

the **Sousa**

Notes

February 2021

The
winter

Issue!

the Sousa

Notes

February 2021

A Note from Mrs. Sheehan



As the month of March draws near, I find myself taking a moment to pause, reflect and look toward the future, a practice that has been part of who I am for many years. Now, I admit that this practice has evolved and matured through the years, but this year the look back on this trip around the sun feels so much more important than years past.

March has a reputation of arriving like a lion and exiting like a lamb. And while in March of 2020 we experienced the lion, I am certain that many of us are eagerly awaiting the lamb. This year has brought many happenings: a global pandemic, marches in the streets and the storming of

the Capitol Building during one of our nation's most tumultuous election years. We have been challenged as individuals, communities, and as a nation. We have needed to find the strength, courage and fortitude to persevere during one of the most challenging times of our lives. As educators we have worked hard to help our students make sense of the world around them. As adults, we have craved the support and understanding of those around us as we have looked for a beacon in the storm.

That beacon has likely taken on many forms for each of us through the year. For me, that beacon has been our children. The way they attend school each day smiling with bright eyes ready to take on each adventure waiting for them. The way they ask hard questions and collaborate to find solutions. The way they lean on each other and rally together to accomplish so much more than any adult could ever expect. Each day, the children in our lives remind me that there is always a bright spot, a silver lining and hope for what is to come in the future. When we ground ourselves in our core values both as a family and a community, the world can be a little less scary and provide us with the lessons needed to make the world feel less like a lion and more like a lamb.

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A Note from
Mrs. Sheehan



At Sousa, those core values are Kindness, Compassion and Confidence. These three values are what gives us the strength to be Sousa Strong! A strength that has been demon-

strated by every member of our community over the last year. By our families through their support despite what is happening in the community around them, by our staff in their tireless efforts to meet every single student and family where they are at any given moment and by our students in their ability to recognize what they need to continue to learn and grow mentally and physically in this ever changing environment.

It is this foundation which has held us up despite the actions of those in the world around

us. These values give us hope that when embraced by our children that they will take these gifts with them into the world and have the strength to stand up for their beliefs, overcome their obstacles and identify their own beacon of light.

Last week, my family celebrated my great uncle's 90th birthday. At the end of the celebration he left us with these words, "Life is a gift. As we journey through the mystery of life, we experience many different happenings. Each happening, good or bad, leaves us with a lesson. Our challenge is to pay attention to the message of the lesson." My wish for each of you in the year to come is that you recognize those lessons, uncover the message and internalize the bright spot in each one.

-Mrs. Sheehan

Attitude of Gratitude!

What are you grateful for? Sousa staff answered that question and turned their answers into a fun, interactive bulletin board in the lobby of the school.

Each staff member printed out their own Bitmoji to hang on the board, and students were able to flip up the pictures to find the sights, smells, sounds and more for which their teachers were thankful.

The bulletin board was a hands-on way to remind students by example of the importance of being mindful of the things big and small that they are fortunate to have in their lives.



Sousa
HSA

In case you missed it... Below are links to our last two HSA meetings/ Conversations with Mrs. Sheehan, always chock full of helpful information!

12/2 meeting link, featuring guest speakers Stephanie Allen, district Pupil Personnel Services director and Shirley Cepero, Director of ENL (English as a New Language):

https://1drv.ms/v/s!AuaH90wqZRoaiFp2z_3sULcI-NXW?e=bIhdjF

1/27 meeting link, featuring detailed Sousa updates from Mrs. Sheehan:

<https://1drv.ms/u/s!AuaH90wqZRoaiTyT5Bk2dzcu88gD?e=X29dXd>

Important Dates!

2/24 at 7pm: RULER 102 parent program

3/5 at 10am: Conversations with Mrs. Sheehan & HSA meeting

4/7: Picture Day (rescheduled from March)

4/14: Picture Day raindate/retakes

5/1: Virtual Sousa Social





NO NAME CALLING WEEK & SPREAD KINDNESS

January 19-22 marked the annual “No Name Calling Week,” the time of year when students are reminded through daily lessons of the importance of being positive, kind and respectful to everyone, all year round.

As part of their Sousa Leadership Program, 5th graders created signs, morning messages and videos about the importance of treating each other with kindness and respect. The 5th grade leaders emphasized the importance of not calling each other names and encouraged students to treat others with empathy no matter the circumstances, and to strive to understand different perspectives by listening to one another.

Through engaging and creative lessons, our students learned to empathize with those

who are called names and see the lasting effects name calling can have.

The message to “Be Kind” continued in February, with the festive “Sousa is in the Spirit of Spreading Kindness” week.

Students were encouraged to match their clothes to a different kindness message each day of the week before winter break: sweats to emphasize that “being kind is no sweat”; colorful clothes to highlight that “spreading kindness makes the world a beautiful place”; their favorite hats as a “hats off (on?!) to them for their kindness; and Valentine’s Day colors or Sousa gear to show that they are kind, compassionate and confident - in other words, **SOUSA STRONG!**



Cooking Lab!

Sousa families had a great time creating delicious apple tarts under the tutelage of former Sousa parent Mat Lanfant, of the Cooking Lab. This fun virtual fundraiser raised \$400 for the HSA!



Thank you to all of the families that shopped online for the virtual Scholastic Book Fair.

Our sales raised \$570 Scholastic dollars, which do not expire, and can be used to replenish Sousa's library collection and individual classroom libraries!

Book Fair!

Sousa Reads!



This month, Sousa held its first-ever Read-A-Thon fundraiser. Parents, grandparents, family and friends from far and near supported their Sousa students by reading, being read to and donating to the Read-A-Thon. Thanks to the support and encouragement of the teachers and administration, half the school had already registered and Sousa had logged 2,532 minutes by the end of the first day. Sousa's program was inspired by the success of a similar reading initiative undertaken by the Elementary Virtual Learning Platform (EVL) students, which raised \$1,100 for Sousa virtual learning students, and saw Sousa virtual student Cole Marro take top reader honors with 2,630 minutes.

The literacy committee added pizzazz, scheduling a virtual author visit with Todd Parr on the final day. Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade watched Mr. Parr read *Reading Makes me Feel Good* and grades 3-5 watched him read *The Earth Book*. It's worth mentioning that in previous years, scoring a famous author like Todd Parr

would have been financially prohibitive. With all of the changes this year came new access to technology, and the children were able to participate in an interactive virtual experience with a seminal children's author.

The final totals for Sousa's Read-A-Thon were:

Total minutes read: 133,399

Top reader: Jessica Greene
(Mrs. Lucie's class, 3,676 minutes)

Top class: Mrs. Keen's (10,988 minutes)

Top grade: Fifth grade (35,472 minutes)

Total registered readers: 386

Net Profits: \$20,100

We hope that the Read-A-Thon fostered a love of reading in your child and look forward to the day we can use these funds to enrich the school experiences of our teachers and students. Thank you to all of the students, parents and faculty that helped make the Read-a-Thon both an educational and fundraising success.

Great job Sousa!



In a year filled with extra challenges and stresses, the HSA wanted to do something special to thank our faculty, staff and administrators -- On a chilly Friday morning in December, after the buses pulled out, the Doughology truck pulled into the Sousa circle to treat everyone to delicious coffee, hot chocolate and donuts.

Fifth grade teacher Karen Silver summed up the feelings of her colleagues when she said, "I cannot even tell you how excited the whole Sousa staff is about Doughology. Thank you all!! What a great way to start the day. We are feeling very appreciated!"

Doughology Truck!



Sousa Fifth graders helped start the new year off right for our fabulous bus drivers, office staff and custodians.

Just after the break, students greeted the buses at morning arrival with hand-made "thank you" signs, and presented the drivers with bags filled with juice, a bagel, cream cheese and butter.

The bags were decorated by the 5th graders with messages of thanks, and were also given to Mrs. McCalley and Mrs. Cox in the main office, and the entire custodial staff.



**Fri-
Yay!**



Fridays, already many people's favorite day of the week, just keep getting better at Sousa!

Perhaps your child has spoken about "Free Mask Friday," where each Friday morning three lucky winners are announced for the prize of a comfy (relatively speaking) and stylish Port mask.

And of course, the first Friday of each month is Sousa Spirit Day, turning the school into a sea of red with a festive air.

Even better, Sousa Spirit Days have turned into donut days! Our food services department sends hundreds of donut holes, which Helen, one of Sousa's hard-working lunch

aides, heats up, wraps so they are Covid safe, and, with the help of Mrs. Reese, hands them out to students at morning arrival.

Thank you Helen for your kind and joyful spirit on Sousa Spirit Day!

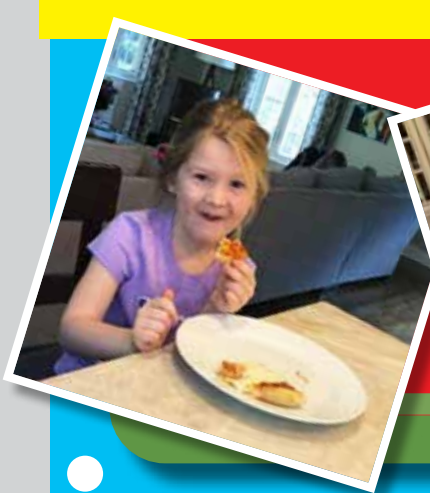


Pizza Workshop!



The Sousa Pizza Workshop was a big hit this year, as budding chefs from 65 Sousa families cooked up 150 personal pizzas and calzones from the comfort of their homes. As always, Linda from Frank's Pizza provided the ingredients and the instructions - this year over video.

Thanks to all the families who participated and helped raise \$465 for the HSA, and to the committee volunteers, especially Lauren Alvarez, whose home served as the ingredient pick up location for this year's event.



We have new eBooks! The elementary librarians pooled their resources with additional support from Ryan Meloni and the Technology Department to purchase some 2,000 additional titles! The link and instructions for logins are in your child's Library Google Classroom. Any questions or comments, please email me at jmoser@portnet.org

Kindergarten

Students learned how to use the SeeSaw app on their iPads while we enjoyed a unit on nursery rhymes.

First Grade

Students were introduced to the SeeSaw app available on their iPads. We completed two Digital citizenship lessons, discussed selected "just right" materials for ourselves, and enjoyed a Martin Waddell author study.

Second Grade

After two Digital Citizenship lessons, we explored trickster and pourquoi folktales.



What We're Learning in the Library!

Third Grade

We have completed three Digital Citizenship lessons and enjoyed an author/illustrator study of Chris VanAllsburg.

Fourth Grade

We completed many of the Digital Citizenship lessons in our first session. Recently, we learned research skills including note taking, database use, and citations while learning more about the Iroquois Federation.

Fifth Grade

We have completed a full complement of Digital Citizenship lessons (see below for more information about the lessons).

Family activities, hints, and resources which support these digital citizenship lessons are provided for all grade levels. If your child has not shared these with you, please ask to see them in their Library Google Classroom in association with the various Digital Citizens lessons.

Valentine's Day!



This year, students showed their love not in the traditional way of exchanging valentines with classmates, but rather by “warming the hearts” of members of the larger Port Washington community.

Students were reminded that more than ever, our community members worked together to keep us safe. Each grade was assigned a community group to whom they would create a “warming heart” card: Hospital workers (K), Firefighters (1st), EMS/EMT (2nd), Police officers (3rd), Nursing Home staff (4th), and Senior Citizens (5th).

In addition, the school again participated in “Valentines for Veterans” to show support and thanks for our armed service members.

All cards were created in advance to quarantine them and make sure that they were safe for delivery!





1

Kindergarten

The Kindergarten students are excited to learn about Forces and Interactions, also known as Pushes and Pulls, in Science! During this unit, students will explore how objects move in the world around us, observe how objects are affected when a force is applied to them and observe, identify and predict the occurrence of collisions. The children are enjoying this unit of study!



What We're Learning In Our Classes!

First Grade

First graders are learning about making connections as they read. They will make text-to-self connections, text-to-text connections and text-to-world connections. In writing, the first graders started opinion writing. In math, first graders are working on addition and subtraction. In social studies, the first graders are learning about needs and wants and goods and services. Then, they will learn about the parts of the government and the different jobs each part does.



2

Second Grade

2nd graders have been working on opinion writing, focusing on supporting their thoughts with reasons and examples. We have just started learning about our basic multiplication facts, using dot paper and our fingers to help us. We are finishing up our social studies unit on communities and showing what we know by creating books using a program called Book Creator. Our next science unit will focus on Earth systems. We are continuously working on becoming fluent, active readers and have already grown so much!



3

Third Grade

The third grade has started our multiplication unit. During our study of multiplication the students will use repeated addition of equal groups to multiply. We will be using the array model and area model (an arrangement in rows and columns) to help the students understand how multiplication and division are related.

We have been singing songs, skip counting, and playing games in the class to help the students with their facts.

You can assist them at home with flash cards, online games, quizzing one another at the dinner table, and playing games at home.



3

Fourth Grade

We are almost done with our unit on division, where we learned the “partial quotients” strategy to solve long division problems.

We are in the middle of our unit on Native Americans and have learned all about the Algonquin and Iroquois tribes of NY.

We finished *The One and Only Ivan*. We loved this book and have learned so much about this true story!



4

What We're
Learning
In Our
Classes!

Fifth Grade

The fifth graders are becoming leaders! They are learning all about what a leader is and finding any opportunity to become the leaders of the school. So far the fifth grade leaders have cheered on each Sousa Spirit Day with greeters and messages. They have created videos and posters teaching the school about No Name Calling Week, and volunteered to be either an announcer, a greeter, to chalk encouraging designs or hang up posters.

The fifth graders helped get people to the districts' blood drive. They also had opportunities to make morning announcements encouraging students to read for the Readathon and in connection with the Kindness Challenges this month. They have headed the drive to create more recess opportunities like blacktop games and equipment. They are truly living up to their fifth grade status as the leaders of the school!



5

First Grade Mascot!



Meet Kiera Koala, the first grade's newly elected mascot!

As part of its social studies curriculum, the first grade learned what a democracy is, and how in a democracy, we vote for leaders. Putting those principles into action, the entire grade participated in an election for a mascot to lead the entire grade.

With a platform based on kindness, empathy and sharing, Kiera Koala beat out worthy contenders Diego Deer, Raleigh Raccoon and Marty Moose.

The first graders were thrilled when Kiera Koala paid a visit to their classrooms to thank her constituents!



Blood Drive!

Our Sousa 5th graders served an integral role in the success of the Port Washington community-wide blood drive earlier this month!

After learning about the importance of donating blood during a virtual assembly by the NY Blood Center, students made posters promoting the blood drive that were hung around town.

The students also personally encouraged people to donate blood. Their efforts paid off, with 86 donations made, which translates into 256 lives saved!

RULER Corner

Ruler activities are robust at Sousa! Our Physical Education classes not only focus on students' physical development but also on their social emotional development.

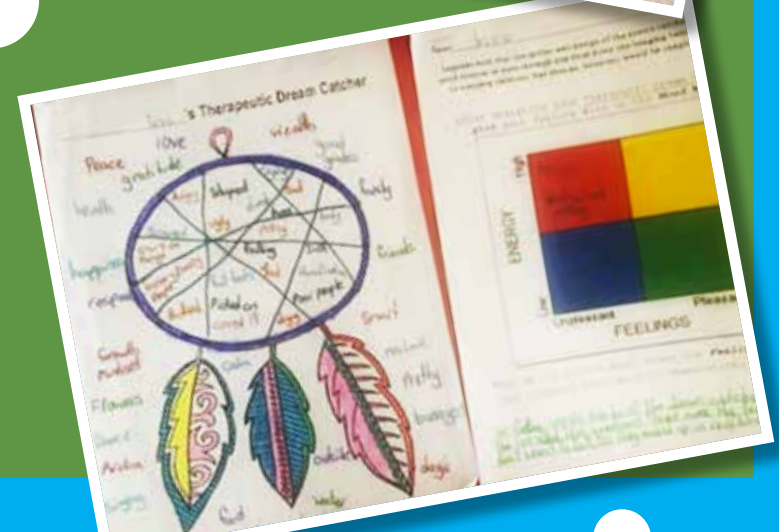
Using physical activities both virtual and in person to elevate the heart rate can move students into the yellow quadrant. Incorporating yoga and mindfulness activities shows students strategies to move into the green or blue.

Many of our classrooms use jamboard or a virtual mood meter for daily check-ins with their classes. Some classes are creating dreamcatchers and identifying feelings inside and outside of the dreamcatcher. Our classroom read alouds are also the perfect time for teachers to help students identify how characters in the book are feeling and if their feelings change throughout the story. Classes often use writers' notebooks to relate those feelings to their own experiences.

Enraged	Furious	Frustrated	Shocked	M	Surprised	Upbeat	Motivated	Ecstatic
Livid	Righteously	Nervous	Restless	O	Hyper	Cheerful	Inspired	Elated
Fuming	Humiliated	Worried	Annoyed	O	Energized	Lively	Optimistic	Thrilled
Reputed	Troubled	Uneasy	Peevish	D	Pleasant	Joyful	Proud	Blessed
M O O D M E T E R								
Disgusted	Disappointed	Glam	Ashamed	E	Blessed	At Ease	Content	Fulfilled
Mortified	Alienated	Mopey	Apathetic	T	Humble	Secure	Chill	Gratified
Intimidated	Excluded	Tired	Drained	E	Calm	Satisfied	Relaxed	Content
Alone	Down	Bored	Tired	R	Relieved	Refreshed	Tranquil	Serene

Sousa Spirit Week, February 8-11th focused on random acts of kindness. Emphasis was on our paraprofessionals, lunchroom staff and custodians. Our focus is designed to teach empathy and pairs perfectly with our RULER skills.

Dr. Koo and Mrs. Biblowitz look forward to sharing multiple strategies for parents to practice emotion regulation, the cornerstone of the RULER approach, in the upcoming RULER 102 workshop on February 24th at 7pm.





Spotlight on The Music Department



“Without music, life would be a mistake.” – Friedrich Nietzsche

No mistake about it, Sousa music teachers Mark Viavattine, Alexis Berberabe and Kelly Ralston are ensuring, despite considerable challenges, that Sousa is filled with music during this pandemic year.

During a typical school year, all students would receive weekly general music lessons from Ms. Berberabe, with a focus on singing culminating in choral performances in the 4th and 5th grades. In 3rd grade students learned to play the recorder. Also beginning in 3rd grade, students have the option to play in the orchestra, this year under the instruction of Ms. Ralston, Sousa’s new orchestra teacher. And in 4th grade, interested students may join Mr. Viavattine’s band, with 5th graders having a chance to join the jazz band.

Fortunately, music lessons have been in full swing all year, returning band and orchestra students have had ongoing instruction, and thankfully, even new band and orchestra students were able to start lessons in the new year. New COVID protocols, however, have forced Sousa’s music teachers to adjust their curricula and teaching methods to meet the new normal.

Concerts, chorus and recorder cannot happen this year. Singing indoors and playing band

wind instruments require a distance of twelve feet between students and six feet for orchestra and other general music lessons. Band students wear surgical masks with mouth holes cut out so that they can play their instruments but still keep their noses covered. Even the wind instruments have masks - band students use “bell covers” on the wind instruments to reduce the amount of aerosols in the environment. Instead of having Ms. Berberabe’s

class once a week, now students in a grade have music every day for two weeks. And in band and orchestra, lessons are taught by individual class, with a mix of instruments, rather than having all players of the same instrument in one lesson at the same time.

To address these restrictions, Ms. Berberabe has taken her show on the road, so to speak, holding music lessons outdoors in the nice weather and traveling to each individual classroom during the winter months. Without the music room as

a base, she can only physically carry so many instruments, and regrets that much of her musical instrument collection cannot be used this year. She has, however, used hand bells to have students work together to create a song, taught “paper plate choreography,” and introduced the ukulele (a student favorite!) to both 3rd and 4th grades. Students have gotten really good at reading rhythms as well. “The curriculum is completely different this



Continued on next page



Spotlight on The Music Department



year. I am doing a lot of movement-based activities, which the kids are enthusiastic about because they spend a lot of time in the classroom in their seats." And, though she wishes that she could do more singing with the students, Ms. Berberabe appreciates that the pandemic has made her more creative, constantly researching new ways to teach the same important concepts.

For Mr. Viavattine, the lack of proximity to his students and masks are big challenges.

He is on the stage, and the students are

spread out in the aisles of the auditorium. It is difficult with that distance to correct misplaced fingers, and of course with the masks, it is impossible to see if the children's lips are properly positioned or if they are puffing their cheeks, for example. With only about 30 minutes per class, he never feels like there is

enough time. And, though it is challenging, especially with the 4th graders, to have to teach all instruments at once in a class, he says the level of patience that the students have shown has exceeded his initial expectations. Mr. Viavattine explained that "I'm afraid that a lot of the joys of playing music are being taken away. I'm trying to fill up that energy with my teaching."

By all accounts - it is working. Participation numbers are good and the elementary stu-

dents remain enthusiastic about their band lessons, even with the changes.

Ms. Ralston jokes with her colleagues that as the orchestra teacher, she is the luckiest of the three musical disciplines as she does not have to worry about aerosols, and can teach her students on the stage. Although they are only six feet apart, not twelve, it is still difficult for the students to hear each other play. She works with them on different exercises that help reinforce playing together as a group. This year, she is not grouping students by ability level and has enjoyed having conversations with students on how they may all be on different levels but that it is important to help each other and support each other. She has also noted the children's continued enthusiasm and says that, "it would be easy to get frustrated, but we music teachers are naturally flexible -- we pivot and find opportunities to be creative."

Even though concerts cannot happen this spring, all three music teachers are brainstorming innovative but feasible ways to showcase the talents of the graduating fifth graders. Stay tuned to find out what these dedicated, talented, creative teachers come up with!

