

## Around Our Campuses

- **Update on Curriculum Mapping Public Site** - What should students know, understand and be able to do? In response to this question, our curriculum mapping work, utilizing the Rubicon Atlas online mapping tool, has brought greater clarity to our professional conversations about district curriculum and has enabled us to capture curriculum on a shared website.

We are excited to have launched our live curriculum maps on February 10<sup>th</sup>. This will allow our students, parents and the greater community to get a clearer picture of what students will learn in grades and courses throughout the district.

Curriculum is developed locally and based on state standards. Most recently, Common Core New York State Standards in the English Language Arts and Mathematics have brought new focus to these areas. These new versions of state standards, along with possible revisions of Social Studies and Science standards, mean that our mapping work is never really done. Some maps may not yet be visible on our public site. Other maps will be undergoing changes as the year progresses and certainly as new standards are released. This is indicative of the dynamic nature of curriculum and curriculum mapping. Maps are reflective of real curriculum in real time. They change and evolve to reflect new standards and new resources along with the needs of the students they are intended to serve.

Our public maps include important elements. Each curriculum map outlines the units of study in that curriculum. Each unit is connected to New York State Learning Standards for that discipline. Identification of the most important “power” standards help teachers to identify learning targets for students. These learning targets are driven through the identification of *Essential Questions* – big idea questions that keep teacher and student focus on the important learning for the unit. The content (including vocabulary) is identified – this is typically described as “*what we want students to know*”. The skills identify “*what we want students to be able to do*”.

Links to the Curriculum Maps are found in each school’s Curriculum web page as well as from the district department site for Student and Professional Learning.

- **Common Core Conversation**  
In cooperation with our district’s PTAs, three parent workshops were conducted to provide information regarding the Common Core Learning Standards and what they mean for student learning in classrooms. The negative press and associated measures that have accompanied the rollout of the Common Core Learning Standards in ELA and Mathematics have caused many to lose sight of what the standards actually say. These workshops hopefully helped to allay fears and assure parents that our mission has always been and will continue to be to provide the best 21<sup>st</sup> century education for all students. The CCLS will inform our development of curriculum as standards always have.
- **2014/15 Calendar:** The adopted 2014/15 school calendar can be found on our website: [www.somersschools.org](http://www.somersschools.org)

⇒ Primrose

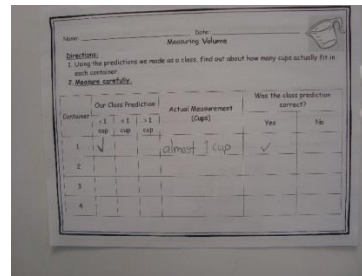
- **Subject: Science 21 Speaks Volumes! Stefanie Pacheco** - Measuring volume for Science 21, Ms. Pacheco's second grade students sorted containers by using a cup measurement and checking the volume on several different containers. They then sorted greater, equal to, and less than 1 cup into bins and compared them. The students used a worksheet to record the information from this interactive lesson.



Measuring to discover where to sort each container



Sorting and then charting the information



- **Subject: Artic Animals Unit Studies Penguin Life, Robin Gaudio and Shannon Frey-Vera** - The students in Mrs. Vera's class studied Arctic Animals through a nonfiction study during both Readers' and Writers' Workshop. The class listened to non-fiction stories, paying careful attention to facts and the features of nonfiction writing. The students read and browsed nonfiction books looking for those features taught during the mini-lesson. The students studied polar bears, walruses, whales, seals, the arctic fox and hare, and penguins from Antarctica. After each lesson, the class created an animal craft that tied into the animal of the day. At the end of the unit, the students took home their nonfiction journals.

The Kindergarten researchers in Mrs. Gaudio's class were interested in learning more about penguins! The study of penguins began with a list of questions that begged to be answered...some examples were "How does a penguin get out of its egg?" and "Can penguins really sing?" They read and listened to non-fiction books, watched non-fiction video clips, and analyzed photographs to answer all of their questions and more! The students collected evidence and then published penguin facts. With the help of volunteers, kindergarteners made penguins out of used water bottles and designed and built an Antarctic habitat for them. Everything is on display right outside their classroom!



- **Subject: New Foundations Reading Program** - This program is in its first year at Primrose. During this first year of implementation, the Foundations program is being used in kindergarten and first grade classrooms. Teachers have observed student application of the strategies they are learning through Foundations as the children read and write. Initial test results (after the first few months of implementation) show students making slight gains in their ability to read words. We will continue to monitor this progress as we begin implementation in second grade during the 14-15 school year.

- **Subject: Franklin Institute Assembly Traveling Science Show for Primrose Second Graders, Joseph Mahoney** - Second grade students at Primrose were treated to an Assembly by the Franklin Institute from Philadelphia, PA. The PTA sponsored the assembly entitled "Energy". This assembly was a kickoff event for the second grade Science 21 unit also titled Energy. The students marveled as rockets, waves, fire, balloons, generators, balls and magnets were used to teach concepts about energy.



- **Subject: Remembering Humanitarian Stephanie Crispinelli, Patty-Jo Kegler** - In February, Mrs. Kegler's and Ms. Laurie's classes made care packages for the Red Cross to honor the memory of Somers High School alum, Stephanie Crispinelli, who lost her life during the earthquake in Haiti while on a humanitarian mission with college classmates four years ago. First graders, second graders, high school students and the Red Cross made tie knot blankets, and then assembled 200 packages this year. Each package contained a blanket made by a team of children and adults, two children's books, a small teddy bear and a pillow all packaged with ribbon and ready to go to families in our area as Stephanie would have wanted. Mrs. Kegler is happy to keep Stephanie's mission alive as she was her first grade teacher. This is the third year of the project.

- **Subject: Children Begin International Program with Poland, Paula Pica** - Primrose Students working with Mrs. Paula Pica are engaged in an international exchange program with students from Poland. KiTeKi – short for Kids Teaching Kids – is the brainchild of community member, Malgorzata Stys who has started a school in Poland. More information will follow as the students continue their involvement in the project.



- **Subject: Teatown Lake Reservation Maple Syrup Production - Robin Gerstein** - Kindergartners went on a field trip to Teatown Lake Reservation. Prior to their trip, they listened to related stories and graphed their favorite maple products. The trip connected the science curriculum through units on living and non-living things, the seasons and life cycles. All Kindergarten students were able to trace the history of maple syrup production from Native American times onward, and were introduced to the technology of sugaring. They learned how and why trees produce sap, identified types of trees and discussed tree growth.



- **Subject: Green Eggs and Ham for St. Patrick's Day! Deirdre Cardona** - Ms. Cardona's 1st grade class celebrated St. Patrick's Day. She was fortunate to be able to obtain Lucky Eggs from the Lucky Farm and after reading Green Eggs and Ham by Dr. Seuss, each child learned how to crack open an egg and then watched them magically turn green when whisked and cooked on an electric skillet. It was a yummy lucky treat, complete with ham, Irish soda bread and green juice (contributions from parents). Naturally the children had to make a LUCKY LEPRECHAUN head band declaring "I Ate Green Eggs"! On the back of their pots of gold, each child wrote a math sentence with the value of six coins and what the coins totaled as a connection to the current unit in math.

## ⇒ Somers Intermediate School

- **Subject: REACH Students Study Games, Elizabeth Olinto** - For the past 8 weeks, the 5th grade Reach students have been working on a Game unit. They spent time studying challenging vocabulary words and then created board games using the challenging words. For the past few weeks they have played the board games, and tested them out. The feedback received from their classmates enabled them to make changes to improve the games before they played with classmates. During the game study unit, Board of Education Trustee, Dr. Ifay Chang, visited with students to share some of the games he has developed. He discussed the process used to get a patent. It was a great learning experience for the 5<sup>th</sup> graders.
- **Subject: SIS REACH Students visit Somers High School Physics Club, Liz Olinto and Chris Petris** - The HS Physics Club, led by Chris Pietris, hosted a "Physics Phair" for Liz Olinto's Intermediate School REACH students. At this event, high school students taught the younger students about pressure, electricity, friction, center of mass,

and light, through hands-on demonstrations. The younger students were given a souvenir from each station, which they can use to teach friends and family about the physics they learned. The event was funded by a grant from the SEF. Future “Physics Phairs” are being planned.

- **Subject: Olympics in the Intermediate School, Ann Rowe** - Ms. McGuire’s and Mrs. Rowe’s 4th grade classes together with Mrs. Haber-Cohen, Mrs. Freebern and Mr. Behling celebrated with their own Opening Ceremonies for the 2014 Winter Olympics. Students paraded through the halls as athletes from the various countries they researched. Arriving into the Library with the Olympic Theme music playing, the students assembled in front of the Olympic flag. The torch bearer lit the cauldron and the students took the Olympic oath. Throughout the week, the students continued their research and reported their countries’ results.



- **Subject: Greenhouse Spring Beginnings for Fifth Graders, Jennifer Colella** - The fifth graders began their planting for spring by nurturing seeds and using the SIS Greenhouse!



- **Subject: Arts and Education-Theatreworks-Freedom Train, Sharon King** - All fifth graders will see the show *Freedom Train*. They will also get to “meet” Harriet Tubman, the conductor of the Underground Railroad. She comes to life in this extraordinary production that shines with traditional music of the period.
- **Subject: Book Club-Parent Child Discussion - Laura Luke and Patty Sisca** - The students had a book club for parents and students by reading *Wonder*, by RJ Palacio. As a class they had some interesting discussions about the characters and the story that unfolded. Through a grant, Mrs. Sisca received 25 copies of the book. The teacher posted weekly discussion questions online for parents to talk over with their child. The book teaches the importance of being kind, and to not judge a book by its cover. Each part of the book begins with song lyrics. The first song is *Wonder*, by Natalie Merchant. Below is a video of her interview and the song. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4TZ-v5BW-pQ>
- **Subject: Technology in the Library - Ken Behling** - Mr. Behling, the Intermediate school’s librarian and media specialist, has been making extensive use of building technology including iPads and school databases in library instruction. All students have been practicing using digital resources available both in school and at home to find credible research. Mr. Behling’s latest curriculum unit has been teaching students to become “self-sufficient searchers” of information and to develop a strong foundation in 21st Century skills.

- Subject: Hovercraft in Engineering Class - Matt Lugo** - The grade 4 students in the STEM Club have been doing a great job participating in a hovercraft design challenge following an engineering design process. The students worked as a team to learn about and create their own hovercraft. Take a look at the video link below showing the students having fun throughout the exciting process.  
<http://animoto.com/play/M5TTm1jAj1dlC3XACHwQZA>
- Subject: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Movie Production - Laura Luke** - Ms. Luke's 5th grade class has completed their first movie production, completely written and produced by students. The movie is posted on the homepage of the class website at SIS. It was prompted by a lesson on bullying found on the Internet, which included a student activity of kids acting out scenes on bullying and problem solving solutions. The students had so much fun that they decided to film the scenes! After many "takes" they completed three short scenes and a culminating narration. The movie lasts under 10 minutes. It will be shown to the Intermediate student body in the coming weeks.
- Subject: Winter Olympics in Somers - Lynn Stepkoski** - The third graders held their own version of the 2014 Winter Olympics. The day-long event was the culmination of many different opportunities to practice non-fiction reading, researching and presenting information in creative ways. Students were assigned different countries to follow during the Olympic Games. They graphed the results of each country's medal count as well as a total count of all medals won by 12 countries. The students developed word problems to compare and contrast medal graphs. Some classes did research on the different countries using many of the library databases. These findings were presented in collaborative posters or individually written reports. At our own Olympic games, students carried the Olympic flag and flame and took the Olympic oath before participating in a mock version of the winter games. They traveled as classes to compete for their country in Ski Jump, Skeleton, Short Track Speed Skating, and Hockey. At the closing ceremonies, they discussed what made the day fun, challenging, and what examples of good sportsmanship they encountered. Medals were announced for the winning countries. After that, the flame was extinguished, the flag was carried out and a slide show of the day's events was shared. Here are a few of the highlights.

## ⇒ Middle School

- Subject: Franklin Institute Assembly Electricity Assembly, Katherine Turkewitz** - Sixth graders attended an assembly presentation by the Franklin Institute. This assembly was sponsored by our PTA and introduced a unit of study on Electricity. This presentation had students participating in experiments with static and current electricity. They were the human conductors for the flowing electrons and were exposed to some exciting and (safely) "shocking" experiences!
- Subject: Drama Stage Crew Uses Technology to Build Sets, Matt Lugo and Richard DeVito, Technology and Engineering Education** - The MS technology teachers have been doing some amazing work by teaching the stage crew students how to build sets for the "Guys and Dolls" drama production.



- ⇒ **Subject: An Introduction to the Stock Market, Mary Ellen Klock, Social Studies - 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies** Teachers and their students welcomed NYSE Euronext Managing Director, Bruce Poignant, a Somers parent, to our Library Media Center. Students learned about the history of the Stock Market, how it works, and made connections to their unit of study on the Great Depression. Students participated in a question and answer session about the current stock market and its relationship to the Stock Market Crash in 1929. Mr. Poignant's career with the New York Stock Exchange intrigued and inspired our students to learn more about the U.S. economic system. We are always happy when members of the community share their expertise with our students. Special thanks Mr. Poignant!



*NYSE Euronext Managing Director, Bruce Poignant*

- ⇒ **Subject: Technology and Engineering Department STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), Matt Lugo and Richard DeVito, Technology and Engineering Education -** The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students showcased their creativity and innovative thinking through a STEM miniature golf hole design project. The project put the students in a real world situation as if they had been hired as engineers to design and build a new version of a miniature golf hole. The students followed the engineering design process using recycled materials to create their own marble sized golf hole. At the conclusion of the design project, the students competed for fun in the SMS Marble Miniature Golf Tournament.



- ⇒ **Subject: Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, Patricia Baldes, Carolyn Shilinski, Kirstin Reynolds and Christina Sweeney -** Nineteen students at SMS have been recognized by the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, a national competition, open to students in grades 7-12. Their works were selected from nearly 1300 submitted. As noted on the Scholastic Art and Writing Award site, "The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards continues to be the longest-running, most prestigious recognition program for creative teens in the U.S., and the largest source of scholarships for young artists and writers." Notable alumni of the awards include Truman Capote, Joyce Carol Oates, Sylvia Plath and Ken Burns. There will be a regional award ceremony in March to honor local award recipients, as well as recognition at the student celebration board meeting at the end of the school year, as it means so much to the students to be honored by their own community. The students were invited to join the Assistant Superintendent for Learning, Julie Gherardi, for an honorary luncheon to discuss their success. They will also be recognized at an upcoming Board of Education meeting.

- **Subject: Guys and Dolls, Jr., Arlene Wozniak, Steve Chetcuti -** 100 Students from the Somers Middle School Drama Club participated in the production of *Guys and Dolls, Jr.*





- Subject: 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Hearts of Hope Campaign, Meghan Gioffe** - Seventh grade art classes have been painting for a Hearts of Hope campaign. Hearts of Hope (website: <http://ourheartsofhope.org/cms/>) is an organization that sends out messages of hope and caring to people in need. Ms. Gioffe is a resident of Newtown and became familiar with the organization's work after Sandy Hook when they scattered hundreds of ceramic hearts across the town for people to find. Each heart that is distributed is hand painted and comes with a little message of hope and caring from the artist. Our seventh graders created hearts for the upcoming March campaign - hearts for soldiers returning from Afghanistan. We were lucky to have Mrs. Duffy join us to paint – her son is currently deployed in Afghanistan.



*Children hard at work creating ceramic hearts to brighten a returning soldiers day.*



*Mrs. Duffy holds a heart to honor her son.*

- Subject: World Language Day, Elizabeth Ferrucci, Angie Gottlieb, Steven Lopez, Karin Messina and Alison Pepe** - The day long festivities took place in the World Language Department. Parents volunteered to join in celebrating the 1st annual “World Language Day” with the children. Attendees were able to participate in fun and exciting cultural activities, arts and crafts, dancing to music and experienced the foods of the country by tasting the cuisines from Mexico, Italy, France, Colombia, and the Dominican Republic. The teachers and students worked hard to prepare for this celebration of cultures. The displays were designed and created by the students in each class. Each student was handed a passport to have “stamped” in each country after they participated and learned about the culture through a variety of tasks which included, making piñatas in Mexico, smelling perfumes in France, dancing a traditional dance in Italy, tasting arepas (a flatbread made of ground maize dough) prominent in the cuisine of Colombia, and making masks in the Dominican Republic.

- Subject: Officer Cristiano-Social Studies Lessons - Janet Antonucci** - Meet our new Student Resource Officer, Kat Cristiano! She has been working with our sixth graders during social studies classes to develop awareness about a variety of topics. First, she met with all students, introduced herself, and answered questions about her job and all the equipment that she carries with her and uses. Another class period focused on personal safety procedures at home, school, and around town. The most recent class discussions have explored the issues of emotions, especially as they relate to bullying and peer-relationships. The lessons during our social studies classes have become a wonderful opportunity to develop a meaningful and trusting relationship with our amazing Officer Cristiano!

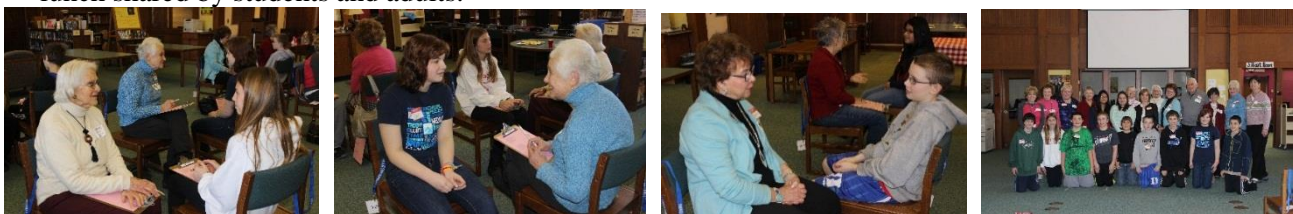


*Students make posters to describe feelings on bullying.*

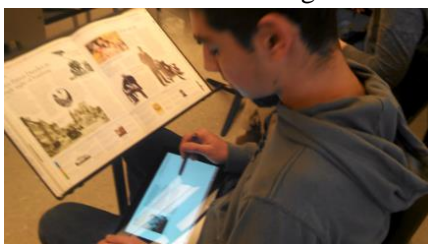
### UNIQUENESS AWARENESS WEEK-“PLEDGE FOR EQUALITY” at Somers Middle School

- I will speak up when I see bullying.
- I will try to stop bias when I hear it.
- I will be mindful of my own behaviors.
- I will help others to fight discrimination.
- I will be understanding of differences.

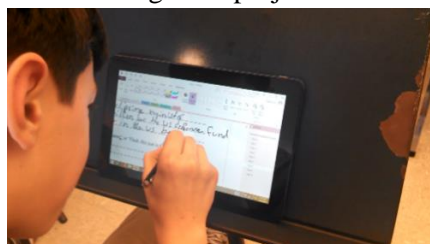
- Subject: Library Shares Stories with Local Seniors - Catherine Gelman** - An airplane flying lesson, a scary camping trip and a near fall into a septic are some of the stories that were “swapped” between 7<sup>th</sup> graders and senior citizen members of the *At Home in Somers* intergenerational out-reach organization. “Swapping Stories” provided an opportunity for adults and students to share childhood stories that transcend age, gender and heritage and celebrate the common threads in the human experience. Cathy Gelman, Library Media Specialist, has worked extensively with community members Ernie Del Negro and Ernie Osborne, to design a program that is structured but informal, and occurs during the school day. Senior adults and Middle school students are paired together, tell each other autobiographical stories and then re-tell their partner’s story to the group in first person narrative. This is a wonderful intergenerational experience that enhances students' listening skills, story-telling skills, public speaking confidence, and social skills. Students were identified and trained for this opportunity by Cathy Gelman with the help of Karin Brill and Marianna Breglio, the students’ teachers. The storytelling was followed by a pizza lunch shared by students and adults.



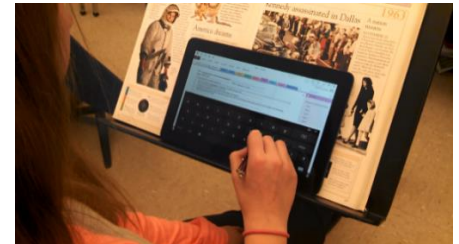
- Subject: Learning to Utilize our PLDs in Music Class - Steve Chetcuti** - Technology in Dr. Chetcuti's Music class is raising the bar for hands-on learning at SMS! Students in Dr. Chetcuti's Music 8 class are researching, collaborating, and learning guitar and piano with the new PLDs rolled out this year. The students are using OneNote as a virtual binder to organize daily work and long-term projects.



*Tablet use with OneNote.*



*Student handwritten input in OneNote.*

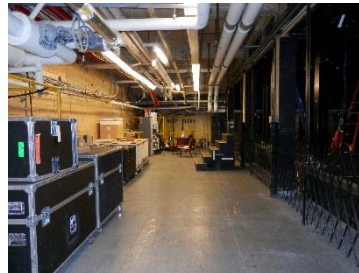


*Tablet input with stylus and keyboard.*



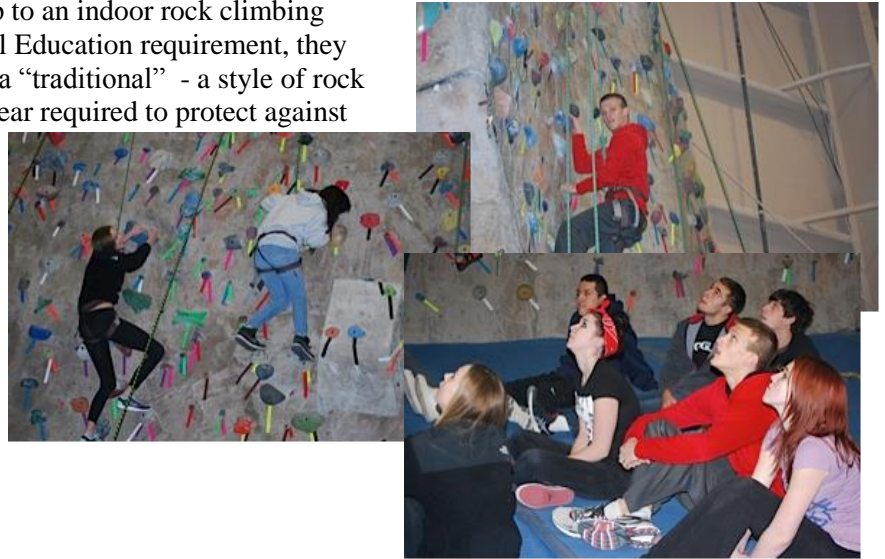
## ⇒ High School

- **Shark Tank - Meredith Polansky:** Students in Meredith Polansky's senior Economics classes have been studying different types of businesses and looking at business structures within the United States. At the end of the unit the students put together their own business plans and presented them to a group of "investors", asking the "Sharks" for financial backing. The project began as a simple business plan assignment and turned into a friendly competition modeled after the show "Shark Tank" on ABC.
- **Subject: Behind the Scenes at Radio City Music Hall, Edward Amato** - Stagecraft students enjoyed a close-up look at the production facilities, operations, methods and techniques used at the professional level. The students were privileged to be given an exclusive tour from Mr. Campbell's brother-in-law, Tom Forgione, who is the Vice President in charge of productions at Radio City Music Hall. The students enthusiastically toured behind and underneath the stage! There were electricians, carpenters and teamsters that were busy on stage in preparation for the concert taking place later that evening. Students were able to examine the numerous lighting, sound and hydraulic components. They observed how the technicians worked in unison to guarantee a seamless production. Students also received a tour of the greater facility, including areas not open to the general public such as galleries, the costume and prop room and control room for the stage. This experience enabled the students to gain a real understanding of professional stage production.



- **Habits of Heart** - Before the Stagecraft students and Mr. Amato left SHS, Assistant Principal, Phil Campbell gave students three Somers Tuskers sweatshirts to take along on the trip. One of the sweatshirts went to Mr. Campbell's brother-in-law, Tom, and another to the fantastic facilities tour guide. After lunch at the Shake Shack and a quick walk through *M&M World*, while on their way to the bus, the students came upon a homeless man asking for spare change. Students, Wesley Cash and Joseph Marra engaged the homeless man in conversation, Wesley let the man know that he didn't have any spare change but what he did next let us know that we are building more than "habits of mind" at SHS. Wesley retrieved the remaining Somers Tuskers sweatshirt and gave it to the gentleman who accepted it with gratitude. This was certainly an additional benefit of what was already a phenomenal field trip.

- Subject: Alternative School Adventure-The Cliffs of Valhalla, Carol Lieto** - The alternative high school, grades 11 and 12, enjoyed their field trip to an indoor rock climbing facility in Valhalla. Fulfilling a Physical Education requirement, they received instruction in trad climbing (aka “traditional” - a style of rock climbing in which a climber places all gear required to protect against falls, and removes it when a passage is complete), bouldering, and belaying from trained staff. Every student participated, in spite of the fact that for many this particular activity was outside of their comfort zones.



- Subject: Drugs and Alcohol Awareness Program: The Numbers are Chilling, Kristen Rigaglia** - The HS Youth to Youth Club recently conducted a school wide awareness activity highlighting the statistic that every 30 minutes, two teenagers lose their lives from drinking or drug abuse. During the specified day, a chime rang every 30 minutes starting at 7:35AM, to symbolize the death of two teenagers. Students from the club volunteered to symbolize the lost teens throughout the day. Each time the chime rang, two students were removed from their classes to change into a black t-shirt. The student volunteers remained silent for the remainder of the day. At the end of the day all students representing a teen death stood together at the entrance of the school as students left the building symbolizing the number of students who could have lost their lives to drugs and alcohol on that school day. It was a powerful representation of the scary consequence of drug and alcohol abuse. Through awareness programs such as these, we hope to educate students and save lives.



*Representative of the 26 Student Deaths*

- Subject: Rehabilitate Park from Storm Sandy, Mark Bayer, Cyndy Maloney, and Eileen Cawley** - On Saturday February 1, 2014 a group of 33 students, grades 9-12, volunteered at Morningside Park in New York City. The original trip to help clean up a community center destroyed by Hurricane Sandy was scheduled for December 14th to coincide with the anniversary of the Sandy Hook incident. Unfortunately, it was cancelled due to inclement weather and rescheduled, this time at Morningside Park. On this day, students helped out by cleaning and removing



ice and snow from a playground that is used heavily by residents in the neighborhood who have small children. In addition, the students raked leaves and spread mulch around trees and plants to help protect them during the harsh winter. This was a great learning and giving experience which nurtured the habits of heart along with the habits of mind.

- **YOUNG ARTISTS 2014 EXHIBITION DATES MARCH 2ND TO THE 9<sup>TH</sup>** - The Young Artist Exhibit for participating Westchester area high school seniors was held at the Katonah Museum of Art. The museum, located on 134 Jay Street in Katonah, annually celebrates the art work of area Westchester/Rockland Seniors. The Somers Visual Art Department sent eleven seniors' artwork to the exhibit. Some of those participants helped volunteered as installers of the show or graphic designers for the publicity. The reception in honor of these artists was held on Sunday, March 2nd.
- **Subject: IBM Think Event - Julie Gherardi** - On March 12<sup>th</sup>, the IBM Academy of Technology held a THINK event – “Where do you see yourself in the next five years?” This IBM Academy of Technology THINK event was co-sponsored by the IBM Super Women's Group in celebration of International Women's Day. With the historic pace of technological advancements, this popular job interview question has become a daunting challenge to answer without a solid plan – whether you are a student, you are just starting in the workforce or you are a seasoned professional. The discussion focused on the six growth areas that are driving today's innovations: Cognitive Computing, Cloud, Social Media, Analytics and Big Data, Mobile and Security. To access a recording of the event, go to <http://www.livestream.com/ibmaotthink>

## Special Education News



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