

COMMON GROUND HIGH SCHOOL

PARENT NEWS

OCTOBER 2010



Our halls are full, really full, with students and staff members returning from summer vacation packed full of exciting and meaningful adventures. This year we welcomed 163 students into our building, and a visiting Fulbright teacher from Hungary. Without exception, staff and students returned reading to “do school”!

As students entered their first classes they found over 100 brand new laptops and desktop computers, Epson projectors, and computer software programs. In addition, 20 students have been trained as members of the Geek Squad, an after school program which allows students to trouble shoot, repair, and resolve issues with our

100 new machines.

In August, Common Ground High School learned that we were receiving a 1.5 million dollar grant from the state of Connecticut to expand. This funding will provide new classrooms, offices, and a recreation space. We look forward to sharing our plans with the Common Ground community in the upcoming months.

Students and families also returned to find impressive gains on the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT). The percentage of students scoring the “State Goal” range doubled or tripled in every subject. In Reading, gains made Common Ground the city’s highest

performing public school. Since 2007, the percent of students who achieved proficiency has increased 44 percentage points in math, 34 percentage points in science, 52 percentage points in reading, and 28 percentage points in writing. These gains mean that our students are scoring above the state average in reading, and above the New Haven city average in all subject areas!

We are all very excited about the upcoming school year—teaching our students and their families. You are all valuable members of our Common Ground community and we welcome you to come on-site at any time. It is going to be a great year!

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

MID-TERM PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES ARE

SCHEDULED FOR

OCT. 27, 28; Nov 1, 2. CALL IRIS OR ANA TODAY AT 203-389-0823 TO SCHEDULE A PERSONAL APPOINTMENT WITH YOUR STUDENT’S ADVISOR.



Parent Nights and Family Programs

We are happy to offer an extensive calendar of workshops and opportunities for families to be involved with the Common Ground Community. Please join us for our upcoming family events! For more information, question, or to become involved please contact Amy Champagne at 203-389-0823 x1206 or email: achampagne@commongroundct.org

Fri./Sat. October 15 & 16: Book Fair at Barnes and Nobles in North Haven, CT. Bring family and friends for our first fundraiser—all sales made on line or in store will have a portion donated to Common Ground.

Monthly Workshops: are held at Common Ground once a month from 5:30-7:30pm. Join other families for a nice meal and a workshop on important issues facing students and their families. Topics range from

healthy decision making to planning for college. Students are encouraged and welcome to attend all workshops with parent.

Can you catch 3 balls in a bucket on top of your head? Use one hand to run a piece of thread through a needle? Stack 3 golf balls on top of another? If you can, then join us to play these games and more on **Wednesday October 20th from 5:30-7:30pm for our own Minute to Win It Challenge.** We will award prizes, treats, and other goodies.

Parents must bring their student and enter the challenge as a team.

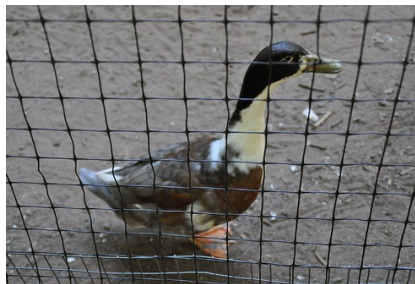
Welcome Freshmen!!

Common Ground welcomes our class of 2014!

Freshmen were greeted on the first day of school by 12 Orientation Leaders and school staff. Upperclassmen trained as Orientation Leaders, helped freshmen make their way through

the first few days of school. Freshmen participated in intensive team building activities, a massive scavenger hunt and more on their first day of orientation. Orientation was followed by our annual Freshmen Campout. At the camp out Freshmen were able to bond with peers, explore our site, and participate in a hike on West Rock.

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After School Programs at Common Ground High School

The Common Ground High School 21st Learning Center offers a variety of free after school programs to all of our students. Our after school programs focus on enrichment, academic supports, and social development for young people. After school programs run from Monday through Thursday from 3-5pm and on Fridays from 1:30-3:30pm.

Our academic support labs provide students with the necessary skills to support high school success, especially in Math, Reading, and Writing. Often times these academic support labs and our Homework Center will be mandatory for your student to attend if referred by a teacher or school day staff. Common Ground High School takes academics very seriously—we see the benefit in providing additional academic supports on a daily basis. Should a student miss their support session, they will be required to make the session up on Friday. If a student misses their support session after school and is unexcused, the student will receive disciplinary action. Too many unexcused absences will result in parent meetings and more serious disciplinary action.

This school year we welcome four new after school programmers to our staff:

Matt Thompson: Coordinator of After School Academic Supports

Samantha Smith: Homework Center Coordinator

Carla Lia: Science and Art Programmer

Camille Seaburry: After School Tutor.

Please, do not hesitate to contact any of our after school staff with questions or concerns. The after school program staff can be reached at: (203) 389-0823 x1205.

Tom Gaudio, our After School Programs Coordinator is available to answer any questions.

After School Program Highlights:

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAVEN MENTORS

College students from the University of New Haven (UNH) work with Common Ground students once per week from 3-5p.m. Mentors assist Common Ground students with their school day academics for one hour followed by one hour of activities based on student interest.

Environmental Leadership Club—a youth leadership program where students design sustainable environmental projects to help improve our school and make a change in our community.

Adventure Club—Students enjoy planned hiking, camping, rock climbing, biking and canoeing activities.

Sound Lab— Students write and produce the music for the annual release of the Common Ground High School CD. Students learn how to record music using our own recording studio.

Athletics and Recreation Programs— Offered daily from 4-5pm. Students can take part in organized physical activities such as hula-hooping, basketball, Frisbee Golf, volleyball and more.

Common Ground Hawks Basketball: Last year we offered our first ever basketball team through the Small Schools League. Stay tune for information on our Spring season— Practices start soon!

Dance Programs— We offer dance three times during the school year. Programs include African Dance, Salsa, and more!

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AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS CALENDAR, OCTOBER 2010

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				1 1:30: Academic Support Makeup, Homework Center, Debate 2:00: Girl Scouts
4 3:00: Academic Support, Homework Center, Sound Lab, Student Government, Strategy Games (Clue) 4:00: Sound Lab, Floor Hockey 5-7: Downtown Evening	5 3:00: Academic Support, Homework Center, Drama, Geek Squad 4:00: Environmental Leaders Club, Basketball	6 3:00: Academic Support, Homework Center, Sound Lab, Science Club, GSA 4:00: Sound Lab, Cooking Club (Salsa)	7 3:00: Academic Support, Homework Center, ELC, Art Club 4:00: Dungeons & Dragons Club	8 1:30: Academic Support Makeup, Homework Center, Debate, Hike to Lake Wintergreen, Envirothon 2:00: Girl Scouts
11 No School Columbus Day	12 3:00: Academic Support, Homework Center, Drama, Geek Squad 3-5: Frisbee Golf (set-up & game) 4:00: Environmental Leaders Club	13 3:00: Academic Support, Homework Center, Sound Lab, Cooking Club (Apple Crisp) 4:00: Sound Lab, Basketball, Science Club	14 3:00: Academic Support, Homework Center, Environmental Leaders Club, GSA 4:00: Dungeons & Dragons Club	15 Early Dismissal 9:00-12:00: All School Hike Midterm
18 3:00: Academic Support, Homework Center, Sound Lab, Student Government, Strategy Games (Apples to Apples) 4:00: Sound Lab	19 3:00: Academic Support, Homework Center, Drama, Geek Squad 4:00: Environmental Leaders Club, Flag Football	20 3:00: Academic Support, Homework Center, Sound Lab, Science Club 4:00: Sound Lab, Cooking Club (Salsa) 3-5: Columbus House prep 5:30-7:30: Family Night – Minute to Win It Challenge	21 3:00: Academic Support, Homework Center, Environmental Leaders Club, Art Club, GSA, Columbus House prep 4:30-7: Columbus House	22 1:30: Academic Support Makeup, Homework Center, Debate, Film Club, Envirothon 2:00: Girl Scouts
25 3:00: Academic Support, Homework Center, Sound Lab, Student Government, Art Club 4:00: Sound Lab, Strategy Games (UNO)	26 3:00: Academic Support, Homework Center, Drama, Geek Squad 4:00: Environmental Leaders Club, Kickball	27 3:00: Academic Support, Homework Center, Sound Lab, Cooking Club (DESK prep-cookies) 4:00: Sound Lab, Science Club	28 3:00: Academic Support, Homework Center, Environmental Leaders Club, GSA 4:00: Dungeons & Dragon Club	29 1:30: Academic Support Makeup, Homework Center, Debate, Film Club 2:00: Girl Scouts 2:00-3:30: Costume Dance Party

What Did You Do This Summer?

Common Ground students and staff both participate in summer opportunities that are engaging, stimulating, and advance academically and professionally. Below are just a few examples of the wonderful programs available to our students:

Lanissa Gardner, Bryanna Johnson, Miriam Juarez, and Maria Torres participated in the Aspirations program. Aspirations for Higher Learning is a 6-week campus-based program at Southern Connecticut State University or Yale University. AFHL provides instruction for highly motivated students in English writing, mathematics, and science. Computer skills are integrated in all course work. Career development and community service are important components of the Aspirations Institute. Students are awarded with 1.5 academic credits for successful completion.

Forest Hoefflinger, Alexandria Garcia, Kathy Flores, and Gunter Luth participated in the Green Light Academy. Green Light Academy is an innovative, residential summer program that consists of an interactive curriculum of academics, applied learning activities to learn about sustainable energy system designs and green-collar skills. GLA students work together to implement a portable solar and wind system at the Penfield Reef Light, and offshore lighthouse in the Black Rock Harbor in Bridgeport, CT.

Marinet Soto, Joe Stoudmire, and Dimitri Lemonas were members of the Nature Conservancy Program. The Conservation Internship Program sponsored by the Nature Conservancy provides opportunities for students to participate in month long field-based internships on TNC land preserves throughout the Northeast. Projects include trail maintenance, habitat management, invasive species control, and ecological monitoring.

Over 37 of our students participated in our Green Jobs Corps program. The Green Jobs Corps places students at meaningful worksites that provide them with work development skills, knowledge of green careers, and leadership development opportunities. Students placed at Common Ground High School spent the summer working as part of our Site Crew or as Summer Camp counselors. Site Crew members worked to improve our site with small construction projects, selling our produce at farmer's markets, and caring for our animals. Summer Camp counselors assisted New Haven Ecology's summer camps for children ages 4-13. Other placement sites included Urban Resources Initiative (URI) and City Seed Farmer's Market.

Science teacher Tricia Johnson was a participant in the Fulbright—Japan teacher exchange program for Education for Sustainable Development. She was one of 48 educators from across the U.S. selected for the program, which involved a 2 week visit to the US (and Common Ground) by the selected Japanese participants and a 2 week visit to Japan by the US educators. While in Japan, Johnson spent time in Tokyo visiting schools and environmental organizations and working on cooperative curriculum with the Japanese educators, and spent one week on the southern island of Shikoku in Matsuyama City. The program hopes to foster international cooperation in Sustainable Development Education.

Common Ground High School strives to place all of our students with meaningful and productive summer experiences—we are able to pair students with summer programs that will support academics, leadership, and work development. Summer program information is typically released in late March through the end of the school year. If you want to learn more about summer opportunities for future summer, please contact Amy Champagne for details.

