

ONTEORA

Winter 2016

BENNETT'S BEGINNING MUSICIANS MAKE BEAUTIFUL MUSIC



Madeline Mills shows off her violin technique during a rehearsal of Bennett's Beginning Orchestra.

Strike up the band—and the orchestra! Bennett students in the school's Beginning Band and Beginning Orchestra are learning to make beautiful music together under the direction of Music teacher Karen McKenna.

"I really enjoy teaching beginners," says Mrs. McKenna. "The beginners are always so excited to learn, and it makes them easy to work with. Their enthusiasm is wonderful!"

Currently, she says, there are about 40 Grade 4 students in Beginning Band, and 25 in Beginning Orchestra. The fledging musicians receive lessons once a week. They also participate in ensemble rehearsals during recess in the weeks leading up to concerts.

Most students, explains Mrs. McKenna, use instruments they borrow from the school. When they sign up, they have three choices of instrument, and generally get one of their choices assigned to them. She and her colleagues take into consideration the balance of each group. "To have a successful band or orchestra, you need to have some of every instrument—not just all drums or saxophones," she explains.

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Reading Adventures at Phoenicia Primary School

AT PHOENICIA PRIMARY SCHOOL, reading is an adventure—a jungle adventure, to be precise.

Phoenicia Reading teacher Kelly McLean has transformed part of the school's reading room into a jungle-themed reading retreat, complete with dangling critters, verdant foliage, forest-green

carpeting, and canopied seating draped in what looks to be mosquito netting. And of course there are lots and lots of books—perfect for exploring worlds both real and imaginary.

The motivation behind the retreat was simple, Ms. McLean says. "I just want to encourage students to read more and get excited about doing it."

The reading room is typically used for reading-intervention classes—a place where small groups of students come in for extra help. By creating a fun-filled space within the reading room, Ms. McLean hoped to make it more inviting and accessible to all Phoenicia students, whatever their reading levels.

The space, she suggests, offers many possibilities. "The retreat could be used for book-buddy activities, pairing younger readers with older, more accomplished ones," she suggests. "It could also provide another option for students during indoor recess, or could be used for whole-class 'read-aloud' sessions."

"I would eventually like to host a reading marathon in the space for any willing participants," Ms. McLean says.

The jungle retreat is a hit with the students who have already had the opportunity to spend time there. "I like the blow-up chairs," comments Grade 1 student Harley Taylor. "They are really comfy!"

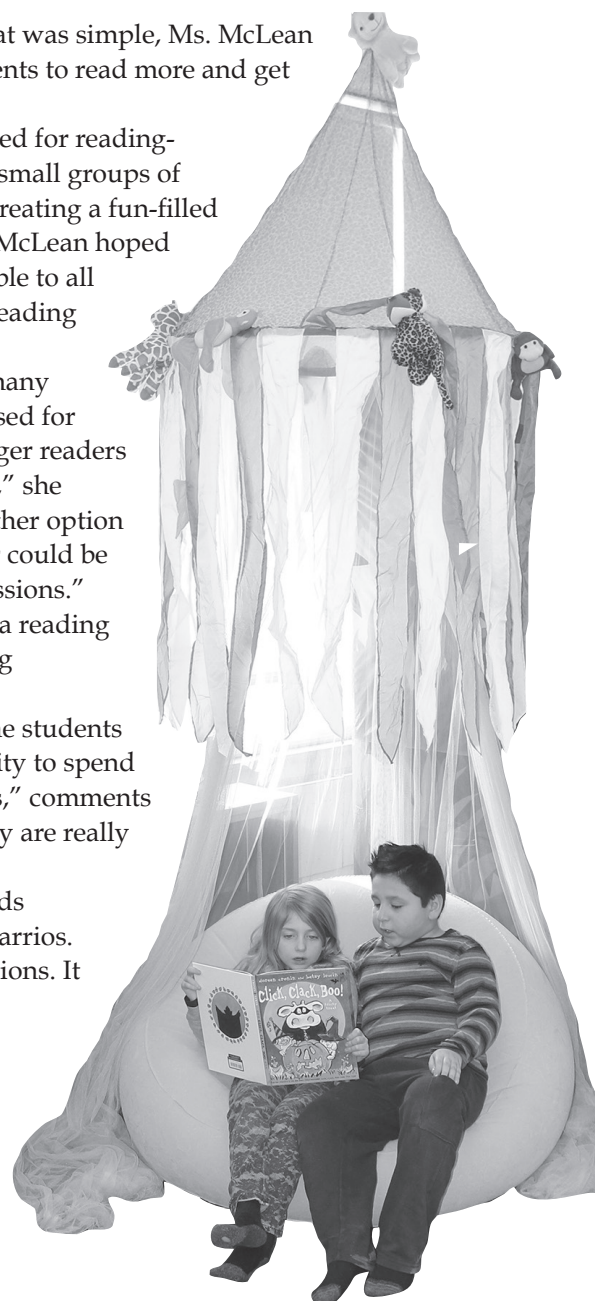
"It is so fun to read in there," adds Grade 2 student Rodrigo Amarilla-Barrios. "It's so comfortable, with no distractions. It gets you pumped for reading!"

Sheltered by a "jungle canopy," Phoenicia Grade 2 students Christian Giron and Ellie Steidel share a good book—and a comfortable chair.

Photos by Kelly McLean



Grade 1 student Harley Taylor enjoying a book in Phoenicia's jungle-themed reading retreat.



BENNETT’S BEGINNING MUSICIANS MAKE BEAUTIFUL MUSIC

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

In September, when the students first receive their instruments, “things don’t sound so great,” Mrs. McKenna admits. “I often tell them that there’s nowhere to go but up, and they can only get better!”

In December, she helps her musicians make a CD to show their families how much they have learned. By June, they are able to look back and see how much their playing has improved, thanks to their hours of hard work and practice.

“Without practice there is no improvement, and at this age it really helps when the parents encourage regular, consistent practice time at home,” she stresses.

Music is an important part of a child’s education, Mrs. McKenna believes. “Studies have shown that music is the only thing that engages



Members of Bennett’s Beginning Band show off their musical chops during a rehearsal.



Bennett percussionists Reese Rotella (left), Ada Helm (center, back), and Hailey Peck practice a song for an upcoming concert.

all parts of the brain at once, so it’s a great thing for brain development,” she declares.

Moreover, she says, being a member of a band or orchestra helps teach children about responsibility. Members of a band or orchestra need to be responsible for caring for their instruments and attending lessons and rehearsals. They also need to master their individual parts; otherwise, the performance of the band or orchestra as a whole will suffer.

“Participating in a band or orchestra shows students how when you work at something you get better, and that practice and dedication are important to learn for every aspect of life,” she concludes.

Pre-K Students Share Holiday Cheer

FIRST STEPS PRESCHOOL AND ONTEORA’S UNIVERSAL PRE-K STUDENTS helped spread some holiday magic in December, as they joined Uncle Rock (aka Robert Burke Warren) for a festive concert featuring songs like “Hold it in My Heart” and “The Rainbow Song.” The children’s spirited rendition of “Jingle Bells,” sung in English and Spanish, cued the arrival of a very special guest: Santa Claus!



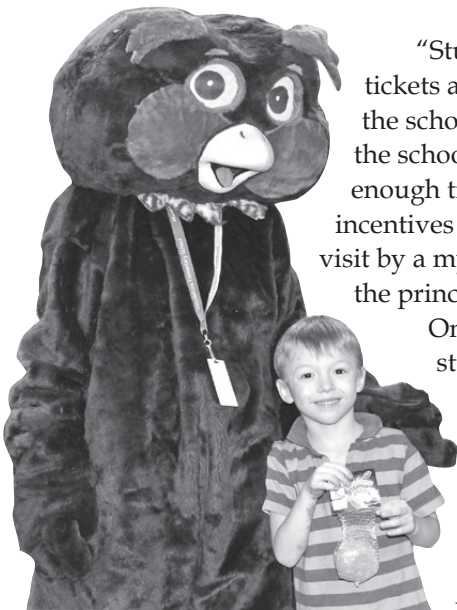
BENNETT STUDENTS CHOSEN FOR ALL-COUNTY BAND FESTIVAL

CONGRATULATIONS to the 18 Bennett students who have been selected for this year’s All-County Band Festival, which takes place at SUNY Ulster on March 11-12. The students were accepted based on their outstanding performance of three scales, a solo, and a short sight-reading excerpt.

Woodstock's School Store Supports Positive Behavior

WOODSTOCK PRIMARY SCHOOL has a new tool for encouraging positive behavior – the Owl Store. Located in the front hallway, the “store” is a glass case chock-full of treasures ranging from felt-tipped markers to fairy wings, bouncing balls to bug-themed activity books.

Money is no good at this shop, however: the only valid currency is good behavior. Individual students as well as entire classes who are “caught” doing something good (say, sharing playground equipment or staying seated during lunchtime) may be rewarded with “owl” tickets that can be redeemed for one of the shop’s many tantalizing trinkets.



Kindergarten student Sterlyn Holt poses with Woodstock’s PBIS Owl, who helps reward children who are “caught” doing something good.

The store, explained Woodstock Principal Scott Richards, is part of the school’s PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports) program. “The aim of this character education initiative,” he said, “is to discourage inappropriate behavior in a positive way – ideally, without punitive measures like scolding, detention, or loss of recess time.”

“Students also keep track of their owl tickets as a class,” added Diana Johnson, the school psychologist and a member of the school’s PBIS team. “If they accumulate enough tickets, they can earn various incentives such as a pajama day, dance party, visit by a mystery reader, or class lunch with the principal.”

On a recent Friday afternoon, students who had been selected to shop at the store eagerly perused the crowded shelves. Asked why he had been awarded a ticket, Grade 3 student Jacob Holt said, “I was walking quietly in the hallway even when people were trying to talk to me.” Taevin Dolan, who is also in Grade 3, remarked that she had received her ticket for behaving safely on her school bus.

“The store,” concluded Mr. Richards, “has been a big hit with the students and with our staff as well. It is really helping our children learn to be respectful, be responsible, and be safe.”

Breaking the Cycle of Violence: Onteora Assembly Promotes Forgiveness, Peaceful Conflict Resolution

HASHIM GARRETT WILL NEVER FORGET the day in 1990 when he was hit by a hail of bullets, paralyzed, and left for dead on a Brooklyn street. But that doesn’t mean that he hasn’t forgiven his assailant. Mr. Garrett, a former gang member-turned motivational speaker, visited Onteora High School on November 13 to share his poignant, personal story of violence – and most importantly, his journey to forgiveness.

Mr. Garrett was one of several featured speakers at an assembly sponsored by Breaking the Cycle (www.breakingthecycle.com), an organization devoted to stemming the nationwide problem of youth violence.

Introducing the speakers was Onteora Principal Lance Edelman, who urged the students to listen closely. “We believe their words can change your life,” he said.

Also addressing the students were Pastor Johann Christoph Arnold, a lifelong peacemaker who marched with Martin Luther King, Jr.; Ann Marie D’Aliso, a grieving mother who spoke about suicide prevention and recovery through forgiveness; former Ulster County Undersheriff Frank Faluotico, Jr., an advocate for school safety and a strong resource to the Onteora Central School District; and Charles Williams, a former Chief of

Police who spoke about the healing affect that forgiving an alcoholic parent had on his own life.

Mr. Garrett, who walked to the microphone using crutches, suggested that his near-death experience likely saved him from a worse fate. “It changed the course of my life,” he recalled, because it spurred him to renounce his former violence-filled life. Instead of seeking retribution, he forgave his would-be assassin and began working on becoming a better person. Today, the college-educated Garrett has a beautiful family and is the owner of Wisdom & Understanding, LLC, a company devoted to teaching adolescents about the causes of violence and the importance of character and education.

“You have to learn how to forgive, to let love, not fear, be the motivating factor for why you do things,” Mr. Garrett asserted. In conclusion, he urged the students to take care when dealing with others. “Be kind; be forgiving. Not one of us is perfect,” he said.

“Violence affects each of us every day,” Principal Edelman told the students. “It may begin with angry feelings, words, or texts, and can easily escalate into something more serious.” Learning to resolve conflicts peacefully, he suggested, is an important part of an Onteora education.



Anti-violence advocate Hashim Garrett, a former gang member, was a featured speaker at a recent High School assembly.

Middle School Mentorship Program Nurtures

WHEN IT COMES TO SUCCEEDING IN SCHOOL, a little extra attention from a caring adult can go a long way. That's the philosophy behind a new mentorship program at the Middle School.

So far this year, 14 students are participating in the school's TUFs (Teaming Up For Success) program, which pairs Middle School students with mentors drawn from the Middle School teaching staff. Each student meets with his or her mentor once a week throughout the school year.

"Our primary goal in TUFs is to support students as they strive to achieve their academic goals," explains Reading/Academic Intervention Services (AIS) Teacher Michelle Martin, who coordinates the program along with English Language Arts/AIS teacher Karen Grimm. Although students may be referred to the program, participation is voluntary for

mentees and mentors alike.

Grade 8 student Melanie Jacobsen values the connection she has forged with her mentor, Life Skills Teacher Nicole Mastrangelo. "We meet once a week during my

study hall to talk about how I'm doing," she says. "It helps me keep track of my grades."

"Mentoring is based on the belief that all children and teens need caring adults in their lives," says Mrs. Martin, who notes that the program enhances the support that students may already be receiving at home. The mentors may also serve as role models.

Although TUFs is a one-on-one mentoring program, there are also monthly group activities to support the establishment of positive relationships with peers and staff. In late December, for example, the mentees enjoyed a cookie-baking party, complete with mounds of icing and heaping helpings of sprinkles, candies, and marshmallows.



Middle School mentor Nicole Mastrangelo (standing) listens to her mentee, Grade 8 student Melanie Jacobsen, during an afterschool gathering of TUFs participants. Also pictured are Nick Williams (second from right) and Destayne Locklear (far right).

Onteora Robotics Program Helps Students

ROBOTICS, A KEY COMPONENT OF MANY 21ST CENTURY JOBS, is the focus of a hands-on program at Onteora High School. Science teacher Bryan Keenan teaches a yearlong Robotics course, which is helping students develop problem-solving skills in computer programming and engineering.

"Students in my class must build and physically modify robots in order to complete specific challenges," Mr. Keenan explains. "They develop programs that allow the robot to interact with its environment and make logical decisions based on the information gathered by its sensors."

During a recent class, for example, his students were tasked with designing a robot that could sort healthy strawberry plants from unhealthy ones. Such a robot could obviously be extremely useful in the agricultural sector.

Grade 10 student Trinity Luther, who says she finds learning about robotics "really

interesting and fun," believes the class helps promote career-readiness. "It would be useful for many different careers," she suggests, "because we are learning how to solve problems."

Onteora senior Patrick Pfeiffer, who plans to pursue studies and an eventual career in Mechanical Engineering, thinks that the class will help him do so. "I like robotics and hands-on learning, and this is definitely a hands-on class," he says.

"There are many careers that make use of robotics, and they are mostly in the realm of engineering," notes Mr. Keenan. NASA, he points out, has been using the principles of robotics for a long time. Robots are also used in many production plants. "A good example of this are the robotic welders in the automotive industry," he says.

Robots are also useful in the disaster-response field, Mr. Keenan adds. When the offshore oil-drilling rig known as the Deepwater Horizon exploded off the coast of Louisiana in 2010, he recalls, a robotic arm was used to divert and cap the gushing oil well. Robots

Onteora senior Eddie Faurote (left) consults with his Robotics teacher, Bryan Keenan, on a class assignment.



Madison Berryann, a senior, tests a robot she created for an assignment called the Container Challenge. The robot is programmed to pick up a "crate" and then use its sensors to carry the crate to a specific location like a common warehouse robot.

Student Success



Middle School mentors and mentees show off their baking and cookie-decorating skills at a TUFFS party. Pictured from left to right are: Melanie Jacobsen (Grade 8), Michelle Martin (Reading/Academic Intervention Services teacher), Destayne Locklear (Grade 7), Leslie Herrera (Grade 7), Nick Williams (Grade 7), and Alyssa Babcock (Grade 7 Science teacher).

Mrs. Martin notes that the Middle School TUFFS program, an extension of a similar High School program, is an official club. “That means the students are expected to be active in the club’s decisions, meetings, and activities,” she remarks. The students and teachers, adds Mrs. Grimm, are currently collecting Box Tops for Education coupons to raise funds for the school’s TUFFS activities. “Anyone who would like to contribute to our efforts can drop off their box tops in my mailbox in the Middle School/High School Main Office,” she says.

MIDDLE SCHOOL MENTORS

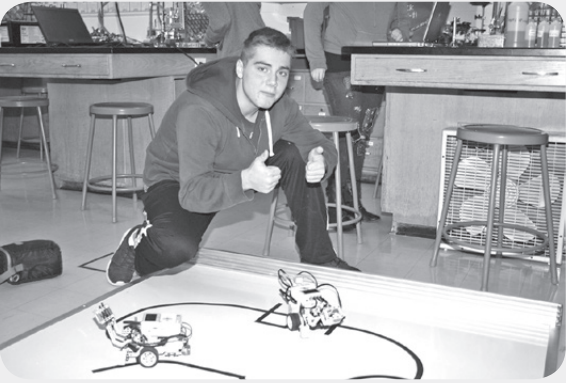
The following 11 staff members are serving as mentors in the Middle School’s TUFFS (Teaming Up For Success) program: Alyssa Babcock, Jennifer Brueckner, Mark Dornan, Karen Grimm, Mike Groeters, Marjorie Hodder, Betsy Lastner, Michelle Martin, Nicole Mastrangelo, Lori Matteson, and Kate Van Baren.

Prepare for 21st Century Jobs

were also used during the 2011 nuclear plant disaster in Fukushima, Japan, because radiation levels were too high to allow humans to survey the initial damage. Some of Mr. Keenan’s students prefer working by themselves while collaborating with others, and others prefer to tackle challenges as a team. “The ability to work well with others and solve problems, coupled with the diligence it takes to complete the challenges, creates a solid foundation for any career,” he suggests. Mr. Keenan’s students work on challenges that require specific robot modifications and precise programming. For half of the year, the students use Lego EV3 bricks, parts, and accessories to construct the robots. The Legos come with an Icon-based programming platform. During the second half of the year, the class will transition to text-based programming using RobotC (a Java-based programming platform). The students also use Tetrix robotic kits, which allow the students to make much larger and more powerful robots that can

be programmed with RobotC and operated remotely. This February, some of Mr. Keenan’s students competed in a regional Science Olympiad competition held at SUNY Ulster. The robot arm device created and operated by senior Dan Foster and junior Cody Davis placed third in the competition, followed by the fourth-place team composed of seniors Ed Faurote and Scott Booth. Onteora’s Science Olympiad team, which won a total of 30 medals, earned the right to advance to the State Science Olympiad tournament, which will take place in Syracuse on March 11 and 12. The job market will continue to be affected by robots, Mr. Keenan suggests. “Robotics may take away some jobs,” he acknowledges. “But there will always be a need for someone to tell a robot what to do. We live in such a changing landscape, and one of the main trends is automation.”

Onteora senior Skyler Beaudette prepares to test a robot he created in Bryan Keenan’s Robotics class.



Onteora sophomore Trinity Luther works on a robotics “challenge” during Bryan Keenan’s Robotics class.

Phoenicia Students are on the Move!

PTA Supports Yoga and Dance Classes

PHOENICIA STUDENTS HAVE BEEN ON THE MOVE THIS WINTER. Thanks to the school's Parent Teacher Association (PTA), Phoenicia students have had the option of participating in yoga and movement classes offered during recess periods during the months of January and February.

"Typically those are the bad weather months, and as part of our health and nutrition initiative we want to keep our students active," says Phoenicia Principal Linda Sella.

On Mondays, local yoga instructor Selena Reynolds has been teaching yoga to the youngsters. "I teach in the lobby – no props or mats, just humans!" she says. "I'm teaching them asanas (yoga poses) and breath awareness, but the format of the class allows for continuous movement, spontaneity, and playfulness."

Since the yoga class meets at recess, Ms. Reynolds thinks that it's important to allow the children the freedom to move about and to speak freely with each other. "We finish our class with seated poses and quiet breathing," she concludes, "so the students are ready to head back to class and focus on learning."

Thursdays, Lisa Brown, a dance coordinator and choreographer from the Center for Creative Education in Kingston, has been teaching a dance-inspired movement

class. "I'm just trying to get them moving," Ms. Brown explains. She has had no trouble doing just that, with the assistance of energetic dance tunes and a giant screen mounted on the gym wall, which allows the children to watch their own dance moves.

PTA President Caro Turba explains that the group's decision to support the winter recess classes was

inspired by a suggestion from the Phoenicia Health and Wellness Committee.

"We knew that with the inclement weather we usually get, the children do not have much opportunity to move about and let some of their inner energy go," she says. "They learn better and have a higher attention span if they are able to have some sort of release during the day."

The program fits well with the PTA's mission, which she says is to "enrich the educational experience for every child and to create events, programs, and an environment that builds strong family and



Lisa Brown, a dance coordinator and choreographer from the Center for Creative Education in Kingston, leads a dance class during recess at Phoenicia Primary School.

inspires great community."

"This is a wonderful example of how we can build on the children's school experience and hopefully enrich it, through our local community members," Mrs. Turba continues. "It exposes the children to healthy physical activities that they might never have encountered. When you live in a rural community, it is so important to have these programs come to the children."

Onteora Senior Wins Regional Poetry Recitation Contest

CONGRATULATIONS TO ONTEORA SENIOR JACK WARREN, who won the regional Poetry Out Loud competition held at SUNY Oneonta on February 1. Jack will move on to the State-level Poetry Out Loud competition this March in Syracuse. Also placing in the top five was Onteora junior Kalo Talley.

During the first two rounds of the competition, Jack recited "Finale" by Pablo Neruda and "Ah! Why Because the Dazzling Sun" by Emily Brontë. When he made it to the "final five," he recited "Zoom!" by Simon Armitage.

Kalo recited "The Glories of Our Blood and State" by James Shirley and "In a Dark Time" by Theodore Roethke. During the final round, he recited "Always Something More Beautiful" by Stephen Dunn.

The contest culminates with the Poetry Out Loud national finals, which will take place May 2-4 at the Lisner Auditorium at George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

Poetry Out Loud was created by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation. The recitation contest is administered in partnership with the state arts agencies of all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico.



Onteora senior Jack Warren (left), winner of the regional Poetry Out Loud competition, is congratulated by Onteora English teacher Elaine Conroy (right). Looking on is Onteora English teacher Bridget Allison (center).

Local Children’s Book Author Visits Woodstock Primary School

LOCAL POET AND AUTHOR JERRICE BAPTISTE visited Woodstock Primary School this fall, reading her book *My Cat Adeline* to three classes of Kindergarten students. The children’s book, beautifully illustrated by teacher and artist April Matula, is a poetic rendition of the true story of Adeline, Ms. Baptiste’s rescued cat.



Poet and children’s book author Jerrice Baptiste responds to questions from students in Lynn Clinton’s Kindergarten class at Woodstock Primary School.

Over the course of her readings, Ms. Baptiste also engaged the children in several feline-related songs and answered questions about her creative process. A story begins with ideas that a writer expresses in words, she told the students. “All the wonderful things Adeline did in real life inspired me to write this book,” she added.

“This type of visit is so important because we are working on both writing and reading skills for these young pre-readers,” explained Woodstock Kindergarten teacher Mary Naccarato. “For Kindergarten students just learning how to read, it is important for them to hear authors read their own work.” Ms. Baptiste also visited students in the classrooms of Lynn Clinton and Elohim Pacheco.

After talking with the students about their own pets, Ms. Baptiste displayed the book’s final page, which featured a photograph of the real Adeline. Hoping to leave her animal-loving readers with an inspirational message, her caption for the photo reads, “Adeline is a happily rescued cat and has brought such joy into my life. Please consider giving a warm home to an adopted cat.”

Ms. Baptiste, who was born in Haiti and now lives in the Hudson Valley, noted how much reading to these young students benefits her as a writer. “It is very uplifting and inspiring to read to the children and see their faces light up from what I have written,” she explained. “I take back what I’ve learned from them to write better books in the future. That interaction is a great gift.”

CONGRATS!



CONGRATULATIONS TO ONTEORA SENIOR BRANDT ESTES, who performed with the All-State Wind Ensemble on December 5. The performance, which was held at the Eastman School of Music’s Kodak Hall in Rochester, was part of the annual New York State School Music Association’s Winter Conference, which showcases the best high school musicians from across the State. Brandt was selected to play in the 1st clarinet section of this elite ensemble.



KUDOS TO SENIOR MOLLY GREENE, whose photographic talent was recognized at a recent show staged by the Woodstock Artists Association & Museum (WAAM). Molly won \$100 for her submission to the show, which was juried by local photographers and limited to darkroom photography. Congratulations!

ONTEORA

WINTER PEP RALLY

Students played word games in the High School/Middle School cafeteria during a Winter pep rally sponsored by the Onteora PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports) team. Pictured are Grade 9 student Cecilia Maillet and Math teacher Aubree Ferraro.

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ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT
Andrew M. Perlman
CLASS OF 1989

ANDREW PERLMAN, Dean of Suffolk University Law School in Boston, has come a long way since he walked the hallways of Onteora’s West Hurley Elementary School.

But he has not forgotten his Onteora roots, which laid the foundation for his future success. “I was fortunate to have had so many dedicated teachers who instilled a love of learning,” he says.

Recalling his elementary school, which closed its doors in 2004, he says, “West Hurley was like an extended family. Everyone really cared about the kids and instilled a love of learning and education.”

Perlman’s positive experiences continued into High School, where he served as class president and joined the Quiz Bowl Club and the Math and Tennis teams.

For Perlman, Onteora not only provided an education, but also a supportive community. “My father passed away when I was in High School,” he remembers, “and the support that I received from everyone at Onteora made me realize what a special place the school is.”

After graduating from Onteora in 1989, he enrolled at Yale, where he took a couple of law-related courses, enjoying them immensely. “I was drawn to the law because of its power to shape our lives and the intellectual interest of the subject matter. I enjoyed the challenge of thinking through issues that did not always

have clear right and wrong answers.”

After graduating from Yale, Perlman went on to get a Juris doctor degree from Harvard and a Master of Laws degree from Columbia.

Perlman worked as a law clerk to the Honorable Suzanne B. Conlon of the United States District Court in Chicago, and as a litigator at the Chicago office of Schiff Hardin. He also spent a summer working for the American Civil Liberties Union in New York, and another for a Boston law firm, Hill & Barlow.

But Perlman was ultimately drawn to academia, because he had fond memories of the teaching he had done in law school. “I also wanted to engage more deeply with legal issues than law practice typically affords,” he says.

In 2001 he moved to Suffolk University Law School, where he taught courses in civil procedure and professional responsibility and founded the school’s Institute on Law Practice Technology and Innovation as well as the related Legal Technology and Innovation Concentration.

Perlman was appointed dean of the law school in 2015. In announcing the appointment, Provost Marisa Kelly called the law professor “a nationally recognized voice on the future of legal education and law practice.”

Onteora, Perlman believes, played an important role in his professional success. “I continue to be grateful for the education that I received at Onteora, but Onteora is about so much more than the education,” he observes. “The teachers, the staff, and administrators truly cared about students and created a wonderful community.”

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Interim Superintendent of Schools
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Interim Asst. Supt. for Curriculum and Instruction
Marystephanie Corsones.. 657-6383 x1012

District Clerk
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