to covid-safety protocols, of course! Lesson groups will be smaller, or virtual, depending upon the students' class assignment. Mrs. Hyatt, our music teacher, is thrilled to be continuing this program. Next year we plan to resume offering this to both 4th and 5th graders.

A new development: Our PreK friends now have access to the beautiful playground that was installed last spring, thanks to the funding and planning by our Head Start partners. It is sure to become a favorite spot for fun and fitness.

As always, we seek to connect learning with real-world application and one of the best ways to do this is for community members to share their interests and careers with our students and explain the academic skills they employ on a daily basis. Please contact Forbes School if you would like to set up a virtual session with one of our classes.

Our teachers continue to pour their hearts, minds, and souls into their work, our academic coaches provide curricular guidance and instructional assistance, our support staff extends their efforts to connect with and bolster every student, our families have a better understanding of what their students are learning, and our students are meeting the unique challenges of our current state of affairs. Not bad for 2020-2021!

Joanne Creedon, Principal
 jcreedon@torrington.org



▲ *Snowman Day!*



▲ *Class Color War*



340 Litchfield Street · Torrington, CT 06790 | 860-489-2311 | Principal: Dr. Mary Ann Buchanan



From Principal Buchanan:

Southwest Dragons, One often hears me say, "Southwest School is a special place." It truly is a wonderful place to learn, grow, and work. We are fortunate to have a caring community of staff, students, and families. As we work through the challenges of a pandemic, the acts of kindness, the degree of determination, dedication and hard work reaffirms how special our Southwest School community really is. Parents, guardians, teachers, extended family members—many are making sacrifices each and every day to best connect with our children. Being pushed beyond our comfort levels to learn new technology at a rapid pace is just one example of our positive spirit. The fluid change of our instructional model demonstrates the flexibility everyone has had to endure. Our school year began with a hybrid model where in-person learning depended on the first letter of last names to determine which days of the week students would be in the classroom and then on the alternate days, students would work remotely. All the while classroom teachers were juggling in person and distance learning simultaneously. Our summer was spent creating protocols for us to be in our buildings in as safe a manner as possible. We experienced that trepidation of would students adjust to the requirement of wearing a mask, being socially distant, and frequently washing hands. Our schedule was built around meeting these safety expectations. School opens in September and we were pleasantly surprised at how quickly our students adjusted and the safety protocols became our "new normal." Families who practiced the protocols and instilled in

their children the importance of following the guidelines make it that much easier for us educators. This is another example of the importance of our family partnership. In mid-October we welcomed the shift for elementary students to participate full time to in-person learning five days a week. We worked with families and teachers to create remote classrooms for those choosing to continue with full distance learning. As I write this letter, we are currently in a full distance learning model for an extended week after the winter break and are anxiously looking forward to students returning next week to fill our classrooms and halls with excitement and energy. The uncertainty of what lies ahead of us adds anxiety, yet we continue to lean on each other for support and put our school motto, "Care of Self; Care for Others" in action.

As we look back at these times, I hope we remember the many good things that come out of this pandemic. There is a greater respect and understanding for those in the education field. There is strength in using technology to connect with loved ones when we cannot be present personally. There is a greater appreciation for the importance of the little things in life we miss that make a big difference – a hug, holding hands, a smile. In due time, this will all come back, yet things are not ones any of us wish to take it for granted.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann C. Buchanan, Ed.D. (Dr. B.)

MALETTA PFEIFFER & ASSOCIATES, LLC
TORRINGTON PHYSICAL THERAPY

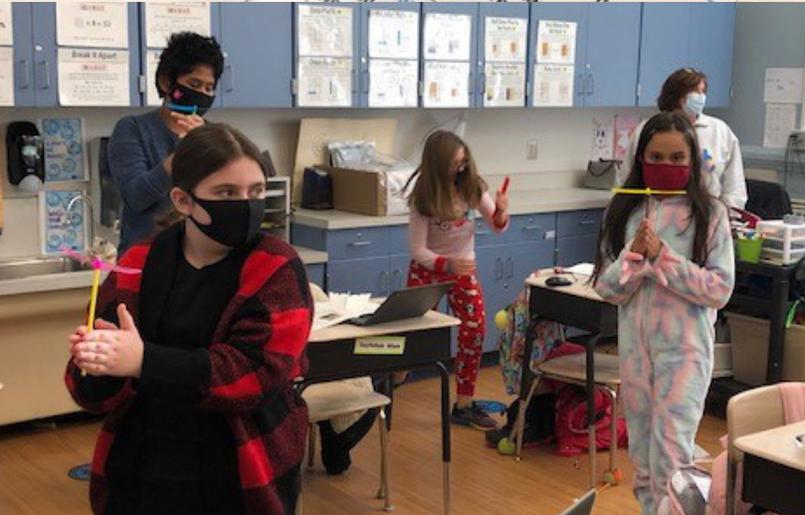
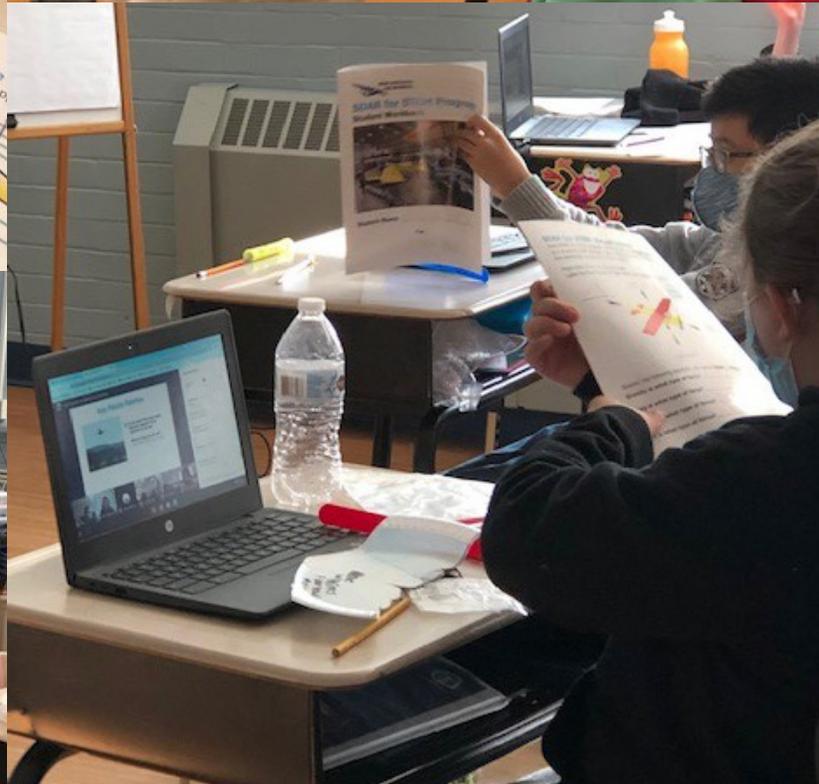
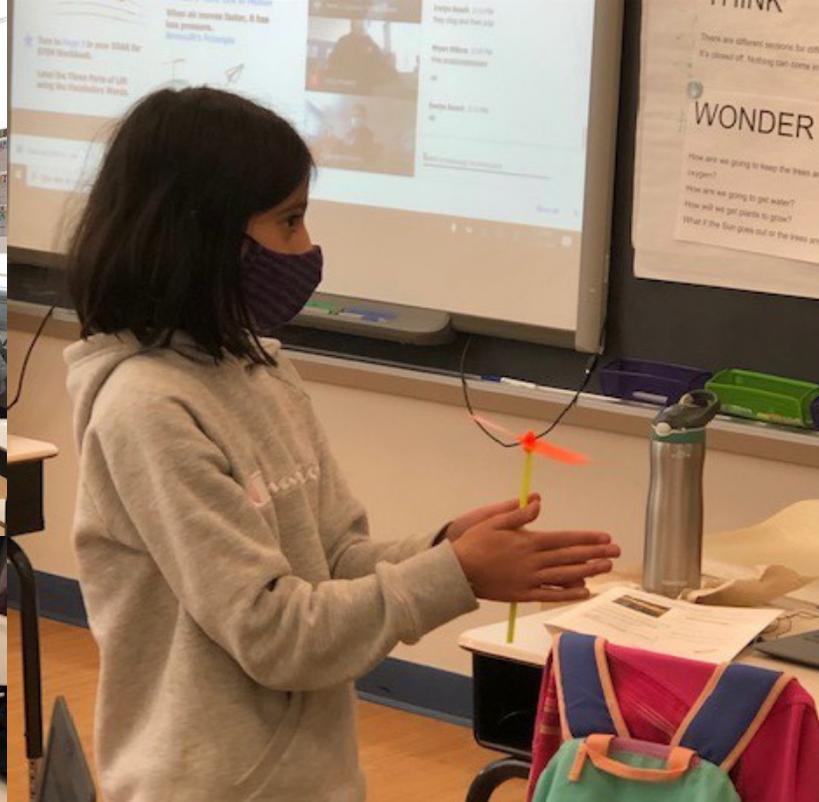
30 Peck Road
Building 1, Suite 1101
860.489.0867

245 Alvord Park Road
860.496.9851

info@torringtonpt.com
www.torringtonpt.com

Alfredo's
Italian Eatery & Cafe

168 Water Street • Torrington, CT 06790 • 860-482-1888
www.alfredoseatery.com

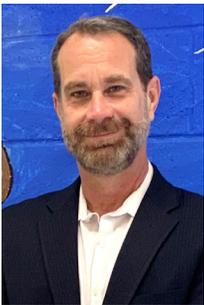


Torrington Middle School

Grades 6-8 | Students: 1,100



200 Middle School Drive · Torrington, CT 06790 | 860-496-4050 | Principal: Brian Scott



From Principal Scott:

The 2020-2021 school year at Torrington Middle School has been one that has presented us with many challenges, but we have seen our staff and students rise to these obstacles to help our students thrive. During this year, we have placed a strong emphasis on providing support and reassurances to our families and community as we all come together to move forward. One of the most impressive parts of coming to Torrington Middle School has been witnessing the commitment and level of caring that the community shares for each other.

At the center of any school are the students. Here, at Torrington Middle School, we have been able to present our students with many new opportunities including the creation of the WINN (What I need now) blocks offering support and enrichment and the expansion of courses that will award students with high school credit in 8th grade for students who qualify. Additionally, we have new courses and new technology offerings that allow our students to explore the areas of STEM. While we have introduced many new things this year; Torrington Middle School still maintains a focus on those things that have long been areas of pride, our fine arts programs. Our music program is going strong, and we can't wait to see what our drama group will bring us in the spring.

We continue to celebrate the good here at Torrington Middle School and help students find ways to work through problems and challenges. We began a new tradition this year called "Happy Fridays". Each week, every grade level house selects a student to

be celebrated on "Happy Friday". These students receive a phone call, telling their families their accomplishments and actions of recognition, they are celebrated on our social media page, and receive a cool pair of TMS Vikings shades!! These celebrations have been as enjoyable for our administration as they have for our families. This is always a highlight of our Fridays to reach out and celebrate our students. In addition to our "Happy Fridays", we have also tried to keep those positive experiences alive with our Spirit Weeks. The Spirit Weeks and Days have been great fun and there will be more to come.

Middle school is a time to focus to build a foundation and focus on preparing our students for their futures. This year our counseling department began Student Success Plan meetings. A Student Success Plan (SSP) is an individualized plan developed with a student and designed to address the educational needs and interests of a student. The purpose of the plan is to keep students connected in school and to guide them to postsecondary education or career success. Additionally, our counselors have built an amazing website that serves as a resource for our students and families.

Torrington Middle School is also proud to announce that our parents have come together to rebuild our PTO. We are so appreciative of the support our families give us and look forward to working with them to support our school improvement initiatives. PTO is an important component of any school community and gives parents a voice in creating positive opportunities for our students.

Charlotte Hungerford Hospital

A Hartford HealthCare Partner

(860) 496-6666

540 Litchfield Street, Torrington, CT
CharlotteHungerford.org

WE MOVED!
EASY ACCESS
AMPLE PARKING

Minuteman Press
PRINTING of Torrington

**YOUR ONE-STOP
PRINT SHOP**

Graphic Design • Small Format Printing
Large Format Printing • Signs & Banners
Printed Clothing & Merch • Laser Engraving
Decals • Mail Marketing • & Much More!

199 Migeon Ave, Torrington, CT • 860.496.7525
www.minutemantorrington.com

We at Torrington Middle School could not be more proud of our students and how they have dealt with these very difficult times. While this year has presented so many obstacles to our students, separated by physical space, remote learning, and hybrid schedules, nothing has stopped our students from becoming a community of learners. Looking forward, we have so many great things on the horizon. We will be continuing to refine our schedule to meet all of our students' needs. We all look forward to the day when we can begin to return to normal school days and schedules.



Torrington High School

Grades 9-12 | Students: 820



50 Major Besse Drive · Torrington, CT 06790 | 860-489-2294 | Principal: Robin Ledversis



From Principal Ledversis:

While we long for our students to be back to in-person learning, a pandemic and distance learning won't stop our students from being involved and doing great things at Torrington High School! Take a look at some of our recent accomplishments and activities the staff and students have been involved in.

The THS Science Club is still involved in community outreach and engaging in science activities outside of the traditional school day. The THS Science Club members are researching conservationists of color and creating posters for the Sharon Audubon. The posters will be laminated and posted throughout the self-guided trails at the center for visitors to see during Black History month. In addition, the club is currently deciding on which virtual citizen science projects they would be interested in participating in. These citizen science projects are voluntary and the work contributes to academic research.

Cadets from Torrington High School Air Force JROTC recently organized a walkathon to benefit the Charlotte Hungerford Pink Rose Program and Fund. The cadets raised a total of \$650.00 dollars for the cause. The fund helps to ensure the women of Northwest Connecticut have comprehensive, coordinated access to services related to breast cancer screening and treatment.

Our Kindness Club initiated a Winter Clothing Drive for our community and has accumulated many new coats, hats, mittens, and scarves to help keep the community warm this winter and beyond.

Since last November, the Torringtonian/El Torringtoniano, an online magazine intended to amplify the voice of the Raiders has been created. The magazine is a project developed by the Spanish IV and UCONN V Spanish students and Mr. Zarazu, their teacher. The magazine focuses on promoting the cultural values of our school and its students and teachers. The magazine also focuses on alumni news, current events and traditional festivities.

Once a Raider, always a Raider. Our former students are doing tremendous work in college and the workforce. Our students attend prestigious universities. The Class of 2019 graduates are attending Cornell, Yale, Bryant, Amherst, Quinnipiac and more! Enjoy recent messages that our alumni have sent us recently in regards to their time spent at THS and the learning opportunities that occurred here.

Student - "I just wanted to email you to thank you for preparing me so much for college. Right now I am enrolled in a Business Law class, and the very first two classes I knew everything the professor was talking about because of what you taught me in American Civ and Criminal Law!"

Student - "Thank you for the past two years. You've been a mentor to me, you've taught me discipline and that when I try hard enough, I can do good things...If it wasn't for you, I wouldn't have gotten a poem published."

Student - "I also wanted to reach out and say thank you for always being so supportive to me and just being a great teacher! I genuinely enjoyed your class and I believe it really prepared me well for college."

Litchfield County
SPORTS
YOUR LEADING SOURCE FOR HOMETOWN SPORTS

Celebrating
10 Years!

To Advertise in
the LCS Magazine:

Tim Gaffney
tgaffney@marketedgewriters.com

To Subscribe to
the LCS Magazine:
www.litchfieldcountysports.com

JIMMY'S STORE
DELI • MEAT • CATERING
Since 1938 • Taste The Difference

1238 East Main Street • Torrington, CT
860-489-3878

Student - "I am really enjoying college and I have no one to thank other than all my amazing teachers I had at THS. You all prepared me so well and taught me many different life lessons."

Outside of academics, THS offers a variety of extracurricular activities to explore and pursue. We pride ourselves in a rigorous and well-rounded education. From our award winning music and drama departments to our newly formed robotics team, we will continue to provide avenues for our students to pursue their passions.

It would be a loss not to mention and share the astounding work our staff continues to do each day. Thoughts of how to meet students' needs, how to keep students engaged, and allow students to grow to be critical thinkers is continuously on our minds, but especially on our staff's. Even with these thoughts swirling around, stepping virtually into our THS classrooms would give the impression that our staff had been managing remote learning, transitioning to and from hybrid learning, as well as a pandemic for years.

Everyday our students are welcomed to class with highly interactive lessons. Lessons integrate the use of PearDeck, Google Slides, Socratic Seminars, Choice Boards and much more to engage our learners. Students are encouraged to share their thoughts and opinions and back them up with evidence and reasoning. Communities of learners continue to be developed and students are gaining and using skills like never before. We remain grateful to a staff that holds true to our motto, "Students First, Always".

Torrington High School is truly a special place with a tremendous faculty and amazing staff. We couldn't be more excited about the continued visioning and planning for our College and Career Pathways and the Torrington High School/Torrington Middle School Building project. We are one lucky community!



Wangari Maathai

Born: April 1, 1940 in Nyeri, Kenya

GREEN BELT MOVEMENT:

BOOKS:

- ★ The Green Belt Movement (2003)
- ★ Unbowed: A Memoir (2006)
- ★ The Challenge for Africa (2009)
- ★ Replenishing The Earth (2010)




TORRINGTON VARSITY ALUMNI CLUB

Open to all THS Varsity Letter earners

Contributing over \$200,000 in scholarships since 1945

torringtonvarsityalumniclub.com

Interested in Advertising Here?
 Get your message in front of thousands of eyes for just pennies each

.....

To advertise in the next issue of this publication:
 Tim: tgaffney@marketedgewriters.com
 OR 860-480-5776

URock! Torrington High School Being. Creating. Living.

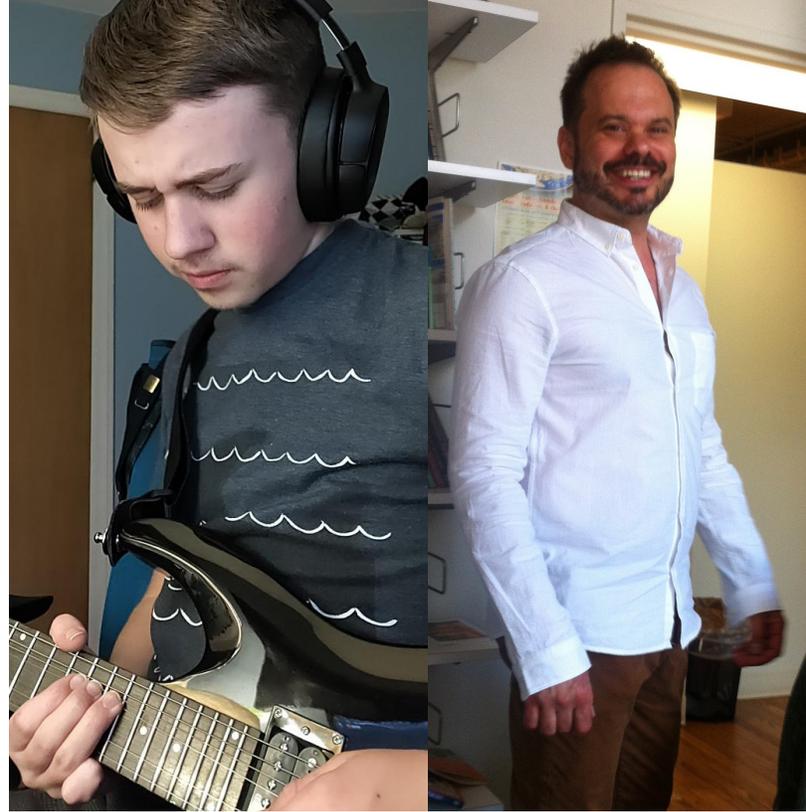
BY PETER DIGENNARO

The URock! Program at Torrington High School is a free, after-school, contemporary arts, culture, and entrepreneurship program where students connect in new and unexpected ways, creating all-original content in their chosen field of practice - raising their own voices, and the voices of their communities, in the process. “I like that the URock! Program gives you the opportunity to work and collaborate with other students while learning at the same time. I think it’s a great program!” says URock! THS student Olivia White.

From music to web design, writing to event planning, coding to marketing, and more, students grow their skills, build their career portfolio, and invigorate themselves and others through creative project work. The URock! Program always uses an “open-architecture” design where all students are welcome to participate, and contributions from any area of interest are included. The program structure adapts and grows to fit the work. Through student consultations with professionals, everyone’s field of vision is broadened - and acumen sharpened - even as creative, productive freedom in student learning is prioritized.

Designed to bring together music, web design, visual arts, writing, and business practices, the URock! Program was conceived to celebrate the individuals and communities of its host schools. It provides a forum for imagination, collaboration, production, and the rethinking social possibilities – ways to connect that may not be immediately apparent or available. URock! uses a design-based approach, in part, to generate these possibilities, garnering social support across and between cultural communities, then re-injecting new energy into those communities through the process and work produced by participants.

In direct response to the personal and social malaises incited by the COVID-19 epidemic, the program developed its approach even further, drawing again on professional mental health research while designing measures to directly counter persistent levels of student and community depression, and constrained capacities when faced with ongoing public health crises. URock! intentionally



challenges assumed habits of social engagement, refocuses various imaginative, connective efforts to its center, then radiates the results back out again into the communities. Especially in this historical moment, URock! dilutes persistent, if varied, levels of isolation, shame, and anger, especially among youth at critical developmental junctures, with extended project support, explicit cooperative collaboration, demonstrative accomplishment and intentional, future-forward thinking.

In February of 2020, the Music Wing of the URock! THS Program was the first to take shape. “Anyone that is musically involved will enjoy it,” continues Olivia White. Five students met after school each Friday (with A New Heroism: International Human Rights Education and URock! founder, Peter DiGennaro) for 2 hours each week. At the end of a mere four hours – two sessions - music for two songs was written. More importantly, as hoped for, everyone had truly met each other and created together, while preserving their individual differences (instrument, age, race, gender, nationality, etc.) - they truly saw each other and the possibilities. As each session progressed, the group witnessed a new, creative reality that was produced from the whole, without losing any individual identities of contribution.

When schools shut down last March, students kept working as they developed a process to produce from different locations. “I really enjoy the writing process - developing new work, seeing what’s possible when different things come together...,” says guitarist Mike Pasquariello. URock! uses several creative, collaborative techniques to generate unexpected results. Running recording sessions with musicians in separate locations from the URock! Studios, students are completing production on their first song, started in the Spring of 2020 by new-alum Sam

Erickson ('20), called "One Day" - a song about imagination and possibility, coupled to faith and hope, in seemingly unending, dire circumstances. "The URock Program is a wonderful opportunity for people to channel their creativity and then further express themselves," says Sam. "For me, personally, it helped me discover a new way to approach the guitar and new sound palettes I didn't think were possible. It was incredible to see my song become something more."

THS art student, Dierdre Noyce, has created the URock! THS' website and logo, achieving an on-line space that is as much an event as it is an information hub. Amidst a stunning design, it provides information on what URock! THS is, what it does, who is involved, and what you can do. It includes a calendar of URock! THS sponsored events, news, student content, collaborations with school and community organizations, and links to off-site student work. It is the central home for URock! THS' programs and work.

URock! THS engages student writers interested in blogging, student culture, community happenings, opinion pieces, poetry, sports, investigative reporting, politics, etc. - whatever genre to which students feel called. Even creating new genres! Whether you're blogging about the truck rebuild you're working on - or the political campaign you're working on - the writers in URock! act as key witnesses to student and community experiences.

In URock! THS' business department, student entrepreneurs work with on-line and off-line business tools, learn from professionals, and demonstrate that the arts and culture are not immune to financial solvency but, rather, that creative economies are central to any community's arrival, preservation, and revitalization. The URock! THS Program will be rolling out its own line of clothing, streaming its' own music, generating marketing campaigns, researching novel grant opportunities, and running analytics on its website. Did we mention the concerts?

If you're a student and want to contribute to the URock! Program at THS, but don't think you have the time - no problem. Given its fluid setup, URock! welcomes members who meet twice a week, as well as student contributors. Either way, you can be a part of the URock! family! For example, students may want to create a podcast about THS sports, or code for the website - whatever your interest and availability, you can connect.

Because of this work, Mr. DiGennaro and the URock! THS participants have been invited to present at Arts and Human Rights conferences in Ankara, Turkey in early March and Australia at the end of June. Mr. DiGennaro, a long-time Arts and Human Rights educator, and URock! THS students, will explore and challenge certain notions of student ability and trauma in the Era of Covid-19 and beyond, critiquing how the URock! Program can help re-enable students' capacity to engage, as well as re-envision how to re-envision what proper engagement of students - and by students - can look like.

The URock! Program celebrates individuals and communities. It addresses core developmental necessities amongst students and the city of Torrington by returning to basic social mores through creative, coordinated, productive individual and group work. It opens up space and provides resources for students to make a place of their own - within their community - by engaging, rebuilding, renewing, and relishing strong, core energies, capacities, and momentum. It does this by ensuring that collaborators and consultants prioritize and provide for the expressive, developing, original student voice and perspective - a voice and perspective so critical to teaching us all about the contemporary world in which we live - while mentors and students simultaneously work together to move our vision beyond that which is immediately visible to that which is not seen, but must be and be seen, such as healthy social and trust networks; and a fundamental experience - beyond mere knowledge - that, foundationally, we are not in this life alone.

This is the heart of the URock! Program.



Alumni



Paul Denza

Year Graduated: 1974

College attended with degree: Yale University, BA in Psychology, 1978; University of Hartford, MA in Elementary Education, 1995; Central Connecticut State University, MA in Educational Leadership, 2004

Career after school: Commercial Lending and Loan Administration for several banks for 15 years; Elementary and Middle School teacher (22 years)

Sports history at THS and after: Varsity Letters in football, baseball and track, All NVL in Track and Football; Varsity Letters in Football at Yale University, All Ivy League in Football; Free agent walk on tryouts with the New England Patriots of the NFL in 1978 and The Hamilton Tiger-Cats of the CFL in 1979

How was THS important in your development? THS influenced my development in three ways. Academically, I was able to receive an education that allowed me to be accepted at the finest universities in the country. This, in turn, gave me opportunities in athletics, in professional careers, and in community organizations for the rest of my life. Athletically, I was challenged at the highest levels. While at THS, there were many talented athletes who had successful college careers. We competed in practice, in gym class, and in our backyards. This competition directly influenced my development as a football player. It also influenced the attitudes that I took into my experiences in my family life and professional careers. While this may sound trite, working hard with a team in order to

reach common goals are useful skills to use in the real world. I was also lucky to have been an athlete at a time when some new coaches came to THS. They, along with a core of existing coaches, understood how to coach and made better athletes, and more importantly, better people out of us. Finally, THS influenced my social development. The teachers, administrators, and counselors were interested in our development as people. The goal was not to get students to graduate high school. The goal was to develop citizens who would successfully influence society as a whole. As a result, they created an environment that I loved. Truly, there was no place I would rather be. There certainly were long hours at school for practice. However, I was also at school for a sunrise basketball league. And, yes, as the name implies, it was before school. I also spent many hours after school on stage crew for many plays and musicals. There, I was able to use my hands to create the sets. I still enjoy using my hands. So, THS certainly influenced me in a positive way while I was there and for the 46 years since I graduated.

What message would you like to send to future generations of Raiders? While you may not realize it and may rebel against this idea, THS can provide you with tools to help you navigate an increasingly complex society as an adult. You need to find the people who truly have your best interests at heart, and then, you need to look to these people for help and guidance. Asking for help is not a weakness; it is a strength. The people who can help you are all around. They may be teachers or other staff at the school. They may be your friends. Choose them wisely.

Additionally, while at THS, learn and adopt habits that will make you successful. The habits you develop in middle and high school will most likely stay with you for life. Develop those habits that will give you the greatest number of opportunities as you mature and change during adulthood.

You have had an unusual high school experience. We have all witnessed events over the past few years that I hope you will not have to witness again. Do not be a passive observer. Become active in the community wherever you land. Be part of changing the world for the better. You do not have to worry about changing the whole world, although this is a laudable goal. Find a part that you are passionate about and work on that.

Learn to listen, understand, and be civil. You do not have to agree with every idea nor should you force everyone to agree with you. There is an idea called compromise that can pull people together. Unfortunately, it is my opinion that many of our leaders have lost these abilities. They only represent those who voted for them instead of representing everyone. They truly ignore the other half of the country. The result is a whipsaw of policy depending upon who is in power. Be part of pulling the country together.

Remember, you are a Raider forever. To borrow phrase from a person much wiser than me, "Don't embarrass the program." Try to bring honor and pride to yourself, to family, and to your community in whatever you choose and do. You will be much more content with life.





Mark Arum

Year Graduated: 1991

Clubs: Varsity baseball, Varsity Football, Model UN, Grandslam (Sports Newspaper) Inside Out (School Newspaper), Italian Club.

College Attended / Degrees Earned: Marist College. 1996. Bachelors Degree in Communications (Journalism)

Career path after schooling: After college I moved to Atlanta and took a part time job with WSB Radio as a Traffic Producer. I was soon promoted to reporter for AM-750. In 2001 I became the fulltime Traffic Reporter for WSB-TV (the ABC Affiliate in Atlanta.) Since then I have done morning traffic reports on WSB-TV, WSB Radio, B 98.5FM and 97.1 The River.

In 2000 I started doing a weekend sports talk show on WSB Radio. From there I was assigned to do the pre and post-game radio shows for The Atlanta Braves and The Atlanta Hawks. At the time, the Braves had the largest number of radio affiliates of any sports franchise. I was heard on over 300 radio stations across the country.

In 2005 we lost the broadcasting rights to the Braves and my sports talk show turned into a general talk show. I continued the weekend show until 2014 when I was given a nightly talk show from 10pm-midnight. Our AM signal (750) can be heard in 38 states at night. In 2016, I was promoted to 7-9pm and in 2019 I was promoted again to my current time slot of 6-8pm. On television, Channel 2 Action News This Morning has consistently been the top-rated, Major Market Morning Show in the country. I have won Emmy and AP awards for breaking news television news coverage. For eight years, I wrote a traffic column in The Atlanta Journal Constitution. In 2017 I became the youngest person ever inducted into the Georgia Radio Hall of Fame.

How was THS important in your development? Torrington High School gave me such a great foundation for my career. Amazing teachers, an amazing learning environment, amazing opportunities and of course a great supportive community. I wouldn't be where I am today without Torrington and Torrington High School.



Torrington Board of Education
355 Migeon Avenue
Torrington, CT 06790

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
HARTFORD, CT
PERMIT # 2386



*“There is something infinitely healing in the repeated
refrains of nature-the assurance that dawn comes after night,
and spring after winter.”*

- Rachel Carson