

# A DAY FOR PLAY



Kendra Leigh Miller • Daily Times

ABOVE: Students at Tiogue Elementary School in Coventry stopped their screen time and played the old-fashioned way — face to face — on Wednesday. Faculty and staff, including principal Louise Seitsinger (below) got in on the fun, too.

## Tiogue students engage in Global Play Day

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COVENTRY — It has been a busy two days for the students, administration and staff at Tiogue Elementary School with a visit from Alan Shawn Feinstein on Tuesday and Wednesday's Global Play Day.

The play day is about a day, or a portion of a day, free from computers and any other electronic device being put aside so children have the chance to indulge in free play.

Students were encouraged to bring toys such as dolls, board games, cards, trucks, cars, race tracks, markers, puzzles, social games (charades), and blankets (for forts).

According to [globalschoolplayday.com](http://globalschoolplayday.com), the initiative began with the Bedley brothers, Tim and Scott, who are teachers in California. They declared February 4, 2015 to be the first global school play day. Within a few days of making their announcement, well over 100 schools signed on.

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Submitted photo

The day prior to Wednesday's Global Play Day, Tiogue Elementary received a visit — and \$12,000 to be used toward technology — from Alan Shawn Feinstein.

## Play Day a global initiative enjoyed by Tiogue students

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"Global School Play Day is more than just a day of play," said Tiogue Elementary School Principal Louise Seitsinger. "It's a day of acknowledgment that play matters, that kids need play, that our society has gone amok with testing and drilling and making kids sit in seats and has forgotten what childhood is all about," she added. "They're learning to get along, learning about friendship, taking turns and getting along responsibly. This is for affirming the child's right and need to play. It is a day for parents, educators, playground directors, city planners—for everyone—to think about what they can do to make free play once again a major part of childhood."

Fourth-grade teacher John Coen said it's about problem solving, learning respect and taking turns.

"With so much testing going on, I wanted to give the kids and the teachers a break," Seitsinger added. "For the teachers, their role in this is just to observe but as I walked around, I saw a lot of smiles from both the students and the teachers as teachers sit back and watch them engage."

The day before, students had a visit from Alan Shawn Feinstein, who encouraged each student to do their best work and to be their best person and follow their own beliefs and help others. The philanthropist added a little something for the school, too.

"Alan Shawn Feinstein awarded us \$12,000 for technology," Seitsinger revealed, "which we will use to purchase interactive white boards and then we'll ask the school improvement team for their input for other items we may

need, also related to technology."

Wednesday, Coventry School Committee Member Dave Florio visited from grade to grade to see what the various play groups were and said so much of seeing the board games like Chutes and Ladders, Monopoly and Twister, brought it all back to him and the love he had for just free play when he was growing up and how important it is for children to know that feeling.

"I love Tiogue," he said. "I love the staff, the students and the administration and here It's all about supporting the child and I've found that Global School Play Day is an example of the social skills these kids need to develop, which are so important as they get older."



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The Game of Life was being played by Tiogue Elementary School students on Wednesday, on a board and with dice and not on a laptop or tablet.