

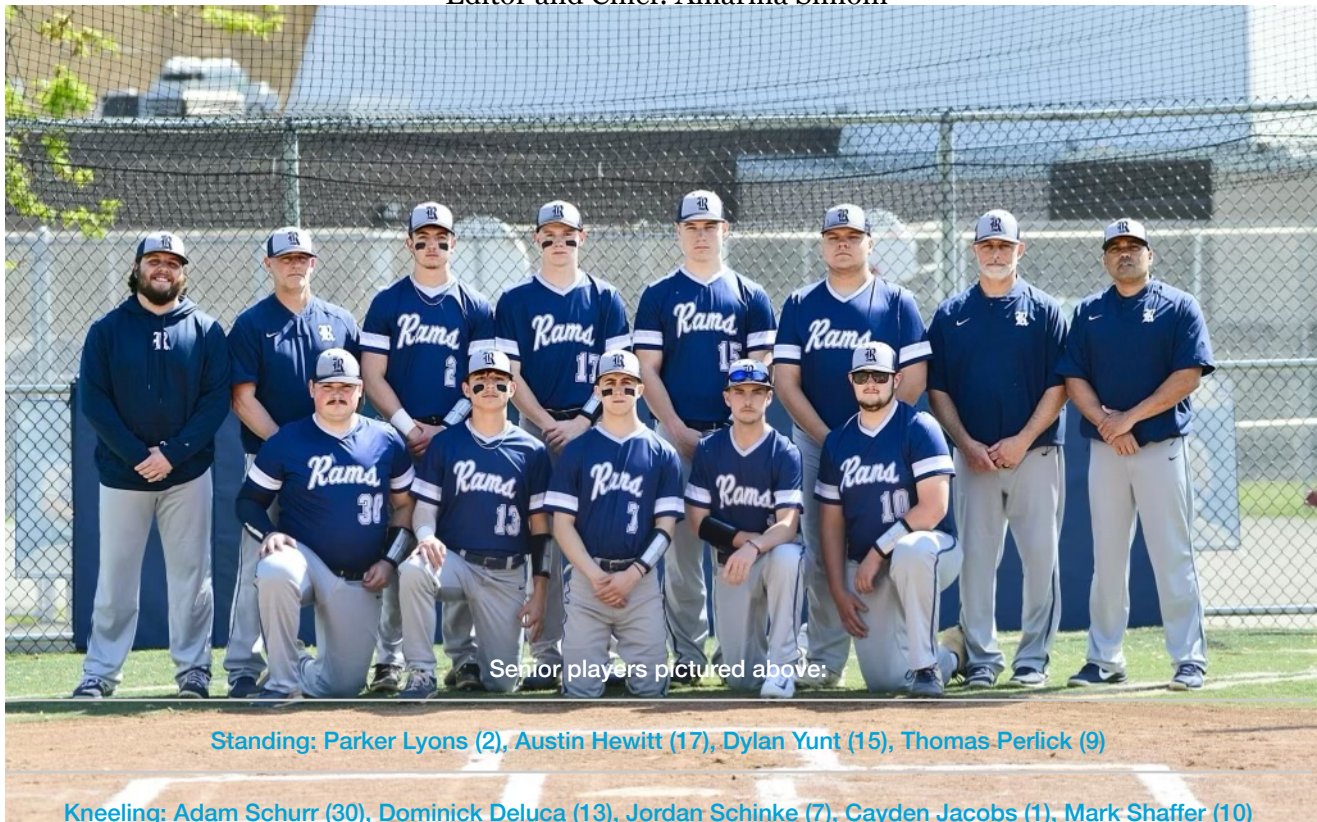
## WHAT'S GOING ON THIS SPRING



# THE ORACLE

The Rochester High School Newspaper

Editor and Chief: Amarina Simoni



## Spring Sports

By: Gianna Sisco

At Rochester Area School District, we have three spring sports. The sports are softball, baseball, and track and field. First up track and field. The track coach is Steve Anthony. Coach Steve doesn't work in Beaver County. His full time job is being a Research Exercise Physiologist at the University of Pittsburgh. He does studies on diabetes, metabolic diseases and other weight related health issues, and the physiological problems of aging. When Steve was growing up, he dreamed of going to the Olympics in track and field. He has a lot of experience with track. He ran track in high school and was





recruited to run in college for Slippery Rock University. His favorite races to run were the 400 and 800 meter events.

When asked about track at Rochester he said, his “goal for the season is to see students improve from the beginning of the year to the end. It's all about the students personal achievements and growth as an athlete in the sport. If medals are won along the way, all the better!!” You can expect a typical practice to be a team warm up, then the throwers, jumpers and runners break up into groups to begin specific workouts for each athlete.

The baseball team is coached by Brian Verrico, a familiar name in Rochester. Coach Verrico says he “is happy with the progress that the team has made up to this point. They are looking forward to the start of the season and are anxious to compete to the best of their ability”. The team has developed a deep rivalry with Union. They have split the season series with them over the past 2 or 3 years, so as you can imagine, games between them are pretty competitive. They usually play a big part in who wins the section championship. A goal they have for this season is to make teams beat them, rather than beat themselves. For them to do that, Coach Verrico said “they need to throw strikes and play good defense”. Another goal they have is to make the playoffs, who doesn't want that!

Finally the softball team is coached by Michael Cuning. Off the field, he is a paraprofessional in the high school and helps with the life skill students. Mr. Cuning also plays softball as well as hockey. Mr. Cuning has been coaching softball for five years. The love for the sport made him want to coach softball. He also likes working with students and had experience coaching little league baseball as an assistant coach. He enjoys sharing the love of the game and getting to work with the students. A goal for the season is to make the playoffs, teach the game of softball, and to have fun and make memories. He also has two fantastic assistant coaches, Liz Lane and Julie Moore.

## High School Garden Club

By: Mariah (Leo) Ruth

The creators of the garden club are Mr. Dixon, Mr. Benedum and Ms. Rossi. What started as a way to up-cycle and reuse the old courtyard turned into a booming club. “It was the next logical step” as said by Mr. Dixon who holds a club meeting with Mrs. Smock on Mondays after school.

The initial motivation for the renewal of the space came from financial support from the Beaver County Education Trust. Through the grant, the garden club has changed the landscape in the courtyard and built a green house complete with garden beds. Like all education it's a process and a challenge in which some find calming, others frustration; but still rewarding in the end. So far this year, they've planted many types of fruits and veggies like three varieties of onions and carrots, twenty types of peppers, and ten types of tomatoes. A multitude of flowers like purple hyacinths and yellow pansies have been planted to attract pollinators. Black-eyed susans, daisies and sun Lilly's will be added soon. They plan on adding beans, zucchini, watermelon, pumpkins, and cucumbers before the end of school in June. Some of the flowers like perennials are chosen because once planted they grow back every year and require minimal maintenance. The vegetables on the other hand have to start growing indoors before being planted outside requiring more work to maintain.

They chose to grow a wide range of vegetables to donate to the food service department to use during the summer lunch programs, with aspirations to hold a mini farmers market once a week during summer for people to come and purchase homegrown goods. This adds another way for students to give back and engage with the community. Along with gaining life experience by working really hard this year, the members of the garden club learned how to care for plants, build pizza ovens, growing beds, bee hotels and even learned how to use power tools. The students get to learn and enjoy the beauty of their achievements while being themselves all while coming together as a community. Most of the twenty plus students of the garden club have schedules that are spread across multiple extracurricular activities. This teaches them how to be flexible, multitasking skills and commitment.

The club is always looking for more members and would love to see new faces next school year. The garden is used in a multitude of different subject areas and learning programs, each which brings unique skills and knowledge to share with the students. The garden is open to all educators to use the garden to engage and continue on even after the creators and current runners of the club are no longer in charge. It could eventually be almost entirely student run and cared for. Thanks to the grants given to the club they now have three food dehydrators to experiment with food preservation for later consumption which they share with the cafeteria staff. The club is planning a canning workshop in the summer to help share and spread old and new knowledge of gardening and community.

## Rochester HS Softball Seniors



**Box 1: Isabella Seybert and Family**

**Box 2: Isabella Seybert and Nya Martin**

**Box 3: Nya Martin and Family**



# Senior Spotlight: Jerome Mullins

By: Austin Hewitt

Senior, Jerome Mullins, of Rochester High School has committed to Mercyhurst University where he will be continuing his academic and football career. For his signing day, he has decided to do it in the comfort of his own home. He wanted to sign at home surrounded by family and close friends, instead of doing it in front of everyone at the school. He officially signed with Mercyhurst University on February 1st, 2023. Jerome said he has “to report on campus August 1st of 2023. This is two weeks earlier than the rest of the students, due to football training and conditioning”.

When asked why he chose Mercyhurst, Jerome explained multiple reasons. He said, “All the Mercyhurst coaches and players made him feel at home right from the beginning.” He also took an overnight visit to get to know the team even better. The coaches loved him and his game so much that they decided to give Jerome a full scholarship to play football. Jerome plans on majoring in business administration. He chose a major that focuses on marketing, math, and economics. It will be tough, but he is confident he can succeed. When asked if he would ever consider joining a fraternity, he responded by saying no. He doesn’t plan on partying, rather he wants to focus on school and football. Jerome is dedicated to his football career and doesn’t want to risk a mishap because of a dumb decision. However, Jerome is excited to meet new people while at college and create new friendships with his teammates and classmates.

# Cultural Diversity

By: Casey Richko

The Cultural Diversity Fair is an event that takes place annually at Rochester High School, generally during the last full week of May. Students get together and form booths of different cultures. It is similar to a fair where you can go around and see all the cultures on display and all the foods they have to offer. After a thorough look at all the booths you can go to the separate booth that sells tickets, which is how you can purchase your food of choice. Cultural diversity is a display of all the different cultures for others to learn where most of their meals come from. Students are encouraged to include their families in this to show off their heritage passed down from generation to generation.

## The bounce back

As many of you know the world had experienced the outbreak of Covid-19 in 2020. Since Covid was around for a while this event didn’t happen for two years! That means the only students who had any idea of what the event was were all freshmen, which is very difficult as freshmen didn’t have a lead role in their booths at that time. It was hard to influence younger students to join as they didn’t know how it worked, they weren’t sure of what they would be signing up for and the seniors at the time didn’t know how to explain what it was as they only had done it for one year. The leader of this event, Mr. Lou Campisi, thought that last year being the first year back would’ve been very difficult and not as successful. To his surprise last year was very successful. As Mr. Campisi said “I’m just happy we were able to get it back off the ground. Each booth raised a lot of money and the popularity of the event was quite surprising to everyone”.

## How to join cultural diversity

If you’re already planning to join Cultural Diversity next year they will be having sign-ups at the end of February through the beginning of March. If you are interested in being a part of Cultural Diversity, you can either run a booth or be a part of the clean-up and set up group. The booths we have included for the fair are Italian, Desserts, Latin American, Pittsburgh, African American, American, Greek, German, Games, Drinks and even Face Painting. If you aren’t sure about joining you can ask upperclassman and they could give you a decent description of the work expected of you and all the fun they had. Each booth gets a budget of \$100 to pay for all the food and decorations of each booth. Decorating your booth is very vital, as it could attract many people with bright colors. We hope to see many new faces next year and build a strong community within our school.



# PROM



## Senior, Alisha Miller said:

“Prom was a night to remember, one of the highlights of my senior year.”



## Junior, Parker Monroe’s Favorite Memory:

“Taking pictures in the photo booth with all the teachers.”



## Junior, Jewell Ours said:

“This was my first prom and it was so much fun. I can’t wait to see what next years prom holds.”



## Senior, Austin Hewitt’s Favorite Memory:

“Spending the night on the dance floor, making memories with my closest friends.”



## Senior, and Prom Queen, Keiarra Farren’s Favorite Memory:

“When all the seniors stood in a circle swaying while singing “Graduation” by Vitamin C.”





# Mr. Russo's Holocaust Museum Field Trip

By: Madison Farris

Mr. Russo took high school students on a field trip to Washington D.C. and West Virginia. They visited the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in D.C. and the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum in West Virginia. As they walked into the Holocaust Museum, the staff handed them all individual identification cards of people who experienced the Holocaust. On the cards they gave the students, there was information about an individual from the Holocaust, and what they went through. The museum wants to make the guests visit as uncomfortable as possible. This better portrays truly what the people of the Holocaust experienced. They made you walk in a single file line, had a noise canceling walls as well as packing the elevators full of people for visitors to understand how close the Jews had to be to each other in the train cars. There were many videos playing of people telling their stories. It was very crowded but nonetheless a very interesting experience. Everyone learned a lot about what happened to those at the concentration camps and also why this all happened. At the end of the walk through you get to meet one of the few survivors left of the Holocaust. They spoke about their bone chilling experiences and told the guests their story.

At the Air and Space Museum students learned about what the different planes did. You could watch planes land and take off as well as playing virtual reality games, such as flight simulators, they had some that even went upside down, or you could go to the calmer ones which were still very fun to ride. Mr. Russo has shared that there are no other trips at this time or soon. There were forty-four students and four staff members that went with them.

# National Honor Society

By: Ethan Sarver

The National Honors Society (NHS) is a group of individuals that help the local community and the school. The individuals that are in the NHS are chosen by the teachers. Students must have a 3.5 GPA and must be a sophomore, junior or senior with at least one completed semester at Rochester in order to be eligible for the NHS.

One of the individuals in the NHS is none other than Gianna Sisco. She explained NHS and what it's like to be a part of it.

**What is it like being in the National Honors Society?** "To me, it's a big accomplishment. I was very happy when I got accepted into it."

**Are any of your friends in National Honors Society? If so, who are they?** "Yes, I have multiple friends in NHS. Some of them are Breanna Fordyce, Casey and Kaitlin Richko, Victoria McCracken and Yuxin Zheng."

**What exactly do you do in the National Honors Society?** "We help with community service around school and town."

**Who are the adults who run the National Honors Society?** "Mrs. Shychuck is the head of National Honors Society."

**What is your favorite part about being in National Honors Society?** "My favorite part of National Honors Society is getting to help the school and community, and making them both a better place."

**What is your least favorite part about being in National Honors Society?** "To be honest, I like everything about National Honors Society."

**How long have you been in National Honors Society?** "This is my first year in National Honors Society. NHS is a wonderful group of individuals that take their time to help the community that they live in." As Gianna explains, "it's an honor to be in the National Honors Society and we all really enjoy being involved."



## April Craft Show

By: Gianna Sisco

This year at Rochester, we hosted our first ever craft show. The elementary PTA (Parent Teacher Association) and the Rochester Maintenance Staff helped set up this event in order to raise money for the PTA. There were many vendors selling many different types of crafty items from clothes to knitted animals. This was the first time in history that our school has done something like this. There were vendors in the hallways, natatorium, the I-cafe, the high school cafeteria and even the gym. Some vendors had candy and food to buy and some others were selling jewelry. Other vendors were selling tumblers, earrings, home-made dog treats and dog clothes. The craft show was advertised on Facebook, yard signs, and telephone poles. It was also posted by the PTA, so many people could see it and others could share it.

The vendors at the event were all found mostly through social media. Another huge help was reaching out to the coordinator of the Blackhawk Band Craft Show; she shared our show with their vendors. The vendors had to pay a registration fee that was \$25 per spot and if they needed tables it was an additional \$25. Most of the vendors were semi-local. We had vendors from Beaver, Washington, Allegheny, and Butler counties as well as parts of Ohio.

They began planning this show in January for it to be set up in April. Ms. Holly Wilkans said “It was quite an ambitious task but we were able to pull it off in about two and a half months! A lot was put into organizing; from creating the Google Form Registration link to accepting payments via PayPal or check, to advertising via social media, signage throughout the community, creating floor plans with post its so we were able to move accordingly and know that similar items were limited in one area of the school. It was incredibly important to only have two points of contact for this event to avoid confusion - We had one for craft vendors and one for food vendors.” Vendors and shoppers seemed to enjoy the craft show and many people even complimented on how organized the show was!

## Mental Health in High School

By: Isis Griffon

The mental health of students is very important. The stronger a student's mental health is, the more likely they are to succeed. This can also help them to work at their full potential. A better mind can also make it easier to build relationships and work with others. A student's mental health can be affected by factors that can change their performance in school and other activities either positively or negatively.

Some things that can be affected by a person's mental state are their social life, health, and education. When students are struggling with mental health they may find things more challenging throughout the day compared to a student who has better mental health. Students with better mental health tend to get support from their families, school and their friends. These same people also are more interested in extracurriculars, social events and are more focused on their studies. A healthy mental state is also beneficial to your memory, which enables you to retain more information that you learn in school.

Students who are struggling with their mental health could be dealing with stress, anxiety, depression or other, more severe, mental issues. These students are more likely to be distracted in class or have little to no interest, this can affect their performance in school drastically. Without intervention it can cause a student to get behind in school and no longer understand the concepts in class. The students may also have low energy levels making them not want to participate in activities with other students. The signs of mental illness usually start around the age of 14, although most struggling students don't get help until they are well into adulthood.

Positive Steps is a mental health office that is open to anyone at Rochester school including students and parents. While it is located in the school, it is an outpatient service where the participants are billed through their insurance. The goal of this office is to help provide mental health to students in a school environment and to the parents during school hours. Lori Bollen says a reason they do this is because it “makes it easier for students or parents to get help without having to travel to an office after school hours.” Intake for Positive Steps happens by a supervisor determining if a therapist will take a person's insurance. If the insurance isn't accepted, then they would be referred to an outside service.

When asked how to make a student feel comfortable when uneasy Mrs. Bollen said “We are a nonjudgmental group. When a person comes to Positive Steps, they are safe to say and feel what they feel.” Individuals information in Positive Steps is never told to anyone unless they have said they want others to know. This also helps create a safe environment. When in this therapy the person will come weekly or every other week, depending on the individuals needs. Overall, the Positive Steps program is for the wellbeing of students and families. It also helps promote mental health awareness in school. Mrs. Bollen says “Everyone struggles at times, and in the Positive Steps program, the person just receives extra support and care to figure out how to manage their problems.”



# Open Heart Surgery

By: Aric Alberts

I was able to attend a field trip to observe an open heart surgery and it fascinated me. Ms. Rossi is in charge of this trip, so I asked her a few questions to understand why we go. Personally, I thought the surgery was an interesting experience. I believe we should have more field trip opportunities like this.

**What do you hope the students will get out of attending this field trip?** “We hope that the students who come on the field trip are able to see the different jobs available and spark some interest in the medical field”.

**How many times have you gone on this field trip?** “We have taken this field trip for about 8 years”.

**Why do you have the field trip in March each year?** “In years past, we have had to cancel the field trip because of weather conditions. So we try to have it later in the year when we are not in danger of snowy or icy conditions. This time frame also works well for when the Anatomy class studies the Cardiovascular system”.

**Would you recommend other schools to do a field trip like this?** “Yes, definitely. It is a unique experience that not many people get the chance to do. Being a teacher you are excited to give this type of learning opportunity to your students.”

## Meet the Staff

Editor in Chief: Amarina Simoni

Reporters: Aric Alberts, Austin Hewitt, Madison Farris, Isis Griffon, Casey Richko, Mariah (Leo) Ruth, Ethan Sarver and Gianna Sisco



Standing: Madison Farris, Isis Griffon, Ethan Sarver, Casey Richko, and Gianna Sisco

Sitting: Mariah (Leo) Ruth, Aric Alberts, Amarina Simoni, and Austin Hewitt

## The Oracle Mission Statement

The Oracle is a student run newspaper that writes to inform, to educate, to entertain, and to provide multiple viewpoints for our community and all Rochester High School students and staff.



If you would like to submit an article of 250 words or less to be published in the Oracle next year, please email your submission with an original photograph to [lyonsd@rasd.org](mailto:lyonsd@rasd.org) with “The Oracle” in the subject line.

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