



Tusker Nation

SOMERS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWS
FOR SCSD FAMILIES

Designs are Out of this World



Felicity McCormack and Olivia Ball display the rover they made in technology class using their design, coding and electrical wiring skills.

Mars is closer than expected if you know where to look.

Inside the technology classes at Somers Middle School, sixth-grade students were hard at

work designing and building their own Mars rovers.

Each rover had to include four laser-cut wheels that were cut in class using the Full Spectrum Laser printer, a separate motor for each wheel, a base to support the motors and connect the wheels, wiring, and a Crumble controller. A Crumble controller is a small circuit board that is easily programmed using an accompanying app.

“I did the coding, put the motor on, and attached the wheels,” said Rocco Zurica. “Getting all the wires to go to the right spots was challenging.”

The Crumble controllers were coded by the students to control the motors. Students programmed their rovers to traverse a specific path on the floor that included twists, turns, and even a jump over a ramp. Students were allowed to make as many attempts at the course as needed since designs often require some reflection and creative thinking to work out any issues.

“It was really fun,” said Felicity McCormack. “I like the controller part. I programmed it to go forward and turn. It’s very specific and I have to get it right.”

This assignment encouraged students to focus on many different aspects of designing a successful Mars rover. Aspects such as balance, weight, symmetry, and durability were all considered while making their final products. Often the first try didn’t work out as planned, and students had to draw on their International Baccalaureate learner attributes of thinker, reflective, and risk-taker to complete their project.

“The crumble isn’t working for some reason that I can’t figure out,” said Felicity. “We’re trying to take that apart and see what’s wrong so we can fix it.”

Outdoor Club a Breath of Fresh Air



Students in the SIS Outdoor Club take a nature walk behind their school building.

Learning moves outside when the Outdoor Club at Somers Intermediate School holds its monthly meeting.

Students in all grades can participate in the club, which is broken up into two groups: a

third-grade group, and another for fourth and fifth graders. The smaller groups, of approximately 15 students each, help to create an environment that is rich with hands-on learning opportunities. Some students arrive with a wealth of personal experience and knowledge, while others have never had the opportunity to take a nature walk.

“We go on hiking and snowshoeing adventures!” said Mae Brenninkmeyer.

The club started three years ago to nurture a love for and knowledge of the natural world among the students at SIS. Club members enjoy unique experiences like following a trail, smelling the stench of skunk cabbage that lines the bank of a stream, watching a ribbon snake slither across their path, or seeing fresh tracks of a whitetail deer.

“We explore the outdoors,” said Khaleesi Flores. “We observe animals respectfully and we identify plants and trees.”

However, the club members do more than go on nature walks. They also tend a school garden where they plant tulips that are harvested in spring to make floral arrangements for school staff and faculty. They also learn to plant and care for dahlias, including gathering the bulbs in the fall and preparing them for proper storage through winter. Students learn lifelong skills by interacting with the natural world around them.

Mae added, “We help the earth by understanding it better.”

□ Seen Around Somers □



The big storm this month was a win-win for SIS students. Not only did they get a day off from school, but upon their return they were able to take the school's snowshoes out for a good stomp.

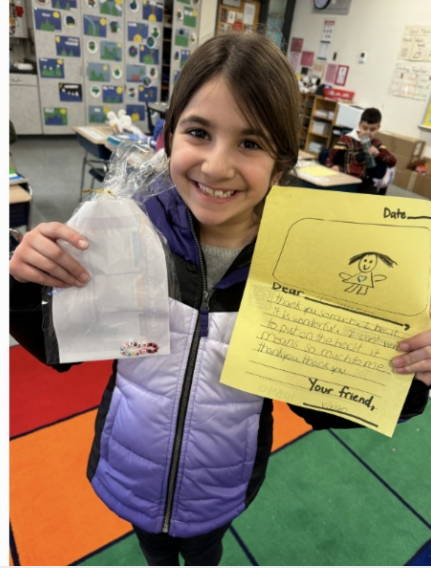


Dozens of students and their families attended an information night in the high school library for the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme. Teachers and current IB Diploma candidates shared their experiences and answered questions. **[Listen to the latest Tusker Talk podcast to learn about the progress and developments of IB in Somers schools.](#)**



Primrose students joined 1.5 billion people around the world in celebrating Lunar New Year. In addition to learning about the holiday's traditions, which include parades, dances, and symbolic food, some children made crafts with central symbols of the holiday - lions and lanterns. This is the year of the dragon, which is believed to bring wealth, luck, and opportunities for growth.

"Belonging" in Action



Left, ninth grade students deliver gift bags to Primrose. Right, students show their appreciation with thank you notes.

Making sure that every student feels that they belong is a focus in all Somers schools. High school freshmen put that concept into practice by delivering handmade trinkets to second graders at Primrose.

“It was about caring, and it was nice of them,” said second-grader Jordy Stephens.

“I learned that it made me feel good making stuff for others,” said Matthew Giliberti, a freshman at Somers High School.

This activity encouraged the students in Tusker 101 class to focus on the International Baccalaureate learner attribute “caring” by handmaking gift bags for students in second grade. During classes, students worked together to create bracelets and assemble gift bags.

“As I worked on the bracelets, I imagined how happy the kids would be, which made me feel excited to bring the bags over to Primrose,” said freshman Ashley Contreras Valencia. “I felt very grateful to have this opportunity to bring smiles to so many faces.”

Each bag contained a bracelet with words of affirmation such as kind, brave, smart, confident, enough, capable, unique, and loved. Each bracelet took about 10 minutes to make.

“My bracelet said kind,” said Jordy.

Along with the bracelets, students also received an “I Care, You Care, We Care” Care Bears worksheet and corresponding stickers to go with it that they could take home.

Second-grader Sophia Venticinque said, “We got a bracelet, emoji stickers, and a paper about how you feel. I felt good when I received my gift.”

After receiving their unexpected gift bags, second graders practiced “caring” and their writing skills by creating handmade thank-you cards for the high school students.

“A couple of days after we brought over the gift bags, we received several thank-you notes from the second graders,” said Ashley. “The kids were over the moon, and it made me feel amazing knowing that I helped make them feel that way.”

Celebrating Similarities and Differences



Angelina Spano and Savannah Milanese got to know each other and their classmates better during a counseling lesson.

At Primrose, students explored their differences and similarities with counselor Jeff Getman by reading "The Sandwich Swap." In the story, children eat all kinds of sandwiches for lunch, everything from peanut butter and jelly to hummus, and ultimately realize those "different" tastes help make everyone unique.

Second-grader Jordy Stephens said, "You can't say you don't like something if you haven't tried it."

After reading the story, students completed a "Find a Buddy" activity that focused on similarities instead of differences. The activity helped them discover new things about their classmates that they may not have known already.

"I learned Mr. Getman wears glasses just like me," said Jordy.

Students walked around the class finding classmates who could say "yes" to questions in certain categories such as, who wears glasses, who has a cat, who is left-handed, who has a sister, and who plays a sport. Sometimes, those were things they had in common and sometimes they were differences.

Reese Schoenberg said, "I learned Stacy has a five-letter name and I do too."

When they found a friend who matched a category, they filled in that square with the student's name. Smiles and laughter filled the room as students discovered interesting things about their classmates and found new connections with their peers.





Thank you Somers for your continuous support! The SMS PTA won the NYS PTA SAVVY Award for membership!



The Seventh and Eighth grader students enjoyed the winter dance.



Third and Fourth grade students were treated to a performance of Ned Mindset Mission - Never give up, Encourage others and Do your best!



SEPTA and Primrose continue to support teacher grants for cooperative leaning in and outside of the classroom.



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