

Bus Stop Conversations

Neighorly news about the Washington Central Supervisory Union schools of Berlin, Calais, Doty Memorial (Worcester), East Montpelier, Rumney Memorial (Middlesex), and U-32 Junior/Senior High School



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Reflections on 9-11

By Kate Ross

What happens when disaster strikes? For many, sensations heighten. We remember where we were, what we were doing, smells, tastes, sights, etc. On 9-11-02, children within the Washington Central schools were provided the chance to remember their feelings, thoughts, and questions surrounding the events of 9-11-01.

At U-32, "Day of Reflection" developed around the TA system. Mark Pichette, Middle School Guidance Counselor, described the day's events. He emphasized that the schedule for the day was based on the strength of U-32's TA (teacher

advisor) system. The TA's are faculty and staff members who usually are introduced to a small group of seventh grade students during a homeroom situation, and proceed

with these students through twelfth grade – six years of growth with the same adult. On 9-11-01, all students returned to their TA's to hear the

developing news. Because of this, an unforeseen deeper relationship

developed in these groups. 'Do you remember where you were when you heard the news on 9-11?' U-32 students can easily reply - in TA with compatriots.

A moment of silence at 8:48 AM evolved into a time

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A section of the 70 piece banner students created to commemorate 9-11, on display in the U-32 atrium.

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for reflection. Within classrooms, students sat alone or with others in small or large groups reflecting on a very difficult topic with or without an adult. Topics ranged, some about the war and assassination: "Do you support the military action?" one student asked.

Rain lightly, but steadily fell outside. The Requiem de Faure was heard throughout the school, as students discussed, thought and began work on assembling individual squares to form a 70 piece (one for each TA) banner that would hang in the atrium when completed. Community members and staff later sewed the individual squares together creating a long banner with pictures of people holding hands, peace symbols, words of thought, such as "Imagine Peace", and patchwork representations of New York City, Washington D.C. and Pennsylvania.

Throughout the rest of the day at U-32, a video recorded live from the World Trade Center on the day the towers were destroyed was available for viewing in the guidance office. Guidance counselors were accessible for support. One student took the initiative to

make remembrance ribbons he provided in the atrium. A general feeling of quiet, remembrance and respect filled the building.

As these events unfolded at U-32, the elementary schools mostly chose to take a developmentally appropriate lower key. Both Calais and Doty elementary school students participated in a moment of silence, then were provided time within classrooms for discussion if requested. East Montpelier staff chose to address 9-11 by sending a letter to parents describing how family could best work at home with this trying event. Rumney Elementary decided to follow the lead of the students answering any questions that arose. Rumney staff felt it most important to focus on what happens when people become angry, wishing to acknowledge, but not dwell on the historic events. Likewise at Berlin Elementary, the idea was to acknowledge the depth of the feelings that occurred on this day a year ago, but not to drag through the trauma again. The whole student body gathered in the afternoon and each grade presented a symbol of peace.

On this distressing day, Washington Central students throughout the district were well cared for by a supportive and knowledgeable staff. Thank you. ❖