

# Tusker Nation

SOMERS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWS  
FOR SCSD FAMILIES



Visitors from Somers High School dropped in at Primrose to help students kick off Hispanic Heritage Month. The high school teachers wore clothing and colors to represent their own families' cultures. Many children took a moment to introduce themselves and connect with the cultural heritage of the staff members.



Congratulations to Liam King, Andrew Tatela, and Brian Huang, named Commended Students in this year's National Merit Scholarship Competition.



Some second graders adopted their very own reading pets. On their adoption papers, the students promised to read to their pets each night during the school week.



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## Personalized Pulsera Maracas

The leaders of the U.S-based nonprofit Pulsera Project sent Somers Middle School a set of personalized, hand-carved maracas from an artist in Nicaragua as a thank you for going “above and beyond” in making the Pulsera fundraiser a huge success in Somers. Over the past two years, the International Club at the middle school has raised thousands of dollars selling beautifully crafted, one-of-a-kind, hand-woven bracelets and purses made by artisans in Central America. The Pulsera Project uses the proceeds to help Central American communities through empowerment and education.

## Aprendiendo Español en la Clase de Arte



***New teacher Caitlin Purcell helps SIS students pronounce “Me llamo \_\_\_\_” which is “My name is \_\_\_\_” in Spanish.***

“Mi color favorito es azul,” said fourth grader James Jackson. “¿Cómo te llamas?” asked fourth grader Roman Casimir.

Statements and questions like this are becoming more common in Meghan Gioffe’s art room at Somers Intermediate School, now a place for third and fourth graders to work on their Spanish, along with their art lessons. The art room walls, typically splashed with bold

colors and artwork, are now dotted with colorful signs of words in English and Spanish for colors, tasks, shapes, art supplies, and more.

This fall, Somers Intermediate School began integrating Spanish lessons in specials classes for third and fourth graders. Caitlin Purnell is the new World Language teacher at SIS who joins Gioffe each day to incorporate Spanish into the classroom art lesson.

“The students are really excited about learning Spanish,” Purnell said. “They come in asking questions and are practicing what they’ve already learned. They are really using their resources to sound words out.”

Gioffe typically instructs her students on the art project by showing them an example. Now she incorporates two. The current project is the “Name Fish” also known as the “Nombre Pez.”

“I think that this program is off to a beautiful start and the students are really engaged and eager to learn,” Purnell said. “Language learning is done best through social experiences and play, which is why we thought that introducing it in the special areas would be a great first taste of a different language.”

Gioffe and Purnell are excited when they hear students whispering Spanish words and quizzing themselves and each other as they work on their projects. Purnell takes the end of the lesson to work on the Spanish lesson and each week she plans to build on what students have learned previously and create interest in Spanish while they are working on other themes.



## A Strong Constitution

“We the People” of Primrose Elementary School celebrated Constitution Day in September by wearing “Star Spangled” attire. Many classrooms created a special classroom constitution.

Students in Stefanie Pacheco and Spyridoula Adanuncio's second grade class pledged to work hard to make good choices that fill the buckets of being kind, being safe and being responsible. And, of course, they put their John Hancock on it!

## Raising Awareness of Global Water Scarcity





***Niamh O'Connor and Hazel Sledzik test the design of their rain water collection container in Technology class.***

Nutritional experts recommend drinking eight glasses of water a day but seventh graders studying water scarcity at Somers Middle School know that is not feasible for millions of people around the world.

“After watching the video about water scarcity, I realized it’s not just a problem for third world countries,” said Niamh O’Connor. “This is something that is everywhere, and people may not even get one glass of water in a day.”

Hazel Sledzik agreed. “It was scary to learn that the lack of water is such a big problem around the world,” she said.

Seventh grade students in Matt Lugo’s Technology classes have been exploring the impact of water scarcity around the world as part of their first Middle Years Programme design unit. The “Invention and Innovation to Help Others” project had students research people and places impacted by water scarcity, explore possible solutions, and brainstorm their own solutions.

The students worked together to create water-capturing devices that could hold as much water as possible for 25 seconds using two sheets of paper and sixteen inches of tape.

The project followed the MYP design process that challenges students to be practical and creative thinkers in solving problems. Their projects got them thinking about the bigger picture.

The task made Sledzik think about ways to help. “For the countries that lack clean drinking

water, we need to find ways to help them build containers to hold excess rainwater," she said.

Thomas Breglio said that the water scarcity made him think twice when emptying out a water bottle after sports practice. "We are lucky we have access to water all the time," he said. "I think we should all be grateful for what we have." He said he was glad to do this project because it made him cognizant of global water issues.

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## Captains Get Leadership Lessons from Expert



***Major Bob Ryan, West Point instructor, facilitates a group discussion about leadership with student-athletes at the high school.***

Major Bob Ryan of the West Point Military Academy visited the Somers High School fall sports captains for a leadership and team-building session this week.

Ryan, who teaches a Student Success Program at the Center for Enhanced Performance at West Point, led the SHS student-athletes in group discussions focused on team chemistry, team culture, and preemptive problem-solving. He guided the students to think about and discuss what effects the pandemic may have had on athletes and whether the culture and chemistry of their teams may have changed.



Ryan led the groups in brainstorming sessions on potential issues that could affect their teams such as morale, team behavior and performance on the field, communication, performance feedback, and ways to combat them.

“To put it in military terms, we want to think about how we up armor ourselves from potential chinks in the armor in our teams’ culture,” Ryan said. “All of us are smarter than one of us.”

Lauren McCartin, varsity field hockey captain, said the leadership session was a great experience. “I took away that team success starts with the culture that captains create,” McCartin said. “I really liked how we discussed different ways to improve and maintain team culture. I feel that this leadership session was very beneficial and will allow me to become a better leader both on and off the field.”

Athletic Director Marc Hattem said connecting with Ryan was a great opportunity for his student-athletes. “Major Ryan did some work with our boys’ lacrosse program and found great success,” Hattem said. “He came very highly recommended by the coaching staff and from student-athlete feedback.

When the planning came together for a Captains’ Club, “Major Ryan was a logical choice because of his experience and a shared vision for our work,” Hattem said. “We look forward to a great year of learning, collaboration, and growth.”

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## The PTA Corner



On Sunday, August 28, the Primrose PTA hosted its third annual Kindergarten Meet-n-

Greet at Reis Park. Students were able to meet their classmates and go on a surprise bus ride to Primrose. The Primrose PTA gave students goody bags with special poems to open the night before school. Parents were able to join the PTA and SEPTA and learn more about the Girl Scout and Boy Scout programs.

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