



COLUMBIA ACADEMY

Columbia Academy News

Principal Update, April, 2017

RISE UP

RESPECT
INTEGRITY
STRENGTH
EXCELLENCE

UNDERSTANDING
PRIDE



Greetings from Columbia Academy,

The months fly by as do the years. If there is one lesson in getting older, it is time goes quickly. Middle school years will come and go in a blink of the eye. Making sure that these years are productive years that help lay a foundation for the years ahead is the true responsibility of a good middle school.

A strong foundation includes the development of both academic knowledge and skills that will provide students with the wherewithal to learn more in high school and beyond. A strong foundation also includes the development of character, the kind of character that will make the world a better place for each individual student. In the end, character is as important as intelligence, perhaps more, in determining one's life experience.

Columbia Academy is a school dedicated to both the academic and character development of every student. We know that family is the primary source of influence on a child, but we are a partner with you in influencing your child to the good.

This newsletter provides some examples of how Columbia Academy works to be part of the village that raises a child here in Columbia Heights. We hope you

will enjoy our short descriptions and pictures of how our students learn and RISE UP each day.

Columbia
Academy

900 49th Ave NE
Columbia Heights, MN 55421
763-528-4700

colheights.k12.mn.us/ca

Principal
Duane Berkas

Assistant Principal
John Awsumb

Assistant Principal
Rick Ostby

Dean
Matt Miller

OUR MISSION

Columbia Heights Public Schools create **worlds of opportunity for every learner** in partnership with supportive small-town communities by challenging all to discover their talents, unleash their potential and develop tools for lifelong success.

Columbia Academy News

CA Team United RISES UP

The Columbia Academy Team United was the biggest and most excited team to participate in this year's basketball tournament at St. Thomas University. Our team exhibited kindness, enthusiasm, and effort—what more could we ask for? We are proud of them all and enjoy seeing them wear their t-shirts and medals from the event. Building confidence and building empathy are two important components of education at Columbia Academy. Participation in Team United does both. A big thank you to the organizers, Special Education Dept. Chair Ms. Bluth and 8th grade WEB leader and EL/Spanish Dept. Chair Ms. Nelson for their hard work in organizing this event.



The CA Challenge 2017

The CA Challenge is for students to meet or exceed their target MCA Reading and Math growth scores. Students' growth scores are based on making at least one year's worth of academic progress no matter where they start at. Students had the opportunity to make a pledge to do their best and go for a personal best on the MCAs. Almost all students signed a pledge sheet that is now posted by grade level at the front of the school. We are proud of our students for making this commitment!



Columbia Academy News

Jazz Band, Marimbas, and Drums Dazzle CA Concert!



A large crowd of CA parents and students attended and participated in a great concert put on by CA students. Mr. Boyd's and Ms. Rubis' students practiced hard in preparation for this event, and it really paid off as our students sounded great! For the first time, CA included marimbas as part of the concert! A highlight of the concert was when Mr. Boyd invited all in the audience to grab a musical instrument to join in the ensemble. Together, the entire audience and our CA musicians created beautiful rhythmic textures that filled our gym. It was special to see people of all ages joining in and fun making music. Congratulations to all our students who performed a wonderful show for our CA community.

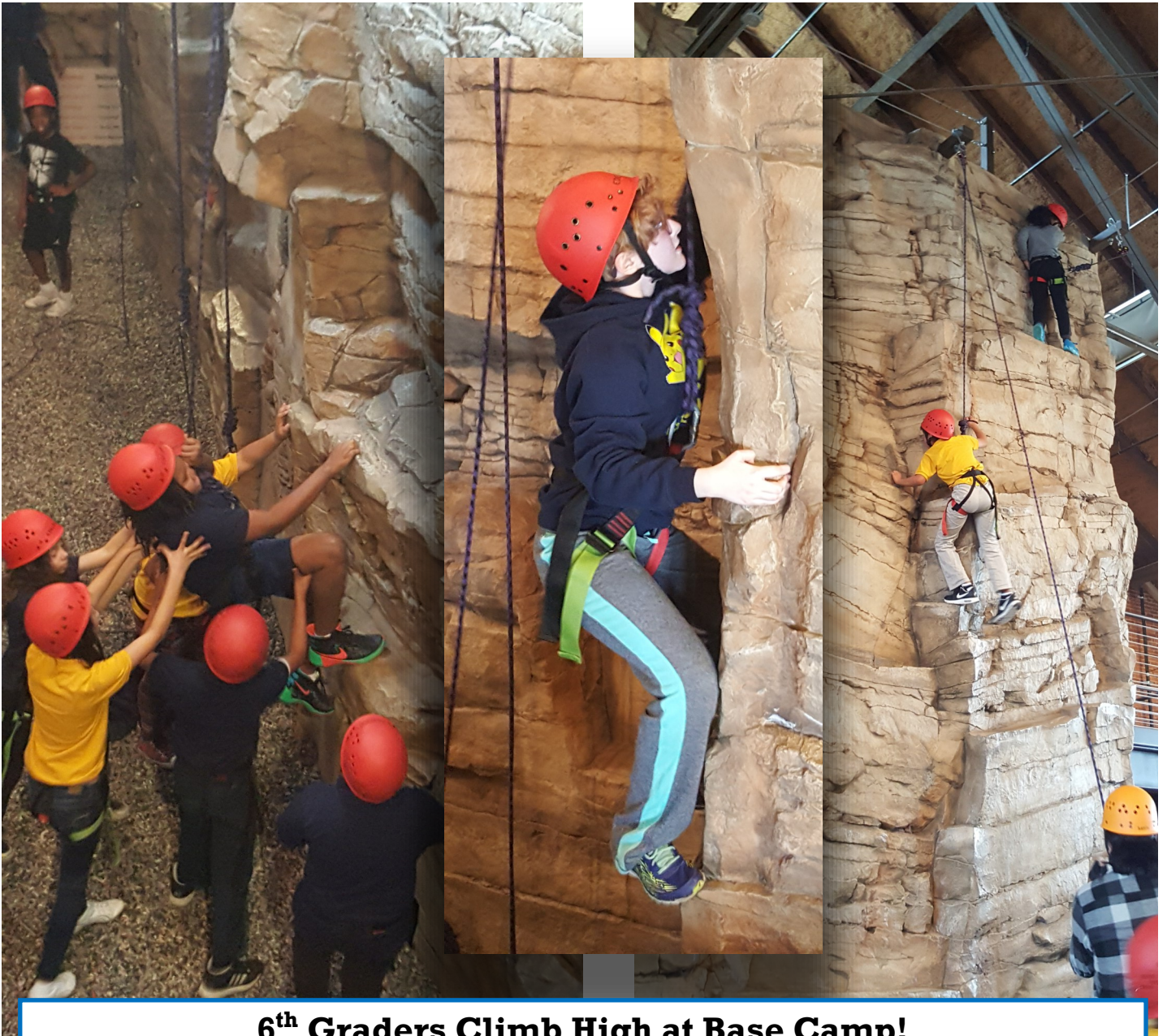
CA Students Participate in Many Spring Sports!

Spring is a great time for our student athletes to compete for Columbia Heights. CA has students participating in Girls Softball, Baseball, Track and Field, Lacrosse, and Synchronized Swimming, and Boys tennis. These athletes are learning many valuable lessons about teamwork, perseverance, and sportsmanship that will carry over into all that they apply themselves to in the future. Good luck to all our student athletes this spring.

CA is also fortunate to have several staff who coach for our sports teams in Columbia Heights. Ms. Kamp coaches Synchronized Swimming for CHHS, Mr. Opatz coaches baseball at CA, Mr. Birr coaches baseball at CHHS, and Mr. Howe coaches Track at CHHS. Thanks to all our staff who take the time to teach our students the many skills it takes to be a competitive student athlete! A special congratulations to our middle school students who are participating on high school teams!



Columbia Academy News



6th Graders Climb High at Base Camp!

270 6th grade students challenged themselves over two days with activities that included archery, rock climbing, and team building games at historic Fort Snelling's Base Camp. Students were exposed to several activities and engaging games that made them depend on each other for the completion of a task. The most popular activities were the archery lessons and the rock climbing wall. Students challenged their abilities and fears as they climbed high above the crowd. Students were extremely supportive and encouraging as their peers attempted to reach the top of the 40 foot wall, and when they did, great cheers went up in celebration.

Columbia Academy News

Home Visits Build Helpful Connections

This past week, all CA teachers received training in the National Parent Teachers Home Visit project. We believe home visits help our teachers and parents gain knowledge that can help students be more successful in school. Home Visits are one way that teachers and families can make stronger connections. Here are some parameters of the Home Visit project:

- Home visits are voluntary for both families and teachers; teachers reach out through a phone call to see if and when they can come to visit
- Families selected for Home Visits are a random draw; there is no criteria used to identify a family for a home visit.
- There are two visits to each family, one in the fall to get to know each other and one in the spring to go over important information regarding the child's education.

We are excited to have all of our teachers trained so that we can begin visiting families this spring. Our hope is that every teacher will have the experience of doing at least one home visit. If you get a phone from a teacher requesting a home visit, please know this is a very positive opportunity.



Third Quarter RISE UP Award Winners

Congratulations to our third quarter RISE UP Award Winners! Students are nominated for the RISE UP award based on consistently practicing one or more of our school values of respect, integrity, strength, excellence, understanding, and pride. We thank our RISE UP award winners for the positive leadership they provide in our school. Thank you parents for raising such outstanding children. We are proud to have them on the CA team!



Columbia Academy News

RISE UP Award Winners (continued)



CA History Day Projects

For months, our Media Center has been filled with CA students working diligently on their History Day projects. Poster boards, photos, written text, and glue sticks have been scattered throughout our Media Center before, during and after school. All that hard work has paid off as our CA students displayed their fine History Day presentations for staff and students in the Media Center.

The quality of the writing and topics that were displayed reflects the hard work and dedication of our social studies teachers Ms. Mason, Ms. Reilly, Ms. Student, Mr. Howe, and Mr. Laskowski. There are many skills including writing, editing, and organization that are embedded within these projects, and students did a fantastic job with them all.



Deep within the World of Media Arts

Columbia Academy students have the opportunity to create art digitally in our Media Arts classes. Ms. Fowler uses her own professional experience in the world of Media Arts to create units of instruction that are relevant to the lives of our students and congruent with what they could one day do for a career. Click on the button below to enter different portfolios of work from the units they have completed this year.



Columbia Academy News

Theater students create eyeballs!

7th grade theater students have been learning about different types of technical theater including costume, set, makeup, and prop design. Last week they learned how to make prop eyeballs in class and were able to take home their finished project.

Their end designs turned out great! Students at Columbia Academy have the opportunity to develop a deep appreciation for the world of theater as well as their own ability to stand in front of an audience with confidence and skill.



5th Grade Family Night Introduces CA

Nearly 200 5th grade parents and students attended the 5th Grade Family Night at CA on April 11th. The evening was organized by our Family Engagement Committee as a way to orientate parents to the many wonderful offerings we have here. Guided tours of the building by our WEB leaders included short presentations by our teachers on our core subjects, arts electives, and engineering. At the end of the tour, families enjoyed a light meal in the cafeteria where they were able to meet and talk with our Administration team. Columbia Academy will continue to offer tours of our school to any parents who were not able to make the orientation and are interested in learning more about our school. We are excited to meet our next year's 6th graders and their parents.



MCA Growth Goals

Please be talking to your child about the importance of performing at their very best on the upcoming MCAs . Growth goals have been set based on their performance last year and the work they have completed this year. Here are three important reasons for students to give their best effort:

- MCAs are used to help determine which students need additional support including summer school and other interventions
- MCAs show how your child is performing relative to other students across the state in the same grade level
- MCAs show how much growth your child is making on an annual basis. The MCAs can help you gauge your child's level of effort in school.

Drop Off/Pick Up

Our drop off and pick up times are busy times at the front of the building. Please remember to drive slowly and to be aware of students in crosswalks and other areas. In order to avoid congestion, some parents have been dropping off and picking up in areas that are not part of school property. We urge you to be patient and pick up in the front of school where there is less chance of cars coming from multiple directions. Thank you for exercising caution so that we can make sure we have safe parent drop-offs and pick up times.

April Dates for CA

April 6: Last day of 3rd Quarter
 April 6: School Dance
 April 7: No school, Grading
 April 10: Beginning of 4th quarter
 April 11: 5th grade family night
 April 10: MCA Reading begins
 April 14: No school, Easter
 April 17: CA PTO Meeting, 5:30
 April 24: MCA Math begins

