



The Calais Courier

Autumn 2014

New School Year, New Staff, New Website

Providing students with the academic and behavioral skills to reach their fullest potential, becoming life-long learners and socially competent members of their communities.



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Megan LoBue
The first two months of the 2014-2015 school year have flown by! It has been wonderful to see both new and familiar faces at The Calais School. We have welcomed new students from Fort Lee, Westfield and Franklin Township school districts, as well as new Calais staff members in the Upper and Lower Schools. Our new school nurse, lower school counselor, structured learning experience teachers, and occupational therapist have all jumped right in to a busy school year. We are also happy to welcome a number of new classroom aides and job coaches who help our school day run smoothly. The cutest addition to The Calais School is Cleo, our second school service dog, who helps out in the occupational therapy room with her handler, reading and elementary teacher Mrs. Lara Ferment.

This year our counseling staff has hosted a monthly Parent Support Group, a supportive place to meet other Calais families and share experiences. The group meets one evening per month and often enjoy baked goods provided by Mrs. Russo's cooking classes. One parent shared her experience at our October meeting: *"I really liked being able to come out and talk about our trials as well as hearing about other families in the same situation.... I think the other moms also felt that it was a bit of a relief to be able to talk with other families who understand what they have been or are going through."*

We are also happy to announce a newly-designed website for The Calais School. The website will be up and running in early December and will still be hosted at www.thecalaisschool.org. The new website will have a special parents-only section, the Parent Portal, which will feature what is going on in the classroom, including test dates, special projects, and homework assignments. The Main Office will send home more information about the Parent Portal in the coming weeks, so please keep checking back!



Right: New and returning students and staff came together during our annual Halloween parade at The Calais School.

Occupational Therapy with Cleo

Lara Ferment & Michelle Geise
In October we welcomed our newest member of the Animal Adaptive Therapy™ team to the Calais School, Cleo, a certified service dog. She is a one and a half year old beagle rescued by Merlin'sKIDS™ in 2013. Cleo, along with her handler Lara Ferment, are part of the Therapeutic Facilitation™ Program at Calais. The program incorporates Animal Adaptive Therapy™ into students' individual occupational therapy plans to facilitate and reach student goals in the OT setting.



Students prepare Cleo for her work day while also addressing fine motor, gross motor, visual processing, multiple sensory needs and much more! She often assists Mrs. Ferment in her reading classes as well. Cleo and Mrs. Ferment work alongside Ms. Michelle Geise, MS, OTR/L to bring a new and innovative way of preparing students to reach their full potential.

Left: Cleo greets students outside the Main Office.
Right: Cleo takes a break in the OT room.



October Teacher of the Month: Mr. Vincent Femia



Steve Sokolewicz

The Calais Community All-Star Recognition Program identifies teachers based on her/his contributions to the Calais community. Staff members were nominated based on a number of criteria, including motivating and encouraging students, serving as a positive role model, demonstrating creativity and imagination, and teaching in a way that inspires students to learn. Vincent Femia was overwhelmingly nominated by his peers as the recipient for October 2014.

Mr. Femia, our Physical Education teacher, is the consummate professional. Always ready to provide for the Calais community, Mr. Femia exudes confidence and leadership in all he does. Whether as Senior Class Advisor, Lead Teacher, or Sports Program Coordinator, Mr. Femia takes on his role with the necessary commitment required to complete the task at hand. Words used to describe Mr. Femia and his importance to the Calais community include, "...Always friendly and helpful..." "...does a great job with the students..." and "...the students respect his opinion and he has done a lot for the school..." Congratulations Mr. Femia and thank you for all that you do!

Students Enjoy Disability Mentoring Day at Novartis



Michelle Primiano

Selected students and faculty from The Calais School attended Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation's seventh annual "Disability Mentoring Day" in East Hanover. Disability Mentoring Day is part of a nationwide initiative created by the American Association of People with Disabilities to promote career development for students and job seekers with disabilities.

Guidance Counselor Michelle Primiano and Structured Learning Experience instructor Lisa Marie Vallo chaperoned the field trip for Calais School high school students. The program included several career exploration segments from employees representing a variety of departments. The program was designed to share the numerous employment opportunities at a corporation like Novartis with students.

The highlight of the program was a dynamic presentation from award-winning author, performer and motivational speaker Geri Jewell. Geri first received worldwide recognition as the first person with a disability to be cast in a prime-time television series, appearing as Cousin Geri on NBC's The Facts of Life. She is a role model for millions of people with disabilities and LGBT youth. Her many television appearances include roles in Sesame Street and 21 Jump Street.

I know it is a successful trip when the bus ride back to school is filled with heartfelt chatter recapping the day. We would all like to send a special thank you to Novartis for organizing and including us in their always memorable Disability Mentoring Day and for the generous gift bags they shared with our students.

Left: Students thank our hosts at Novartis. Right: High school students visited six interactive career exploration stations during the event.



Calais Seniors Host Calais Apparel Fundraiser

Vincent Femia
The senior class has an extremely busy year ahead of them as they prepare to work at places such as Marshalls, Petco, and the library. Furthermore, they have the responsibility of being role models for our community of students and are in charge of leadership activities such as fundraising. Every year the senior class is challenged to raise money for school events such as senior prom and class trips.

Led by presidents Omar and Caroline, the senior class has started the year off with fundraising efforts that have been stronger than ever before. On back to school night, Caroline, Omar, and Connor led a successful bake sale by selling goods baked by teachers, parents, and the science of cooking class at The Calais School. We were so impressed with their efforts that we decided to run a t-shirt fundraiser in which we sold 139 items! These items were sold to staff and parents and our senior class is currently working hard to fill the orders and get them out to our community. The process began with choosing different design shirts and seeing what would be best for our target market—students, parents, and staff. We decided to come up with two different shirts, one for each target market and the strategy proved to be a success. Thank you to all those who have participated in making our fundraisers a success this year!



Left and above: Students show off their Calais gear.

Mentor Program is a Halloween Hit!

Marjane Vitaletti



On Friday October 31, students and staff enjoyed a day full of special events to celebrate Halloween. The day began with homeroom activities. Some of the activities included pumpkin painting, Halloween story writing and planning for an exciting day.

The next amazing event was the school-wide Big Brother/Big Sister team and community-building activity. High school students were assigned to lower school classes to act as mentors, assisting younger students with fun activities that teachers had prepared. Each classroom had activity stations supervised by the high school students. The activities ran from a wide range of arts and crafts to story reading. For the finale, Dr. Manno led a spectacular Halloween parade of lower school students escorted by very enthusiastic high school students. As much fun as everyone had, the most heartfelt experience was watching the upper school students interact with love and care with the lower school students.



Afternoon activities included an educational and entertaining program from Snakes and Scales, who brought creepy crawlly animals for the lower schools students to meet. High school students enjoyed a Halloween dance, with music provided by DJs Mr. Catalano and Mr. Femia. Mrs. Russo's culinary class made the most amazing cookies and cupcakes ever and the costumes worn by our staff and students were the icing on the cake! Our day wound down with closing activities back in homeroom, reflecting on and our wonderful day.

Top and bottom left: Student mentors help out in the Lower School classrooms. Right: High school students enjoyed a Halloween dance.

Fire Department Visits Class 301



Mrs. Braen and Ms. Heinen's classes have been learning about community helpers this fall. In October The Calais School had a very special visit from our friends at the Whipppany Fire Department. Students learned about the importance of firefighters in the community. After a very informative presentation about fire safety, students were able to sit in a real fire truck. The highlight of the visit was when the students had the opportunity to extinguish a make-believe fire using a fire hose. Everyone enjoyed this special visit from our friends at the Whippanny Fire Department!



Left: Class 301 thank our community firefighters. Right: Students take turns using the fire hose.

Calais Cares About Our Community

Community Service Project

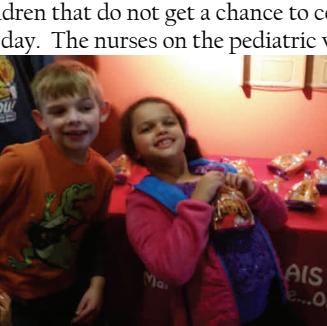
Marjane Vitaletti

Our first community service project took place during the week of Halloween. Students filled Halloween treat bags for the Children's Neurology and Epilepsy Center at St. Clare's in Denville NJ.

For the past 5 years the students at The Calais School fill Halloween gift bags for children that do not get a chance to celebrate this festive day. The nurses on the pediatric ward are just as

filled with joy & appreciation as the children are.

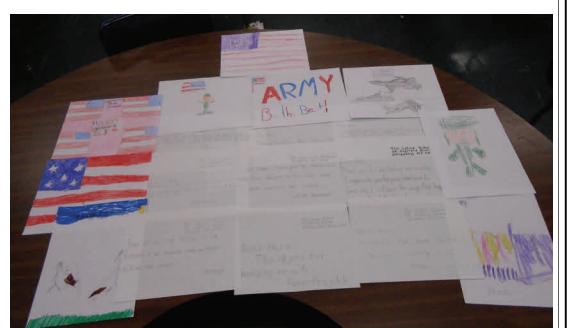
At left: Students prepare treat bags to deliver to St. Clare's. Right: Class 301 displays their letters to the troops.



Calais Thanks Our Troops

Carol Tacinelli

Class 302 wrote letters to troops deployed overseas to thank them for their service to our country. The students drew pictures to accompany the letters. Students also donated candy from their Halloween "loot" to share with the service members. We learned on Veterans Day about the importance of supporting our American Armed Forces and decided to do this as our tribute to them as part of Operation Gratitude.





The Calais School

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www.thecalaisschool.org
www.thecalaisfoundation.org



See learning as it happens on our school blog!

<http://thecalaisschool.wordpress.com>

THE CALAIS COURIER

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