



The Counselor Café

PTMS Counseling Department Newsletter

The Counselor Cafe

Fall 2013

**PT Middle School
Peters Township
School District**

Meet Your Middle School Counseling Department

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Middle School is a fun and exciting time in a child's life, but also a challenging one. The counseling department is working hard to help students overcome struggles and achieve success.

Ms. Mary Beth Kenny is the 7th grade counselor for the 2013-2014 school year. Ms. Kenny is in her 7th year with the middle school. Prior to working at PTMS, she worked in the Franklin Area School District for 6 years as an elementary counselor. Ms. Kenny earned a B.S. in Psychology from Carlow University, a MSW from the University of Pittsburgh and a school counseling certification from Slippery Rock University.

Mrs. Bianca Goodwin (formally Miss Barnabei) is the 8th grade counselor for the 2013-2014 school year. This is the start of Mrs. Goodwin's 4th year at the middle school. Prior to working at PTMS, she spent one semester as a counselor at McMurray Elementary and 1 ½ years as a career counselor for Western Area Career and Tech. Center. Mrs. Goodwin has a B.A. in Psychology from Bethany College. She received her M.S.Ed. in Counseling from Duquesne University and is a Nationally Certified Counselor.

What counseling office would be complete without the counseling secretary? Mrs. Tina Cramer is in her 5th year working for the middle school counseling department. Prior to working at PTMS, Mrs. Cramer worked for 7 years in various capacities at McMurray Elementary School.

The counseling department looks forward to getting to know you and your children throughout your time at the middle school!

Each counselor brings a wealth of insight and experience in working with children of all ages to the department.



Contact us:
724.941.2688

Mrs. Tina Cramer
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Ms. Mary Beth Kenny
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Mrs. Bianca Goodwin
8th Grade Counselor
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Peters Township Middle School is a National Blue Ribbon Award Winning School!



The U.S. Department of Education has named Peters Township Middle School as a National Blue Ribbon School. This year, 286 schools were designated as 2013 National Blue Ribbon Schools based on their overall academic excellence or for their success in closing achievement gaps. The Middle School was recognized among the highest performing public and private schools as measured by their performance on state assessments. A total of 15 schools in Pennsylvania were awarded this honor.

Character Counts At Peters Township Middle School!

Character Education is a cornerstone in Peters Township School District as well as in our community at large. The purpose of character education is to teach our students about core values such as respect, responsibility, honesty, compassion, and integrity.

The Middle School continues with the goals of fostering character development in our students by using the Seven Habits, the Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education, Project Wisdom, and by continuing to educate students on bullying and promote the use of anti-bullying strategies.

To recognize the importance of character education, the Middle School held its annual **Character Counts Week** from **October 7th** through **10th**.

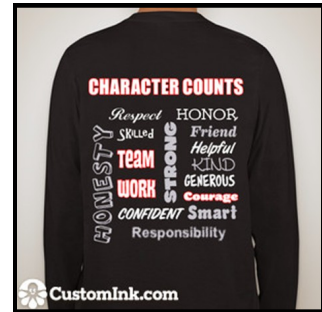
This year's activity was focused on cooperation and teamwork. Each homeroom, as a team, designed a t-shirt exemplifying what the middle school means to them. Some of the design themes emphasized ideas related to: character, Blue Ribbon Award, and the various activities here at the middle school.

The middle school's Character Counts Committee voted on the 37 homeroom designs, narrowing it down to 4 finalists, two 7th grade and two 8th grade homeroom designs. Students were then able to vote on the winning design during lunch.

Student Council rewarded the four finalists with a homeroom treat. The winning homeroom received a breakfast and their t-shirt design is featured on a long sleeve t-shirt available for students and faculty to

purchase. For more information on t-shirt sales, please check our our website and email blasts!

The winning design was created by Mrs. McCue's 8th grade homeroom!



Red Ribbon Week: October 21st-25th

The Red Ribbon Campaign is now the oldest and largest drug prevention program in the nation reaching millions of young people during Red Ribbon Week. It is an ideal way for people and communities to unite and take a visible stand against drugs.

The National Family Partnership is the national sponsor of the Red Ribbon Campaign. They are helping citizens across the country come together to keep children, families and communities safe, healthy and drug-free, through parent training, networking and sponsoring the National Red Ribbon Campaign.



This year's theme was **"Ask Me, See Me, Be Me...I'm Drug Free!"** This theme is intended to unify the campaign and help to broadcast one message creating a tipping point to change behavior.

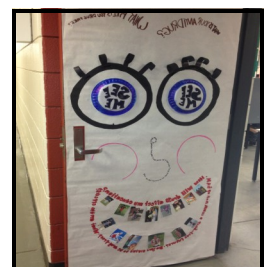
The Middle School planned many fun activities for Red Ribbon Week. Each day of the week had a dress up day theme and the homeroom with the most participation in the dress up day theme won a treat! Our annual door decorating activity was also held where all homerooms decorated their door in a way that reflected this year's theme. A panel of judges voted on the most creative doors and two homerooms won a breakfast sponsored by our PTA!

The Winning Homeroom Doors!

7th Grade-Mrs. Petricca's HR



8th Grade- Mr. Griffin's HR





Visit us on
Facebook

We are proud to promote the PTMS Facebook page! Here you can find information on upcoming events and activities. To get these daily updates, search Peters Township Middle School on Facebook and "Like" our page!



Online Bullying Report System

In an effort to help address bullying concerns at PTMS confidentially and more efficiently, an online reporting system has been instituted. The purpose of this reporting system is to help empower victims and bystanders to inform counselors and administration of bullying behaviors. It gives students and parents a way to confidentially communicate concerns. The goal of this system is to help create a safe school environment.

This online form can be accessed via smart phone or computer by clicking "Bully Report" on the Counseling page of the PTMS website.



STAR Team: Student Assistance Program



The Student Assistance Program (STAR Team) is a group process that helps students who are experiencing academic and/or behavioral difficulties that pose a barrier to their learning and success in school.

The STAR Team is comprised of a core group of caring professionals who are trained in student assistance and include: School Administrators, Teachers, Counselors, and Community Agency Liaisons.

The STAR Team gathers information in order to identify concerns, brainstorm solutions, and monitor progress to assist our students. They will make suggestions, implement strategies, and follow up as needed. The goal of the STAR Team is to work with you and other teachers and/or professionals who serve your child to assure his/her success.

All information discussed with the STAR Team is kept strictly confidential. If you think your child could benefit from the STAR Team program or to learn more about it, please contact your child's school counselor.

Hot Shots: After School Homework Help

Would your child benefit from receiving help with homework?

Hot Shots is an after school homework help program offered to all students who would benefit from a structured homework time facilitated by teachers.

Hot Shots is held every Tuesday and Thursday in the Middle School library from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. Program sponsors for this year are Mrs. Petricca, Mrs. Van Wert, Ms. Ritter and Ms. Van Balen.

If you are interested in having your child attend Hot Shots, you can download the form online by clicking the link located on the PTMS Counseling page or stop by the Counseling Office to pick up a form.

Hot Shots is not tutoring, it is help with homework. Please note that students will need to be picked up at the school at 4:00. There are no buses provided for transport home after the Hot Shots program.

PTMS Homework is Online!

Does your child's assignment book come home blank? Check out the homework online link to find homework assignments updated daily! This link is located on the top right hand corner of the middle school website.

**Peters Township Middle School -
Achievement
Character
Community**



Information on our Counseling Department website is updated regularly. Please check it often for additional information.

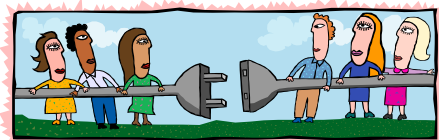
Important Dates to Remember:

Tuesday, October 29th - End of 1st nine weeks
 Friday, November 1st - No school for students
 Tuesday, November 5th - Report cards online
 Thursday, November 7th - Parent/Teacher Conferences
 November 27th-December 2nd - Thanksgiving Break
 December 23rd– January 1st– Christmas Break

Connecting with Your Child's School Counselor

Understand the expertise and responsibilities of your child's school counselor.

School counselors make a measurable impact in every student's life, assisting with academic, career and personal/social development. Professional school counselors are trained in both educating and counseling, allowing them to function as a facilitator between parents, teachers, and the student in matters concerning the student's goals, abilities, and any areas needing improvement. School counselors provide services not only to students in need, but to all students.



Discuss your child's challenges and concerns with the school counselor.

As a parent, you know your child best. However, the school counselor can help you better understand your child as a student. It's important to encourage your child's expression of needs, hopes, and frustrations. School counselors are trained to help your children.

Learn about your child's school and social connections from the school counselor.

When you need information or assistance, your child's school counselor can help you get in touch with the appropriate school officials; learn about school policies on behavior, attendance, and dress; know the

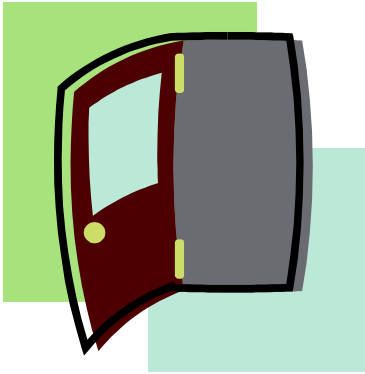
school calendar of important dates; and stay connected with the school in many other ways. The school counselor can also help you locate resources in the community when you need them.

Work with the school counselor to identify resources and find solutions to problems.

If your child is having a problem at school, it is important to work with your child's school counselor to find solutions. Discuss resources available within and outside of the school, and get information on how such programs can benefit your child. Your school counselor can be a valuable partner in your child's education and preparation for life beyond school.

Who Do I Call in the Counseling Department?

You may sometimes wonder who to direct your question to in the School Counseling Office. The following are some helpful hints to direct your questions:



Our doors are always open to students throughout the day, every day.

Call Mrs. Cramer if:

- You feel your child needs referred for special education testing.
- You need a work permit for your child.
- You have any questions about extra-curricular activities or sports.
- You have questions about Power School and Power School passwords.



Call your child's grade level school counselor if:

- You feel your child may be having difficulty with an academic or personal/social issue.
- You have questions about scheduling.
- You have questions about high school and post-secondary planning.
- You need assistance finding help outside of school
- You need a list of available tutors.

PT Middle School Counseling Department



Ms. Kenny
7th Grade School Counselor



Mrs. Goodwin
8th Grade School Counselor



Mrs. Cramer
Counseling Dept. Secretary

Peters Township Middle School

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http://www.ptsd.k12.pa.us/ptmiddleschool_home.aspx