



November 2023

NY MILLS



UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Parents, Guardians and Community Members,

The 2023-24 school year is off to a great start! Students and staff have been planning and preparing for a variety of school events. This edition of the newsletter includes highlights from some special fall events as well as information about what the 2023-24 school year will have to offer.

Each day, our campus is bustling with activity. We are excited to bring back many of the programs that provide opportunities for parents and community members to participate in our educational experiences, as well as the many occasions that allow us to celebrate our traditions and accomplishments.

Mission:

Our mission of preparing students for the future remains at the core of our work. We will continue to provide the programming and services that support our students in their educational journey and we renew our commitment to excellence in fostering an environment that not only allows our students to grow, but to thrive.

District Goals:

One of our primary goals is to continue to increase communication. The District will be kicking off a new website platform with redesigned features to enhance navigation and information access. This new platform will also integrate with our parent communication system which provides notifications via telephone, text messaging, email and social media posts. We are looking forward to these enhancements to help facilitate home/school communication.

Proposed Capital Improvement Project:

I am also pleased to announce an upcoming proposition for a Capital Improvement project. On December 12, 2023, qualified registered voters of the New York Mills Union Free School District will have the opportunity to vote on capital improvements in the K-12 school building that include much needed upgrades to bathroom facilities, building security features, the auditorium, the attendance kiosk, the high school gymnasium, the roof and other facility items that are essential to a safe and supportive learning environment. All of these improvements can be accomplished with a zero percent increase in taxes. Detailed information on the full scope of the project will be shared in the upcoming weeks.

Programming and Services:

Instructional programming also continues to be enriched. Curricular enhancements and a multi-tiered system of support are being implemented to meet the academic and social-emotional needs of all students. We firmly believe that the provision of a quality education is one that builds a framework of support for student success and one where key stakeholders work in partnership to prepare students for the many possibilities that lie ahead.

New York Mills Union Free School District is dedicated to building a legacy of opportunity for all. Thank you for your continued support of our students and our school district as we partner in providing another productive and successful school year.

Sincerely,

Michele D. LaGase
Superintendent of Schools

"Elf Jr.," The Musical (cont. on pg. 15)



HIGHLIGHTS

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MAKING THE MASK

Students have been working in teams to help create a 3D plaster mask. The art students researched African ceremonial masks and had to come up with an original mask of their own. This is a fun, collaborative, hands-on project that has gotten the students excited to make some 3D art. Come down to the art wing to view some of the amazing creations.





Fundraiser presented by:
THE GRADES 7-12 CHORUS

Tickets go on sale beginning **November 20, 2023**

Full chicken dinner, **\$15**

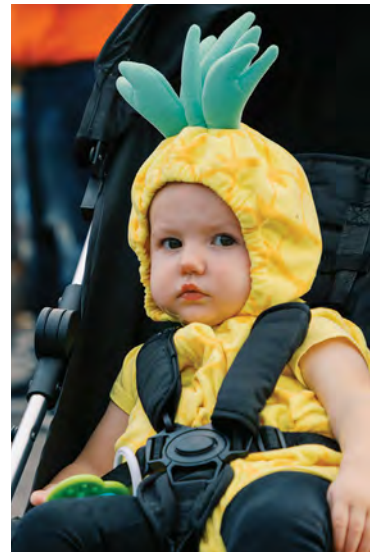
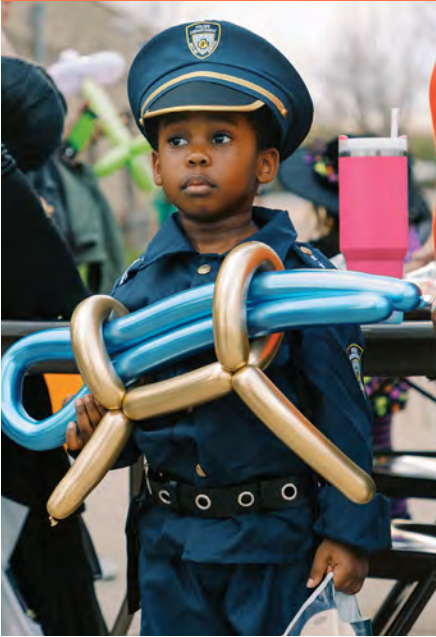
Pickup December 1, 2023, 3-6 p.m. in the school cafeteria

Pre-order your dinner through the school or any chorus member.



DISTRICT NEWS
TRUNK OR TREAT &
HOMECOMING WEEK

TRUNK OR TREAT





HOME COMING WEEK



Written by NYM student Asah Bova

Over the week of October 16th-21st, students were able to participate in Spirit Week, a Pep Rally, and the Homecoming football game and dance. Spirit days included Pajama Day, Rhyme Without Reason, Barbie Day, BBQ Dads vs. Soccer Moms and Orange and Blue Day.

At the Pep Rally on October 20th, students participated in fun activities following the Powder Puff game, in which junior and senior girls played flag football while the boys cheered.

The Homecoming football game was held at 12 p.m. on October 21st. The Marauders beat Sauquoit 30-16. The dance was held later that day at 7 p.m. Homecoming was a very fun and successful week. We want to thank the parents, teachers, students and Student Council for putting this week together.



Music Department Upcoming Events

- 12/01** **Brooks BBQ**, 3:00-6:00 p.m. | School Cafeteria | *Pre-order starting Nov. 20th*
Call the school or see any chorus member
- 12/14** **Jr./Sr. High School Winter Concert**, 7:00 p.m.
(with special guest, the Elementary Band)
- 12/20** **7-12 grade Musical Auditions**, 2:45 p.m.
- 01/10** **Jr. High All-County Auditions**
- 01/11** **Jr. High All-County Auditions** *(Snow date)*
- 01/29** **Kanari Saxophone Quartet "Intro to Chamber Music" Presentation**

We welcome everyone to our winter concert, as it is a wonderful way to fill your holidays with the beautiful music our musicians create here at our school. The concert is free and open to the entire community, friends and all our neighbors.

WHEN IN DOUBT ...
WHO TO CONTACT

➔

A GUIDE FOR STAFF, PARENTS
AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS	STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5
MEDICAL CONCERNS	➔ Building Nurse 768-3391	➔ Building Administrator Mary Facci 768-8124 Denise DiSpirito 768-8129	➔ Director of Athletics (if related to an athletic event only) Marissa Rys 768-8124	➔ Superintendent Mrs. Michele D. LaGase 768-8127	
SCHOOL DIFFICULTY	➔ Classroom Teacher/ School Counselor	➔ Building Administrator Mary Facci 768-8124 Denise DiSpirito 768-8129	➔ Executive Principal Mary Facci 768-8124	➔ Superintendent Mrs. Michele D. LaGase 768-8127	
TRANSPORTATION (pickup route questions)	➔ Director of Transportation Patty Ward 768-7948	➔ Building Administrator Mary Facci 768-8124 Denise DiSpirito 768-8129	➔ Executive Principal Mary Facci 768-8124	➔ Superintendent Mrs. Michele D. LaGase 768-8127	
TRANSPORTATION (e.g. student behavior on bus)	➔ Bus Driver	➔ Director of Transportation Patty Ward 768-7948	➔ Building Administrator Mary Facci 768-8124 Denise DiSpirito 768-8129	➔ Business Official Lisa Stamboly 768-8127	➔ Superintendent Mrs. Michele D. LaGase 768-8127
BUDGET CONCERNS	➔ Business Official Lisa Stamboly 768-8127	➔ Superintendent Mrs. Michele D. LaGase 768-8127			
SPECIAL EDUCATION	➔ Special Education Teacher	➔ Director of Student Services/Special Education Vanessa Vaccaro	➔ Building Administrator Mary Facci 768-8124 Denise DiSpirito 768-8129	➔ Superintendent Mrs. Michele D. LaGase 768-8127	
CURRICULUM (course) MATERIAL	➔ Classroom Teacher	➔ School Counselor	➔ Building Administrator Mary Facci 768-8124 Denise DiSpirito 768-8129	➔ Superintendent Mrs. Michele D. LaGase 768-8127	
ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS	➔ Team Coach	➔ Director of Athletics Marissa Rys 768-8124	➔ Building Administrator Mary Facci 768-8124 Denise DiSpirito 768-8129	➔ Superintendent Mrs. Michele D. LaGase 768-8127	
TECHNOLOGY CONCERNS	➔ Classroom Teacher	➔ Building Administrator Mary Facci 768-8124 Denise DiSpirito 768-8129	➔ Technology Administrator Gary Coufal 768-8124	➔ Superintendent Mrs. Michele D. LaGase 768-8127	
BUILDING USE REQUEST	➔ Superintendent Mrs. Michele D. LaGase 768-8127				

AFTER HOURS CONTACT: emergency@newyorkmills.org



EVERY DAY COUNTS!

Post-COVID, much of our focus has been on “getting back to normal.” This fall however, we have been working with secondary students on moving beyond “normal” and shifting our focus back to growth and achievement. One of the main factors that affects growth and achievement is attendance. Nationwide, chronic absenteeism and tardiness is detrimentally impacting student achievement. Check out the statistics in the charts below shared by AttendanceWorks (AttendanceWorks.org), detailing the significance of absenteeism on student success.

If your child misses...	That equals...	Which is...	And over 13 years of schooling thats...
1 day every 3 weeks...	20 days per year	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1.5 years
1 day per week	40 days per year	8 weeks per year	Over 2.5 years
2 days per week	80 days per year	16 weeks per year	Over 5 years
3 days per week	120 days per year	24 weeks per year	Nearly 8 years

How about 10 minutes late a day? Surely, that won't affect my child?

They are only missing...	That equals...	Which is...	And over 13 years of schooling thats...
10 minutes per day	50 minutes per week	Nearly 1.5 weeks per year	Nearly 1 year
20 minutes per day	1hr 40 mins per week	Over 2.5 weeks per year	Nearly 1 year
30 minutes per day	Half a day per week	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1.5 years
1 hour per day	1 day per week	8 weeks per year	Over 2.5 years

SPIRIT WEEK 2023

Sponsored by Student Council

Spirit week is always a blast! October 18th was Barbie Day.



PARENTS BILL OF RIGHTS FOR DATA PRIVACY AND SECURITY

The NY Mills UFSD seeks to use current technology, including electronic storage, retrieval, and analysis of information about students' educational experience to enhance the opportunities for learning and to increase efficiency.

The following is the New York Mills Union Free School District's bill of rights for data privacy and security:

1. A student's personally identifiable information (PII) cannot be sold or released by the New York Mills Union Free School for any commercial or marketing purposes.
2. Parents have the right to inspect and review the complete contents of their child's education record including any student data stored or maintained by the New York Mills Union Free School. This right of inspection is consistent with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). In addition to the right of inspection of the educational record, Education Law §2-d provides a specific right for parents to inspect or receive copies of any data in the student's educational record. The New York State Department of Education (NYSED) will develop policies and procedures pertaining to this right.
3. State and federal laws protect the confidentiality of PII, and safeguards associated with industry standards and best practices, including, but not limited to, encryption, firewalls, and password protection, must be in place when data is stored or transferred.
4. A complete list of all student data elements collected by the State is available for public review at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/sirs/documentation/NYSEDstudentData.xlsx>, or you may obtain a copy of this list by writing to the Office of Information & Reporting Services, New York State Education Department, Room 863 EBA, 89 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12234.
5. Parents have the right to file complaints with the New York Mills Union Free School about possible privacy breaches of student data by the New York Mills Union Free School's third-party contractors or their employees, officers, or assignees, or with NYSED. Complaints regarding any student data breaches should be directed to:

Michele D. LaGase, Superintendent of Schools
New York Mills Union Free School
1 Marauder Blvd. New York Mills, NY 13417
315.768.8127 | mlagase@newyorkmills.org
6. The exclusive purposes for which the data will be used;
7. How the contractor will ensure that the subcontractors it uses will abide by data protection and security requirements;
8. When the agreement with the third party contractor expires and what happens to the data at that time;
9. If and how an affected party may challenge the accuracy of the data that is collected; and
10. Where the data will be stored and the security protections taken to ensure the data will be protected

All complaints must be accompanied by a Breach or Unauthorized Release of Student Data Complaint Form and submitted in person to the superintendent's office. The form can be found on our website under District>District Procedures & Policies>Breach or Unauthorized Release of Student Data Complaint Form. A complaint can also be submitted to the New York State Chief Privacy Officer using an online form at: www.nysed.gov/data-privacy-security/report-improper-disclosure

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION ABOUT THIRD PARTY CONTRACTS

For purposes of further ensuring confidentiality and security of student data — as well as the security of personally-identifiable teacher or principal data — the Parents' Bill of Rights (above) and the following supplemental information must be included in each contract that this District enters into with a third-party contractor with access to the information listed above (**numbers 6 – 10**).



CODE OF CONDUCT - PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY

HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, AND BULLYING IS PROHIBITED AT SCHOOL

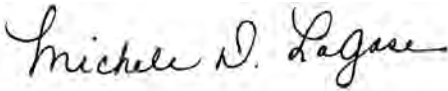
You should never feel that it is not safe for you to come to school and participate in all school activities. You should never be prevented from concentrating on your school-work because another student or a school staff member is teasing you, making fun of you, pushing you around, or threatening you in some way, because of your race, color, weight, national origin (where your family comes from), ethnic group, religion, religious practices, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex, or any other reason.

You may not act toward another student in a way that reasonably might make them feel threatened or unsafe, or that might reasonably make them unable to concentrate on their school work, because of what you think about their race, color, weight, national origin (where their family comes from), ethnic group, religion, religious practices, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex, or any other reason. It is against school rules for you to do this by your physical actions or by your verbal statements, including electronic messages.

When responding to acts of harassment, discrimination, and bullying, the District will take an age appropriate approach to remedy the situation with the goal of prevention and education; as well as, intervention and discipline. We will consider the nature and severity of the conduct, the developmental age of the student engaging in the conduct, the person's prior disciplinary record, and the impact on the student at whom it was directed. School employees who witness conduct that may be harassment, discrimination, or bullying, or who receive a report of such conduct, are required to report that conduct to the Dignity Act Coordinators or the Superintendent. This should happen by the end of the following school day.

We look forward to working with you to ensure a safe, harassment free learning environment for all students. The full version of the Code of Conduct is available on our website, or by contacting one of the principals. Please keep us informed and encourage your child to reach out to one of the principals, or another staff member if he or she does not feel safe, or is being bullied.

Respectfully,



Michele D. LaGase
Superintendent of Schools

Should you have a harassment, discrimination, or bullying concern that you wish to report, you may do so to the following Board of Education appointed Dignity Act coordinator:

Mary Facci: 315.768.8124



Athletic Booster Club

The New York Mills Athletic Booster Club ended the 2022-23 school year by purchasing Olympic Day T-shirts for all students and staff in grades K-6. This purchase was made possible by our March raffle proceeds.

We have exciting news! We will be purchasing a new mascot costume for the school to use. All students in grades K-12 will be voting on which one they would like and the one with the most votes will be purchased.

We honored all our senior student athletes and the visiting teams' seniors for all fall sports. We are looking forward to the winter sports season.

We are looking for volunteers to help with the concession stand during basketball games and to help sell tickets for a 50/50 raffle at all home games. If this is something you would be willing to help us with, please email us at athleticboosters@newyorkmills.org

Our next fundraiser will be our March raffle. Look for information about that beginning in January.

We are always looking for new members and people who are willing to volunteer when needed.

We meet the first Tuesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. in the high school library.



Student Council Updates

THE STUDENT COUNCIL WILL BE ORGANIZING A THANKSGIVING COLLECTION FOR THE EMMAUS HOUSE.

Each grade level (7-12) will adopt a family in need. The grocery shopping is typically done by the class officers, but we encourage other classmates to bring in various items like canned sweet potatoes, boxes of stuffing, jars of gravy and other food that can be used/eaten by the family on Thanksgiving. We encourage students to sign up and bring something to help these families. Thank you for supporting this generous endeavor!



Student Council recently participated in the Oneida County International Fall Clean-Up weekend.



ELEMENTARY

STUDENT OF THE MONTH



**BUY YOUR
YEARBOOK**

The Neyomian Yearbook Staff is busy preparing the book that will provide students in grades 7-12 with the information and memories that will capture this school year forever. Give your student the gift of a yearbook so they will be able to look back at all of the friends and fun, and remember their own extraordinary experiences of the 2023-2024 school year. Yearbooks are on sale now at www.yearbookordercenter.com and our school's order number is **2899**.

Purchase an ad for a graduating senior and show your child just how proud you are of them for all of their hard work and incredible accomplishments with an ad in their senior yearbook. You can add personal photos, special memories and a unique message to honor and congratulate them in a way they'll be able to cherish for years to come. Businesses in the community may create and purchase their ads of support online as well. You can purchase ads here: www.yearbookordercenter.com Be sure to use the school code **2899**.

Look for our yearbook staff at the upcoming PTSO Craft Fair. We will be selling the yearbook, as well as extra copies of years gone by. If you have a reunion coming up, or just have a missing book in your yearbook collection that you want to replace, please stop by our booth and we'd be happy to help you enjoy your memories. If you have any questions, please email: nymyearbook@newyorkmills.org



Utica University & Children's Literature

New York Mills Union Free School District partnered with Utica University to host a children's literature course.

Eight Utica University undergraduate students are paired with more than 16 New York Mills elementary students to read and discuss countless classics from children's literature. We are very honored to have the University's students on campus working with our students every week!



NY MILLS PTSO CRAFT FAIR

The New York Mills PTSO 44th Annual Craft Fair will be held at the school on December 2nd and 3rd from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Admission will be \$3.

The Craft Fair is well known for having an incredible variety of gourmet foods, jewelry, handcrafted soaps and lotions, pottery, paintings, photographs and so much more. There will be more than 100 vendors with many new faces. This is a show you don't want to miss if you're looking for great holiday decorations and gift ideas. This event is not possible without the help of volunteers each year.

If you would like to help, please visit the PTSO Facebook page or the following link to volunteer:

www.newyorkmills.org/PTSOCraftFair

The PTSO would like to thank you in advance for helping us make this a successful event. **The PTSO meets the second Wednesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. in the high school library and all are welcome!**





VETERANS DAY PROGRAM





On November 3rd and 4th, the Elementary Drama Club presented the musical "Elf Jr." to the community. The cast was made up of 71 actors/actresses in fourth through sixth grade. The musical was a stage version of the New Line Cinema movie "Elf."

"Elf Jr." follows the story of Buddy the Elf (played by Tyler Dziuba) as he is transported from the North Pole to New York City. Along the way, Buddy meets his new family and finds his true identity.

The cast spent September through November learning about musical theater. The talented young actors transformed the New York Mills stage into a winter wonderland!

Some of the characters that graced the stage included Santa Claus (Janeva Jordan), Walter Hobbs (Graham Panella), Emily Hobbs (Ariana Willey), Michaela Hobbs (Tayla Sebastian), and Jovie (Polina Donchuk).

Thank you to the entire community for their support of the drama program here at our school. We hope you had an opportunity to start your holiday seasons off early with this year's Elementary Drama Club production.





District Office New York Mills, NY 13417

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
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Permit #566

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Steve King, *President*
Kristin Hubley, *Vice President*
Jacqueline Edwards
Jeremy Fennell
Johnathan Fiore
Kimberly Gyore
Robert Mahardy Jr.

ADMINISTRATION

Michele D. LaGase, *Superintendent of Schools*
Mary Facci, *K-12 Executive Principal*
Denise DiSpirito, *Interim K-12 Principal*

VISIT US ON THE WEB

newyorkmills.org



Veterans Day Program

OUR MISSION:

Through combined efforts of students, staff, parents and community members, our mission is to foster the confidence, knowledge, cognition and character necessary to instill a strong work ethic, to create an environment of tolerance and respect and to ignite an attitude of inquiry and enthusiasm for learning that will enable students to become productive, responsible citizens.

DID YOU KNOW?

For the complete District calendar, schedule of upcoming events and more District news, please visit newyorkmills.org