

NYMILLS

March
2017

UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

A Message from the Superintendent Regarding NYS Assessments

Dear Parents, Guardians, and School Community Members;

As we enter our third state assessment season since the onset of the test refusal movement at New York Mills, I am again writing to encourage families to participate in the upcoming state tests. The grades 3-8 English Language Arts and Math assessments are designed to measure student learning that is aligned with state standards in order to ensure that all New York State students are prepared for their future college and/or career plans. When a district does not perform well on the assessments as a whole, or in one or more subgroups, the district is designated a Focus District. In addition to improved test results, Focus Districts are required to achieve a 95% student participation rate on the assessments in subsequent years in order to be removed from the Focus District list.

As most of you already know, New York Mills Union Free School District was designated last winter as a Focus District: an accountability status that prompted a review of our school district using the Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness. As a result of that review, a District Comprehensive Improvement Plan was developed and is currently being implemented. In addition, the district was identified as a District in Need of Assistance in the area of special education; resulting in a full review of our special education programs and services, and culminating in recommendations for improvement from a Special Education School Improvement Specialist.

New York Mills UFSD has continued to have a high number of parents refusing the assessments on behalf of their children, which means that the school district will remain on the list of Focus Districts. This accountability status requires a great deal of extra reporting, intensive improvement planning, changes in programs and services, and state oversight of the school district. This will continue for as long as we are designated a Focus District.

Although I've stated this before, both in writing and at our Focus District forums, I will state one more time that I sincerely believe that if every child was sent to school on our state assessment days

and encouraged to do their best on the test—just as they do every other day of the school year – the New York Mills Union Free School District would never have been placed on the Focus District list.

Therefore, if every child comes to school and does their best on the assessments this year, I firmly believe that when the next list of Focus Districts is published, our school district will not be included.

Please give my request sincere consideration; I carefully considered the perspectives of parents, teachers, and students before composing this message. It is my greatest wish that our school district return to “good standing” and that the cloud of doubt and uncertainty be lifted from us.

To be very clear, I believe in the capacity of our teachers to prepare your students to perform well on the assessments. I witness daily the intense focus, care, and concern every educator brings to the awesome task of preparing your children for a complex and challenging future.

If you have questions or if you would like to speak with any of our administrators about the state assessments, we can be reached at:

Kathy Houghton, Superintendent of Schools

(315) 768-8127, khoughton@newyorkmills.org

Mary Facci, K-12 Executive Principal

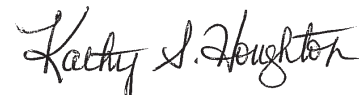
(315) 768-8124, mfacci@newyorkmills.org

Brent Dodge, K-12 Principal

(315) 768-8129, bdodge@newyorkmills.org

[newyorkmills.org](mailto:bdodge@newyorkmills.org)

Sincerely,



Kathy Houghton
Superintendent of Schools



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

December 2016



Shaun Crist
Grade 11



Angela Chen
Grade 10



Holly Simon
Grade 9

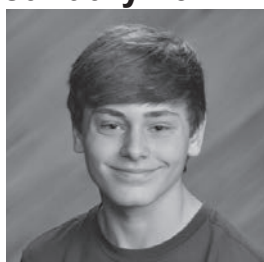


Sophia Lin
Grade 8



Francesca Borrometi
Grade 7

January 2017



Zachary Radziewicz
Grade 11



Kaitlyn Kulawy
Grade 10



Olivia Litzinger
Grade 9



Dominique Galante
Grade 8



Logan Copperwheat
Grade 7

February 2017



Grace Reilly
Grade 11



Karilynn Tramacera
Grade 10



Kiley Lyons
Grade 9



Mercedes Williams
Grade 8



Isiah Thomas
Grade 7

Kids of Character Awards

The following grade 3-6 students were selected as Kids of Character at New York Mills Elementary School for the months of November, December, January, and February. This award is given for following The Marauder Way on a regular basis.

NOVEMBER

- Grade 3** – Abbey Calhoun and Vistoria Kern
Grade 4 – Yuvraj Patel and Andrew Sosa
Grade 5 – Cardin Chau and Lauren Kulpa
Grade 6 – Benjamin Boccardo and Noah Moore

DECEMBER

- Grade 3** – Lindzee Brush and Nataleea Dingle
Grade 4 – Heidi Cilbrith and Sean Clifford
Grade 5 – Lucas Komnick and Alivia Rizzo
Grade 6 – Hailey Cornish and Maya Robinson

Optimist Student of the Month November

Marissa Kulesa has been named the New York Mills Optimists' Youth of the Month for November. Marissa is the daughter of David and Robin Kulesa of New Hartford and a member of the New York Mills Class of 2017.

Marissa is an honor roll student who has been selected as student of the month in previous years. She has emerged as a leader within our school in various ways. Marissa was elected class vice president as a junior and this year serves as the senior class president. She actively participates in our school government on a consistent basis. A member of the yearbook club since 10th grade, this year she is the vice president of the organization. In 10th grade, Marissa was selected as our school's representative at the Hugh O'Brien Youth Leadership Conference, where she spent a weekend with other delegates from across the state developing and refining leadership skills. In addition, she has participated in leadership conferences in both Niagara Falls and the Catskills for which she served as a representative for District 8. She also attended classes on Women's Studies through Colgate Seminar. Other activities include chorus, varsity club and prom committee. Marissa is also a dedicated runner who participates on both our cross country and track and field teams, the latter of which she was selected to serve as captain this past season. In addition, Marissa dedicates much time tutoring underclassmen and organized a *Juniors to Juniors* book read.



Marissa Kulesa

Marissa is also active in numerous community activities, including at her church where she babysits, sings on the worship team, plays piano and is a member of the leadership group and greeting committee. She also taught piano to children.

Marissa aspires to a career as a Physician's Assistant and has engaged in activities related to her goal. In summer 2015, Marissa participated in MediCamp at St. Luke's Hospital. This school year she is interning at the Mohawk Valley Health System Women and Children's Health Center through the Regional Program for Excellence. Colleges in which she is interested include Southeastern University, SUNY StonyBrook and Upstate Medical College. Marissa's spirit of leadership and volunteerism has benefited many of us in the school and local community. We look forward to the contributions that she will continue to make to all of us as she reaches her goals.

Optimist Student of the Month December

The New York Mills Optimist Club has named Rachel Siegel as Youth of the Month for December. Rachel is a member of the New York Mills Class of 2017 and is the daughter of Gail Siegel of New York Mills.

Rachel is a high honor roll student who has been selected as Student of the Month each year since 9th grade. She was inducted into National Junior Honor Society in 8th grade and was inducted into National Honor Society as a junior. Last spring, Rachel was honored with awards from RIT and RPI.

Rachel has participated in a number of activities. This year she is the Student Council Executive President and the Newspaper Club President, to which she has belonged since her junior year. Not only she has been performed spoken and singing roles in all of our drama club musicals since she was in 4th grade, but she helps with costumes and set work. Since elementary school she has been an active member of chorus and band in which she plays flute. In addition, since 10th grade Rachel has spent countless hours tutoring underclassmen in geometry, middle school math and Spanish. She has also been a football cheerleader since 10th grade and this year had the role as spirit leader for the group. During spring break of her junior year, Rachel was one of our school's representatives in the Air Force Research Lab Challenge Competition. Rachel has also been a member of the Oneida County 4-H through which she had several projects displayed at the New York State Fair and participated in the Heart Walk in 9th grade and the Pen in Hand Conference as a junior.



Rachel Siegel

Rachel plans to pursue a career in scientific research with a second major in creative writing and is interested in attending a college or university in New York State. Rachel has made meaningful contributions to our school and we look forward to seeing all that she continues to do for her community while she is in college and pursuing her career goals.

Kids of Character Awards

JANUARY

Grade 3 – Maggie Copperwheat, Nathaneal Dzwonkowski, and Nirvon Wenz

Grade 4 – Zachary Matyjias and Allison Meagher

Grade 5 – Frank Calhoun and Catherine Testa

Grade 6 – Isaiah Sobolewski and Kamryn Williams

FEBRUARY

Grade 3 – Alexa Grande and Valentino Rizzo

Grade 4 – Lauren Kulpa and Hailey Mahardy

Grade 5 – Jayla Bennett and Cindy Wu

Grade 6 – Noah Diskin and Joseph Odarchuk



School News

Capital Project Update

During the past few weeks, our contractors have been conducting the necessary concrete pours to finish the walls and foundation of our new cafeteria. As soon as the concrete cures and passes inspection, the steel beams that will support the cafeteria roof will be erected. We expect this to occur before March is over. Once these important tasks are accomplished, interior construction of the cafeteria will begin; with the goal of completion before the summer.



In addition to work on the cafeteria, new locks purchased through the capital project were installed throughout the interior of the building; allowing teachers and staff to safely secure their doors from the inside of any classroom or office in an emergency. In addition, improvements to our auditorium lighting system were completed.

As construction of our cafeteria progresses, please take special care during morning car drop-offs and afternoon pick-ups of students. There are times when we must limit access to our front drive, which may create slower traffic at our side entrance. The best way to minimize the wait when dropping off or picking up your child is to avoid it altogether and send your child to and from school by bus. If that is not possible, please be prepared to wait for your turn in line. Also, please stop if the car(s) in front of you are unloading on the driver's back passenger side. We must work together each day to be sure that all bus riders, walkers, and car riders remain safe.

Budget for 2017-18 School Year

Dear School Community Member,

Our Board of Education and administration are currently hard at work on the 2017-18 district budget. As a result of our current Focus District status, the budget will include school improvement services through BOCES, as well as the Outside Educational Expert/Evaluator that served on the district's review team last year. There will also be additional funds budgeted for required professional development and curriculum work. The programs and services listed above are needed for the full implementation of our District Comprehensive Improvement Plan required of all Focus Districts.

Due to our additional designation as a District in Need of Special Education Assistance, the budget will include additional Special Education positions. In order to accommodate larger than normal K-1 enrollment, we are projecting that we will need to add a teacher to provide three sections of both Kindergarten and first grade next year.

Our Board and administrators will continue to work collaboratively to

craft a budget that is mindful of the taxpayers, while still meeting the educational needs of our K-12 students and achieving the goals of our District Comprehensive Improvement Plan. We invite you to join us at our upcoming budget workshops, which will take place at Board meetings scheduled on Tuesday, March 21 and Tuesday, April 4 at 6:30 p.m. You are also invited to attend our Public Budget Hearing on Tuesday, May 2 at 6:30 p.m.

Thank you for your continued support and understanding as we work together as a school community to improve our K-12 instructional program.

Sincerely,

Kathy Houghton
Superintendent of Schools

NYM Announces New K-12 Executive Principal

The New York Mills Union Free School District Board of Education appointed Mrs. Mary Facci as the new K-12 Executive Principal at their meeting on December 6.

Mrs. Facci comes to New York Mills from Donovan Middle School in the Utica City School District, where she worked since 2007. She began her duties as K-12 Executive Principal on January 6, having been selected to replace Michael Spost. We welcome Mrs. Facci to our school district!



Best Wishes!

The New York Mills Union Free School District would like to thank Interim K-12 Principal Steven Marcus and Interim K-12 Executive Principal Ken Ford for their assistance during our time of transition.



Marcus

Ford

Spanish Students Create Their Own Hispanic City

After midterm exams, Mrs. Milone's Spanish students have been very busy. The 8th grade Spanish students were charged with creating a miniature representation of a business or residence that could be found in a Hispanic city. They did an outstanding job this year! This was the most architecturally accurate city to date as it included a plaza, cathedral, a municipal building, a public library, a soccer stadium and a bridge designed to add to the city's authenticity. After transforming the room into a charming city, students took turns directing each other precisely how to go from one destination to another. Students walked down streets and passed through avenues to retrieve or purchase objects as they visited each place of business and were then called upon to tell where they went.

The 7th graders took advantage of these awesome projects as well. Class time was used to learn the names of places in their community. They learned some irregular verbs such as to go, to come, to have, and to be (located). They learned how to express where they were "going to go" and what they "have to do." Some students even expressed with anticipation what they would like to create next year when it is their turn.

The students' positive responses and subsequent test results support the notion that we can learn vocabulary, grammar, and a bit of culture, while having some fun too! Great work, students!



Third Graders Sing Christmas Carols



Both third grade classes visited the Country Club Court on December 13 to sing Christmas carols and deliver donations to the residents. Instead of exchanging gifts with each other, the students have been bringing in items such as soap, shampoo, coffee, tea, and winter gear for the seniors. The students enjoyed this experience and the residents were very appreciative of our visit.

Giving Tree

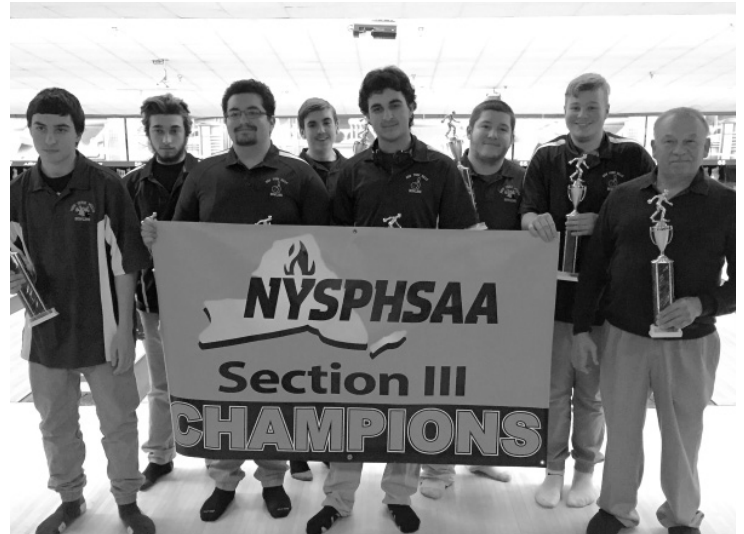
Each year there is a tree set up in the elementary school. It's not decorated with lights, tinsel, garland or ornaments. This tree was decorated, thanks to the generosity of so many families in our district, with 260 items. Collected were 102 hats, 61 pairs of gloves, 1 pair of earmuffs, 63 scarves, 1 pair of boots, 2 pairs of socks, 14 sets of hats & gloves, 7 ear/headbands and 9 coats. In December, second grade students learned the true meaning of making a wish and learned a song called "I Wish" in sign language. Together we made a difference by making the holidays more cheerful and definitely warmer for so many. Thanks!



Sports

Bowling

The bowling team is the C.S.C. League Champions as well as the Section III Class C/D Champions. The C.S.C. League All-Star team members are Nick Acee (New York Mills bowling team captain), Justin Mikalajunas, Evan Schaaf and Rob Kinville. Honorable Mention for the C.S.C. League All-Star team is Tyler Bullen. Rob Kinville (co-captain and six year veteran) had over all high average (206) for the C.S.C. League and also a State all-star member. He will compete at States in March. Great job to Coach Dave Zebrowski!



Volleyball

The Girls Varsity Volleyball program continued on with its growth and development this year. With four seniors moving on, the NYM volleyball program saw a lot of very close matches and intense 4 and 5 match games, including the win more than Frankfort in 5. Claudia Spost ended the season with over 70 kills and Haley Simon with 150 assists in the 2017 year alone. The program will continue on and develop and rebuild as the up-and-coming girls are ready to fight and win! Good luck to those seniors moving on!



Girls Basketball

The Lady Marauders are a team that looks to have a bright future. Rounding out the Marauders team was Rachel Beaulieu, Chloe Cattadoris, Abbey Copperwheat, Alyssa Fuccillo, McKenzie Keator, Michaela Marrero, Katelynn Osika, and Kaliana Sobolewski. All teams are put to test with adversity this was especially true this year after losing 8 seniors from the previous year. The team stuck together and played hard and understood it takes a TEAM effort to be successful. We worked together showing improvement during games, and supported each other during this tough year. Thank you to Senior Michaela Marrero you will be greatly missed. The Lady Marauders also took part in the Hoops for the Hospital game in which they raised money for Childhood Cancer and was designated to the Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital and the Upstate Cancer Center. Congratulations, Girls!

Team Captains: Michaela Marrero, Abbey Copperwheat



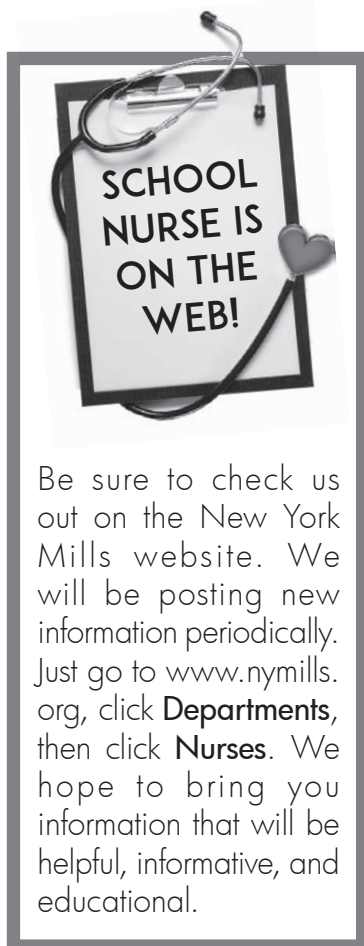
Boys Basketball

With a new coach at the helm and 4 of the 5 starters from last year's team lost to graduation, the boys basketball team was immediately counted out. Although the start of the New York Mills Marauders season wasn't going according to plan, the team persevered by working hard every practice and they got better each and every day. The team mounted a huge comeback in order to beat Hamilton in overtime, and the pieces of the puzzle started falling into place. With the leadership of seniors Kenny Egan and John Mitchell, along with the consistent play of starting guards Nick Briggs-Ellenberger and Justin Ellsworth, New York Mills was finally reaching their potential. After their

loss at Waterville, the Marauders fell to 4-6, but they did not let that get to them. After the loss, the players rallied together in order to save their season. Since then, the Marauders have won 4 straight games including victories against rival Oriskany and league opponents Poland and Remsen and 6 of the last 7 games. The boys were able to make it to the semi finals.

Captains: Kenny Egan, John Mitchell, Jake Vennaro, Nick Briggs-Ellenberger

League all-stars: TBD



Be sure to check us out on the New York Mills website. We will be posting new information periodically. Just go to www.nymills.org, click **Departments**, then click **Nurses**. We hope to bring you information that will be helpful, informative, and educational.



WE ARE LOOKING FOR

Substitute Teachers, School Monitors and TAs.

Visit www.newyorkmills.org for more information.

NYMILLS

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

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If you thought you knew the story of *The Princess and The Pea*, you may be in for a walloping surprise! Did you know, for instance, that Princess Winnifred actually swam the moat to reach her Prince? Or that, in fact, it wasn't the pea at all that caused the princess a sleepless night? Come refresh your memory of a childhood fairy tale and let us give you a new look at an old favorite. The cast of this year's musical *Once Upon a Mattress* will gallop their way into your hearts with the hilarious, romantic and melodic story with its side-splitting shenanigans. Our hope is that you will never look at fairy tales the same way again.

Once Upon a Mattress will be presented on March 24 and 25 at 7:30 p.m. in the New York Mills auditorium. Tickets will be available starting March 13, \$9 for adults and \$7 for students and seniors. There will also be a senior performance on March 23 at 4 p.m.

The musical is directed by Teresa Zielinski-Lovecchio, choreographed by Juliana Muirhead and orchestral direction by Steve Shrey. This year's musical will surely shine a "new light" on the community as it will be the first 7-12 grade musical with our new lighting system. Thank you to everyone for their constant support of the drama club and our school. We look forward entertaining you with a fairy tale with an unusual "happily ever after." See you there!



Board of Education Meeting Dates

Tuesday, March 21, 2017 – Budget Workshop, 6:30 p.m.
Tuesday, April 4, 2017 – Adopt Budget for Vote, 6:30 p.m.
Tuesday, April 25, 2017 – Vote for BOCES Budget & Board Members, 6:30 p.m.
Tuesday, May 2, 2017 – Public Budget Hearing, 6:30 p.m.
Tuesday, May 16, 2017 – Budget Vote and Board Election – Noon – 9:00 p.m.
Tuesday, June 6, 2017 – Board of Education Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

