



Fattal's Forum

By Superintendent John Fattal

I used to love snow days.

And when I say "love", I actually mean, LOVE!! Back in the "good old days" before technology could alert us instantly when school was canceled, I used my close proximity to the bus garage to find out if we were going to have a snow day. I would look out my window to see if the school buses were warming up. There was no better feeling in the world than looking out my bedroom window (I had the top bunk bed) and seeing snow flying and dormant buses. It was heavenly!

Fast forward about 50 or so years, and I'm not so keen on snow days anymore! As you know, the first winter storm of the season hit our state just after Thanksgiving break, causing us to cancel school on Monday.

When it comes to canceling school, I wanted to spend some time today sharing how the decision is made. There are three primary goals when making the decision to close school.

1. First and foremost is the safety of all students.
2. Use all of the information that I gather, which includes personally driving district roads, checking with local and state weather authorities, checking with the Shiawassee County Road Commission speaking with other Shiawassee County school superintendents, and Shiawassee County RESD Superintendent Dave Schulte to make the most informed decision.
3. Make the decision to close school in enough time for parents to be able to make childcare arrangements.

This is never an easy decision to make, and inevitably invites criticism whether school is cancelled or not. I say this not to elicit sympathy; rather, it is being said to let you know the thought process a superintendent goes through before deciding to cancel school.

If a parent or guardian is not comfortable with a decision to remain open, it is always their choice to decide the best course of action for their family. I take the responsibility regarding the safety of our students, staff, and parents very seriously.

Extra curricular activities come into play during inclement weather days as well. When school is cancelled, all non-varsity practices and community education activities are cancelled. Decisions about contests, or voluntary varsity practices are made after noon.

Finally, I'm not asking you to agree with decisions made about closing school; my goal is to let you know the process we follow.

Miscellany

School of Choice Corunna Public Schools is currently accepting school of choice students for second semester as we have in the past. Applications may be found on our website at www.corunna.k12.mi.us Look under the tab "For Parents". You will find the application along with information regarding the Schools of Choice program and how it works.

Our district is rich in history and has strong academic and athletic programs. A smaller school system such as Corunna often has improved attendance, graduation rates, and a higher percentage of college bound students. Students are more engaged in their studies and are more likely to participate in extracurricular activities.

This is due to the fact that students are more likely to be known by all of the adults and children in the school and are much less likely to fall through the cracks.

Holiday Season With December comes the joys, excitement and the opportunities to help make the holiday season brighter for others. We are part of an amazing community filled with people who understand the power of giving. One example was our recent canned food drive, which were overwhelmingly successful! This food will help our local food pantries and our district backpack program. You'll also find information in today's Communicator about the 25th annual Festival of Trees. That's another example of good, clean, wholesome entertainment/activities that makes our community/school district meet our "Gold standard".

Here's hoping you and yours have a safe and prosperous Holiday season!

We "CAN" and We Did!

The district held a food drive for the district-wide backpack food program throughout the month of November. The food drive gives students an opportunity to make a difference in their own school community. Currently, our program services approximately 70 students. Each backpack is sent home on Thursday and contains breakfast, lunch, dinner, and two snacks to feed the student over the weekend. The backpack program begins in October and runs through May. We raise nearly \$1,400 a month to provide food for our students currently served in the program, with an annual fee of approximately \$11,000. All funds used to support this program are donated by staff and community members.

Pictured are just some of the canned goods and food items donated at Corunna Middle School and being sorted and organized by three student volunteers.



This Year's Partnerships for Festival of Trees

Denise Zeeman (CHS)—Time for Flowers
 Student Council (CHS)—In memory of D.J. Root from his daughters
 Peer to Peer (CHS)—PFCU
 Art Club (CHS)—C2AE (Civil Engineering firm used by the City Corunna)
 Ingrid Dettman (CMS)—C2AE
 Ingrid Dettman (CMS)—On behalf of all civil services in Shia. County
 Ingrid Dettman (CMS)—PFCU
 Corunna Public Schools' Food Service Department—Corunna DDA
 Lesley Brieger 4th grade)—VFW Post 4005 & Auxiliary
 Shari Judd (1st grade)—Corunna 4th of July
 Lisa Burns (pre-first)—Donna's Reflection
 Rebecca TerMeer (1st grade)—JP Kulhanek & Sons Construction
 Kim Kiesling (1st grade)—PFCU
 Amy Shu (1st grade)—Heritage Acres Veterinary Services
 Mindy Palasio (2nd grade)—Jackson Trucking LLC
 Anne Kassuba (3rd grade)—Nemeth Trucking

Kelly Fry (2nd grade)—Friends of the Corunna Community District Library
 Cindy Richmond (2nd grade)—Curb Appeal
 Kara Hampton and Eli Gustafson (kindergarten)—LeValley Realty
 Sheryl Bauman (pre-first)—Jazzercise
 Stephanie Fanko (kindergarten)—Tyler Land Contracting
 Corunna Public Schools—Corunna Public Schools

This marks the 25th year for the City of Corunna's Festival of Trees. Corunna Public Schools is once again happy to partner with area businesses to decorate trees. This year's Festival of Trees kicks off with the Parade of Lights on Friday, December 7 at 6:30 p.m. The Historical Village will be open during the Festival of Trees this year.

Festival of Trees will be open:
Corunna Community Center, McCurdy Park
December 7-7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.
December 8, 9, 15, and 16-6:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Jenelle Ritchie currently lives in San Diego, California and works at Rady Children's Hospital in the pediatric emergency department. She is a travel nurse, and every 3 months or so, she relocates for work. Her next job will be in Phoenix, Arizona at Phoenix Children's Hospital. She has been a pediatric emergency nurse for 5.5 years, and has been traveling for almost 3 years.



Other assignment locations have included Tacoma, Washington; Reno, Nevada; Austin, Texas; and Falls Church, Virginia. Prior to pursuing travel nursing, she worked at C.S. Mott Children's Hospital in Ann Arbor for 2.5 years. She has also taken her nursing career to Haiti on medical mission trips and in January will be completing her third mission.

Jenelle graduated from CHS in 2009 and in 2013, graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from the University of Michigan.

Her parents reside on a small family farm in Corunna. Her brother, Landon, also resides in Corunna and works as a paramedic, and her sister Ashleigh is also a nurse and lives in Chicago.

One of the things she loves best about graduating from CHS and being raised in this community is the cohesiveness and sense of community that is always prevalent, and knowing that no matter where you go in life, Corunna will always be home. She is grateful to still have a home team rooting for her, and although there is a big world out there to explore and dreams to achieve, she has learned that it is important to always remember where it all began. It was really important for her to understand that she could fly as far as her dreams would take her, but her roots will always be here in Corunna to keep her grounded.

She said, "Corunna Public Schools really helped me to build a foundation for the goals I have worked to achieve and dreams I have pursued. At Corunna, I was always encouraged to try my hardest, challenge myself, and persevere through any obstacle, and those are practices I still apply in my everyday life. I am grateful for the opportunities I had at CPS, whether through honors classes, AP courses, sports, and other extracurricular that fostered the opportunities be challenged, to be a leader, and to be successful. Undoubtedly, I would not be where I am today without the education and opportunities I had as a student in Corunna Public Schools."

Should you know of anyone who would make a good feature for this column, please email contact information to John Fattal jfattal@corunna.k12.mi.us or Peggy Friess pfriess@corunna.k12.mi.us.



The Weather Outside is Frightful!

Second grade students at Elsa Meyer Elementary recently spent some time reading while sitting by a "warm", cozy fire complete with the sound of crackling embers. It is just another way that technology can create an innovative and unique learning environment in the classroom.

Corunna Public Schools' Community Luncheon

December 12 • Meals are \$3.50
1:00 p.m. in the Corunna High School Cafeteria

Mark Your Calendars! Winter Wonderland Daddy Daughter Dance

Corunna Public Schools will host a Daddy Daughter Dance on January 29, 2019, at Corunna Middle School from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Please look for more information on the district's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/CorunnaSchools/>