



Bulletin Board

Middle Country Central School District at Centereach

Planetarium Programs Exploring Wonders of Our Sky



The Tupper Planetarium at Centereach High School provides services for 11,000 Middle Country students in grades K-12. David Cohn, the director of the planetarium, combines his efforts with those of district teachers to effectively catalyze student interest in astronomy, science and inquiry-based learning in general.

The planetarium works very closely with the school science coordinators designing and supporting space science and astronomy curricula at all levels. The programs are presented throughout the year and correlate with what the students are learning in their classrooms. For example, third grade students are currently exploring galaxies and the universe. Using 3D modeling software at the planetarium, the students are able to examine our galaxy from a variety of external viewpoints that show its true morphology. They are also able to discern the location of our Solar System and all the stars visible from Earth within the Milky Way Galaxy. All of the programs align with district educational standards and a variety of resources are available to both students and teachers on the website: www.tupperplanetarium.org.

The Tupper Planetarium will soon be offering programs to members of the community. For more information, check future *Bulletin Boards* or call David Cohn at 631-675-0717.

Did You Know?

That the Tupper Planetarium opened in 1971 and it is the largest school-based planetarium in New York State!

Have You Ever Wondered What it's Like on Mars?

By visiting the planetarium's website, you can find a link to NASA and participate in interactive games and activities that will allow you to explore Mars from your computer. Go to: www.tupperplanetarium.org, click on "Sun, Stars and Planets" and you will find links that will route you right to Mars exploration missions! The activities are fun and educational!

Service Learning – Education in the 'Real World!'



Our nation's future depends on having citizens who are actively involved in their communities. It is with this understanding and democratic ideals that the Middle Country School District is promoting a Service Learning initiative at both Centereach and Newfield High Schools. Integrating a Service Learning component into the traditional curriculum allows students to have unique opportunities to expand their educational experiences while benefiting our schools, hospitals, government institutions, neighborhoods and communities – the *real world!*

Service Learning is based on involving students in activities beyond the classroom walls and harnessing the tremendous amount of energy, ability and creativity they have to offer to the entire community. Under a pilot program in our high schools' elective social studies classes, students are working with their teachers to create Service Learning plans that relate to the course *and* extend beyond the classroom in order to benefit the school or community. Both students and teachers collaborate to create Service Learning plans; sometimes a project is developed that involves an entire class working together.

Over the past year, students have initiated a variety of activities, from school-wide voter registration drives to volunteer service at nursing homes. Some students have helped out in soup kitchens, and others have participated at the Special Olympics. As part of the Service Learning experience, students often need to reflect on their experience in a journal or through classroom presentations. While the rewards of Service Learning are intrinsic, teachers give additional academic credit to participating students, and they receive a departmental certificate at the end of each semester. To date, more than two hundred students have been part of the pilot program.

Middle Country Central School District at Centereach
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