

# NYMILLS

December  
2020

## UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

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Join our mailing list for paper updates! To sign up, contact District Clerk Stefany Scharf at [sscharf@newyorkmills.org](mailto:sscharf@newyorkmills.org) or by calling 315-768-8127 (option #2, option #1)

**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."

## Message from the Superintendent

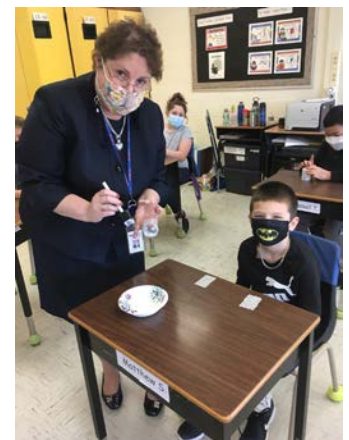
### Dear Residents,

I would like to begin this newsletter with heartfelt gratitude for everyone responsible for the successful fall we have had. We made it to December, and while that shouldn't seem like a cause for celebration, in this world of COVID-19, getting to December is a huge deal. Thank you to our students, our staff, our families and our community for pulling together to keep our infection and exposure rate at a low enough level to allow us to keep school open over the past few months.

As you know, due to the higher rates of positive COVID cases in our area and after a review of all data from the Oneida County Department of Health and COVID-19 Dashboard data, the New York Mills Union Free School District will be shifting to a fully remote instructional program beginning Wednesday, December 9, 2020 and will extend the remote learning model through Friday, January 8, 2021 with the intent of returning to our current educational plan on Monday, January 11, 2021. The health and safety of our students, staff and community is at the forefront everything we do, and reviewing all the information available as well as utilizing caution and safety has led us to this decision.

Please review the following key aspects of instruction for the extended remote learning model:

- All students taking classes on our district campus should plan to engage in those classes remotely every day. This will look different depending on subject and grade level.
- All students who have been enrolled in fully remote classes prior to this point will continue to attend their fully remote classes. This letter is outlining the educational plan for those who have been attending in-person instruction.
- At this time, beginning December 9, 2020, we will deliver meals on a daily basis to our families that sign up through our on-line form. All children, up to age 18, are eligible for meals. All families should complete the remote meal form every day. Please use this link to access the lunch request form. Lunches should be ordered by 9:00 a.m. each day.  
*Continued on page 2*



Dr. Shelmidine helps third graders make Christmas candle tea light holders for their families.

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## Message from the Superintendent *Continued from Cover*

- At present, CTE/PTECH/BOCES programs will continue to be an option for our students. If those programs move to a fully remote model, you will be notified. Please contact the Bus Garage if your child will be attending their program that specific day (315-768-7948).
- Any special education student enrolled in a program out of district, or off campus, will be provided with the transportation opportunity to attend. This is dependent on the program providing in-person instruction. Each program has, and will continue to communicate directly with families.
- Students are asked to follow the guidance of their classroom teacher(s) for their daily instructional schedule.
- Service providers (e.g. speech, OT and PT) will be in contact with students and families to continue remote sessions to the greatest extent possible.
- Parents who need to pick up their child's medications from the school nurse should contact Mrs. Germann at 315-768-3391.
- Current fully remote high school students should still plan on picking up materials for MP2 on Wednesday, December 9 from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the HS parking lot entrance.

I recognize that this shift to fully remote instruction may cause personal scheduling adjustments for you and your family members. Please know that we will provide you with as much support as we can. Please reach out to your child(ren) teachers, principals, and me should you have additional questions or concerns that relate to your child's education.

With the onset of cold and flu season, please continue to follow the safety, health and hygiene guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and the Department of Health to assist in isolating and containing the spread of the COVID-19 virus during this pandemic period. Your continued support and assistance that has allowed us to make it to this point in the school year has been recognized and greatly appreciated.

As we look ahead, changes to our campus will be coming! This coming summer, you will find a new playground, a new sign and new handicap accessible bleachers installed as part of the Capital Project voted on last year.

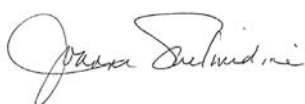
The project is in the final phase of approval from State Ed. Along with the outwardly visible additions to our campus, work inside our school building will include the addition of doors that will limit access throughout the building during evening games and events, as well as an emergency situation. Again, much of this work will take place this summer.

Separate from the Capital Project voted on last year, is an Energy Performance Contract (EPC) project to be done at the same time. The EPC, approved by the Board of Education, focuses on three main areas: improved, energy efficient lighting for our classrooms, the replacement of rooftop condenser units that are either not working or obsolete and upgrading building systems such as heating, electrical and plumbing with digital controls allowing for safety and more energy efficiency.

The total cost of the upgrades is approximately \$1.3 million. The District expects to save around \$73,000 per year because of these upgrades. Although the project does not require a referendum vote, because the EPC will pay for itself over the life of the upgrades (roughly 18 years), a vote is scheduled that would allow the District to gain an additional 10% New York State aid that will further support the upgrades. For every dollar spent on capital projects, NY Mills gets about 65% of that money back from NY State. With a successful vote for the EPC, NY Mills will get about 75% of that money back from NY State. The vote is December 15 from 12 p.m. – 9 p.m. at the Beekman Gymnasium. Please contact the board clerk at [sscharf@newyorkmills.org](mailto:sscharf@newyorkmills.org) or at 315-768-8127 if you would like an absentee ballot.

I wish you all a happy and healthy holiday season.

**Respectfully,**



**Joanne Shelmidine, Ed.D.**  
*Superintendent of Schools*



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## September 2020 Optimist Youth Of The Month

Victor Lee has been selected as the New York Mills Optimist Youth of the Month for September! Victor is the son of Lisa Lee of New Hartford and Michael Lee of Whitesboro.

Victor is a high honor roll student and was inducted into the National Junior Honor Society and National Honor Society, of which he is now president. As a junior, he was granted awards from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, the University of Rochester and Clarkson University.



Victor has always been involved in extra-curricular and athletic activities. He was elected as Secretary of the Student Council in grades 7-9 and Treasurer in grades 10-12. This year, he is also a member of our Technology Club. Victor is an accomplished runner and has been a member of our varsity cross country, indoor track and outdoor track teams throughout high school. He won the MVP Award as a junior in cross country, and made it to the state championship race where he placed 20th in the state for Class D boys. He was then named to the 3rd team All-State and selected as a Mohawk-Valley All-Star. Victor was the second New York Mills runner and the first junior to make cross country states for boys. A CSC All-Star in grades 11-12, he was ranked 11th in the state for Class D boys going into his senior cross country season. This year, Victor won the individual title at the Center State Conference Championship, beat his personal-best time and finished the season undefeated. His season was cut short due to the cancellation of the sectional and state championship meets, as were his senior year indoor track and junior year outdoor track seasons. Victor is the current school record holder in the two-mile run for indoor track, and has also served as team captain in all sports he's participated in. He is also taking an independent study on virology as well as one on cybersecurity. In addition to volunteer activities through the Student Council, he has also held part-time jobs.

After graduation, Victor wishes to pursue a career in the science and technology field, and is interested in participating in cross country and track at the college level.

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## October 2020 Optimist Youth Of The Month

Heather Roberts has been named the New York Mills Optimist Youth of the Month for October 2020! She is the daughter of Donald and Diane Roberts of Yorkville, a high honor roll student and a member of the National Junior Honor Society and National Honor Society. As a junior, she was granted awards from Rochester Institute of Technology, Clarkson University and the University of Rochester.



Heather's activities include three-year memberships in Drama Club and Technology Club. She has been active in Girl Scouts since elementary school and earned the Bronze Award, for which she restored the butterfly exhibit at the Utica Zoo. Heather also enjoys horseback riding; she has been named a champion barrel racer and likes to spend time taking care of the horses. In addition, she has belonged to a local robotics club and has taken art lessons since pre-school. Her volunteer activities include donating time at the Special Olympics and dog sitting.

After graduation, Heather plans to pursue a career in software development.

### Grades 7-11 Students of the Month

Students are chosen using the following criteria:

1. Academic effort
2. Positive attitude
3. Respectful behavior
4. School involvement
5. Community involvement

#### September

Grade 7 - Mason St. James  
Grade 8 - Emily Cognetti  
Grade 9 - Frank Calhoun  
Grade 10 - Isaiah Sobolewski  
Grade 11 - Jemma Jordan

#### October

Grade 7 - Mark Klein  
Grade 8 - Christopher Edwards  
Grade 9 - Abigail Evans  
Grade 10 - Cira Guarno  
Grade 11 - Isabella Cornish



# Music News

## Welcome Ms. Corathers!

Welcome to our newest music teacher, Lily Corathers! Ms. Corathers is a Herkimer High School grad and went on to study at Alderson-Broaddus College and Ashford University. She has two dogs; one named Ella after Ella Fitzgerald and another named Joplin after composer Scott Joplin.



## Elementary Choir Concert Update from Ms. Lily

Our fourth through sixth-grade choir students were able to opt-in to doing choir lessons with Ms. Lily in preparation for a recorded concert in late December. As they are doing in the high school, a link will be sent out with the recordings to anyone who would like to watch and support. There will also be a place to post some supportive messages to the choir during the stream. Since school has switched to remote until January, the release date of the concert has yet to be determined, so stay tuned for more details on the District's website!

Thank you for your support of the arts at New York Mills!

## Music News from Mrs. Lovecchio

The chorus and band here at NYM have been keeping their distance for safety reasons, but have continued to work on making music since September. Due to the many restrictions during these times, they are working extra diligently to bring the community a piece of their love for music this winter season. The band, chorus and hand-bell choir have begun recording their winter music to share on the school's website. Please keep your eyes and ears open for a link on the District's homepage in late December.

The music department looks forward to a time when they can invite you back into the building for a live performance, but until that day, will keep working to share the joy of music with you.





## Student Council Updates

Although some of Student Council's typical holiday activities look different than in previous years, they are still embracing the holiday spirit with a remote Gingerbread House Competition! The competition began on Monday, December 7 and will end on December 17. Students will submit up to four photos of their houses and must provide their own supplies/kits. Voting will take place on December 18 via class pages; stay tuned on the District's website for pictures of the students' creations!



## CAREER DAY

During Fall Spirit Week back in October, each day had a different theme where students dressed accordingly. For Career Day, students dressed to impress and wore outfits that matched their future careers.

## Senior Class Collects Donations to Feed Our Vets

In November, the New York Mills Senior Seminar Class sponsored a food drive for Feed Our Vets in honor of Veterans Day. The total weight brought to the organization by our seniors was just over 300 pounds of food and toiletries!

Feed Our Vets is a local 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization whose mission is to help veterans in the U.S. and their families, as well as involve the public in fighting veteran hunger. They work toward their mission by running community food pantries that provide free food along with other related goods and services to veterans and their families, as well as providing public education and outreach. Feed Our Vets has provided free food assistance to more than 25,000 veterans, distributing 1.1 million pounds of food and over \$100,000 in gift cards.

A large portion of the food provided for veterans is donated from local food manufacturers, grocery stores and organizations. Thank you to our New York Mills UFSD community for helping to support this local nonprofit and combat veteran hunger!





## Eighth Grade English News

Eighth graders started the school year by reading the novel *Touching Spirit Bear* by Ben Mikaelson. The main character, Cole Matthews, is forced to come to terms with his actions and ends up creating a totem pole to explain what he has learned about himself. The eighth-graders created totem poles about their lives and selected at least two animals that represented their past, present and future to add to their totem poles



# HAPPY HALLOWEEN







# Art Projects





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U.S. Postage  
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Permit #566

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**Mary Facci**, *K-12 Executive Principal*  
**Brent Dodge**, *K-12 Principal*

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<http://www.newyorkmills.org>



In November, Miss Crowley's Kindergarten class created a Veterans Day bulletin board to recognize the Veterans in their lives.