

El Nido del Águila

"THE EAGLE'S NEST" | THE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER OF PITTSBURGH LIBERTY K-5

December 2020

Vol. 6, Issue 3

 **SUPPORT LEAF THROUGH
#GiveBigPittsburgh THIS TUESDAY, 12/1!**



Each year, GiveBigPittsburgh, a 24-hour fundraising event, raises money for local nonprofits through a single online platform, providing a simple way to connect donors to the charitable causes they care about most. And this year, for the first time, LEAF will be featured on the site! Log on THIS TUESDAY, DEC. 1st to support our mission in service of the students, teachers, and families at Liberty K-5. Our fundraising supports classroom supplies, cultural celebrations, field trips, extracurriculars, scholarships for advanced learning opportunities, and teacher appreciation. And during the pandemic, LEAF has helped bring our community closer through virtual events.

<https://www.givebigpittsburgh.com/organizations/liberty-elementary-academic-fund>



CALENDAR

Asynchronous learning day

Mon. Nov. 30

Chipotle Fundraiser--4800 Baum Blvd location

Tues. Dec. 15, 4–8PM

Make dinner a selfless act by joining us for a fundraiser to support our kids! Come to the Chipotle at 4800 Baum Blvd. on Tuesday, Dec. 15th between 4PM and 8PM. Tell the cashier your supporting LEAF/Liberty to make sure that 33% of the proceeds will be donated to our cause! See the flyer here: <https://bit.ly/39tzJ8w>

OR you can order online for pickup! Either:

1) Visit <https://chipotle.com/> and use the code ANCADNH before checkout in the “promo” field. OR:

2) Use the Chipotle app for pickup using the code ANCADNH. The app is at: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/chipotle/id327228455>

PTO/PSCC Meeting (Virtual)

Wed. Dec. 16, 6–7:30pm

<https://tinyurl.com/LibertyPSCC>

Please join us online. For more info: president@pghleaf.org

Festival de Inverno (Winter Festival)

Tues., Dec 22, 6–7PM

tinyurl.com/Liberty-School-Event

Please join us for Liberty’s virtual celebration! Activities will include a chorus performance, games, music, a scavenger hunt, and story time. Join in the fun by decorating your background for the night of the event. ALSO: Please send in fun winter photos of you and your family, and/or wintry artwork, to kcox@pghschools.org by Sun. Dec. 20th!

Winter Break

Thurs. Dec. 24–Sun. Jan. 3

No school! Happy holidays!

LIBERTY TOY DRIVE: SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER

The Liberty community has always come together to support one another. In this especially difficult time, we’ve been brainstorming creative ways to keep that going this holiday season. And so... Liberty staff and families are partnering to organize a small toy drive/giving tree among our school community! Stay tuned for an email with details on how to participate—coming soon! For questions, contact our school social worker, Ms. Erin Kelly: Ekelly2@pghschools.org



“GIFTED” SERVICES AT LIBERTY

Every Friday (when in-person classes are in session), a group of Liberty students take a bus to Pittsburgh Gifted Center (a.k.a. Greenway), a school campus in the West End, to participate in what's known as Gifted and Talented Education Services. (During the pandemic, the program runs remotely.)

Per their website, the overall aim is to provide educational opportunities and experiences to help high-achieving students extend their learning, develop individual potential, enhance their self-concept, and become life-long, independent learners. “PPS is committed to providing differentiated activities and opportunities,” the site states, “through which students can discover and develop their unique and individual needs, interests, talents and abilities.” In addition to the instruction students receive at Greenway, students also receive gifted services at Liberty through differentiation in their classes.

→ What is "gifted?"

In this context, it means higher-than-average IQ. If average is within the of 85 to 110 range, gifted is 115, 120, 130, and so on. (For perspective: Einstein was 147!)

Some signs that your child may be gifted: The child is a quick study and absorbs new knowledge fast. The child just somehow knows things, and you wonder, “When did she learn that?” The child might be bored at school. There are misconceptions surrounding IQ: It's important to keep in mind that it is absolutely possible to have a learning disability and a higher-than-average IQ. And sometimes, the reason a child is misbehaving is because she or he is bored—and truly could benefit from the gifted program.

→ A few things to keep in mind if you're planning to have your child tested for gifted:

- Barb Bradley, a Gifted Center faculty member, suggests: First, talk to your child's teacher regarding the student's progress through the lens of gifted education. “Most conversations are around progress in the regular curriculum,” she says. “When considering testing you would ask questions more around what types of differentiation have been needed for your child. Is your child going beyond what is expected on assignments regularly? Has the teacher needed to enrich the assignments to meet the child's needs? How often is this needed? Does the child have a strong desire to find out additional information on a topic being studied and

bring that information back to their peers?"If you decide to have your child tested, contact Liberty's social worker, Erin Kelly, to request a form. It will be provided within 10 days—the child will then be scheduled within 60 days of submission of your completed form. (The 60-day clock is paused during the summer and resumes at the start of the school year.)

- There's good reason to not tell your child what the test is for; it can lead to a lot of anxiety, stress, and potential heartache.
- It is possible to have students tested as early as kindergarten; however, the district strongly discourages this, for several reasons: PPS students do not start going to Greenway until 1st grade. Additionally, waiting gives the children time to settle into school, and also allows their teachers to get to know them and make the best recommendations possible to the gifted center. And in the meantime, the faculty will accommodate the children, enriching their learning onsite as needed—talk to your child's teacher if you have questions.
- Testing only happens during the school year. This is new as of 2018–19.

→ What to expect after the test

- If a student has an IQ of 130, they are automatically admitted into gifted services.
- If the child is within the range of 120-129 (or maybe 115), the gifted team will do a review. When there is a need for additional information, they will ask the school social worker to request a portfolio of the student's work. Then the Gifted Center makes the determination. In those situations, it is very helpful for our school social worker to sit down with parents and discuss the big picture for the child, because the department is aware that there are many things that can affect IQ testing score: any history of trauma, poverty, grief, loss, feeling unsafe in their neighborhood, etc. It's important to share any factors that should be taken into consideration; this information will be kept confidential.

If a child is not admitted to gifted services, it is by all means not the end of the world! The reason the service is run by the Department of Special Education is because it's an exceptionality. These kids need more services (they do have IEP plans).

→ Equity in gifted services

In recent years, media outlets and education advocates have raised important questions and dialogue about racial bias in gifted services:

- “Who gets to be considered ‘gifted’ in Pittsburgh schools? Too few black girls.” PublicSource, March 16, 2017.
<https://blackgirlspgh.publicsource.org/education/gets-considered-gifted-pittsburgh-schools-black-girls>
- “If everyone got screened, gifted education in Pittsburgh could be more equitable. School officials aren’t sold.” PublicSource, March 17, 2017.
<https://blackgirlspgh.publicsource.org/education/universal-screenings-can-increase-equity-gifted-education-work-pittsburgh>
- “Keys to Expand Access to the Gifted Program in the Pittsburgh Public School District” An issue brief by A+ Schools that examines identification processes used by PPS and nearby districts; compares the demographic profile of the district compared to those students identified as gifted; and highlights steps that other districts have taken to be more inclusive, as well as ways to expand enhanced learning opportunities to all students.
<https://files.constantcontact.com/111fdbca001/29734e26-1167-4324-9641-007c090e47a2.pdf>

→ For more information on PPS gifted services

Visit the district website: <https://www.pghschools.org/giftedandtalented>

✚ A MESSAGE FROM THE NURSE’S OFFICE

With Covid-19 being prevalent right now it is extremely important to have Emergency Care Forms up to date with current contact information. Additionally, our school nurse, Ms. Dobbs, needs to be aware of any medical conditions our children may have.

The emergency care form can be filled out online! Click here for the form (<https://bit.ly/3l8xeLb>) and then email it to Ms. Dobbs: adobbs1@pghschools.org

Additionally, Ms. Dobbs has “virtual office” where students and families can meet with her to talk via Teams if you have any questions privately or publicly. For instructions—as well as helpful information, resource links, forms, and daily health announcements from the district—visit: <https://bit.ly/3l7hS9Q>

 **MEET OUR NEW MUSIC TEACHER, MR. CORBETT**

→ What is my favorite music to listen to?

Broadway musicals, classical music, and jazz are among my favorites to listen to. I especially love other musicians who play the clarinet or sing, but I am always exploring new artists. Thank you to Mr. Bassett for introducing me to U2!

→ What instruments do you play?

My primary instrument is clarinet, but I also play flute, piano, saxophone, and have been enjoying learning ukulele.

→ Where did you go to school?

I graduated from Peters Township School District located in the South Hills. I have a bachelor's degree in music performance from Slippery Rock University and my K-12 Music Teaching Certification from Carnegie Mellon University.

→ Other Fun Facts!

My CMU colleague and I collaborated with Alumni and Friends of Alderdice and led a GoFundMe campaign for Taylor Alderdice High School. Together, we raised more than \$10,000 to purchase instruments for their instrumental music program!

I performed in "Weird Al" Yankovic's Strings Attached tour at the Benedum Center for Performing Arts, and with The Who in their "Moving On!" tour at the PPG Paints Arena. It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that I will never forget!

In addition to teaching at Liberty, I am a member of a woodwind quartet called "Ears Engaged." We have provided interactive concerts around the Pittsburgh area in venues such as Phipps Conservatory, Carnegie Library in Oakland, and the Children's Art Museum of Pittsburgh. Currently, we have a contract with an assisted senior living facility where we provide virtual concerts and Zoom one-on-one musical visits with the residents.

→ Why did you become a teacher?

My motivation to go into teaching was the profound impact that my previous teachers have had on me. They provided a model of sincere kindness and commitment to my success as a musician and as a person just trying to find my place in this world. It is my goal to help shape the community by advocating for arts education and fostering life-long learners in our community.

→ What are the students learning in music?

Music classes for K-3 have been focused on participatory songs and games that teach basic music theory, mostly reading/performing rhythms, and solfege patterns. I will often have fun prompts such as, "What's your favorite color," or "what are you thankful for?" Students respond by either singing or speaking the answer in rhythm. This allows me to assess their musicianship and learn fun facts about them! Performing in front of your peers can be a nerve-wracking experience; giving students a safe space to express their individuality helps create a sense of community in the virtual classroom.

4th grade has been learning about the different families of instruments, and how they are unique. Most recent lessons were focused on Timbre, the character or quality of an instrument's sound. Including web-based tools like Chrome Music Lab makes the lessons more interactive and memorable!

5th grade is learning about jazz music; where it came from, notable artists, common instruments used in the genre, and improvisation. We experimented with a shared piano app on Chrome Music Lab where students could improvise a melody using the pentatonic scale by playing only the black keys on the piano. Every lesson is a learning experience for me. I look forward to continue growing as an educator throughout my teaching career so that I can better serve my students and our community.

Teaching music virtually is vastly different from teaching person. I am eagerly waiting for the day we can safely sing and play instruments in person. Music offers a strong sense of community that cannot be replicated in a virtual setting!

→ Additional Learning Goals:

Remote learning is not an easy situation for families, teachers, principals, and especially the children. In response to this added stress and anxiety, I have been engaging all grade levels in mindful moments. Students are invited to pause and reflect while they listen to peaceful music. For example, I wrote this script as a prompt to my most recent mindful moment:

“With (Fall Break) Thanksgiving coming next week, I want you to pause and think for a minute. Think about a time that you needed help. Every one of us at some point or another do. You can always ask for help and more importantly, you can be the helper. No matter where you came from or who you are, you have something to offer. Be kind to one another. Help your parents, brother, sister, a friend, because you would never imagine how much you could brighten someone’s day by lending a

helping hand. If you feel comfortable sharing, type in the chat something you recently did to help someone or something someone did to help you.”

By sharing some of my own experiences and giving students the space that they need to reflect, it is my hope students will better understand who they are and who they can eventually become. Social emotional learning is a lifelong journey for everyone. Practicing self-awareness through mindful moments can help students work through their own conflicts and know that they are not alone. In a world of constant engagement and instant gratification, music can—and should—be used as a tool to ease our minds and open our hearts to the compassion present in us all.

FIFTH GRADE FOCUS: REMOTE LEARNING

In Reading, the students are learning how to summarize throughout their reading. They are also working on identifying text evidence to answer Text Dependent Analysis Questions (TDA's), as well as a multitude of grammar skills, such as: nouns, pronouns, prepositional phrases, etc.

In Math, they have studies place value, expanded, word, and standard form of numbers. They are currently studying rounding numbers.

We are hoping to have a movie night for just the 5th grade students and their families.

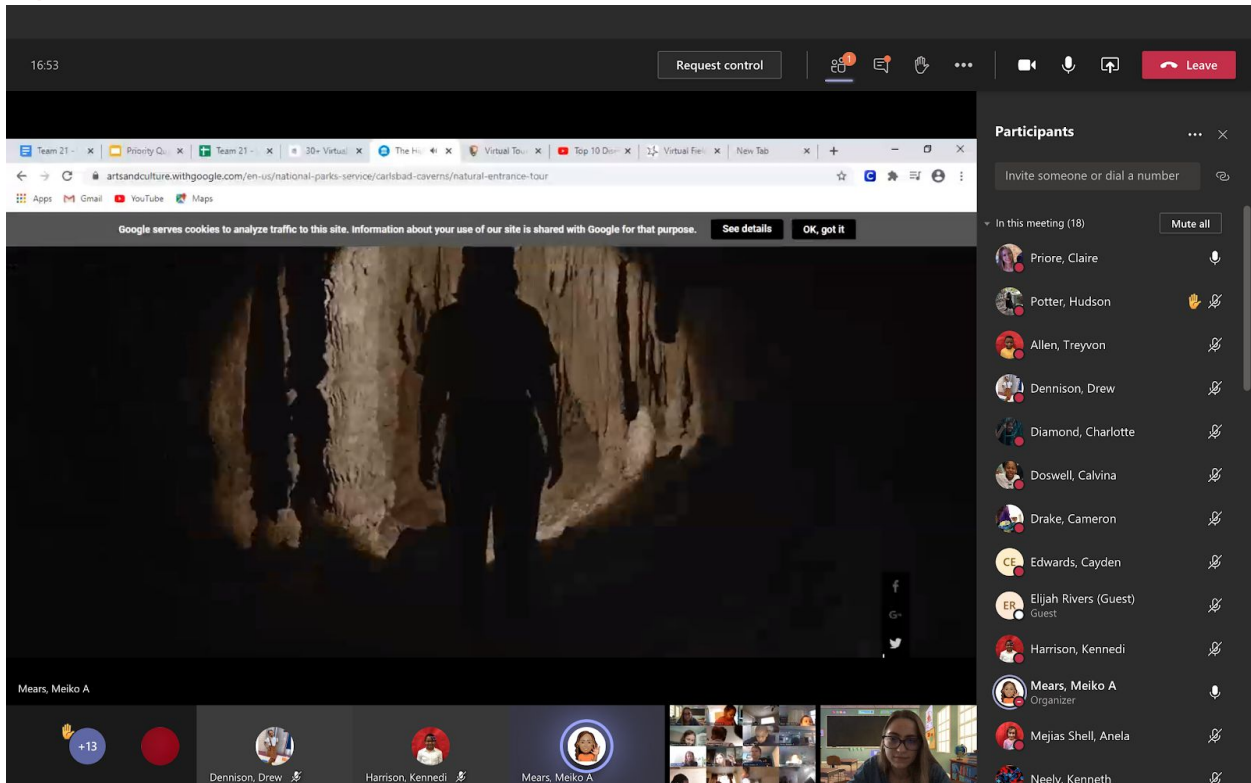
SPANISH: K-2nd

Mrs. Pinizzotto is the Spanish teacher for Kindergarten through the 2nd grade. The daily routine includes greeting each other and going over the calendar. They also say the date, the weather, and the season. Recently, the students have worked on days of the week, months of the year, and weather related words. The students have also practiced saying how old they are, so birthdays are a part of the daily routine. Currently, they are learning about food that is eaten during Thanksgiving and manners (yes, thank you, and no, thank you) when replying to types of food we would like to eat. The students listen to songs and watch videos . This helps them listen to how words are used, and how to pronounce them correctly.

As they go into the winter, they will learn vocabulary for clothing, family, and go into more detail about what we see in the winter.

Mrs. Pinizzotto is very impressed with how well the Kindergarten through 2nd grade students are doing. She is so Feliz (happy) that they are enjoying learning Spanish so much.

FIRST GRADE VIRTUAL FIELD TRIPS



The screenshot shows a Google Meet interface during a virtual field trip. The main video feed displays a person walking through a dimly lit cave with stalactites. The browser address bar shows the URL: artsandculture.withgoogle.com/en-us/national-parks-service/carlsbad-caverns/natural-entrance-tour. The meeting controls at the top include a 'Request control' button and a 'Leave' button. On the right, the 'Participants' list shows 18 people in the meeting, including Priore, Claire; Potter, Hudson; Allen, Treyvon; Dennison, Drew; Diamond, Charlotte; Doswell, Calvina; Drake, Cameron; Edwards, Cayden; Elijah Rivers (Guest); Harrison, Kennedi; Mears, Meiko A (Organizer); Mejias Shell, Anela; and Neely, Kenneth. The bottom of the screen shows a gallery view of participants, including Mears, Meiko A, Harrison, Kennedi, and Dennison, Drew.

First grade does a different theme for each day of the week. Students are excited to see where we will be going on Field Trip Fridays!

November 20, they had fun visiting the Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico, where they got to view naturally formed structures inside the cavern and fly with the bats to see a bat's view flying in and around the cavern. They even got to see how bats use echolocation, which tied right in with our story *Stellaluna*. They enjoy talking about each field trip after "arriving" back at virtual school. We have played with slime in space, watched different animals live at the zoo, and swam with sharks in the coral reef! The first graders even enjoy guessing where we'll be going. Just know that we are looking forward to next Friday!



LOCAL LIBRARIES

It's a school year like no other... But the Library is here to help!

From remote one-on-one learning support to live homework help, to language learning resources and virtual storytimes, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (CLP) has learners of all ages and stages covered.

CLP wants to make sure that kids and teens still have access to books and can grow their love of reading, especially during this challenging time. The Library is here to support literacy and learning.

→ We would love to hear from you!

Did you know that real-time assistance is available from Library staff 7 days a week?

Monday - Thursday, 10am-7pm

Friday - Sunday, 10am - 5pm

- 1 Call! 412-622-3114
- 1 Chat! Click the "How can we help?" icon on our website at

www.carnegielibrary.org

- 1 Text! 412-775-3900* (*standard message rates apply).

→ Connect with the Library

Facebook @CarnegieLibraryOfPittsburgh

Instagram @carnegielibrary

Twitter @Carnegie Library PGH

→ CLP - Virtual brings the Library to you anytime, anywhere!

→ Book a Librarian

Schedule a one-on-one telephone appointment with a librarian.

→ Remote Learning Support

Having trouble with homework? Can't figure out your online classroom? The Library is here to help!

www.carnegielibrary.org/kids-teens

→ Get a Library Card

Anyone in Allegheny County can register for a card online at

www.carnegielibrary.org/librarycard and begin using it immediately to access our eResources for all ages, including ebooks, audiobooks, magazines, research databases, online homework help via Tutor.com and more.

→ eResources for Kids and Teens

The Library is open 24/7 online and on your smart device!

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

At Liberty, we want to support our students' social and emotional growth in addition to their academic growth. PPS has developed the Student Assistance Program (SAP) to help with this effort. Our Schools' SAP Care Team works together to develop ways to meet our student's individual needs and improve academic performance. Our school SAP Team consists of teachers, the principal, social worker, and school nurse. Our goal is to assist students who may be experiencing difficulties that interfere with their academic success.

SAP can include classroom-wide presentations, on-going small groups, social-emotional support, and referrals to outside community-based agencies. SAP is designed to support, educate, and empower students socially and emotionally. The information provided is designed to help students make healthy and positive decisions in their lives as well as to heal from trauma, cope with anger or grief, and much more.

If you are interested in learning more about the SAP program or if you would like to refer your child to SAP, please contact your child's teacher or our school social worker Ms. Kelly: 412- 204-6183, Ekelly2@pghschools.org



LECCION DE ESPAÑOL: DICIEMBRE

campanas: bells

vela: candle

baston de caramelo: candy cane

villancico: carol

Navidad: Christmas

tarjeta de Navidad: Christmas card

dia de Navidad: Christmas day

decoraciones navidenas: Christmas decorations

Nochebuena: Christmas Eve

luces navidenas: Christmas lights

arbol de Navidad: Christmas tree

duende: elf
chimenea: fireplace
regalo: gift
hombre de jengibre: gingerbread man
¡Feliz Año Nuevo!: Happy New Year!
días festivos: holidays
medianoche: midnight
adornos: ornaments
reno: reindeer
Papa Noel: Santa Claus
Felices Fiestas: Season's Greetings
Noche de Paz: Silent Night
copos de nieve: snowflakes
estrella: star
media: stocking
pavo: turkey
guirnalda: wreath



SUPPORT LEAF WHILE YOU SHOP!

If you do any of your shopping on Amazon, there's an easy and automatic way to support Liberty students at the same time. Amazon's nonprofit arm supports a site called AmazonSmile--which is virtually identical to Amazon in terms of pricing, selection, and convenience. When you check out, 0.05% of your purchase price will be donated directly to the charity of your choice. Simply use your usual login credentials, but via the AmazonSmile address instead (smile.amazon.com). Then, when the site prompts you to select your charity, type "Liberty Elementary Academic Fund" in the search bar.



CRAFT: HANDPRINT SANTA

→ You will need:

- white or red construction paper
- crayons, markers, or paint.

→ Directions:

On the paper, trace your hand. Turn the paper upside down. If you used the red paper, you can color the top of the thumb white like the ball on Santa's hat. If you

used the white paper, color the thumb red and leave the other fingers white to represent his beard. For the red paper, you will need to color the fingers white. Add a face on the middle part of the hand. Cut it out if you choose and add a ribbon, so that you can use it as an ornament.

CRAFT: MEXICAN STAR

→ You will need:

- a paper plate
- bright colored markers or crayons

→ Directions:

Draw a big star in the middle of the paper plate. Make it as big as the plate, if possible. Color in the star using bright colors. Make a pattern using different shapes. In Spain, bright colors and patterns are used when celebrating Christmas.

CRAFT: HANDMADE PAPER CHAINS

→ You will need:

Different types of paper: construction, scrapbook, even wrapping paper that isn't too thin will work.

→ Directions:

Cut out strips of paper. Loop them together using glue, tape or staples to keep them together. Hang them from the mantle, the tree, in the window or on the door.

RECIPE: SANTA'S REINDEER FEED

→ You will need:

- 1 cup of oats (any type rolled or steel cut)
- 1 teaspoon of ground cinnamon
- 1/4 cup of white sugar
- 1/4 cup of red or green sugar crystals or sprinkles

First, combine all the ingredients in a resealable plastic bag or container. Seal and shake until well combined. When it is dark before bed on Christmas Eve, sprinkle the magic food on your front lawn to help Santa and his reindeer find your house. This makes enough for all of Santa's reindeer! The oats are a reindeer's favorite food. Cinnamon is their favorite smell, and sugar crystals reflect the light from Rudolph's nose so Santa can find your house. This is a magical "recipe" for kids to make on

Christmas Eve in preparation of Santa's visit, and it won't harm any small animals that might take a bite. Another variation of this recipe uses arts and crafts glitter which can be harmful to animals. Sometimes, we add different Holiday sprinkles instead of the colored sugar crystals.

RECIPE: WHIPPED CHRISTMAS SHORTBREAD

This quick and easy recipe can be ready in less than 30 minutes for a good cookie recipe ready fast. You can use sprinkles and candy-coated chocolate candy, or any toppings of your choice. Try using a whole pecan, a Hershey's kiss, or drizzle them with chocolate, add some crushed candy canes, or leave them plain. If making ahead of time, wait until they completely cool and then freeze. These cookies can last for two months in the freezer. When you are ready to eat them, let them come to room temperature for about 20 minutes before eating.

→ Ingredients:

1 cup butter, softened (salted or unsalted will work)
1/4 cup corn starch
1 1/2 cups all purpose flour
1/2 cup confectioner's sugar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 cup toppings of choice (sprinkles, nuts, candy, etc.)

→ Instructions:

- 1) Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. Set aside.
- 2) Add the butter to a bowl and using a hand-held mixer, whip until light and fluffy-about 3 minutes.
- 3) Add the flour, corn starch, confectioner's sugar, and vanilla. Blend together until fully incorporated-about 2 minutes.
- 4) Portion about 1 teaspoon of the dough (a small ice cream scoop helps).
- 5) Roll the dough into small balls and place on the lined baking sheet. Leave a good 2 inches between each ball.
- 6) Next, dip a fork into the confectioner's sugar to keep the dough from sticking to the fork, and push the fork down into the ball to flatten it to 1/2 inch or so.
- 7) Top the dough with sprinkles, candies, or nuts.
- 8) Bake for 14 minutes. Remove from the oven. Allow to cool for 2 minutes on the baking sheet before transferring to a wire rack to continue cooling.

 **NEWSLETTER DEADLINES**

Submissions are due on the 20th of each month of the school year. Send them to president@pghleaf.org

This newsletter is produced by the parent-teacher organization known as LEAF (Liberty Elementary Academic Fund), a nonprofit organization. LEAF's mission is to support the students, teachers and families at Pittsburgh Liberty K-5 through fundraising, volunteering, and community events.

Visit our site for more info: www.pghleaf.org

Email us: president@pghleaf.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PghLibertyPTO>
