



# The Counselor Café

PTMS Counseling Department Newsletter

**The Counselor Cafe**

**Fall 2019**

## Meet Your Middle School Counseling Department

**PTMS  
Peters Township  
Middle School**

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**Contact us:  
724.941.2688**

Mrs. Tina Cramer  
Counseling Secretary  
cramert@pt-sd.org  
ext. 4247

Mrs. Mary Beth Kenny-Massaró  
7th Grade Counselor  
kennym@pt-sd.org  
ext. 4245

Mrs. Bianca Goodwin  
8th Grade Counselor  
goodwinb@pt-sd.org  
ext. 4246

Middle School is a fun and exciting time in a child's life, but also a challenging one. The counseling department is working hard to help students overcome struggles and achieve success.

Mrs. Mary Beth Kenny-Massaró is the 7<sup>th</sup> grade counselor for the 2019-2020 school year. Mrs. Kenny-Massaró is starting her 13<sup>th</sup> year with the middle school. Prior to working at PTMS, she worked in the Franklin Area School District for 5 years as an elementary counselor. Mrs. Kenny-Massaró earned a B.S. in Psychology from Carlow University, a MSW from the University of Pittsburgh and a School Counseling Certification from Slippery Rock University.

Mrs. Bianca Goodwin is the 8<sup>th</sup> grade counselor for the 2019-2020 school year. This is the start of Mrs. Goodwin's 9<sup>th</sup> year at the middle school. Prior to working at PTMS, she spent one semester as a counselor at McMurray Elementary and 1 ½ years as a career counselor for Western Area Career and Tech. Center. Mrs. Goodwin has a B.A. in Psychology from Bethany College. She received her M.S.Ed. in Counseling from Duquesne University and is a Nationally Certified Counselor.

What counseling office would be complete without the counseling secretary? Mrs. Tina Cramer is in her 11<sup>th</sup> year working for the middle school counseling department. Prior to working at PTMS, Mrs. Cramer worked for 7 years in various capacities at McMurray Elementary School.

Each counselor brings a wealth of insight and experience in working with children of all ages to the department. We look forward to getting to know you and your children.



## Career Chats

We are excited to announce that the counseling office is continuing to host the Career Chats program, which is now in its 4th year. The purpose of this program is to help create an awareness about different careers as they relate to student interest and abilities, as well as how different careers are related to each other. Over the course of two years, students will have the opportunity to attend 16 chats, one from each of the 16 career clusters. Upcoming Career Chats are advertised through the morning announcements. Students will have the opportunity to choose which chats they are interested in attending by signing up in homeroom or in the main office. The following Career Chats are scheduled so far this year:

- Wednesday, October 2nd - Attorney
- Thursday, October 17th - Accountant
- Wednesday, October 23rd - Law Enforcement
- Wednesday, November 6th - Technology
- Wednesday, November 13th - Chef
- Wednesday November 20th - Small Business Owner
- Wednesday, December 4th - Construction
- Wednesday, December 11th - Musician

Please check the PTMS Counseling Website for updates and additions to the Career Chats schedule.



## Red Ribbon Week October 28th-November 1st



We will be celebrating Red Ribbon Week from **October 28th through November 1st**.

During Red Ribbon Week, we will have dress up days every day. Students who are dressed for the theme will have the chance to win a gift card!

Students will also have the opportunity to participate in a poster contest. The theme for RRW and the poster contest is:

*Send a Message...  
Stay Drug Free.*

Information about the poster contest will be given on the daily announcements starting on Monday, October 28th and the contest concludes on Friday, November 1st.

### DRESS UP DAYS!

**Monday - Sweatpants** - "It's No Sweat to Stay Drug Free"

**Tuesday - BLACKOUT DAY**  
"Don't Let Drugs Blackout Your Future"

**Wednesday - College or Sports Apparel** - "Don't Let Drugs Destroy Your Dreams"

**Thursday - Halloween Costume or Shirt** - "Don't Be Tricked - Treat Yourself to a Drug Free Life"

**Friday - Meme/Tik Tok Personality** - "Don't Let Drugs Change Who You Are"

On October 29th, we are hosting a Kickoff Assembly for **Cool 2 Be Clean (c2bc)**. C2bc is an initiative at the middle school that promotes a healthy and positive lifestyle.

During the c2bc assembly, students will learn about the consequences of drug use from a parent who lost a child, the consequences of drug-use from law enforcement, and hear a recovering addict speak about his life experiences.

In the days following the assembly, students will have the opportunity to sign a pledge to stay drug free.

Students will also have the opportunity to sign up to become a member of c2bc at that time. C2bc will be promoting activities throughout the school year centered around making healthy choices and staying drug and alcohol free! Please contact Mrs. Goodwin or Mrs. Kenny-Massaro with any questions about c2bc.

## THON

THON is Back!! For several years some very dedicated PTMS staff, led by teachers Stephanie Van Balen, Liz Bladel and Missy Giaquinto, have sponsored a dance-a-thon to earn money for charity.

It is similar to the Penn State THON, just on a smaller scale. THON usually takes place every-other-year, but we weren't able to have it last year. It is back though and bigger than ever!

Students have been challenged to collect \$25,000 for this year's charity—Ronald McDonald House Charities of Pittsburgh and Morgantown, Inc (RMHC).

THON will be held on Friday, January 31, 2020. There will also be several other events and activities prior to that to help raise money.

The first big activity is Friday, October 25th. There will be a scavenger hunt, escape room and a bon fire here at the middle school. Students can come themselves or form a team to compete. There is a \$20 per person cost. Encourage your children to attend this event! They must sign up and pay ahead of time.

One of the great things about THON is that it fits perfectly into the school district's continued mission with Rachel's Challenge. Kindness and giving to others go hand in hand.

Please see the THON website for more information on how you can support this activity.

[www.ptmsthon.weebly.com](http://www.ptmsthon.weebly.com)

## Rachel's Legacy of Kindness

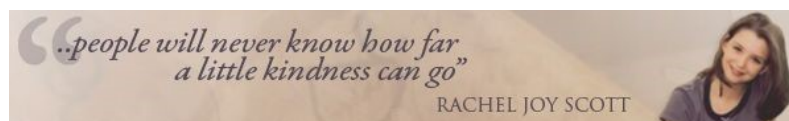
Last year, Peters Township School District brought the very powerful Rachel's Challenge Program to us. We spent all year working to help students learn, through ways both big and small, how to reach out to others and spread kindness. As a part of Rachel's Legacy Program, the district is continuing that mission. At each school level that is done in different ways. One of the ways we do this at the middle school is with the continuation of the FOR (Friends of Rachel) Club. Interested students and staff have been meeting in the days and weeks following the Rachel's Legacy Assembly on September 9th to work on some initiatives for the Middle School.

One of the ideas was to "catch" people being kind. If a student or staff member sees someone being kind, they can fill out a "caught being kind" slip and that person will receive a shout out on the morning announcements. There will also be "caught being kind" certificates displayed in the middle school.

Another initiative is a zip-lock bag collection that we will be having during the first week in November. On November, 4th students will hear about Play It Forward, a group which collects new and gently used toys. Play It Forward spends a week sorting toys and then they have a huge shopping day where families in need can "shop" for free for holidays. To facilitate this, Play It Forward is in need of 1 and 2 gallon zip-lock bags to package toys with small pieces. We would like to help this worthy cause, so on Friday, November 8th we are going to ask students to bring in boxes of zip-locks that we can donate to this organization.

The week after Halloween we will also be collecting any leftover or unwanted candy to give to our local Meals on Wheels program. Starting November 1st please send in your candy! We will be collecting candy through November 8th.

Each team of teachers is also challenging their students to show kindness through different activities. So be on the look out for opportunities to support your children in these endeavors.



## Hot Shots: After School Homework Help

Hot Shots is an after school homework help program offered to all students who would benefit from a structured homework time facilitated by teachers. This program is homework help, not individual tutoring.

Hot Shots is held every Tuesday and Thursday in the middle school library from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. Program sponsors for this year are Ms. Collins, Ms. Carto and Mrs. Bernardo-Pankuch. High school National Honor Society students also volunteer their time at the program.

If you are interested in having your child attend Hot Shots, you can download the form online by clicking the link located on the PTMS Counseling page or stop by the Counseling Office to pick up a form.

Please note that students will need to be picked up at the school at 4:00. There are no buses provided for transport home after the Hot Shots program.

## PTMS Homework is Online!



Does your child's assignment book come home blank? Check out the homework online link to find homework assignments updated daily! This link is located on the top right hand corner of the middle school website and also on the counseling page as seen below.

At the top of the homework page you will find the 7th grade teams, followed by the 8th grade teams. You will find the World Language classes listed next and finally you will find an alphabetical listing of all of the special area teachers. So, all you need to know are the names of your child's team and teachers, and then you can look at their homework each day.

The homework page is updated daily with both the nightly homework, as well as long term projects, AR due dates, quizzes and tests.

## STAR Team: Student Assistance Program

The Student Assistance Program (STAR Team) is a group process that helps students who are experiencing academic and/or behavioral difficulties that pose a barrier to their learning and success in school.

The STAR Team is comprised of a core group of caring professionals who are trained in student assistance and include: school administrators, teachers, counselors, and community agency liaisons.

The STAR Team gathers information in order to identify concerns, brainstorm solutions, and monitor progress to assist our students. They will make suggestions, implement strategies, and follow up as needed. The goal of the STAR Team is to work with you and other teachers and/or professionals who serve your child to assure his/her success.

All information discussed with the STAR Team is kept strictly confidential. If you think your child could benefit from the STAR Team program or to learn more about it, please contact your child's school counselor.

**Peters Township Middle School -**  
**Achievement**  
**Character**  
**Community**



## Dates to Know!

Information on our counseling webpage is updated often. Please check it for additional details on upcoming events.

**October 15th**– Chamber of Commerce 5k (some of the proceeds support c2bc)

**October 24th & 25th**– No school for students

**October 24th**– Parent Conference Day

**October 25th** - THON Scavenger Hunt

**October 28– November 1st** – Red Ribbon Week

**October 29th**– Cool 2 Be Clean Kickoff Assembly

**November 27-December 2nd**– Thanksgiving Break

## Safe 2 Say Something

In 2018, the Pennsylvania General Assembly passed Act 44 mandating the establishment and use of the “**Safe2Say Something**” (S2SS) anonymous reporting system by every Pennsylvania school. Developed in partnership with Sandy Hook Promise, the app will help facilitate the reporting of important safety related information that could help save lives in our schools.

S2SS allows individuals to submit secure and anonymous safety concerns to help identify and intervene when unsafe and/or harmful behaviors take place within K-12 schools statewide.

Through S2SS, students and community members may **ANONYMOUSLY** share safety information through the:

- S2SS app (Safe2SaySomething PA)
- website at <https://www.safe2saypa.org/>, or
- 24/7 Crisis Center Hotline at 1-844-SAF2SAY (1-844-723-2729).

The tip is then triaged by the Crisis Center to gather enough information and is delivered to the impacted school and, as needed, local law enforcement via 911 County Dispatch. Anonymity is strictly protected unless the person submitting the information wishes to share their identity. If an individual abuses the system or breaks a state or federal law, the District can request a court order to uncover anonymity.

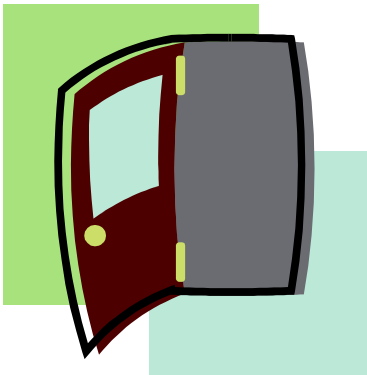




## Who Do I Call in the Counseling Department?

Sometimes you may wonder who to call in the School Counseling office when you have a question. Here are some helpful hints so you know who to direct your questions to.

Our doors are always open to students throughout the day, every day.



### Call Mrs. Cramer if:

- You feel your child needs referred for special education testing.
- You need a work permit for your child.
- You have any questions about extra-curricular activities or sports.
- You have questions about Power School and Power School passwords.



### Call your child's grade level school counselor if:

- You feel your child may be having difficulty with an academic or personal/social issue.
- You have questions about scheduling.
- You have questions about high school and post-secondary planning.
- You need assistance finding help outside of school
- You need a list of available tutors.

## PT Middle School Counseling Department



**Mrs. Kenny-Massararo**  
7th Grade School Counselor



**Mrs. Goodwin**  
8th Grade School Counselor



**Mrs. Cramer**  
Counseling Dept. Secretary

## Peters Township Middle School

625 East McMurray Road McMurray PA 15317

Phone: 724-941-2688 Fax: 724-941-1426

[http://www.ptsd.k12.pa.us/ptmiddleschool\\_home.aspx](http://www.ptsd.k12.pa.us/ptmiddleschool_home.aspx)