Honoring Those Who’ve Served
Is Both An Honor And A Great Privilege
It brings us all joy as we say “thank you.”
The 15th annual salute to servicemen, servicewomen and veterans at Kelley School November 9th was truly another wonderful tribute this year to those who have served this country and those who are currently serving.

It began in the cafeteria with veterans and active duty military personnel enjoying breakfast with school children related to them at patriotically-decorated tables.

A moving assembly followed with Principal Jeff Hamelinck warmly welcoming all the honored guests calling the opportunity to do so “a great privilege.”

“We are truly blessed to honor you today,” he said. “Thank you for your service and sacrifice you made at home or in other countries . . . you put your hopes and dreams on hold and sacrificed much to serve our country.”

Hamelinck aptly reminded children about the many rights and opportunities that we may sometimes take for granted, but enjoy as Americans like the right to vote, publicly express our differing opinions and worship wherever we choose. He said these freedoms, and so many others, would not be possible were it not, in large part, to those who served and are serving this country and protecting our nation’s liberty.

“These men and women collectively have spent many, many days and many years sacrificing their time to serve our country and we benefit from it every day of the week. Thank you for your service to others and for the freedoms we enjoy because of your service he said to the servicemen, servicewomen and veterans seated in the center portion of the packed auditorium.

And then he instructed Kelley School students to make it their goal to express their appreciation as often as possible.

“Whenever you see a veteran, and not just on 11/11 or 11/12 thank them for their service and for the opportunities they have helped provide our country with because of their service,” Hamelinck continued.
Then the Kelley School third grade chorus, directed by Kelley general music teacher Libby Brozik, sang the “National Anthem.”
Then brothers and members of Cub Scout Pack 122, Nicholas DeYulio (5th grader) and Anthony DeYulio (4th grader), each read essays they wrote about what “Taps” means to them. One of the 12 Cub Scouts Laws is Reverent. The boys mentioned it in their essays, since Scouts need to practice it when “Taps” is played at opening/closing ceremonies and during prayers before meals at Cub Scout Camp.

Hamelinck then asked everyone to observe a moment of silence to honor those who died in combat and who are missing in action.

That somber moment was followed by “Taps” being played by Kelley School band members Brayden Sherman, Nicholas DeYulio, Matthew Murrell, Evan Burley, Autumn Hockenbruckner, Maggie Lynch, Kyla Williams and Brooklyn Hand.

Then Dennis Tellier, President of the Newark Veterans Council on behalf of both the August Mauer Post 286 of the American Legion and the Arcadia Memorial Post 2883 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars presented two plaques in appreciation of Kelley School’s annual salute to veterans to Hamelinck.

After that some students from Kristen Pilcher’s class presented the school with two large red, white and blue flower pots they painted and planted yellow mums in to show that Kelley School honors veterans and those currently serving in the military year round. The class used money they raised selling yellow ribbon pins they made to purchase the pots, paint and mums. Some of the $123.50 raised will also be used to purchase seasonal plants and flowers for the pots.
Then Kelley School Third Grade Chorus sang “On Veterans Day.”

After that, each branch of service was recognized by the playing of its theme song and showing their insignias on banners held by children.

Then third grader Cameron Johnson read an essay about how proud he is of his stepdad, Mike Catalano, who served in the Navy for 22 years.
Lastly, students sang the moving, emotion-charged song honoring veterans called: “We Are Proud of Our Veterans.”

“It truly has been a pleasure and honor to thank you for the gifts of service you all have given us,” Hamelinck said as the assembly came to a close.

He also thanked those Kelley School staff and students who were involved in planning for and participating in the inspirational annual tribute.