



1227 CR,25, Canton, NY 13617

(315)379-9474

steve@littleriverschool.org

www.littleriverschool.org

LITTLE RIVER COMMUNITY SCHOOL

# Little River News

## The Humaira Project

Humaira, a young woman from Afghanistan, applied to Little River in 2016 for her senior year. She was admitted and offered financial aid. Unfortunately, the US denied her visa and she was not able to attend. However, we maintained contact as she finished school, prepared for college, and enrolled in the American University of Afghanistan as a computer science major in Kabul.

Last winter when the US announced that it would be withdrawing from Afghanistan, it became clear that Humaira's education, if not personal safety, was in jeopardy. By spring Little River helped start a campaign to bring Humaira to the North Country to continue her education.

Humaira applied to and was accepted at Clarkson University with a generous scholarship. We launched the Humaira Project to fundraise and pay her expenses for her junior and senior of college. Dozens of people donated.

The visa was still the tricky part. Over the summer the US Embassy in Kabul closed due to



COVID and only opened at the end to the scramble of the US departure. Humaira needed an embassy interview to complete the visa process and with Kabul Embassy so tied up, she needed to leave the country to get an interview.

Two weeks before the Taliban came to power, Humaira flew to Islamabad, Pakistan for an interview. The appointment lasted a few minutes and she was denied the visa. It was a great disappointment.

We received advice that she ought to reapply and Senator Gillibrand's office offered their assistance in contacting the State Department and the Embassy to support Humaira's application. Three weeks later she had another interview and this time she was given a student visa to

study at Clarkson. It was with great joy that Humaira flew to the US just in time for the first day of school and has since settled into her studies.

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## School Wide Soccer

The students and staff of Little River Community School have been soaking up the remaining fall days with soccer twice a week! It has quickly become a staple for everyone.

Our weekly soccer games have been a fun time for the

students to interact with different age groups as well as the staff. It has also been a great way to get active during the day.

Now that the cold winter days are well on their way, the students will soon find new activities. For now, we

are enjoying the dwindling warm days and our newly rekindled love of soccer!

*Nuala Woods*



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### Have your child come home happy

- Democratic School, K-12
- 8:1 Student/Teacher Ratio
- Individualized Curriculum
- Hands-on Learning
- Satellite Options

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Also find us on Facebook and Instagram

## Donkey Crew

Every year, a group of dedicated students volunteers to take care of the three equine members of the Little River community. This year, the Donkey Crew consists of Middles Lidija, Sola, Cami, Ella, and Emilie.

Donkey Crew members report that they are learning a lot of responsibility by caring for the animals. As Cami states, "They are living creatures so they have to have attention." Sola echoes this sentiment, "You can't be there and just forget or ignore it." Most members of the Donkey Crew report that even though they sometimes struggle to get all of the chores done, they like the sense of responsibility that caring for the animals gives them.

Sola explains that taking care of the donkeys involves feeding them three flakes of hay ("Which they love"), bringing them two buckets of water, and grooming them often. Ella adds that they also "Scoop poop." Emilie remarks that it "makes [her] sad that their fur gets matted so often" but that working with the donkeys is "Really fun."

Although being on the Donkey Crew adds extra work to these students' days, crewmembers report that they get back more than they give. "I like to work with them because they are so loving...they take stressful thoughts away," Sola states. Having donkeys at school is a unique part of Little River students' school day. As Cami says, "They give a sense of community. They are so adorable and every one loves them. They give character to the school."



*Donkey Selfies!*

*Elena Pignone*



*Maddie and Mary presenting to the Middles*

## Pride Presentation

Because LGBTQ+ is such an important topic at LRCS, Mary and I created a presentation to educate the Middles on the LGBTQ+ community. This is important to younger generations, and discussions like this should be normalized.

People should not look at a member of the LGBTQ+ community as "weird," but rather look at them as a person. In our presentation we discussed

what the LGBTQ+ community stands for, pronouns, gender identity, the oppression the community faces, questions vs invading personal space, coming out, how to be an ally, and why this needs to be talked about. We hope it enlightened them, and they truly took something away from it.

*Madeleine Hansen-Schreiber*

## Stayin' Alive or Biting the Dust?

Here is a little quiz for you: What does the song "Stayin' Alive" by the Bee Gees have in common with "Another One Bites the Dust" by Queen? Yes, they are both impossible to get out of your head, but that isn't all. The answer is that both of them happily thump along at 100 beats per minute, the speed at which chest compressions should be administered by a person performing CPR. Sing it with me "Ah-ah-ah-ah-stayin' alive! Stayin' alive! Ah-ah-ah-ah..."

Jenn Collins, a CPR trainer from Hero's Haven in Waddington spent two Wednesdays with the Olders health class teaching them American Heart Association CPR/AED and basic first aid. The students learned how to administer CPR to adults, children, and infants and how to use an automated electronic defibrillator (AED). The

training included site assessment, CPR with a partner, and involved practicing on different sized mannequins. They also covered first aid for everything from choking and heat stroke to broken bones and bleeding. Students learned to immobilize an arm or shoulder injury using a sling, perform the Heimlich Maneuver, and how to use a tourniquet.

Little River offers the Olders a health class every few years. This year's class includes instruction in human sexuality, general well-being, sexual harassment and cyberbullying, nutrition, drug and alcohol awareness, and exercise in addition to the first aid topics already covered. Now, as a public service, lets get the Bee Gees out of your head: "Dum dum dum another one bites the dust! Dum dum dum another one bites the dust!"

*Leon Sawyko*

# The New Craze - Monsters and Heroes

Little River students Liam and Noah have been using their free time to create their very own take on *Pokemon* cards.



Noah and Liam playing *Monsters and Heroes-Corrupted Warriors*

The game is called *Monsters and Heroes - Corrupted Warriors*. Noah was inspired by his friend's game, so he decided to create a version with his own unique characters. This project started over the summer, when Noah began creating his own characters. He brought his ideas to school and Liam was hooked! The two have spent the semester creating more and more cards and

collector packs. Noah draws the cards by hand and their characters are complete with individual HP (health) levels, different moves, and attacks.

Noah says, "It is like my own version of *Pokemon*. It is cool, like making my very own *Pokemon* cards!" Every day, Liam and Noah create a new character or pack of cards. It has been exciting to see their collection grow and how passionate they are about their game. They are unsure whether they want to go public with their game, but who knows? You may be seeing *Monsters and Heroes* in stores near you.

Nuala Woods

## Humaira (continued)

Little River students have taken a good deal of interest in Humaira's quest for an education and the rapidly changing conditions in Afghanistan. Both the Middles and Olders have been studying Afghanistan and reading Humaira's letters. The Middles are each doing independent projects on topics including the US and Soviet wars in Afghanistan, repression of the Hazaras, animals and endangered species, money, kites and culture, and more.

The Olders have read several related books from the region including *I am Malala*, about a girl from Pakistan that

spoke out for girls' education in the face of Taliban terror, and *The Kite Runner*, a book set in Kabul and the US through the 1980s to the 2000s. The Olders are now working on a bigger project to support Humaira's appeal for asylum by collecting and summarizing articles on the persecution of girls and women, Hazaras, and Shia in Afghanistan.

Humaira came out to the school several weeks ago and shared stories of growing up in a war zone and her pursuit of an education. The students asked questions and got to meet the person they had been reading about in letters. Humaira's stories and life experiences are truly inspirational.

Steve Molnar



Maddie speaking at the Climate Action Vigil in Canton on October 22. Maddie helped organize the event that brought out 40 people calling for sustainable energy policies and the end of fossil fuels.

## Yoga

This year the Middles and Youngers have had the opportunity to participate in an activity which has nourished their minds, bodies and souls: yoga! Sarah Oakley has generously volunteered her time and expertise to share her love of yoga. As she did last year, Sarah comes in once a week to guide the Middles through different poses. This year, she also works with the Youngers once a month.

Many students love yoga time and look forward to it. For those who are not sold yet, they appreciate that Sarah allows them to participate when it is comfortable for them, and to sit and watch quietly when it is not. This accepting and nurturing attitude has led to a few yoga

breakthroughs where reluctant students decided to participate and realized, "Hey, this is really fun!"

One form of yoga that Sarah has introduced which has proven very popular with the Middles is yoga nidra. An ancient technique from India, yoga nidra is a practice in which a person is completely relaxed and their attention is drawn inward by following a set of verbal instructions. Regular practice of yoga nidra has been shown to reduce stress and anxiety, and is even being used to treat soldiers with PTSD.

Yoga with the Youngers is often more active. Staff at Little River love watching

the youngers dance around in a circle holding up their big bright yellow paper suns to the sky. They have increased their yoga repertoire by learning downward dog, shark pose, cobra pose, mountain pose, turtle pose, warrior pose, pretzel pose, and tree pose among others.

Little River is lucky to have Sarah introduce our students to a variety of yoga styles and to give them some respite from the demands of their day. She is planting seeds that will no doubt develop into lifelong practices in many of them.

Elena Pignone

## Thank You

Dulli Tengler for welcoming the Youngers into the garden for the harvest season; Sarah Oakley for yoga with the Youngers and Middles; Esta Tovstiadi and Sarah Oakley for initiating and offering to be a part of an advisory group on diversity; Alan Christian for picking up the hay for the donkeys; Emily Dixon, Brianna Dixon, and Lauren Dixon for assisting with summer set up; Josh Akins for working on the sink; Bill Porter for lawn care and Ann Petroccione for consultation regarding COVID issues.



*Leo and his beet from a harvest day at Birdsfoot Farm*



*Little River pumpkin decorating*

**Have your child come home happy!**

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**Celebrating 20 Years!**