

DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

C.R. Anderson Middle School



From The Principal: Social Media- Villain or Hero?

Over the Thanksgiving break I was thrilled to have my 13-year-old grandson come for a visit. In the past when he visited, we read books, played board games and took long hikes in the forest near my home. This visit, I saw the top of his head more than his face as he stared fixedly at his phone for much of the day. When asked what held his interest, he let me know that he was visiting with his friends. They chatted, played online games, and shared videos. It seemed he had not left his friends behind for the weekend! It took a little cajoling, but I convinced him to detach from his phone and spend some quality time with grandma.

This behavior is typical of middle school students. Social media has become a standard in their lives and without it they feel detached from their peer group. Claude Mellins, Professor of Medical Psychology, suggests that social media is an "important source of socialization and relationship-building for many young people." Tweens and teens today depend on social media for their social life. They keep up to date with friends and family, share thoughts, make plans, and generally rely on social media for relationships, entertainment, activities, and communication. Without it, they may feel excluded since the trend is to reach out to a friend group on social media to plan an event rather than to reach out to an individual. Mellins adds that social media helps introverted kids to meet others with similar interests. Additionally, the resources on social media, if used responsibly and mindfully, can help kids stay connected. Social media is a contemporary "relationship building tool" (Mellins, 2021).

Kids are "learning to do most of their communication while looking at a screen, not another person." (Ehmke, 2023). What is the harm? Most importantly, kids cannot see the impact of their words on the recipient. The non-verbal cues that are intrinsically important to good communication are missing. One cannot text tone of voice or read the facial expression of the recipient of the text. "Kids text all sorts of things that you would never in a million years contemplate saying to one's face," (Donna Wick, ED. D). Social media has opened the door for extreme language with lasting effects on both the sender and the receiver. The lack of the check and balance inherent in non-verbal cues can lead to harassment, cyber bullying, and downright cruelty. The adage sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can never hurt me cannot be more wrong. Not only can words spread over social media hurt, but the hurt is also compounded when the message is shared and, depending on the platform, the words do not go away and can lead to cyber bullying.

Unfortunately, we see much of the dark side of social media in middle school. Students are crushed by their "friends" with only a few words on social media; and many of these once strong relationships cannot be repaired. The cruelty is not restricted to students, anonymous posts spread untruths about students, teachers, administrators, and just about anyone else. Things that would never be said to one's face and that have no basis in truth are posted and reposted. The sender rarely understands the hurtful nature of the post or the lasting damage that may be caused.

Social media is a powerful tool that can be used to promote positive social behavior or be used as a destructive force. It is not going away, so educating teens to use social media to build relationships, rather than tear them down, is essential. It will take schools and parents, working together, to help students understand the power in social media and how to use that power constructively. The best way to educate kids on appropriate uses of social media is by being positive role models. Adults need to be mindful about what we are posting on public platforms. Check in with your kids' social media platforms. If you see teasing, bullying, or other inappropriate content, talk to your child and reach out to the parents of other kids involved. A reminder that we should not post what we are not willing to say face-to-face can impact teens online behavior. Establish tech free time with your kids. They need practice in face-to-face communication and reading nonverbal cues to promote positive communication. Give your kids your full attention daily and you will build your relationship with your child and build their self-esteem. Try the winter break challenge, once a day do something offline with your kids. Have the kids write it down and bring it to school in January. We'll have a drawing with a prize for each grade.

Social media is a quickly changing, powerful technology that will not go away. It is incumbent upon adults to guide teens through the complex world of social media, to monitor what they post, and to model positive use of social media. Our kids have grown up with technology, they know how to navigate it, we need to teach them to be responsible while using it.

Kathleen Prody
Principal



Important Dates

December 8th

Holiday Dance
3:00- 4:30pm

December 12th

Jazz and Concert Band
Concert 7pm
3:00- 4:30pm
At Capital High School Auditorium
Orchestra Concert
8th grade- 12:30pm
At Holter Museum

December 14th

Band Concert
6th grade at 4pm
7th grade at 7pm
C.R Anderson Upper Gym

December 22nd- January 1

Winter Break
No School



Happy Holidays From Student Council!

This December is going to be the best yet with the holiday dance, candy, and spirit week. Our CRA Student Council has worked hard on making these days jolly, so make sure to get involved and have fun.

- **The Holiday Dance** will be on December 8th from 3:00-4:30 in the upper gym. We have an amazing DJ this time! Dance tickets will be \$3 if purchased before Friday, and \$5 on Friday.
 - Candy, pizza, and other snacks will be sold for \$1 to \$3 price range.
- **Candy grams** can be bought for two dollars and will be sold from December 11th-18th. These will be delivered to advisors on December 20th.
- **Spirit week** is going to be held from December 18th -21st
 - Monday, December 18th: Holiday PJ Day - Bring on those holiday pajamas! Please make sure that you are still within dress code.
 - Tuesday, December 19th: Red and Green Day and bring on the bling! Wear your red and green, holiday earrings, and hat day!
 - Wednesday, December 20th: Grinch Everything Day!
 - Thursday, December 21st: Ugly Sweater Competition

UGLY
SWEATER
party



Holiday Help Programs For Those Who Need Help or Want to Donate

The Giving Tree-The Cathedral of St. Helena and Good Samaritan Ministries are partnering to ensure that children receive a gift Christmas morning. If you need assistance in providing for your child(ren) this Christmas season, please come to the Cathedral Center across the parking lot from the Cathedral. Registrations will take place Mon through Thurs, 9 a.m.- 2 p.m. and Fri. 9 a.m.- 12 p.m., Nov. 13 through Dec. 12. No appointment necessary. Parents must bring a picture ID and present a copy of your child's birth certificate. Gifts will be distributed Dec. 15 and Dec. 16 at 530 N. Ewing Street. If you have questions, please call Jennifer at the Cathedral of St. Helena at 406-442-5825.

HELENA TOYS FOR TOTS -Online registration for the Helena area will now be available only if you have participated (in Helena) in 2020, 2021, or 2022. Please follow this link for more online registration information. <https://helena-mt.toysfortots.org/local-coordinator-sites/lco-sites/local-toy-request-single-form.aspx>

In Person Registration Dates:

Dec. 3 11am-2pm, Dec. 4 2pm-5pm, Dec. 6 2pm-5pm

Location: Lewis and Clark Library

Helena Food Share -Lewis Street Pantry

1616 Lewis St.

Helena, MT 59601

Hours - Monday 12:30 pm - 6:30 pm, Tues. 12:30 pm - 3:30 pm, Wed. 12:30 pm - 3:30 pm, Thurs. 12:30 pm - 6:30 pm, Fri. 12:30 pm - 3:30 pm

Holiday Meal Signup: Holiday meal distribution will be one day only at the Pantry (1616 Lewis St.) on Thurs, Dec. 21st. Please visit <https://helenafoodshare.org/get-help/holiday-meal-share/> to sign up. Each household will receive a turkey, a turkey breast, or a ham (if available), and a box of food to prep holiday meal sides: fresh vegetables, canned food, and rolls.

God's Love Holiday Meals

533 N Last Chance Gulch (406) 422-7000

Christmas Day: 1 pm





From the Music Department



The Helena School District is in its sixteenth year partnering with the Metropolitan Opera Company (the MET) for the Live in Schools program. The Live in Schools program provides tickets to as many as five operas each season to introduce students to this incredible art form. Each opera is streamed live to our local movie theater, and the MET provides rich and detailed educator guides that help teachers and students learn about each show.

With our third show fast approaching— Florencia en el Amazonas on Saturday, December 9—we want to remind C.R. Anderson students that everyone is welcome to be a part of the Live in Schools program. If you want to get involved with the opera you can still contact Mr. Cleary at kcleary@helenaschools.org. We hope to see you at the opera!

New York City 2024!

The tour group that Mr. Cleary and Mrs. Shockley are leading this coming Spring Break is finally getting into the planning phase of the travel experience. With four months until the plane departs for the Big Apple, the start of December is the last chance for students to sign up. You can visit <https://www.efexploreamerica.com/2574971WR> to see our itinerary, get pricing information, and enroll.

Our first official tour meeting (for everyone enrolled on this amazing adventure) is scheduled for Monday, December 4 at 6:00 pm in the CRA Choir Room. Entry #19 will be unlocked (across the basketball courts off Allison Street) to allow easy access to the choir room. This in person meeting allows us to finally dig into tour details like room assignments, meal preferences, and itinerary specifics and we are looking forward to seeing everyone there. Please contact Mr. Cleary at kcleary@helenaschools.org if you have questions as we prepare for this amazing educational opportunity!

Ironhorse Youth Music is wrapping up our fall semester, and students are getting excited to share their progress! Our concert on Sunday, December 17 (4:00 pm at St. Paul's United Methodist Church) is free and open to the public if anyone wants to share in some beautiful holiday music.

Our diverse ensembles welcome students of all ages and ability levels who want to explore challenging symphonic and choral literature with their peers. Ensembles meet on Thursdays, but our lesson program has a varied schedule. If you are interested in learning more about our organization, or in obtaining an enrollment brochure for the upcoming spring semester, please visit our website (<https://ironhorsemusic.org/>). We welcome strings, brass, woodwind, and percussion players along with vocalists. Talk with your music teacher or contact Mr. Cleary (kcleary@ironhorsemusic.org) if you are interested in joining an Ironhorse program!



After School Tutoring Program

What: ASK PROGRAM- After school tutoring for students who struggle with getting homework turned in or to understand homework.

Who can attend: We have openings for 6th, 7th and 8th grade.

When: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3pm-4pm in Tutoring teacher's room.

Cost: Free, first come, first serve basis

How: Applications are in the office or call Ms. Sprott 324-2784 for an emailed application at ksprott@helenaschools.org

We start first week of December!



From The Health Room

Did you know that research shows that students who do not get enough sleep have a higher risk for many health and behavior problems? Data from the CDC indicates that over 57% of middle school students and 72% of high school students reported sleeping less than the recommended amount.

Students without enough sleep may experience:

- Decreased ability to focus
- Difficulty with memory and learning
- Impaired decision making
- Increased emotional reactions and irritability
- Shortened reaction time, especially significant when students are driving



Tips for helping your student:

- Set a firm bedtime: This may sound unachievable when trying to parent a teenager who is striving for autonomy. However, studies suggest students' mood and fatigue levels are improved when parents set a bedtime, choosing a time that is in line with their student's needs
- Stopping the use of electronic devices, including cell phones, one hour prior to lights going out.
- Students may sleep better when they have a supportive mattress and a bedroom that is dark and quiet

For more information:

<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/children-and-sleep/sleep-and-school-performance>

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/features/students-sleep.htm>

https://www.sleep.org/sleep-hygiene/all-nighters-and-health/#adolescents__amp__high_school_students

Kids Packs

Helena Food Share is offering our Kid Pack program to children at CR Anderson Middle School, and we invite your children to participate.

- If you choose to sign up, the Kid Pack Program will provide a bag of non-perishable, nutritional food to your children each week for them to eat over the weekend.
- This support is also available for other children in your home regardless of their enrollment status in school.
- The program will begin September 8, 2023 and continue throughout the 2023-2024 school year.
- There is no cost to your family for this program.
- Students can pick up Kid Packs outside the front office on their way out the door on Friday afternoons.
 - Please be advised that these bags contain some foods that include peanuts, nuts, soy, wheat, eggs and milk. All the food is labeled and sealed by the manufacturer. If you want your child to receive a weekly bag of food, you can contact: Emily Hilliard 324-2763



8th Grade Baby Picture - Yearbook Submissions

Make sure to include your child's FIRST and LAST name!

- Please title the subject - first name last name baby picture
- Example -Subject: Charlie Brown Baby Picture

Using the subject format will really help organize hundreds of pictures that we get for the yearbook and to know who is who!

The **DEADLINE** for submitting baby pictures is **FEBRUARY 1st**.

This is a **HARD** deadline as the yearbook must be submitted to the yearbook company before the book goes to print.

Once it is submitted to the printer no changes can be made - this means we don't have the ability to add more baby photos.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mrs. Hogan or Mrs. Peterson.

REMEMBER SEND ALL PHOTOS to crandersonyearbook@gmail.com

MealTime Parent Portal Overview
This portal is for both Pay Online and Apply Online.

Logging in:

1. Go to <http://www.mymealtime.com>
2. If you already created an account
 - a. Enter your username and password
 - b. Click on Sign In
3. If you need to create an account
 - a. Click on Register
 - b. Enter YOUR OWN date of birth (not your student's)
 - c. Mark the box stating You have read and agree to Terms of Use
 - d. Click OK
4. Please fill in the fields to create your MealTime Online Parent Profile. You are entering YOUR information here not your student's information.

Adding Your student:

1. On the Left side, click on Manage Cafeteria Accounts
2. Under Add student, click New
3. Select State, Enter Montana
4. School Name, Enter CRA Middle School
5. Student ID, Enter your Student's ID #
 - a. If you don't know their ID #, please call 324-2757
6. Click Add

Free/Reduced Meal Application:

1. On the Left side, Under MealTime Apply Online, Click Let's go!
2. You will have to Sign In again
3. Click on New Application
4. Please follow the prompts to apply

If you have any questions, please call Rachel Lillevedt at 324-2757.



	Full Price	Reduced
Breakfast	\$2.00	\$.030
Lunch	\$3.00	\$0.40

The grace period for the Free or Reduced Meals from last year's applications expired on 10/13/23. You must reapply every year to maintain your status. If you do not reapply, your students Mealtime account will revert to Full Pay, and you will be responsible for the payment of those meals. You can find the application at

<https://www.mymealtime.com/Apps/SignIn.aspx>

Don't Wait! Complete your Application NOW!



Everyday Reminders



Early Release on Mondays!

Students will be released from classes at 2:05 p.m. each Monday, for professional development time for teachers. Busses will run their regular routes.

Cold Weather

Please be sure that students are dressed appropriately to be outdoors. The school doors open at 7:50 in the morning and students go outside for lunch break. The doors do not open early until the temperature drops below zero.

Student Attendance

If your student is to be absent from school due to sickness, an appointment, or any other reason, please call the school attendance line at 324-2802, or you may send a signed note to school with your student, or you may come into the building to check your student out. The attendance line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

If you have had a change of address, phone number(s), or email please let us know so we can keep our contact information up to date. You may call 324-2800.

Chromebook Accidental Damage or Loss Protection Plan

Reminder- If you have not filled out a technology use agreement and paid for the protection plan for your child, you might want to consider doing so and opting into the "Accidental Damage and Loss Protection Plan." The plan costs \$15 dollars per year and can be a BIG savings to families.

The cost to replace the screen is \$100, trackpad - \$60, the outer casing- \$150, and the entire computer costs \$286 to replace. The protection plan covers all accidental damage and loss. We issue a new computer to your child with no fee to replace any broken parts.

If you are interested in opting into the Accidental Damage or Loss Protection Plan, have your child stop by the office or library and pick up a form. Fill it out and return it with the \$15 fee to the main office. You may also complete the form and make payment using RevTrak <https://helenaschools.revtrak.net/c-r-anderson-middle-school/technology-cra/>.

