HAWK REPORT: NOVEMBER 2012

There are many traditions that we have around the holiday season and this is true in the Cooke household as well. The one that we are famously known for in our world is that the Cooke Christmas letter will arrive the day after Thanksgiving. This was a challenge last year as I was in Florida at the time. However, an saved the day for me and the tradition continued. The beauty of this tradition is that you get to reflect on your year. What is even more exciting is to read previous letters to see what you goals, successes and struggles were and how you have grown from them. Reflection is often lost in our busy lives. I hope that you all get a chance to reflect on your lives during the upcoming Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks.

Perhaps the greatest reflection we were able to do this month was towards our military heroes at our annual Veteran's Day assembly. Mr. Pritchett, Mr. Calabrese and Mrs.Slinkard outdid themselves this year. For the first time the band and choir performed a song together while Mr. Pritchett added some new ideas to his always popular video. The morning and afternoon presentations were both well attended. I would also like to thank Sara Harris for providing coffee and goodies after the assembly for our veterans and their families. The greatest enjoyment that I get from the performance is talking to veterans after the assembly. The most poignant discussions are from Vietnam Veterans who were often ignored when they came home. They felt the pain when the first came home and as society has changed they have been embraced again for their bravery. A number of them spoke and wrote to me saying how important that assembly was. To all veterans, we thank you for the sacrifices that you have made.

On November 15th, a community meeting was held to address the impact that our community has on our students. For this meeting, I only invited a small number of community members as I felt that it would be a more effective method to start the conversation. What impressed me was how many of the citizens that I invited came. Our goal is to capitalize on the many strengths that our wonderful community has and create even more opportunities for our kids. At the meeting were students, staff, parents, representatives from local churches, community members, Lions Club. La Center Library, casino board members, school board members and the city council. We walked away with many practical ideas to present to a larger community audience which we will do in January. Our three goals are"

1. If we create a variety of enrichment activities after school then we will provide the creative outlet to enhance the right side of their brain, make positive choices and create positive relationships.
2. If we create opportunities to address mental health and improve coping skills then we build resiliency in our students and parents.
3. If we create a more supportive community, then parents and students will be more open to sharing and addressing their concerns.

We will be working closely with Sean Chavez who is a Community Prevention Project Specialist with the ESD. Sean is also currently coordinating similar grass root movements with Battle Ground to address social issues here. He was

impressed by not only the number of parents who turned up but their positive approach to helping La Center thrive. A committee will be established to plan our next meeting based on the recommendations that emerged at this meeting. I sincerely appreciate the response of the concerned citizens that attended the meeting. I would also like to thank Carol Patton. Kristen Krem and Katie Kipp for assisting me in planning this meeting. It is exciting to see the community rise to the challenge.

Shirley Barnes is keeping busy in her retirement years which probably does not shock anybody. She is currently recruiting students to be involved in the LEO club which is a student movement affiliated with the Lions Club. Their first project is cleaning u what is deemed as the 'Ugly Spot' in our school. It is the courtyard near the bicycle rack at the front of the school. This club ties in well with what we are trying to achieve in our community forums. We look forward to watching these kids grow as they complete their community service work.

This year four students, Lauren Powers, Spencer Sudemeir, Madelyn Brown and Hallie Nelson auditioned to be in the State Choir. Lauren was accepted to be in the choir. Congratulations to all four students for taking on the challenge of competing in this prestigious event. In band, Lynnea Sharapova(trumpet), Kaitlynn Stabell (French Horn) and McKenzie Haverlack (Bass Clarinet) also made the All State band. To add to the "Proud Dad" file, Mr.Calabrese's daughter, who is a 7th grader at Huntington Middle School is Kelso, also made it.

Thanksgiving is right around the corner and there is a lot to be thankful for. There have been many examples this month that once again show me what a wonderful place La Center is to work in. I wish you all a wonderful Thanksgiving with your families.

GO HAWKS,
David Cooke
Principal
La Center Middle School