

Noteworthy News

Buddy Benches and a Peaceful Playground create an inviting, safe environment for all students

The evidence surrounding the link between physical activity and academics continues to gain in strength. There are many life lessons to be learned on the playground that add to a child's development. This year, we have added two significant programs to Concord Road, which make recess and physical education time more valuable.

Peaceful Playgrounds provide organization and more activity choices

The Peaceful Playground program is a means of supporting students to organize and self-manage play in an area that provides students with choices and utilizes space more efficiently. At CRS, the blacktop in front of the clock entrance has been transformed to include box ball courts, racing lanes, bowling alleys, basketball hoops, movement grids and more. This new space was designed and created collaboratively with faculty, parent and student volunteers. We thank the AEF for their support with this project.



Buddy Benches bring students together

A buddy bench is a simple idea to encourage inclusion, eliminate loneliness and foster friendships on the playground. The Buddy Bench movement started at an elementary school in Pennsylvania and has taken off around the world. Students use Buddy Benches as a safe meeting place to either initiate or join a social activity.

Last year on Election Day, CRS students voted on adding Buddy Benches to the CRS playgrounds. With the support of the PTA, the Student Council took ownership of the program and purchased three bench kits, built the benches, created the designs, painted the benches and decided on the quotes to put on each bench.



Buddy Benches were introduced to all CRS students recently at a special assembly. Students were instructed and encouraged to go to a buddy bench with clear intentions and a plan. For example, if a student wants to start a game of freeze tag, they would approach the bench, invite others to join them and explain the rules of the game. All students who are at the bench are welcome to join in the game of tag or join another game that may be starting. For students who struggle to make social connections during recess, the Buddy Bench is a comfortable, inviting way to get involved and make new friends.

Both programs are proven to provide more opportunities for student participation, increase physical activity levels, lessen bullying and promote compassion. Combined, the Buddy Benches and Peaceful Playground programs provide a powerful learning and development setting that students have already begun to enjoy and appreciate.