



# WILLOW AVENUE NEWSLETTER

December 2025

Kindness Lives at Willow

Vol. 6 issue 4



## Upcoming:



**11/26-28 - Thanksgiving Break**

**12/11 - Evening Parent/Teacher Conferences**

**12/12 - Parent/Teacher Conferences all day - No School for students**

**12/22-1/2/26-Winter Recess**

## December Cornwall Trait

Perseverance -

To continue in spite of difficulty and always try your harvest.



with Mrs. Gandolfini & Mrs. Sweeney

This time of year everyone is bustling and the kinders are certainly learning and hustling-math, ela, social studies and more-

December has a lot in store...

Math begins with numbers 6-10, making counting and comparing them.

Social Studies lessons will take us around the world to see how others celebrate their HOLIDAYS.

ELA will focus on comparing stories about Gingerbread characters;

Who do we need to watch out for, setting, sequence and which book we like BEST.

Reading groups are in full swing building their skills to learn how to read!

We wrap up the month with a day for the GRINCH-with all our parents' help these events are a cinch!!

We THANK YOU in advance for your help!

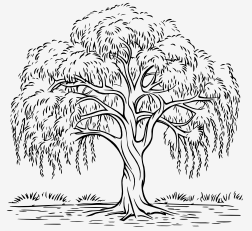
\*A note from PE (Ms Nissen)--please wear sneakers on Gym days.

Lastly, as the temperature begins to drop and winter is right around the corner we ask you to practice putting coats on and off- zipping coats, and talking gloves and hats on and off. With 23 kids getting ready for recess and dismissal their independence in these skills are very important.

**Website:**  
**[www.cornwallschools.com](http://www.cornwallschools.com)**

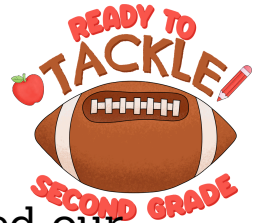


**Follow us on Instagram:**  
**@willowavenuees**



Mrs. Berchielli &  
Miss Karlson

First grade is thankful for all of the wonderful experiences we have had this year! Students hiked at Black Rock Forest to observed the habitat of a beaver, observed 3-D shapes during our visit to Storm King Art Center, and showed our school spirit during Color Wars. It is exciting to see students continue to improve by leaps and bounds in reading, writing, and math. If you have some time to cuddle with your child on a chilly day, some good read aloud suggestions are Turkey Trouble by Wendi Silvano, A Turkey for Thanksgiving by Eve Bunting, and Thanksgiving on Thursday by Mary Pope Osborne! We have much to be thankful for!

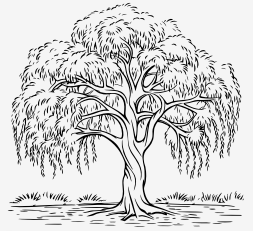


Mrs. Byrne &  
Mrs. Santos

Sensational second graders are in full gear! We finished our first full unit in Iready math. Ask us to solve one or two step problems, organize data on pictographs and bar graphs, and add using multiple strategies. We are moving to double digit addition with regrouping. We finished our full unit in Social Studies on communities and voting. We held class elections! We are wrapping up personal narrative writing and starting informative writing. In Science, we have begun our unit on Erosion. We also read Turkey Trouble and came up with our own turkey disguises! Check them out! They are displayed in the hallway!

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Our inquisitive third graders will be going on a field trip to Locust Grove on December 9th. They will participate in inquiries to study forces and motion by measuring distance and force. On the property is Samuel Morse's summer home and the students will also do a house hunt using clues to find artifacts from long ago. They will visit the barn and walk the grounds to see how simple machines can help you work more efficiently. The third graders blew us away as they learned about weather in science. They learned all about weather and climate patterns around the world, and they applied that knowledge to build a roof for a rainy climate. In ELA, we will begin our new unit and will explore pourquoi tales, which explain "why". Afterwards, we will use Book Creator to create books and publish our tales. In Math, we've marched into learning our multiplication facts with the goal of mastering many of them before winter break. Knowing them will help with our next topic: division. So practice those facts on the bus, in the car, and at the dinner table! They are a foundational skill that makes doing math so much easier.

The third/fourth grade floor is looking forward to the 4th annual Winter Wonderland Celebration before our holiday break.

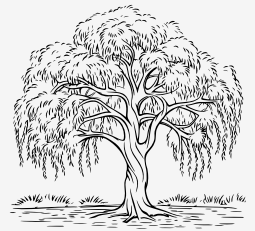


Mrs. Hogan &  
Ms. Mante



Mrs. Cleaves &  
Ms. Merante

**Our 4th graders have settled nicely into their academic routine and are still learning the important responsibility of transporting their computers to and from school each day. Thank you to our families for your support with this take-home technology program—it truly helps our students build independence! In math, we're exploring factors and multiples as we gear up for some big multiplication concepts. Reading groups are in full swing, and we're excited to be wrapping up our class read-aloud, *The One and Only Ivan* by Katherine Applegate. In science, we've just finished our first unit on how motion energy shapes the Earth and are now diving into Unit 2 to discover how that same energy moves and changes. Next up in social studies, we'll begin learning about how the first Americans came to New York. Wishing all of our families a joyful and restful holiday season!**



## tidbits of mOTivation with Mrs. Lucia

### **Navigating the Holidays with Sensory Sensitivity**

The holiday season brings beauty and joy, but for individuals with sensory sensitivities, the change in environment can be stressful and overwhelming. Acknowledge that they perceive their surroundings differently.

#### **Potential Overwhelm Triggers**

Be aware of common situations that can lead to sensory overload:

- **Loud Noise:** Music, crowds, and talking.
- **Strong Smells:** Seasonal candles, perfumes, or cooking.
- **Intense Visuals:** Bright, flashing, or excessive lights.
- **Emotional Overload:** Over-excitement or anticipating events.
- **Physical Closeness:** Large crowds or too much physical touch.

#### **Recognizing Sensory Overload (Possible Outcomes)**

When a loved one is overwhelmed, they may communicate their distress through:

- Emotional outbursts (tantrums, crying)
- Avoidance or withdrawal
- Increased challenging behaviors (e.g., hitting, biting)

#### **Strategies to Help Immediately**

If you notice signs of overload, try one of these grounding tasks:

Strategy Category	Immediate Actions to take
Space & Calm	Lead them to a quiet corner or separate room to talk
Movement	Go for a walk or run outside (increases awareness of the body)
Engagement	Offer an easy, focusing task (e.g., stirring ,beading, stickers)
Oral Input	Offer a drink through a straw, or provide crunchy foods
Regulation	Practice deep breathing, read together or sing

### **The Power of Being Present**

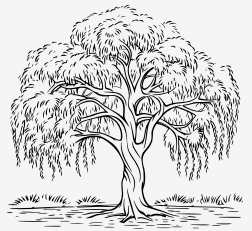
Be mindful of your surroundings. Your loved one's needs (whether they are big or small) must take priority. A conversation may need to be paused. Sometimes, **taking a walk** outside feels like "extra work" just to get bundled up, but the resulting calmness and regulation are worth the effort. You are the expert on your loved one.





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## November Principal Award Winners

Eliza A.  
Arianna B.  
Reagan C.  
Amy D.  
Patrick F.  
Zaria K.  
Charles M.  
Ryan R.  
Kennedy S.

Vale B.  
Alexander B.  
Mason D.  
Giovanna E.  
Taylor H.  
Isabella L.  
Julianna M.  
Maxwell S.  
Ellie T.



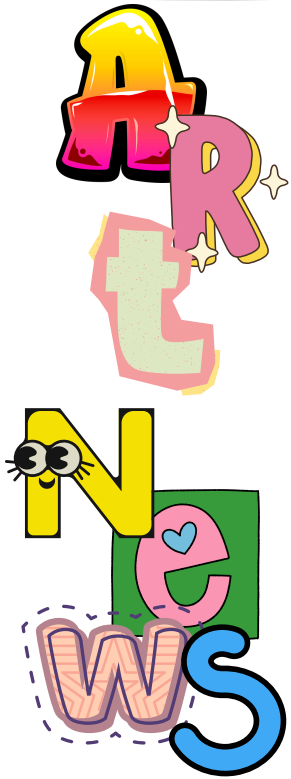
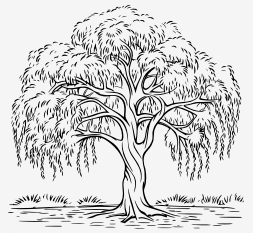
## December Birthdays:

12/1: Anisa P. – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
12/1: Sophia P. – 1<sup>st</sup> Grade  
12/2: Brayden B. – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
12/4: Wesley J. – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade  
12/4: Ceileigh H. – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade  
12/5: Caleb R. – 1<sup>st</sup> Grade  
12/5: Andrew M. – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
12/5: Jonathan A. – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade  
12/6: Shane M. – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade  
12/10: Eamonn K. – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
12/10: Fionnuala K. – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
12/13: Bryce D. – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
12/15: Aria I. – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
12/17: Riley S. – 1<sup>st</sup> Grade  
12/19: Savannah R. – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
12/22: Declan A. – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
12/22: Colin L. – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
12/26: Gabriel S. – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
12/27: Phoebe K. – Kindergarten  
12/28: Corinne U. – Kindergarten  
12/30: Glenn P. – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade  
12/31: Olivia J. – 1<sup>st</sup> Grade



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I can't believe how fast time is flying in the art studio! Our Kindergarten & First grade artists have had art enrichment this past trimester but it will be coming to an end in the next couple of weeks, and then I welcome Second and Third grade to art enrichment! Our first grade artists are working on their turkeys, where we painted papers using the primary colors (red, yellow & blue) and then we used the primary colors to mix and MAKE the secondary colors (orange, green & purple) for the turkeys' feathers. First graders are working on wrapping up their very cute acorn collages. We learned about the pattern called plaid and how to layer colors and line thickness to create our own plaid for the background of our acorn drawings. Second graders are almost done with mosaic owl collages. Third graders have been working on drawings of fall animals and did leaf rubbings with crayons for the background- they are so cute and vibrant! Fourth graders are in the middle of their Andy Warhol Campbell's Soup can project- they are very cool!!

*-Mrs. Butler*



**Please note - Send your student in with jackets due to the colder weather as they go outside for recess and PE Class. Also, if your family has a need and could benefit from support for food or winter coats please contact our Food Services Department to complete the confidential paperwork. See our website**



## Caring Hands with Nurse Katie



Did you know that the first School Nurse position in the United States was created in New York? It's true. And the birth of School Nursing in the United States is a New York original as well!

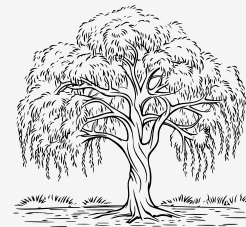
In 1893, after moving to NYC's Lower East Side and seeing the terrible living conditions in the local community and schools, forward thinking innovators, nursing pioneers, and social justice queens, Lillian Ward and Mary Brewster, put their passion for Public Health to work. They hired Lina Rogers, a pediatric nurse and overall kiddo expert, to be the first school nurse in NYC schools. Lina saw that many students were sent home from school due to illness and never returned, in addition, she saw that most of those exclusions were treatable with a few environmental changes. Lina educated students and families on hygiene and disease prevention thereby drastically reducing illnesses, exclusions, and chronic absenteeism. To quote Lina Rogers (probably) "Back to class."

So, in short, if you feel like your student sees the nurse entirely too much, perhaps they are simply celebrating NYS rich history of School Health.

Happy Holidays! Wash your hands!

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## Kids in Motion with Ms. Nissen



For the Month of December, classes will be finishing up our Bowling Unit! Older students have been learning and practicing how to keep score in small groups, while all students are earning a feather for every Strike they bowl!

Basketball and Jump Rope will be our main focus activities during this month. Younger students will work on hand-eye coordination, dribbling, passing and shooting, with bouncy balls. Older students will focus more on history, rules of the game, and cooperative game play. With good sportsmanship as our #1 focus!

**\*\*A homework sheet will be coming home soon for students needing more practice tying their shoes. Shoe tying is an important life-skill, and a great way to practice fine motor skills.**

**\*\*Also, as you begin to holiday shop, please consider including gifts that promote physical activity! A simple hula hoop, jump rope, bouncy ball, football, frisbee, soccer ball, etc can provide hours of fun and physical activity!**

**Have a wonderful, safe, and healthy holiday!**

**HAPPY  
NEW  
YEAR**

## Stay in the Know with our Willow Ave PTO

November is a time to be Thankful and your PTO is thankful for you!

In the last month we have had our first Dragon School Store, raised \$150 for Flags for Veterans, represented our cultural community at Multicultural Night and announced Mrs. Hogan and Ms. Merantes classes as our membership Pizza Party winners!

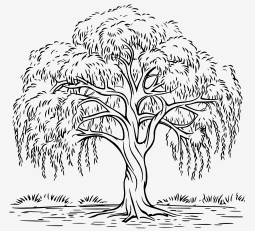
**Thank you again for all of your support!**

Drama club signups are underway for our 3rd and 4th grade students for this year's production of The Music Man! Please signup by December 3rd and our first club meeting will be December 10th from 3:30-5:00pm.

Also coming up in December we will be having our Holiday store on 12/15, Gingerbread cookie decorating on 12/9 and 12/10, and a special holiday FMO on 12/19 with a visit from our Cornwall Dragon and a special holiday guest!

**Enjoy your Thanksgiving break with your loved ones!**





## **Ms. Zawacki's Mindful Moment**

**Keep in Touch:**

**Email: [kzawacki@cornwallschools.com](mailto:kzawacki@cornwallschools.com) or  
845-534-8009- ext 3026**

Winter Greetings!

December's Character Trait is Perseverance, which means to continue in spite of difficulty, always try your hardest and to use positive strategies when we are feeling frustrated, angry or sad.

Strategies which can assist us in persevering during difficult times include:

- Mindful breathing
- Intense physical exercise, an outdoor walk in nature or just around the neighborhood
- Drawing, playing with friends or enjoying a hobby that brings you joy

It is very important to use one of your positive strategies on a daily basis so you can have them strong, well-practiced and ready to go during the tough times. Practice is key for any mental health or physical strategy.

The holidays are upon us and the hustle and bustle of family gatherings and holiday shopping are well underway. Although this is a joyous time of year, it is also a time that can bring much stress and big emotions.

As you go about your daily routines, as you prepare your family dinners and complete your holiday shopping, remember to take time for yourself. Maintain healthy eating, do something enjoyable and find time to rest. This is an important time to reflect on what we are grateful for and to teach and model for our children the deeper meanings of the holidays.

The holiday season and cooler weather are here! If your family has a need and could benefit from support for food or winter coats please contact Food Services Department to complete the confidential paperwork.

**Let's  
talk it  
out**

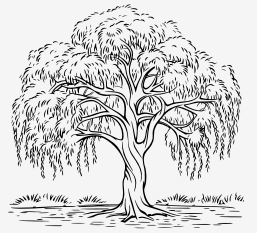


## **Bookmarks from our Librarian - Mrs. Ebenhoe**

**What a busy month! Kindergartners are studying author/illustrator, Jan Brett, who has a December birthday. First and second grades are learning the importance of the ABCs in everything from finding favorite authors to dictionary organization. Third grade classes are exploring OPALS, our online catalog. Our fourth grade students are familiarizing themselves with characteristics of reliable sources and about altered images and videos.**

**Thanks to the families that participated in the Sponsor-a-Book program. We are looking forward to adding some exciting new titles in the coming months. Also, with the possibility of delays and snow days, please be sure to keep your child's library book in their backpacks, so they will have them when schedules permit a make-up book exchange.**

**We hope you have a wonderful winter break...**



## DECEMBER SPEECH NEWSLETTER

MRS. JENNINGS



EXPRESSIVE

### Winter Vocabulary:

- Traditions
- Blizzard
- Celebrations
- Shiver
- Decorate

Winter is a great time of year to encourage reading. Start a routine of reading with your child before bed every evening. Allow your child the ability to pick out the book.

You can read it out loud together, take turns reading, or read it to them. Ask questions along the way, such as:

- **Who** is the main character?
- **What** happened on this page?
- **Where** does the story take place?
- **When** did this happen?
- Have your student **retell** the story in their own words.

RECEPTIVE

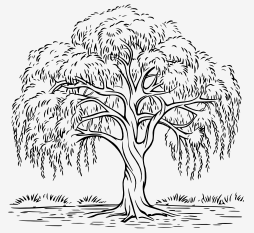


ENCOURAGE YOUR KIDS  
TO ENGAGE IN  
CONVERSATION AT  
HOLIDAY GATHERINGS  
(FOCUS ON TURN  
TAKING,  
& LESS INTERRUPTIONS)

SOCIAL







## Join Us for The Music Man

Willow Avenue Drama Club  
invites all 3rd and 4th graders  
to be part of our fantastic cast!

The first club meeting is  
December 10, 2025  
from 3:30- 5:00 PM

**Performances  
are April 23 & 24**

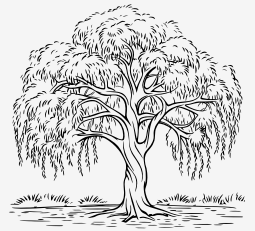
Register Here



**Sign up by  
December 3, 2025**

Practices: Wednesdays  
Cost \$40

If you are in need of financial  
assistance please reach out to  
[kzawacki@cornwallschools.com](mailto:kzawacki@cornwallschools.com)



## RHYTHM & NEWS

MS. TREACY'S MUSIC CLASS UPDATES



DECEMBER  
2025

December is here, and our music room is glowing with curiosity, creativity, and winter spirit! Students are diving into new skills, exploring hands-on projects, and growing as confident musicians.

### Grade-by-Grade Highlights

#### FOURTH GRADE

Fourth graders are mastering their solfege syllables and bringing those skills into chorus rehearsal. They are working hard on musical accuracy and blending their voices. You can hear our band, orchestra, and chorus share their progress at the **Winter Concert on December 16th at 7:00 PM** at the High School. We can't wait to share this joyful celebration of music with our community!

#### THIRD GRADE

Third graders are making great progress on their recorders, focusing on the notes B, A, and G. They're discovering how many songs can be played with just these three notes, starting with Hot Cross Buns, and their excitement is growing with each new success! Students should use the Google Classroom resources for support with at-home practice.

#### SECOND GRADE

Second graders are exploring music and science with the Makey-Makey, building their own digital instruments and learning how electricity connects to sound. They are also preparing for a class "listening party," where they'll celebrate everyone's original Soundtrap compositions.

#### FIRST GRADE & KINDERGARTEN

Our youngest musicians are singing snowy songs, learning about the woodwind family, and even trying out solos! Their confidence is growing as they explore new sounds and practice performing for one another. They are also learning what it means to be **artful** performers by making creative, intentional choices in their movements, voices, and use of instruments.



### In The Spotlight

Instrument Family Focus

Woodwind

Instrument of the Month

The Pipe Organ

Composer of the Month

Teresa Jennings



Drama season has begun at both elementary schools! Rehearsals begin **December 3rd at COH** and **December 10th at Willow Avenue**. Thank you for your continued support of our music program!

HAPPY  
HANUKKAH

❄️ MERRY ❄️  
CHRISTMAS

HAPPY  
KWANZAA