

“There can be
no health of mind,
unless the body
is cared for.”

– Plato

Physical Education Program: Exercise Builds Better Bodies and Better Brains

While gymnasiums today are sometimes thought of as mere appendages of our schools, the ancient Greeks believed that the gymnasium was the school. They knew there were many good reasons to exercise, and fitness was only one of them.

Today, with modern research such as brain-scanning tools and sophisticated biochemistry confirming that a strong, active body is not only crucial for building good health, but for building a strong, active mind, the District is working with teachers and parents to provide students with the information they will need to create a healthy lifestyle and lifelong health through weight management, fitness, and overall family health and wellness knowledge.

“Our plan is to incorporate more activity into the classroom and more cardiovascular activity into PE class,” says Lee Molyneaux, Athletic Director for the District. “We did a lot of curriculum writing over the summer that stresses more activity for all students at all levels. We want students to have the best learning environment possible.”

The District provides a comprehensive physical education program for Grades K-12 that includes a modified interscholastic program for Junior High School students, and a full interscholastic program for High School students. More than a dozen sports are offered.

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Riccardi students get their heart rates up on Dance Dance Revolution.

Saugerties

Central School District

FALL 2007

Capital Project Reaches First Milestone



Progress on the Capital Building Project continues at a steady pace with many of the exciting new additions at the Senior High School easily visible from the roadway and parking lots. In fact, a major milestone is fast approaching, according to the District’s construction manager, Craig Zandonella of U.W. Marx Construction. “We’re making good progress,” he reports. “We’re on schedule for occupancy of the new science area and music addition during the first week of January.”

Anticipation grows as construction continues. On the southeast side of the building, the walls of the new music addition can be seen. On the northwest side, the facade of the media center is completed and the interior work is ready to begin. Behind the school, improvements to the athletic fields (including the installation of a new track, bleachers, and scoreboard) have been watched closely by students, who are eager to put them to good use. But first, they will have the opportunity to try out new classrooms in the science and music areas.

The science area renovation and expansion has transformed three 1963-era science classrooms and a seldom-used



Science and music classrooms are scheduled for occupancy in January.

courtyard into two new classrooms and three state-of-the-art biology, chemistry, and physics laboratories. The music addition boasts four new rooms (instrumental and vocal rooms, music library, and a classroom) with modern acoustics providing an ideal setting for music instruction.

More good news comes from Mr. Zandonella, “The exterior of the media center is about 90 percent complete,” he says. Interior work is scheduled to begin in January and continue through the

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– Craig Zandonella
Construction Manager

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Cahill Students Learn Geography Can Be Fun

According to the educational website www.mywonderfulworld.com, only 37 percent of American students can point to Iraq on a map. For Cahill Elementary School teacher Kathleen Kluber, that number is simply not good enough. So Ms. Kluber, along with school librarian Barbara Repko, set a standard for Cahill students: "Our goal is for 100% of our students to be able to tell on which continent Iraq is located and find Iraq on the map."

That's where Geographic Awareness Week comes in. Every third week in November since 1987, the National Geographic Society has promoted geography in schools through educational resources available online, as well as special events for students, games, contests, and classroom activities. This year, Ms. Repko and Ms. Kluber brought the activities to Cahill students, and it was a huge sensation.

Both Ms. Kluber and Ms. Repko became fired up about geography after participating in a Summer Institute through the New York Geographic Alliance, which is funded by National Geographic. "The subject was The Erie Canal, but the broader theme was geography education," says Ms. Kluber.

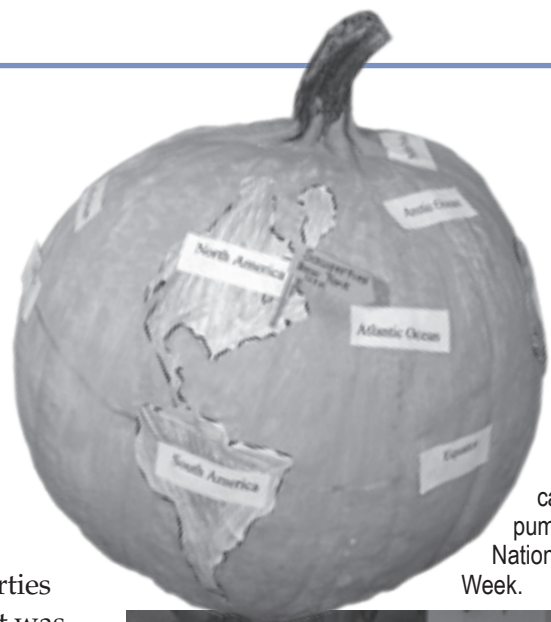
Upon their return from the seminar, Ms. Kluber and Ms. Repko have been applying their newly acquired skills to spreading the word about geography to both students and teachers. "We have facilitated many hands-on geography lessons in our building," she said. "Last week we presented a workshop for Saugerties teachers at Staff Development Day."

So what were the kids up to during Geographic Awareness Week? Lots, said Ms. Kluber. Everyday, students at Cahill were given a geography related activity. For example, November 15 was Wear Your Geography T-Shirt to School Day. Prizes were awarded for both the place that was farthest away from Saugerties and for the most unusual place. A contest was also held to see which student could make the longest list of books with geography in the title.

But the fun didn't end there. Cahill second graders created pumpkin globes, which have been circulating around the school as a "moveable exhibit." As the pumpkins travel, other students are adding features to the globes. "The third graders added The Great Lakes, the fourth graders added the Prime Meridian, and the fifth graders used the pumpkin globes to add other lines of longitude.

Students also made topographical map cookies of New York State, using icing and chocolate chips to identify bodies of water and mountain ranges.

"Geography Awareness Week was a huge success," says Ms. Kluber. All seven continents were presented on Wear Your Geography T-Shirt Day, with sixth graders sporting T-shirts from Dubai, Paraguay, Chile, France, Madagascar, and Kenya, just to name a few. Ms. Kluber intends to make Geography Awareness Week an annual occurrence. "In the meantime, we will continue to promote geography in all the content areas," she professes.



Cahill students created topographical map cookies and pumpkin globes for National Geography Week.



Mt. Marion Elementary School Celebrates 50 Years of Learning

Mt. Marion Elementary School's year-long golden anniversary celebration continued recently with the long-awaited completion of a 'Saugerties Timescape' mural across the length of the cafeteria's wall.

Artist Rick Pantell was chosen by a committee from a number of interested artists to paint the mural because of his clear understanding of what the work would mean to the school and the community, said retired principal Tony Manley, who joined the school community for this important celebration.

"We basically gave him a blank canvas and said we would like something that says Saugerties," Manley said. "It was like magic. All of a sudden, as a group, we realized we had gold."

Pantell's piece travels through the history of the area from left to right, beginning in the prehistoric age and continuing through the 20th century. Among the town-specific highlights are the Saugerties Lighthouse, Opus 40, Main Street, the Grist Mill, and eventually the familiar front of Mt. Marion Elementary School. Marching out of the school and into the future is a line of students playing musical instruments.

While the mural has been mostly finished for years, it wasn't truly complete until Pantell added a space shuttle above the school, as well as his own signature in the lower right corner of the piece. Poised upon a ladder in front of a crowd of roughly 100 people

"To be part of Mt. Marion has been an absolute highlight of my life"

*—Tony Manley
Retired Principal*

on a cold autumn night, Pantell added the last touches while being steadied by current principal Timothy Farley.

The mural was originally sketched out by Pantell, with faculty and students helping add color before the artist himself smoothed out the rough edges. Manley recalled filling in the smooth lines of a green Corvette, while the celebration host Jocelyn Cariello said she'd painted the backside of a woolly mammoth.

The mural was only part of the evening's festivities, which also featured a PowerPoint presentation of a journey through the last 50 years, including pop culture, politics, and local history. Two members of the very first Mt. Marion kindergarten class of September 1957 were also on hand for the celebration: Raymond Andreassen and Nancy Sutkus.

A video starring the comical antics of Manley and Farley struggling to find and remove a time capsule buried by students in 1982 was a big hit with the audience. The contents of the

time capsule included many drawings and essays from students at the school in 1982, all of which are on display in the main corridor and along the back wall of the cafeteria at Mt. Marion. Also in the capsule were artifacts that represented the early 80s, including a Holly Hobby doll and a baseball signed by Manley. There was also a copy of the New York Post from June 23, 1982, the date the time capsule was originally sealed.

The pride staff and community members displayed for the school and its history was moving. "This building is more than a building," Cariello said.

Manley agreed. "To be part of Mt. Marion has been an absolute highlight of my life"

If you missed the PowerPoint presentation, don't fret. The entire slide show will be made available on the school's official website.

The 50th anniversary celebration will continue on Friday, April 4, when the school will host a sock hop dance for current students, as well as any alumni who might be interested in attending.

Over the course of the school year, students will also create a new time capsule to be buried on the school grounds on Wednesday, May 21, presumably to resurface some time in 2032.

Finally, Mt. Marion Elementary will wrap up their year long golden anniversary tribute with a float in the popular Saugerties 4th of July parade.

Capital Project Reaches First Milestone

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spring. With the addition of this new space, the size of the media center will more than double, allowing more classes the ability to access the center for instruction and projects and provide sorely needed space for computer workstations.

Things are also looking up in the corridors of the Junior-Senior High School where ceilings were removed to accommodate upgrades to the electrical and plumbing systems. "That work has been completed and the ceilings are scheduled to go back in after the first of the year," Mr. Zandonella says. New lockers will also brighten the hallways in the New Year.

Next on the list are the unit ventilators, part of the heating and ventilation upgrade, which will be installed throughout the 100, 200, and 300 wings of the Senior High School. The spring will also bring the renovation of the 100 and 200 wings, which includes two additional science labs in the Senior High School. The boiler room renovations and upgrades will start in the spring and extend into the summer.

There's no doubt that the summer of 2008 will be a busy one for the construction crews with kitchen work, roof upgrades, and the technology and art department renovations scheduled.



Top: The exterior of the media center is 90 percent complete.



Bottom: New bleachers were installed on the athletic field in November.

"We'll also be addressing the Elementary Schools next summer," Mr. Zandonella adds. "That includes a whole gamut of renovations and mechanical upgrades."

Stay tuned for more exciting news as the project advances! Also, more information and construction updates can be found on the District's website at www.saugerties.k12.ny.us.

Construction on Athletic Fields Progressing

A major project for the District's Athletic Program this year is the ongoing construction of new athletic fields, which are beginning to look very inviting with the installation of lush green grass, security fencing, and shiny aluminum bleachers nearing completion.

"Everything's coming together," says Lee Molyneaux, Athletic Director. The football field's new goal posts are going up and the irrigation system has been installed — no more puddles or mud for students to avoid. There's a new scoreboard going in as well. The long jump and high jump areas are nearing completion and the track runways have been reconfigured. The former cinder track will be brought up to date with the installation of a much safer and sturdy all-weather surface of asphalt topped with a coating of the familiar brick-red bonded rubber.

In the meantime however, with the athletic fields temporarily unavailable for home games, scheduling and transporting more than 30 sports teams to and from every event has been no easy task.

"It's been interesting," Mr. Molyneaux says. "The modified teams have been playing on the back field at the High School, but the junior varsity and varsity events have all been scheduled at Dietz Stadium in Kingston."

Whether they're at home or away, the Sawyers demand respect on the athletic field. "We're competitive at almost every level," Mr. Molyneaux says.

Indeed, across the board, Saugerties students train long and hard with positive results. The baseball team has won league championships for the last three years and the wrestling and cross-country teams have their sights set on competing at the State level this year. "We have a lot of talented athletes, but their success is also a tribute to the coaching staff," Mr. Molyneaux says. A coaching staff that is stretched thin at times, he adds.

"It's becoming increasingly difficult to find coaches." Ironically, one reason for this he suspects is the high level of student interest in sports. "We have nearly 50 students trying out for basketball this year, which means that not everyone is going to get to play. That's one of the hardest parts of being a coach; deciding who gets to play and who doesn't."

Deadline Extended for School Tax Relief Rebate

There is good news from Albany for Saugerties School District residents who have not yet returned their applications for the 2007 Middle Class STAR Property Tax Rebate program. The New York State Tax Department is resending applications to eligible taxpayers who have not yet applied and has extended the deadline till **December 31**.

The Tax Rebate is part of a program designed to provide property tax relief for senior citizens and middle income families. The rebate arrives in the form of a check and is provided in addition to the STAR relief that reduced the tax due line on people's school tax bills.

The State will calculate rebate checks on a sliding scale based on income and town within each school district. Taxpayers earning over \$250,000 are not eligible for this additional new relief, but will continue to receive their current STAR benefit.

To apply, residents must complete and return the application that was sent to them by December 31, 2007. Seniors 65 years or older who already receive the enhanced STAR exemption do not have to apply, they will receive their STAR rebate check automatically.

Applicants are encouraged to apply online for the fastest check processing service, but must have their applications in hand to do so, as each contains a special STAR code unique

to the individual property. Filing the application on-line is fast, secure, and free. Once your application arrives, simply go to the Tax Department's website at www.nystax.gov and follow the directions.

More detailed information is also available on the website, as well as through the Tax Department's Call Center at 1-877-6-STAR-NY (1-877-678-2769), which can also fully assist Spanish speaking taxpayers.

Example Middle Class STAR Rebate for Saugerties Central Schools Based Upon 2005 Combined Income of Property Owners and Spouses				
	Up to \$90,000	Over \$90,000 and up to \$150,000	Over \$150,000 and up to \$250,000	Seniors with Enhanced STAR
Town of Saugerties	\$389.25	\$291.94	\$194.63	\$307.04
Town of Ulster	\$320.59	\$240.44	\$160.30	\$253.04
Town of Woodstock	\$385.01	\$288.76	\$192.51	\$303.79

Source New York Tax Department at www.nystax.gov

The First Ones In and the Last Ones Out

There's no question that the Saugerties Central School District Custodial Staff is a very dedicated team of men and women. Their day begins before the sun is up and ends long after sundown, and the tasks to be tended during the intervening hours are endless. Just imagine cleaning up after 3,376 students between the ages of five and 18 on a daily basis!

"We are the first ones in the door in the morning and the last ones out at night," says Mike LaTourette, head custodian and supervisor of the staff of 23 men and women who maintain the District's buildings – a total of 444,040 square feet. Mr. LaTourette is quick to add though that he and his staff work hand-in-hand alongside the District's maintenance crew. "Teamwork is a priority for us," he adds.

At the Junior-Senior High School (184,610 square feet) alone, there are nearly 100 classrooms and offices, at least a dozen bathrooms, two gymnasiums, a huge auditorium with a stage, four locker rooms, two libraries, and two cafeterias to be kept up. The custodial staff there also cares for the Hildebrandt Building (9,180 square feet) where the District's admin-

"I've got a good group of individuals who respect one another, work well together, and know what they're doing."

*– Mike LaTourette
Head Custodian*

istrative offices are located. And the construction of the new music and science rooms and Media Center at the School will soon add another 16,062 square feet.

There's another 250,250 square feet between the four Elementary Schools with their respective classrooms and bathrooms, libraries, cafeterias, and gymnasiums.

Needless to say, there are always floors to mop, bathrooms to clean, and trash cans to

empty, but there are also classroom chalkboards to wash, jammed locker doors to open, and far too many clogged drains to clear. During the summer, there's a lot of heavy lifting and lugging as the staff moves all the desks and cabinets out in preparation for painting classrooms and waxing and polishing floors. It's then too, when all those lockers lining the hallways are given a thorough scrubbing, inside and out.

Even in the evenings and on the weekends — anytime there's a school or community event in District buildings — the custodial staff is on duty. They roll out the gymnasium bleachers, set up tables, chairs, and sound systems, and then put them all

away when the event ends. They also keep their eyes open for potential trouble such as a leaky pipe, a window that was accidentally left open, or too much snow on the roof.

Properly maintaining the cleanliness of the buildings is not a task that should be taken lightly, and the custodial crew understands the vital role their efforts play in the health and safety of students. Not only is there the potential for injuries if people are tripping or slip-

Saugerties Central School District Custodial Staff Unsung Heroes

Caring for the nearly half-million-square-feet of the District's six buildings takes a lot of manpower, coordination, and hard work. The almost two-dozen unsung heroes on the District's custodial staff do

a great job keeping the buildings looking good and pitching in when the maintenance crew needs some extra hands. This team of individuals is dedicated to the children of these buildings.

Jr-Sr HS

Mike LaTourette (Head)
Chester VanWagenen
Paul Masten
Paulann Hillje
Bruce O'Neal
John Wolven
Robbie Freer
Stephen Thorne
Brett Marcus
Bob Yetter

Mike LaTourette



Chester VanWagenen



Doug Steere



Riccardi ES

Doug Steere (Head)
Frank Sparling
Jeff Longendyke

Mt. Marion ES

William Pedersen (Head)
Jeff Thorne
Maria Reginato

Cahill ES

Kim Buntele (Head)
Joe Zisko
Dave Ducas
Debbie Sperl
Steve Sullivan

Morse ES

Tom Resso (Head)
Bruce Meiswinkel
Jason Wenton

Bob Yetter



Robbie Freer



Bruce O'Neal



Paulann Hillje



ping on un-kept floors, highly occupied public buildings, especially those with children, can be a breeding ground for germs. The crew ensures their buildings are thoroughly cleaned and sanitized to keep sickness away from the children that they serve. When a public health crisis arises (like the flu or the recent antibi-

otic-resistant strain of a common staph infection called methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) that caused concern for schools across the nation), the custodial crew is one of the first lines of defense for preventing an outbreak.

"We try to catch things before they become

a problem and keep things running safely and smoothly for everyone," Mr. LaTourette says. He credits his staff, with their wide range of experience and skills, for making this possible. "I've got a good group of individuals who respect one another, work well together, and know what they're doing."

District Welcomes New Head Custodian

The job of head custodian for the District is new for Mike LaTourette, who joined the staff in August, but as a school alumnus, the District's buildings are certainly very familiar to him. The Saugerties High School graduate walked the hallways as a student, and now he and his wife have four children currently attending schools in the District. They also have a daughter who is a teacher in the District.

Mr. LaTourette credits his predecessor of 20 years, Tom Brennan, for easing the transition into his new job. "Tommy kept records on everything. That's helped tremendously. He also told me to call him if I had any questions, and I've taken him up on it several times. He's been there whenever I needed him."



Retired head custodian Tom Brennan (right) shares some pointers with Mike LaTourette, who took over the reigns in August.

Jeff Thorne



William Pedersen



Kim Buntele



Bruce Meiswinkel



Tom Resso



Maria Reginato



Square Footage -

- ☛ Mt. Marion Elementary = 53,060, sq ft
- ☛ Grant D Morse Elementary = 49,230 sq ft
- ☛ Riccardi Elementary = 57,100 sq ft
- ☛ Cahill Elementary = 90,860 sq ft
- ☛ Hildebrandt Building = 9,180 sq ft
- ☛ Jr/Sr High = 184,610 sq ft
- ☛ **Total = 444,040 sq ft**
- ☛ Also, the capital project additions at the Jr/Sr High (Music Rooms, Science Rooms, and Media Centers) will add 16,062 sq ft.

Readers Are Leaders!

Summer Reading Challenge at Riccardi Elementary School

One distinguishing quality of all great leaders is the fact that they are readers. Review many biographies and you'll discover that leaders make it a point to read on a regular basis, rely on reading as a major key to expanding their knowledge base, and enthusiastically encourage those around them to do the same.

That's exactly what teachers at Riccardi Elementary did during the School's first annual 2007 Summer Reading Challenge – enthusiastically encouraged their students to read, read, and read some more!

"The Summer Reading Challenge was a huge success and we expect even more participants next year," says Frances Murphy, a second grade teacher. Students read their books and then chose a challenge that related to their reading, such as cooking a meal with mom, making a mobile, or writing a letter to the author, she explained. The young readers' response to the project was very exciting.

Students read everything from A to Z, including biographies and fiction, classics and comics, and cookbooks and sports books. All together, they read hundreds of books and created many beautiful projects that were displayed in the hallways and classrooms when they returned from vacation.

"It was very successful," adds Riccardi principal Michael Miller. "The children had a great



Julie Raleigh, a winner of the summer Reading Challenge, loves to read!

time and the summer break was an opportune time for them to expand their language skills."

In September, 36 students were presented with awards, based on the number of challenges completed. A special treat for everyone at the awards presentation was a visit from two literary favorites, the Cat in the Hat and Mother Goose.

The top award went to Julie Raleigh, a second grade student. She received a Barnes and Noble gift certificate, a "Readers are Leaders" T-shirt, and a school store gift certificate for her hard work. Students who completed 30 or more challenges received a T-shirt and a school store gift certificate. Those who completed at least eight challenges received a school store certificate. All participating students received a signed award certificate.



Making Healthy Choices for Life

Although very different from those lessons taught in the core academic subjects, learning to make healthy food choices and exercise regularly are also important skills that students will have with them for the rest of their lives. Laying the groundwork for students to make healthy dietary and exercise decisions is a major focus of schools across the country as childhood obesity levels soar. With this in mind, the District began working on developing a Health and Wellness Policy last fall.

"The goal is to model and teach students to eat well and be physically active in order to achieve a lifetime of good health," says Lee Molyneaux, chair of the Health and Wellness Committee. The Policy addresses the issues of nutrition, healthy living, and physical activities, and the impact these issues have on the District's children.

The District has taken a proactive stance on addressing many of the health and wellness issues today's society faces.

Tips for Eating Healthy when Eating Out

- As a beverage choice, ask for water or order fat-free or low-fat milk, unsweetened tea, or other drinks without added sugars.
- Ask for whole wheat bread for sandwiches.
- In a restaurant, start your meal with a salad packed with veggies, to help control hunger and feel satisfied sooner.
- Ask for salad dressing to be served on the side. Then use only as much as you want.
- Choose main dishes that include vegetables, such as stir fries, kebobs, or pasta with a tomato sauce.
- Order steamed, grilled, or broiled dishes instead of those that are fried or sautéed.
- Order an item from the menu instead of heading for the "all-you-can-eat" buffet.
- Order an appetizer or side dish instead of an entrée.
- On long commutes or shopping trips, pack some fresh fruit, cut-up vegetables, low-fat string cheese sticks, or a handful of unsalted nuts to help you avoid stopping for sweet or fatty snacks.

Tips for increasing physical activity

- Join a walking group in the neighborhood or at the local shopping mall.
- Push the baby in a stroller.
- Get the whole family involved—enjoy an afternoon bike ride with your kids.
- Walk up and down the soccer or softball field sidelines while watching the kids play.
- Walk the dog — don't just watch the dog walk.
- Walk, skate, or cycle more, and drive less.
- Do stretches, exercises, or pedal a stationary bike while watching television.
- Plant and care for a vegetable or flower garden.
- Play with the kids — tumble in the leaves, build a snowman, splash in a puddle, or dance to favorite music.
- Replace a coffee break with a brisk 10-minute walk. Ask a friend to go with you.
- Take a class in martial arts, dance, or yoga.
- Take a nature walk.
- Most important — have fun while being active.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture

JRHS Fall Friends Reach Out

The burst of color during the advent of fall is a hallmark of living in Upstate New York, but as pretty as it is, no one really enjoys raking a leaf-strewn yard. For those who have physical limitations or simply aren't able to for any number of other reasons, it can also be an impossible task to complete. That's why the Junior High School's Builder's Club spent a few hours of their time in November as "Fall Friends," providing raking services for fellow community members in need.

According to English teacher Hope Antonelli, the idea for a "Fall Friends" project came from the school's new principal, Tom Averill. The project was perfectly in tune with the purpose of the Builder's Club, which is a service club that Antonelli describes as the Junior High equivalent of Kiwanis International. "We're like the little sister of Key Club."

Members of the Builder's Club realized that many different people from all walks of life could use a hand when the leaves start to fall. "This time of year can be hectic," Antonelli wrote in the flyer that urged members of her club to volunteer, "with parents with children going to school, for older friends who may have health concerns, for new moms and dads with babies, or perhaps to a friend who has fallen on hard times. These are the people that we would like to be Fall Friends to."

The response from the students was robust, not surprising given the size and dedication of the student members. The Builder's Club is one of the largest clubs in the school with about 50 students, which is a good thing because once word got out, the calls and re-



quests started pouring in.

"We have a lot of elderly people who need help, and even some young, like a new mom and dad who really just are strapped for time. It could be somebody who's working two jobs and just can't do it," explained Antonelli.

Regardless of the reason for the need, given the success of this year's event, the service will almost certainly be available in years to come. "People like to keep their community looking nice," Antonelli said, "but it is a lot of work."

The Builder's Club also participates in a number of other community service and charity events throughout the year, including a "Toys for Tots" campaign and a food drive. Students have also raised funds for St. Jude's Children's Hospital.

Welcome!

The District would like to extend a sincere welcome to this year's new instructional staff members.

New Teaching Staff

Jacqueline Allen, Cahill Elementary School, Grade 5

Laura Bubel, Cahill Elementary School, Academic Intervention Services

Mary Buehl, Riccardi, Special Education

Laura Cadden, Mt. Marion, Grade 4

Sean Collins, Morse/Riccardi Elementary Schools, Physical Education

Denise Distel, Cahill Elementary School, Reading

Laurie Freeman, Cahill/Mt. Marion Elementary Schools, Social Worker

Melissa LaTourette, Morse Elementary School, Grade 6

Jamie McCarthy, Cahill Elementary School, Grade 2

Amy Michaels, Junior High School, English

Jamie Monroe, Cahill Elementary School, Kindergarten

Arlene Parsi, Morse/Riccardi Elementary Schools, Social Worker

Steve Stellavato, Senior High School, English

Veronica Stinemire, Senior High School, Math

Michael Story, Junior High School, Math

Jenny Thayer, Morse/Riccardi Elementary Schools, Speech

Kristan Whelan, Mt. Marion Elementary School, Grade 6

Melinda Whitaker, Cahill/Mt. Marion Elementary Schools, Physical Education

A New Leader at the Junior High School

The Saugerties Junior High School has a new leader at the helm. Principal Tom Averill is thrilled to begin his career in the Saugerties Central School District, a place where he lives, works, raises his family, and volunteers with community organizations.

"The transition here was relatively easy because I already knew many of the students," comments Mr. Averill, a resident of Saugerties since 1991 and parent of five children in the District; one high school student, one junior high student, and three students who attend Grant D. Morse Elementary.

Mr. Averill is a graduate of SUNY Oswego with both a master's and bachelor's degree in technology education. He began his teaching career in the Rondout Valley Central School District in 1988, where he concurrently worked as Dean of Students as well as coached soccer, softball, and cross country running.

"It's been great to have a teaching background, but in my new position as an administrator, I'm also relying on the time management skills I developed when I was a teacher, coach, and dean of students," says Mr. Averill. Juggling all three professional roles was great preparation for the demands he would face as a school principal, Mr. Averill says.

Mr. Averill remained with the Rondout Valley Central School District until the Spring of 2002, when he moved on to serve the Hunter-Tannersville Central School District as principal of the Junior/Senior High School.

The rigors of administration and ability to connect with students throughout the school are things Mr. Averill truly enjoys. In July of 2007, he accepted the District's offer to be-



Tom Averill, Junior High School Principal

come principal of the Saugerties Junior High School.

The dedicated educator sees many similarities between working in administration and coaching athletic teams. "The coaching perspective is beneficial because it helps you understand where people are coming from," Mr. Averill says, who has worked as a volunteer with the American Youth Soccer Organization for the past several years.

Working to help all aspects of the school function together is something that provides Averill with a sense of purpose. "One of the biggest challenges in this role is trying to keep a middle level philosophy in a large, crowded 7-12 building," Averill explains. This challenge is one Mr. Averill readily accepts.

"My favorite part of being a principal is having the opportunity to create an environment that supports learning and growth in students. When this happens, I can see a sense of satisfaction in both the students and the teachers," Averill says.

High School Foreign Language Department Recognized

Students taking a foreign language or English as a second language at Saugerties Junior-Senior High School have the benefit of a very dedicated group of teachers...and that's a FACT! They have a recent recognition — for the second time — by the New York State Association for Foreign Language Teachers (NYSFLT) to prove it. The organization presented the teachers with its prestigious James E. Allen Distinguished Foreign Language Program award in November. The Department was also chosen for the award in 2003.

"We are an exceptionally strong unit," says Bernadette Dvorak, Spanish teacher and chair of the Department, explaining the team's success. The teachers' source of strength, she says, comes largely from their mutual "love of languages," but also their ability to "simply work well together." Their close proximity, along a main corridor of the building, is also help-



Junior-Senior High School Foreign Language and English as a Second Language Department teachers were recently recognized by the New York State Association for Foreign Language Teachers.

ful. "We constantly confer with one another as we pass in the hallways or enter and exit our shared classrooms. We are like a dynamic family unit, composed of very strong and independent individuals who accept and respect each other."

The James E. Allen Distinguished Foreign Language Program award is given annually for teaching excellence, as well as a demonstrated dedication and commitment to sharing knowledge of the field with colleagues. Department members include seven Spanish teachers (Laura Aponte, Bernadette Dvorak, Suzette Faxon, Ana Gatta, Angela Houlihan, Carolyn Muñoz, and Geraldine Popko); two French teachers (Lynn Gore and Teresa Schirmer) and one ESL teacher (Sondra Buono).

"They're a hard working team, respected by their students and their colleagues," says Timothy Price, High School Principal, about the award winning teachers. "We're very proud of them."

The teachers' source of strength comes largely from their mutual "love of languages," but also their ability to "simply work well together."

— Bernadette Dvorak, Department Chair

Physical Education Program:

Exercise Builds Better Bodies & Better Brains

Story continued from page 1

A Physical Education staff of 13 is responsible for getting the more than 3,100 students in the District moving: the athletic director, six physical education teachers at the Junior/Senior High School, and six teachers at the Elementary Schools, including two additional teachers added this fall.

CARDIOVASCULAR

Increasing activity levels for students without lengthening class periods isn't easy. But focusing on time efficiency and providing students with engaging activities helps. For example, at the Elementary Schools, students are getting some serious cardiovascular work-outs with the popular interactive dancing game Dance Dance Revolution (DDR). The District has purchased two of the games, which are being rotated among the four Elementary School buildings. Unlike the traditional video games that turn children into couch potatoes, this game keeps students moving and coming back for more with its eye-catching animation and high-energy music.

Students begin with dancing (stepping, stomping, and jumping) on the video game's electronic pads. They add upper body movement as they advance through the levels of difficulty, and eventually move on to create their own routines. Students learn to monitor their heart rate throughout the routine, calculate caloric expenditure, and wear pedometers to measure how many steps they've taken.

"The kids love it," says Ted Suttmeier, physical education teacher at Riccardi Elementary School, who reports that his students can take as many as 1,000 steps during one class period using the DDR dance pads. "It has a lot of cardiovascular benefits and the whole class can be working out at the same time."

A BRAIN WORK-OUT

Getting kids physically fit is not restricted to only gym classes. Teachers are also bringing movement and physical activity into the confines of the academic classrooms. Action-based learning, which is a teaching method based on

"A strong, active body is not only crucial for building good health, but for building a strong, active mind as well."

— Lee Molyneaux
Athletic Director

studies that support the link of physical activity to increased academic performance, can be used effectively in the classroom where space may be limited. Bringing rhythmic activities, such as jumping, dancing, tumbling, and stretching, into learning activities stimulates the brain and prepares it for optimum learning.

"One little girl in my class wrote in her journal, 'I love Mrs. Murphy's games,'" says Frances Murphy, a second grade teacher at Riccardi Elementary School who uses action-based learning techniques in her classroom every day. "To her, they're just fun. She doesn't know that I plan them into the lesson."

Mrs. Murphy uses a variety of activities including Musical Chairs and Simon Says to keep students engaged. One, called Move Like a Bat, is a favorite. Students begin with stretching to music and as the music speeds up so do their movements. "The students love it," she says. "You really have to see it to appreciate how much fun it is!"

It can be especially useful when working with kinesthetic learners. These are the "hands-on learners" or the "doers" who actually concentrate better and learn more easily when movement is involved.



Frances Murphy's second grade students get a classroom workout.

"Sometimes it's just hard for young students to be sitting in a classroom for long periods of time," Mrs. Murphy adds. "With some it's very obvious; some get sluggish, others get hyper. They need to stay active."

Mrs. Murphy also uses movement when teaching vocabulary words to her students. "They really enjoy it. For example, for the vocabulary word 'mourning' we would act that out by touching our hands to our hearts and dragging our feet. It also helps them remember things better – they associate the word with the movement."

For more information about the link between physical activity and academic performance, please visit www.fitness.org, www.healthierchildren.org, and www.braingym.org.

SAUGERTIES SPORTS OFFERED

- Basketball
- Baseball
- Cheerleading
- Football
- Golf
- Softball
- Cross-Country
- Wrestling
- Boys' /Girls' Lacrosse
- Boys' /Girls' Soccer
- Boys' /Girls' Tennis
- Boys' /Girls' Track
- Girls' Volleyball

Mustang Bowl IV: More Than a Game at Morse Elementary

The field was ready, the players and cheerleaders were warming up, and the fans anxiously waited for the game kickoff of Morse Elementary School's Mustang Bowl IV on October 17. Anticipation weighed in the air as the Mustangs and Patriots reviewed game strategy one more time before they met in the battle for the coveted Green Apple Cup.

"It's more than a game," explained Seth Turner, principal at Grant D. Morse Elementary School. "It's as big as the Super Bowl to the kids."

Aside from the physical benefits, it's also a lesson in sportsmanship, leadership, and teamwork for the fifth and sixth grade students who play the roles of players, coaches, and cheerleaders. The team coaches are selected on the basis of their ability to lead effectively while possessing a great deal of respect from their classmates. Athletic knowledge and ability was not a factor in their selection. The students take the game very seriously, practicing after school for more than a month to prepare.

Every year the Mustang Bowl grows a little larger and this year was no exception. The students' families and friends came from near and far to support their favorite teams and enjoy the post-game fes-



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—Seth Turner
Principal at Grant D. Morse
Elementary School

ivities, including a traditional tailgate party and favorite entertainers: Hilby the Master of Mischief and Mark Rust the Master of Music.

Phoebe Defino, a sixth grade student, described the event exceptionally well in her article for the Official Game Day Program, a special publication created by student staff members of the School newspaper, *Just Print It*: "The Mustang Bowl is an awesome school event," she wrote. "The spectators will feel as if they are going to a professional football game."