



Donovan Barros, left, and Austin Rezak proudly represented Saugerties at the Capital Region Spelling Bee.

SAUGERTIES  
JHS STUDENT  
TAKES 9TH PLACE  
IN REGIONAL  
SPELLING BEE

The word “fabulous” probably wasn’t on the official list of spelling words at the Capital Region Spelling Bee recently, but Saugerties student Donovan Barros certainly knows how to spell it. In fact, he defines it.

Donovan, an eighth grader at Saugerties Junior High School, finished ninth at the regional bee, out-spelling about 90 competitors from 61 school districts. Cahill fifth grader Austin Rezak also competed at the regional event, held at Proctor’s Theater in Schenectady.

This year’s competition was Donovan’s second time taking part in the Capital Region bee. He competed in the winter of 2015 after winning the Saugerties district bee as a sixth grader at Riccardi.

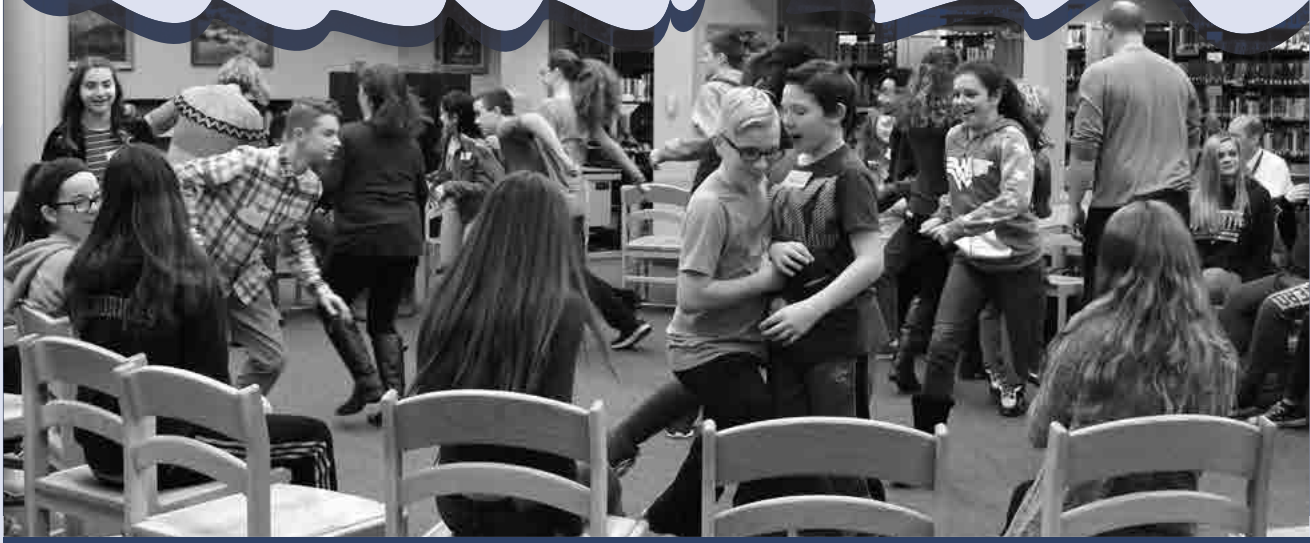
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# Saugerties

Central School District

WINTER 2017

## 30 Saugerties Junior-Senior High Students Trained as Peer Leaders



“You were chosen for this because you are seen as leaders. You have a lot of power.”

Emily Judd,  
Above the Influence Prevention Specialist

A group of “dynamite” young leaders walks the halls at Saugerties Junior-Senior High School every day, trained and ready to help their peers cope with the challenges and pressures of the teen years.

Through a two-year grant provided by New York State Senator George Amedore, Saugerties was able to launch a program called Above the Influence at the Junior-Senior High. A national anti-drug campaign run in affiliation with the University of Rochester, Above the Influence is aimed at helping students rise above negative influences, stay true to themselves, and make positive decisions with the help of leaders among their own classmates.

Thirty students in grades 7 through 10 were nominated by their teachers to become peer leaders and received two hours of interactive training in January, led by Emily Judd, an Above the Influence Prevention Specialist. The group of trainees is diverse and represents a cross-section of the student body. Four Junior High School teachers – Kim Petramale, Amy Michaels, Kyle Schermerhorn, and Meghan Keyser – were also trained as part of the program.

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## Farmstand, Tractor Bring Thoughts of Spring



Saugerties Junior-Senior High School technology students and their teachers gather to show off the new farmstand and tractor.

Even though snow is still flying, everyone at Saugerties Junior-Senior High School is thinking spring thanks to the arrival of the new farmstand building on the edge of campus.

The farmstand, which was delivered during winter break, will ultimately become the focal point of the Saugerties G.R.O.W.S (Graduation Requirements Through Occupational Work Study) initiative, which was launched in January 2016 with a \$700,00-plus grant. The grant is helping the District expand its career and technical education course offerings and will give

students with disabilities real-world occupational work experience that will count toward a graduation credential.

Students will eventually grow vegetables in the garden on the Junior-Senior High School campus and sell them, along with homemade food, crafts, and other items, at the farmstand, which is located close to Washington Ave.

Another sure sign of spring that appeared recently are the blue bags used by science and environmental club students to collect sap from the maple trees on campus. The maple sugaring operation, which

produces tasty homemade maple syrup, also plays a role in Saugerties G.R.O.W.S. and students were busy in the fall sawing wood to fuel the evaporator used to boil down the sap.

Thanks to the efforts of technology and science teachers, the District also acquired a tractor that will be used in the garden to move mulch, turn compost piles, and other tasks. The tractor will be serviced by students, and teachers hope it can be eventually converted to run on vegetable oil, all as part of a new Transportation course offered at the Junior-Senior High School.

## Cracking the Code at Saugerties Junior High

Saugerties Junior High School students were part of the future of technology in December as they joined millions of their peers around the world for an "Hour of Code."

Held annually in conjunction with Computer Science Education Week in early December, Hour of Code is a worldwide effort to not only demystify coding, but to help students learn and enjoy it. Saugerties has been taking part in the initiative for several years.

Hour of Code actually lasted three days in Saugerties. Throughout the week of December 5, students in Shawn Christensen's, Bryan VanVliet's, and Jack Washburn's technology classes got a chance to experience a variety of coding lessons and activities. They tried their hands at making 3D games using an online program called AgentCubes, animated their names on a computer screen using a free programming language called Scratch that's available online through Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and learned the basics of the coding process.

"We're having a good time with it," said VanVliet. "I think the students are really excited and engaged."

For many students, this was their first time working with coding and Christensen said the activities were "very relevant" to what's happening in technology and the job market. The activities were meant to introduce the students to the possibilities

of coding, both in terms of how it works and what talented coders can do professionally. Christensen said that many technology jobs with excellent compensation and perks are becoming available to "the best of the best" and the field continues to grow. VanVliet said the students recognize the importance of coding as something that affects real life through devices like phones, televisions, and cars.

What made this year's coding event even more exciting was the chance for students to use some of the latest technology available: tiny computers called

Raspberry Pi. Roughly the size of a credit card, Raspberry Pi is a fully functioning computer that plugs into a screen and keyboard and can do anything a full-size computer can do, all for about \$30 each.

Saugerties purchased 20 Raspberry Pi computers through a grant and students have been enjoying working with them.

"Once Wi-Fi goes in, we'll have 20 machines with internet access," VanVliet

said, noting that having the tiny computers saves not only money but space.

By the end of the three days, students had logged a total of about 800 hours of coding.





## Backpack Program Helps Keep Students Nourished, Warm This Winter

More than 80 Saugerties elementary school students in need have been enjoying warm gloves, hot soup, and yummy snacks this winter, thanks to the ongoing efforts of the Saugerties High School Key Club.

Each week, Key Club members stuff 85 backpacks with a variety of non-perishable breakfast, lunch, and snack items that students can easily prepare and eat. The backpacks are sent home every Friday to ensure that the children have food to eat during the weekend. This winter, gloves, hats, and scarves donated by District staff have also been included to help keep kids warm.

Thus far, the program has served students at Cahill and Mt. Marion, but the Key Club hopes to add Morse and Riccardi soon.

The Key Club is a high school service organization sponsored by Kiwanis of Saugerties. The backpack program has been underway for more than a year under the direction of advisor Missy Greco. The club extends its thanks to the many generous donors in the community who have supported Saugerties students through their contributions to the backpack program.



## Saugerties Puts Its Heart into Annual Jump Rope Fundraiser

Mt. Marion, Cahill, and Saugerties Junior High were all jumpin' to the beat in February...the healthy heartbeat, that is.

Students at all three schools took part in the annual Jump Rope for Heart during Valentine's Day week, raising money for the American Heart Association and staying active at the same time.

Jump Rope for Heart activities took place in phys ed classes at Cahill and Mt. Marion. Students enjoyed moving through a variety of stations where they challenged themselves and their friends at activities like hurdles, Hula Hooping, and jumping rope, of course. A long jump mat at Mt. Marion proved enormously popular, as did pogo-sticking, an activity that not only built muscles and coordination, but also patience and perseverance. At Saugerties Junior High, members of the Builder's Club continued their tradition by taking to the gym for some vigorous after school exercise.

While it's impossible to know how many beats the students' hearts took while they ran, jumped, and skipped, one thing that's definitely healthy is the students' concern for those with heart disease and the amount of money, more

than \$25,000, that the three schools have raised in the last decade through their Jump Rope for Heart participation.





## SHS Students Fired Up For Ceramics Course

A group of art students at Saugerties High School (SHS) has spent this school year molding and shaping their talents and skills, not to mention a whole lot of clay, thanks to the re-introduction of ceramics to the High School art curriculum.

"Clay is always a lot of fun," said Bob Slate, who teaches the full-year elective course. "The students love it."

Slate spent last summer reworking the curriculum of the former ceramics course that was offered for many years but eventually eliminated. When the new class launched, nine young women, mostly juniors and seniors, signed up and have spent the year creating everything from trinket boxes to vases.

"There's a wide range of things happening," Slate said of his students' projects.

Although the students say they opted to take ceramics because "clay is fun," they're actually

learning a lot as they mold, pinch, scrape, and carve. They're getting direct experience with the three-dimensional world, thinking in terms of geometric shapes, learning the properties of physics firsthand as they shape each object, and engaging in nearly constant problem solving.

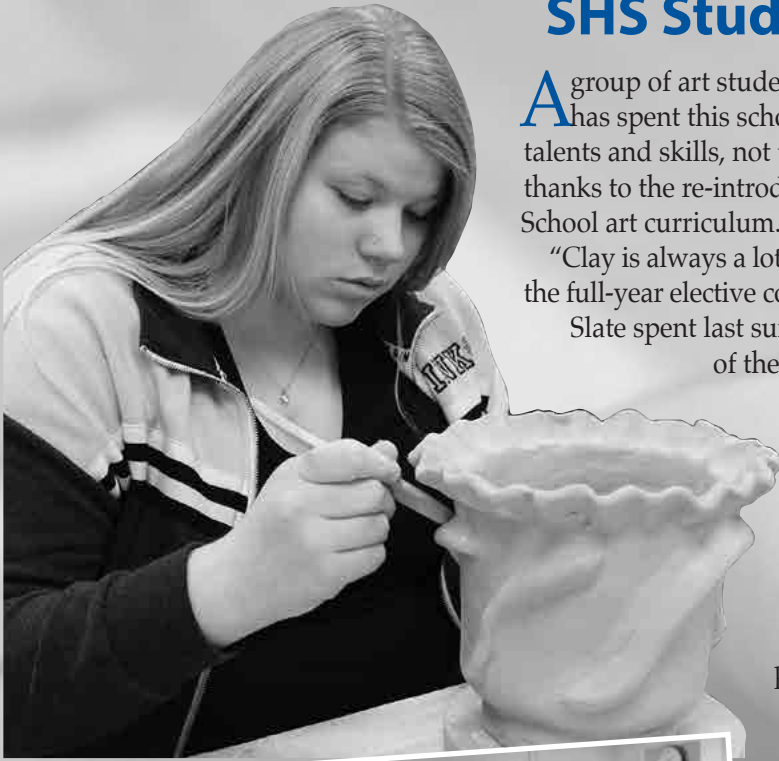
And the results of all this learning are beautiful. A cart near the kiln holds colorful pinch pots and flowers, and the students' final hand-building project for the year has generated everything from a complex geode to a realistic lighthouse.

Most of the students' work is done by hand-building, but one project this spring will involve throwing pottery on the wheel, an experience the young artists are looking forward to.

In order to take ceramics, students must first take Studio Art and Design, where they get a brief introduction to working with clay. Seventh graders also have one clay assignment per year in art class.

Examples of artwork created by the Ceramics students can be seen on Slate's web page:

<http://www.saugerties.k12.ny.us/Domain/356> on the District website.



Humans have been sculpting clay for thousands of years, but these four Saugerties High School artists were getting creative a little more recently, about half a century ago. They were featured in the 1967 Sawyer yearbook on a page devoted to student art classes. Although the students' mustached sculptures are a bit different than today's ceramics designs, the philosophy behind teaching art, namely that it's a "course in awareness," hasn't changed much in five decades.

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## 30 Saugerties Junior-Senior High Students Trained as Peer Leaders



"You were chosen for this because you are seen as leaders," Judd told the students. "You have a lot of power."

During the training, students took part in ice-breaker games and activities that involved writing, drawing, and interacting with their peers to help them learn more about themselves and their fellow trainees. During the second half of the session, the students discussed some of the challenges of the teen years, like stress, relationships, drugs and alcohol, bullying, and pop culture, and learned more about ways to talk to their peers about those challenges. The students were urged to consider the many good reasons to rise above stress, and think about who they can turn to in difficult times to help them cope.

Dreama Manganiello, a seventh grader who trained as a peer leader, said she was "super excited" to take part in Above the Influence because she loves "being involved."

Junior High School Assistant Principal Ginger Vail thanked the students for stepping up to take part in the initiative and expressed pride in them on behalf of herself as well as Principal Tom Averill.

"Mr. Averill and I couldn't be happier that we're going to have some dynamite leaders in the building, helping their fellow students work through the challenges of junior high," Vail said.



# Learning Goes Galactic at Riccardi's Planet Runway

Riccardi Elementary School second graders proved that learning about science is the best thing this side of the space station as they once again launched Planet Runway, an annual celebration of everything celestial.

The planets aligned for a perfect performance on February 14 as students in Sue Rinaldi's and Frances Murphy's classes wrapped up their study of the solar system with an educational fashion show for parents.

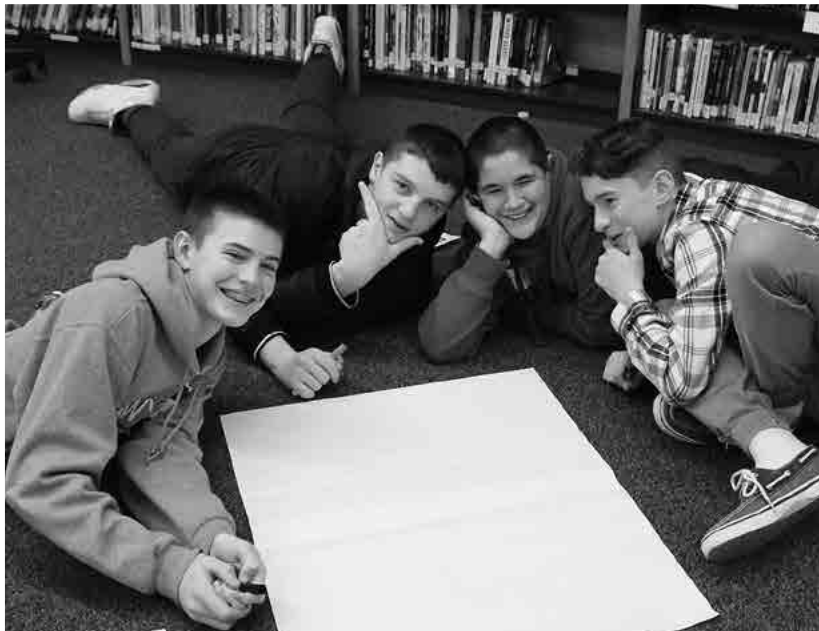
The students spent a month exploring deep space (virtually, that is), and emerged with a galaxy of fascinating facts about their chosen planets. Then, proving that there might be inertia in space but not in second grade, they got right to work creating far-out fashions to wear on the catwalk.

Whether they were styling Saturn's radical rings or wearing a jazzy Jupiter jumper, the students were a constellation of cuteness whose gravitational pull was impossible to resist.

Superintendent Seth Turner acted as master of ceremonies for the event, keeping the planets spinning with jokes and puns while giving each student a moment in the sun. The planets performed their short orbit to appropriate tunes like "Venus" by Bananarama and "Uptown Funk" by Bruno Mars, all spun by Riccardi's very own resident DJ, JoAnn Longendyke. Teaching Assistant Patricia Moore assisted by holding up a microphone for students so transmissions from each of the planets came through loud and clear.

Besides becoming educated about the Earth and its solar system, the students got space gloves-on art experience making their costumes, and were able to practice the galactic grace and Plutonian poise needed to perform in public.

Some of the Riccardi solar system, left to right: Joshua Gohl as Planet Nine; Alexander Fehring-Cocks as Uranus; Delia Lopez celebrates the Earth's moon; and Charlie Wawro as the Sun.





# TOP SPELLERS SHINE IN SAUGERTIES DISTRICT BEE

Saugerties Central School District's best spellers waltzed through a tornado of words at the annual district-wide spelling bee on January 4, with eighth grader Donovan Barros emerging as the winner for the second time in three years. Fifth grader Austin Razek from Cahill took second place.

Two students each from Cahill, Morse, Mt. Marion, Riccardi, and the Junior High took part, earning a spot by winning their school bees in December.

The spellers' mettle was tested with words like muskrat, geothermal, Capricorn, and diorama.

"Ballerina" almost tripped up Donovan, who said he had trouble with vowels while practicing at home. He persevered, however, and even exuded confidence, a word he spelled correctly in the bee, but admitted he didn't always feel.

An avid reader who enjoys science fiction and the novels of Rick Riordan, Donovan, who attends Saugerties Junior High School, also won the 2015 district spelling bee when he was in sixth grade.

Runner-up Austin Rezak said he signed up to participate in his classroom bee, but didn't think he'd even get as far as Cahill's school bee.

"I said I would do it but I seriously have no potential for this," he recalled.

Austin proved that he did, in fact, have quite a bit of potential, giving the right spelling of words like loiter, Netherlander, and caboose. When he correctly spelled falsetto in the fourth round, his jaw dropped in surprise.

When he's not practicing spelling words, Austin can often be found reading, particularly realistic fiction and the novels of "Diary of a Wimpy Kid" author Jeff Kinney. He also enjoys sports, especially football.

The classroom, building-level, and district-wide spelling bees provided a fun opportunity for students to practice their English Language Arts skills, build vocabulary, and develop poise and confidence while speaking in public.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Olanike Audu called the participants "real winners" for having advanced to the district-wide competition, and Superintendent Seth Turner also congratulated them for being the top one percent of spellers in their respective schools.

In addition to Donovan and Austin, this year's participants were: Brendan Honzik from Cahill; Mason Hagen and Armani Castano from Mt. Marion; Samuel Cushman and Molly Boek from Riccardi; Nicholas Stinemire and Gracelynn VonAhnen from Morse; and Brian Argueta from Saugerties Junior High. Brendan Honzik, Mason Hagen, Samuel Cushman, and Gracelynn VonAhnen are all returning district spelling bee participants from previous years.

Donovan and Austin represented Saugerties in the Capital Region Spelling Bee at Proctor's Theater in Schenectady on February 7.

Cahill fifth grader Austin Rezak reacts with surprise after correctly spelling "falsetto" at the District bee.



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### JHS STUDENT TAKES 9TH PLACE

Last time, he missed a word in the third round. This year, he made it into the top ten, clearing tough word hurdles like "babushka." He was only prevented from going further by the word "junta."

"I spelled it with an H," he said. "I should have asked for an alternate definition."

Austin's toughest word was "solepiece," which, he said, "has something to do with the bottom of a boat." Demonstrating good critical thinking skills, he teased out the spelling by considering the definition and deciding that the first part of the word was more likely spelled "sole" than "soul."

Both boys studied hard for the regional competition, reviewing a list of Scripps national spelling bee words available on the regional bee website. Both also enjoyed the adventure of meeting and competing against other standout spellers from around the state.

"It was really cool," Austin said. "I liked it a lot and I met a lot of cool people there."

"After getting over the fact that I got out on something I shouldn't have, it was really fun," said Donovan. "I had a good time."



The participants in the District spelling bee with their building principals, Superintendent Seth Turner, and Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Olanike Audu.



## Caring is Key at Cahill

Cahill Elementary School students have been putting their kind hearts to work warming up the cold winter months with compassion and care recently.

The Student Council held its annual Valentines for Vets Drive in February. Students were invited to send valentines to veterans who are currently at the VA hospital in Albany. The Valentines not only spread heartfelt cheer, but also thanked the veterans for their service.

On February 15 the school held “A Day in Yellow” to honor a Saugerties student who has been diagnosed with a rare type of brain cancer. Students and staff wore yellow to honor all those fighting childhood cancer.

Students were also busy making sure the animals of the Saugerties community are not forgotten this winter. A pet supply drive was held in mid-February and students collected several large boxes and bags of pet food, towels, blankets, treats, and toys for the cats and dogs at the Saugerties Animal Shelter. Elly Monfett, manager of the shelter, stopped by to pick up the donations and expressed her appreciation to the students.

Members of the Cahill Elementary School Student Council sent good wishes to veterans for Valentines Day (left). They also led a pet supply drive to assist their furry friends at the Saugerties Animal Shelter (below). Willow, one of two therapy dogs who regularly visits Cahill, “pawed” to join the students for a photo op on behalf of her canine and feline pals.





## Morse Alum Hits the Right Note with Winter Concert



Katie Hofstatter (sixth from right), a Grant D. Morse alumna and 2016 graduate of Saugerties High School (SHS) returned to the District on January 13 to perform in concert with The Rusty Pipes, an a cappella singing group she's part of at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy. Katie, who sang in chorus while a student at SHS, is currently a freshman studying architecture at RPI. The Rusty Pipes performed at Morse and SHS as part of a multi-state winter break tour.

In addition to enjoying great music, the concert gave students an opportunity to see a Saugerties graduate who has found academic success and enrichment through the arts at college. "She's done very well for herself," said Morse Principal Don Dieckmann, who pointed out that Hofstatter embodies all of the Six Cs – **Creativity, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Compassion, Citizenship, and Communication** – the positive character traits that Morse students aspire to each day.



### Morse Celebrates the Six Cs

Grant D. Morse Elementary School students are superstars at working with their ABCs, and this winter they proved that they're pretty awesome at the Six Cs, too.

The Six Cs – **Creativity, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Compassion, Citizenship, and Communication** – are character traits that all Morse students aspire to.

During an assembly at the end of November, each of the traits was demonstrated and celebrated with skits by the Student Council, musical performances by Kindergartners, and other fun learning activities. Student Council members Nick Stinemire and Natalie Vail are pictured during a skit that emphasized communication.

Throughout the fall and winter, staff have also been busy "catching" students who display one or more of the Six Cs during the school day.

## Saugerties Administrators Take Part in Poverty Simulation

Three Saugerties Central School District administrators attended a poverty simulation workshop at Ulster BOCES in New Paltz in February.

Presented through a partnership between Ulster BOCES Instructional Services and Capital Region BOCES, the half-day workshop was aimed at giving administrators insight into the daily struggles of those living in poverty and how those struggles affect students. Participants were divided into "families" and tasked with navigating through four 15-minute "weeks" with limited resources. Saugerties Deputy Superintendent Lawrence Mautone, Coordinator of Pupil Personnel Services Lisa Kappler, and Saugerties High School Assistant Principal Lee Molyneaux attended the workshop. Kappler is pictured below at left, in discussion with Instructional Services Supervisor Gwendolyn Roraback.

