

# CHARACTER CONNECTION BUFFALO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

October 2018

Each month during the school year, you will be provided with strategies to integrate CHARACTER COUNTS! into your class, department, and school. Also, we will feature schools in our "Spotlight on Character" highlighting engaged character experiences that demonstrate school-wide integration. The hope is that you will find specific methods and explicit tools you can utilize in making sure character truly does count.

Gary Smit, CHARACTER COUNTS! Master Trainer    Suzanne Bracci, Lead Mentor/Coach of Western New York  
Melissa Frawley and Jennifer Pincoski Mentor/Coach of Western New York

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## SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

When I mention the need for professional development for CHARACTER COUNTS!, most visualize the image of a marathon-long lecture session that is scheduled for a full day or even multiple days. These sessions are designed with the expectation that they can improve the practice of teachers to implement CHARACTER COUNTS! in a single sit and get and intensive burst of learning. But, we know from our experiences that this isn't how learning happens.

Like students, teachers need learning to be an ongoing process that builds over time and that gets to the depth of direct classroom implementation. From my perspective, teacher professional development is not an event; it is a system and mindset for continuous improvement to positively impact student learning. That is one of the valuable outcomes of the multi-day Student Development Workshops that have been held these past two years in Buffalo where participants were trained to become School Champions for character. With guidance from your school's assigned Mentor/Coach, the school champions should be capable of providing support to your school staff on implementation and integration strategies.

Throughout this 2018-19 school year, I hope your CHARACTER COUNTS! committee will function as a Personal Learning Community. This can be accomplished by having your staff members personally assess their knowledge level of various topics related to program implementation of CHARACTER COUNTS! Then, ask staff to identify the areas where they would like additional information or support. This will allow your school to plan for **Why, What, How and When** of professional development on character that can become the vehicle for personal learning and growth.

To assist in this process, you will find on the 2<sup>nd</sup> page of this Character Connection Newsletter, a chart that can be used or modified with your staff. Regardless of the method your school, in collaboration with your Mentor/Coach, will use this year to promote and advocate for CHARACTER COUNTS!, I encourage you to give thoughtful consideration to helping teachers get better at their craft. When this occurs, students will benefit and the school will truly become an engaged learning community where teachers are able to teach and students want to learn.

Gary Smit



**A Professional Development plan for your school that provides on-going support throughout the implementation of CHARACTER COUNTS!**

Teachers can sign up for the area of CC! implementation in which they are most confident.

Understanding of CC! & the Pillars

Knowledge & application of Academic & SEL Standards

Integration of CC! into class lessons

Use of CC! resources

Connection of CC! with class management & PBIS

CC! connection with positive school climate

Building & supporting a Culture of Kindness

Strategies to create a class of character

To support me to be my best, I would like to learn more in the following area(s):

Teachers can sign up for the area of CC! implementation in which they would like PD for support.

Understanding of CC! & the Pillars

Knowledge & application of Academic & SEL Standards

Integration of CC! into class lessons

Use of CC! resources

Connection of CC! with class management & PBIS

CC! connection with positive school climate

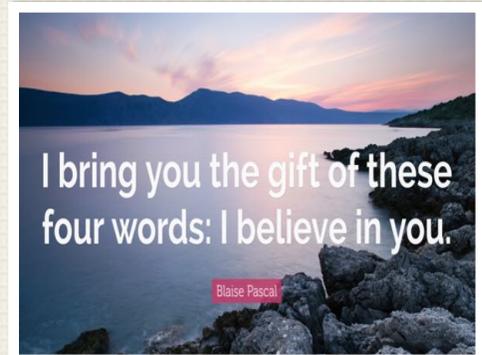
Building & supporting a Culture of Kindness

Strategies to create a class of character

# IMPORTANT

Like last year, there will be four opportunities for school champions to participate in a 45-minute conference call on a topic that applies directly to our initiative and the commendable efforts of Buffalo educators in creating a values-based school environment.

Our first **CONFERENCE CALL FOR CHAMPIONS** this year will be Thursday, October 11 at 10:00 am.  
 Conference call dial in: 610-467-8310  
 Passcode: 452462



# SPOTLIGHT ON CHARACTER

Even though the school year is only a month old, there are many exciting character experiences happening throughout the Buffalo schools. Here are just a few for you to enjoy.

## School #72 Lorraine Academy

Character is in the air at #72. Teachers nominate one student per class per month who demonstrates the pillar trait of the month. These students are the SELECT (Students Exhibiting Lorraine Elementary Character Trait) students of the month and receive a special six pillar select t-shirt.



## School #65, Roosevelt ECC

School #65 started the year off with a fun and lively Six Pillar TRRFCC assembly that included song, dance, and a slide show ([cc kickoff assembly 1819.mp4](#)) with pictures celebrating the many ways students demonstrate the Six Pillars during the school day. "Teddy Tickets" are awarded to students each month for behaviors tied to the pillar of the month.

Roosevelt ECC has done an incredible job weaving their PBIS initiative with CHARACTER COUNTS! Great teamwork Roosevelt Bears!! Pictured are two second grade students caught being good citizens.



## Science Magnet Annex #59A

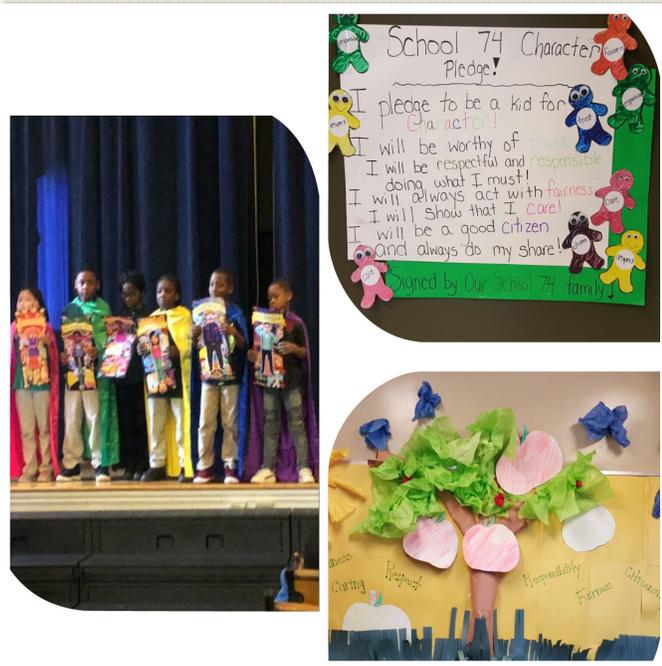
The hallways at Science Magnet Annex are filled with creative and vibrant displays promoting character and CHARACTER COUNTS!! #59A's 2018-2019 CC!/PBIS action plan includes bulletin board and hallway displays, pillar trait of the month, an interactive monthly student celebratory assembly, school-wide projects and incentive activities, golden spoon award (for behavior in the cafeteria that demonstrates the Six Pillars and PBIS behavior expectations), Caring Café in the school cafeteria, and character-related announcements and classroom lessons. #59A's culture and climate has taken on a TRRFCC character-focus!



## School #74 Hamlin Park

Dedicated Champions at #74 met in both June and August to plan for the 2018-2019 school year. Hallways are colorfully decorated with the CC! pledge (which is a part of the daily announcements), creative bulletin board displays and CC! posters/banners. 74's kick off assembly included student superheroes of character. Pictured are 3rd grade students who demonstrated the qualities of a pillar power super hero.

Lead Champion Lauren Hackett's enthusiastic commitment to CC! includes the idea of the development of "Character Pods", to ensure sustainability amongst schools in the BPSD CC! pilot. The first meeting will be held at #74 on 10/25/18 at 1:00PM. Champions from all pilot schools are invited.



## School #97 Harvey Austin

Character is being intentionally embedded throughout School #97. Harvey Austin students presented their September Character Trait of the Month projects on the pillar of Respect. The projects were spread over a wide range of songs and dances, to posters and letters written to the local fire department. The best part was that the students came up with the ideas for their homeroom's project themselves, which has led to strong buy-in throughout the school. Students also helped design a beautiful affirmation tree. Students

are very excited & engaged in building a culture of character at School #97.



## RECOGNITION OF OUTSTANDING EFFORT IN PROMOTING CHARACTER

New this school year, the CITRS/CHARACTER COUNTS! team will be recognizing star Champions and efforts within the Buffalo CC! pilot schools through a monthly "Character Honor Roll." Each month, we will nominate individuals and a team from each of the three categories below, who will then be recognized in our monthly Character Connection newsletter and via CITRS social media outlets.

Congratulations to the October Champion of the Month, Administrator of the Month and Champions Team of the Month! We salute and appreciate your dedicated efforts and enthusiasm.

### Champion of the Month

Duo - Sherry Swenson and Jackie Floriano (School #59A Science Magnet Annex)  
Tag-team lead Champions Sherry and Jackie have demonstrated tireless efforts and dedication to 59A's CC! initiative through the development and implementation of a comprehensive and meaningful school-year long action plan; co-coordination of vibrant and monthly student assemblies that

engage students & adults; creatively bringing character alive throughout their building with unique bulletin board and other hallways displays (along with wonderful contributions from fellow teachers), as well as encouragement of classroom and school-wide lessons, projects and student recognition. Sherry & Jackie are true CC! cheerleaders who are making sure that character comes alive @ Annex!

### Administrator of the Month

Cassandra Gasbarrini (Assistant Principal - School #97 Harvey Austin)

As an AP and trained Champion, Cassandra sees the value of CC! and the importance of character focus within her school. Cassandra has dedicated time strategically decorating School #97 with vibrant CC! posters and banners, while making CC! and character development focal points within the school's academic lessons and school-wide environment. Cassandra is a true character leader, and her impact is evidenced by #97's successful implementation and growing progress.

### Champions Team of the Month

School #74's SEL/CC! Team

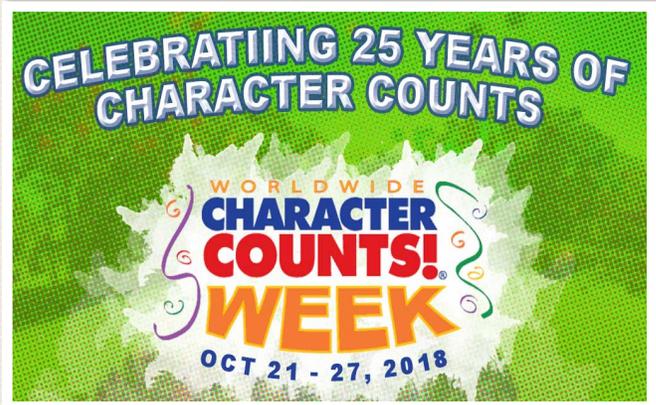
School #74's team has demonstrated honorable commitment to braiding CC! within the culture and climate of their school. Lead Champion Lauren Hackett encouraged and recruited a full team of dedicated trained and non-trained supporters, who have as a team devoted significant time and energy to the planning and coordination of team meetings (even meeting over the summer!), faculty presentations/professional development, monthly student celebratory activities, encouragement of classroom/school-wide lessons and projects, and advocating for character to be a part of the focus within all areas of their school and school management. Way to go #74's SEL/CC! team.

### OUR MESSAGE ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD CHARACTER

When we intentionally focus attention on character, the intended desire is for students to see that:

1. Their character counts and their success and happiness will depend on who they are inside.
2. That people of character know the difference between right and wrong and that these people use the "Six Pillars of Character" as a guide to their thoughts and their actions.

### CHARACTER COUNTS! WEEK



Every year, the U.S. President, U.S. Senate, state governors, and officials around the world proclaim the third week in October CHARACTER COUNTS! Week. More than 4 million children and young people in over 50 countries are expected to celebrate this important event. This is a chance for schools and districts to celebrate positive relationships among their students and to promote positive school culture. The premise of CC! Week is to celebrate the universal values we all share, and the message is to strive for good character at all times in every situation.

Here are links to the CHARACTER COUNTS! web page where you will find some suggestions for fun and engaging activities that anyone can implement.

#### [Individual Ideas](#) [Group Ideas](#)

Plan now for making the CHARACTER COUNTS Week a meaningful and memorable event for your school.

October is National Principal Month. The role of a principal is challenging in meeting needs of staff, students and families. It is also to a school's success. For, the culture of a school is shaped by the values, beliefs, choices and actions of the Principal.

#### **THE PRINCIPAL**

The school takes on the personality of their PRINCIPAL. If the PRINCIPAL is mean, the staff will be mean to one another and the kids, and the kids will be mean to one another. If the PRINCIPAL is full of energy, excitement and enthusiasm, the teachers will be energized to teach and the students will be excited about learning. The PRINCIPAL can either extinguish a flame of positivity or ignite a flame of hope. The PRINCIPAL is responsible for the culture and mood of their school.

Dr. Marcus Jackson