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On November 18, the first grade from AE/MS helped celebrate Andover's first award from Tree City USA. The first graders worked in class discussing the benefits of trees and then spent time writing about trees. During the ceremony, the first graders joined members of the Andover Conservation Commission to celebrate with well wishes the planting of the tree. The first graders read their wishes aloud to the tree and then planted their wishes with the tree.
Photo: Charlie Darling

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AE/MS NEWS

By Jane Slayton
Principal, AE/MS

As I write this after Thanksgiving, I can't help but think about all that our school community has to be thankful for. I feel fortunate to be part of such a caring, supportive, and generous community. I am also fortunate to work with dedicated and talented educators. I certainly appreciate the town of Andover and all it does for our children.

November and December are always busy months at Andover Elementary/Middle School. In November, the AE/MS school community hosted two big events: Veterans Day and Grandparents Thanksgiving. Both events were very well attended. December is filled with holiday traditions.

The school building has been readied for cold and blustery weather ahead. Storm windows are down, storm doors are closed, and new weather stripping is starting to appear along windowsills and doorways.

Seventh and eighth grade basketball teams have gotten an early start to the season. Coach Tucker ran open gym practices before the Thanksgiving break. Coaches Jim Tucker and Chris Cloutier are looking forward to a great season with the Andover Eagles.

We tried something different last year by offering two evenings of holiday music instead of packing everything into one long night. We found it to be successful and will offer two concerts again this December.

The first holiday program, on Thursday, December 9, was for students in kindergarten through fifth grade to perform with their classes. The second holiday program, on Thursday, December 16, is more of an instrumental evening to showcase our three bands. I am also excited to note that for the first time we have a middle school chorus

that will perform. You won't be disappointed! There will still be some band music during the first concert but not to the extent it has been in the past.

All are invited to come and enjoy both winter concerts! It's always a special treat to see the kindergarten students take the stage for their first time. You never know what they might do! It is even more fun to watch because the morning and afternoon kindergarten classes don't practice at all together before that evening.

As part of the rehearsal schedule to prepare for our winter concert, the three bands and chorus will perform at the Merrimack County Nursing Home on Tuesday, December 14.

The Holiday Shoppe will be held on Friday, December 10. This is the much anticipated shopping day for all students. It gives the students an opportunity to surprise their family members with gifts they pick out all by themselves. Due to the generosity of the community and PTO, we are able to have a bountiful Holiday Shoppe every December.

Holiday wreath decorating took place in the gym on December 4. Wreath orders were received from community members and local businesses. After the orders were filled, then another 20 wreaths were decorated and delivered to all the Town buildings. This has become a fun tradition and a great way to start the season.

The Town of Andover is once again generously making the ski program available and affordable to Andover families. The first ski day is Friday, January 7. Students have the opportunity to alpine ski or snowboard at Ragged Mountain. Any questions regarding this program should be directed to Andover Recreation Committee members Ellie George or David Powers. Participat-
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