

# O'MALEY

## Innovation Middle School



### O'Maley Happenings – Thursday, November 16, 2017

What's happening at O'Maley this week???

**Reminder** – *Early Release 11am. Wednesday, Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup> and No school Thursday & Friday, November 23 and 24<sup>th</sup>.*

#### "O'Maley Staff Appreciation

**Luncheon**" *The O'Maley PTO is hosting an Appreciation Luncheon tomorrow. Thank you! O'Maley PTO*

**O'Maley Ski & Board Club** - *Come ski and snowboard with your friends this winter! The O'Maley Ski & Board Club will offer optional lessons in skiing or snowboarding at Bradford Ski Area in Haverhill on six consecutive Mondays this winter starting on: January 8, 2018 Register online on the O'Maley website or pick up the forms in the Office. See Mrs. Sumner with questions.*

**Our annual Calendar Raffle** - *Any student traveling to Washington D.C. is welcome to participate in this fundraiser. The money each student raises by selling the tickets at \$5 each can go directly to that individual student's account. Gloucester businesses were especially generous this year and there are many nice prizes. Tickets are sold through the month of November and the winning begins on Dec. 1st.*

**Dear O'Maley Middle School Parents/Guardians and Student-Athletes!** - Winter sports season is around the corner! This year O'Maley Boys and Girls Basketball will be open to all O'Maley students, Grades 6-8. This has historically been the case, and will continue, for O'Maley Hockey. The MIAA has also granted several "Middle-Level" Waivers opening high school sports participation to student-athletes in Grade 8 and in the case of the GHS Swim/Dive team, Grades 7 and 8. **Please see attached letter from Julie Smith, Gloucester Public Schools Director of Athletics – Information is also on the O'Maley Website.**

Does your child have an idea to make O'Maley – and Gloucester – even more

**AWESOME?** - *The O'Maley community has been invited to submit proposals to make O'Maley even more awesome. The top 2 proposals will be awarded \$1,000.00 to see their idea through. All proposals are due Wednesday, November 22. Come see and hear ideas on "Pitch Night" Tuesday, December 5<sup>th</sup> 7:00pm in the O'Maley Library.*

#### O'Maley Academy News:

**Career Night** was a great success! Thanks to all of those who attended and a special thanks to our community partners who volunteered their time to share information about their professionals with our students! We plan to have this become an annual event.

**SAVE THE DATE** for a very special event on December 6<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. The Drama Club and Drama-Rama Club will present "A Holiday Showcase" featuring holiday themed songs, dramatic readings and short comedy along with a sneak peek of a *Shrek Jr.*!

**Reminder – NO Academy Afterschool programs next week Nov.20-22<sup>nd</sup>** last week of programs for the fall session is Nov. 27-30. Stay tuned for information on sign ups for the winter session.

#### ANNUAL FOOD DRIVE for Open Door

**Food Pantry** - *Food collection boxes will be in all homerooms from Nov. 7 - Nov. 21. Please send in non-perishable items such as peanut butter, canned meats, mixes, healthy snack items, cereals, pasta and sauces.*

**Attention All Students and Parents** – *The Lost and found will be out on a table in front of the Cafeteria until tomorrow. All clothes left will be given to Charity!*

**PAGE 2** - *Please scroll down to page two of O'Maley Happenings to see an article that has been written by volunteer members of the O'Maley School community!*

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**Technology and Our Children: Tips for Parents**

*By: Rebecca Wetter, CAGS, School Psychologist*

*It has been twelve weeks since O'Maley has instituted its new cell phone policy requiring that students keep phones away and out of sight for the length of the school day. This restrictive approach was taken in response to the latest research on the impact of cell phone use on brain and emotional development and specifically school performance and test scores. Technology use, including unlimited access to social media has been linked to increased symptoms of anxiety, depression, reduced motivation and attention for learning as well as sleep disturbance. Psychologists are also blaming increased technology use for lagging social and communication skills. We are living in an age where psychologists ponder new psychiatric diagnoses related to technology addiction. O'Maley has given your children the gift of six hours of freedom from social media in hopes of increasing focus, reducing social stressors and increasing overall academic achievement. My question to parents is this: Is six hours of freedom from social media enough? And what can we actively do as parents to reduce the impact of continual technology use on our children's lives?*

*The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends less than two hours a day of screen time for children. If you calculated the time your child spends watching Musically videos plus texting and completing computer based homework, would they top out at six hours a day and up to 40 hours a week like a third of the tweens in this country? I ask, knowing what screentime and social media is doing to our children's brains, how can we NOT be active in reshaping how our kids are spending their time? Full restriction of technology use is not an option in this day and age however, there are a few small things we can do as parents that can reduce the negative impact of technology on our children's lives:*

- Give your children the gift of a full night's sleep, uninterrupted by texts from friends. Collect cell phones and all other devices at night and keep them in a predetermined location until morning.*
- Establish large chunks of time each day where kids get a break from technology use. For example, from 4pm through 7pm, kids are expected to engage in other activities that do not involve technology (such as playing a board game, working on art projects and eating dinner with the family!)*
- Expect that homework is done without the interruption of texts and alerts. Keeping cell phones OFF during homework time leads to increased efficiency, more focused attention and better recall of information!*
- Factor in daily opportunity for physical activity AND time spent OUTSIDE. Exercise and access to nature increases tolerance to stress and overall resiliency. Undo the impact of screen-time on the brain by getting outside and being active!*
- Take the opportunity to connect with your child during those rides to and from school, music lessons and sports practices. Expect your child to put the cell phone away and have a conversation with you during these precious stolen moments.*