

Tusker Nation

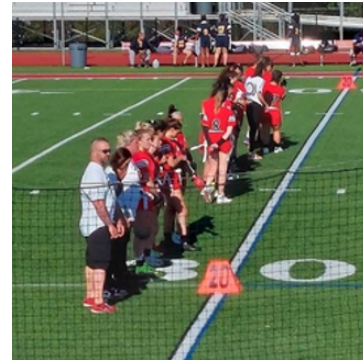
SOMERS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWS
FOR SCSD FAMILIES



Principles of Biomedical Science students prepare isolation streaks of bacteria to identify the species causing an outbreak in a fictitious medical facility.



Todd, the explosives detection canine with the Westchester County Police Department, visits fifth-grade students at SIS with his handler, Officer George Varbero.



The girls varsity flag football team sold t-shirts and raised over \$2000 for the flag football scholarship fund in memory of gym teacher Dom Narcisco.



Dodd 3rd in International Contest

Senior Emily Dodd took 3rd place in the category of Biomedical and Health Sciences at the 2022 Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair for her research related to Alzheimer's Disease.

Emily competed in Atlanta, Georgia, against the top students in the world at the largest pre-collegiate fair. Students from over 63 countries and territories competed both in-person and virtually for top honors. Emily was ranked 3rd in her category.

"This is such an amazing accomplishment," says Science Research teacher Bill Maelia, "And a true testament to the hard work, dedication, and passion Emily has demonstrated throughout her research."

Hilltop, How Does Your Garden Grow?



Fifth graders were thrilled to be off-campus again for field trips - this excursion an opportunity to learn about growing fruits and vegetables and seeing some farm animals.

Blue skies and sunny weather made for perfect visits to the farm. Smells of soil, compost, and the wet, cold noses of farm animals greeted eager and excited students.

This spring, Somers Intermediate School fifth-graders traveled to Yorktown's Hilltop Hanover Farm for their annual field trip and learned about the sustainable organic practices used on the farm. They toured the fields and saw crops peeking out of their plant beds. Students visited the greenhouses that were bursting with herbs and vegetables, tasted some fresh herbs, and heard about the processes of composting and small-scale livestock management.

"It was one of the best field trips I have ever been on," said Marco Pomponi. He said he was excited to see the farm animals including a mother cow and her calf and two goats the class affectionately called Michael Jordan and Tom Brady. They also tasted freshly picked basil inside the greenhouse and outside and compared the taste. "In my opinion, I liked the inside basil because it had more flavor whereas the outside basil was very bland," Pomponi said.

Hannah Williams said she was excited about petting the animals and seeing the growing crops.

"We tried two kinds of spinach, one salty and one sweet," she said. "I liked the salty spinach better. We also learned how the people that work there don't milk the cows and that cows are really smart because they know when to switch fields, so they don't wear out one particular section."

Teacher Patty Sisca was thrilled that the farm field trip returned for SIS students. The trip usually happens in the fall but this group of students had a different farm experience.

"I was so happy when we got the okay to go back to the farm," Sisca said. "The children had a great time learning about organic and sustainable farming, as well as the small-scale livestock, the cows and goats that live there."

Steps from Ukrainian Dance Master



It is a history and dance lesson with poignant relevance to current events. Students in the Somers High School International Baccalaureate Dance class got a tutorial in Ukrainian Folk Dancing from the master – Orlando Pagan, Artistic Director of the world-renowned Syzokryli Ukrainian Dance Ensemble. The style is fast-paced and energetic with graceful twirling and sweeping motions.

Pagan led four one-hour lessons to teach the students the traditional dance from Central Ukraine. The dance incorporates solo work and pair dancing where they wind around each other in a box formation. **Watch the dancers in action.**

Artistic Talent on Display



Jordyn Frias has a group of his paintings on display outside of the middle school art room.

Jordyn Frias loves panoramas and beautiful views and spends as much time as he can painting them. The Somers Middle School eighth-grader has painted dozens of beautiful landscapes and a sampling of his works is displayed outside the SMS art rooms.

Art is a hobby and passion for Frias and SMS art teacher Gary Wanderlingh said he was floored by the talent of his student. "These are all paintings Jordyn created on his own," Wanderlingh said. "Since he is leaving us this spring, I wanted to showcase them for all to see since they were not included in the district art show last month."

Frias took up painting at home and said he got his inspiration to paint landscapes by watching YouTube videos of iconic painter Bob Ross. "I watched a video to learn how to paint," Frias said. "My mother was surprised to see the first landscape I did." He said he most enjoys painting landscapes using colors of red, blue, and yellow acrylics. "I paint every day, Frias said. "It makes me feel calm."

Frias comes to SMS as part of the PNW BOCES Learning Center program and has taken art with Wanderlingh for the last three years as part of his electives. Frias wanted to share his paintings and brought in a few to show his teacher. "I was really floored by Jordyn's talent," Wanderlingh said.

Frias said he is excited for art at the high school level and plans to keep painting.

Designs on the Future



After sketching their designs for their new communities, these second-grade planners begin construction.

Tall skyscrapers and busy concrete streets or a quieter farm community with a babbling brook running through the center of town?

Second graders in Jessica Paperman's class are working on their Community Unit in social studies, creating three-dimensional projects based on rural, suburban, or urban

areas. Students worked together in small groups to plan their choice of community and discussed the features that they would include.

Lego City is an urban community developed by Mason Holt, Donovan Shaughnessy, Jenna Klatsky, Stella Varbero, and Lexi DeVito and will include features such as skyscrapers, construction sites, apartment buildings, schools, and playgrounds as well as taxis, buses, and a subway station. The city will rise up from the poster board base using items like boxes, Play-Doh, milk cartons, a 3-D pen to create a stop sign, and actual pieces of Lego. The group was excited to see their city come alive as they began with grey paint for the roads and sidewalks.

Farmville is a rural community currently in development by Jasline Alonzo, Laura Jarquin, Samantha Thomas, Olivia Ritacco, and Kaylee Ayabaca Paute.

“We chose a rural community because it’s quiet and pretty and there is a lot of grass and trees, and not a lot of people live there,” said Alonzo. For their project, the girls will build their rural area using real pebbles, tissue paper, cardboard, pipe cleaners, toothpicks, and more. “We are creating a lot of space so kids in this community can have a nice playground,” Ritacco said.

The two groups planning suburban areas determined the best combination of sidewalks and park-like areas and used a ruler to ensure there is equal space for cars, walking dogs, and riding bikes around the Dogwood Town and Preston Town neighborhoods.

To prepare for the project, Paperman said the students identified the distinct characteristics of rural, suburban, and urban streetscapes, including their different styles of residence. They compared the distinctive features and explored how the common interests in each reflect in the structures they see in those communities.

SEF Grants Enhance Student Experience



Middle school students explore the music of other cultures that incorporate ukuleles and have formed a student-led ukulele/guitar club that meets during the WIN period.

Dozens of ukuleles for middle school music and a laser cutter for the Fashion and Textiles class are two of the newest grant awards through the Somers Education Fund (SEF).

“I wrote a grant for ukuleles several years ago to pilot a ukulele program and it has become such a valuable part of my curriculum, that our music department decided to incorporate ukuleles into the Music 7 MYP curriculum,” Malara said.

The second grant was written to expand the program into Margaret Chan and Marie Williams’ music classrooms. “We love teaching the ukulele because it enhances dexterity and hand-eye coordination and gives students a chance to interpret and decode chord charts and practice music theory.”

“The students are so excited about the ukulele, that they are asking to play even outside of class,” Malara said.

At the high school, a new laser cutter will offer Fashion and Textile students state-of-the-art equipment to express their creativity. Cutting fabrics, decorating clothing and textiles, and creating accessories such as earrings or pendants are all possible with this technology.

SEF representative Vicki Durso said the organization is thrilled to help raise funds for specific student and teacher-initiated projects that enrich the educational experience and

are not funded by the district's budget. Through the granting process, the foundation supports these endeavors to enrich the educational experience.

"The fashion cutter will provide fashion students with new opportunities and new and innovative technology," Durso said. "The original set of ukuleles was a huge success in enhancing the middle school music program."

Busy PTA in the Month of May



The nice weather provided great opportunities for PTA events in May. The SMS PTA organized after-school socials for each grade. Students enjoyed an ice cream truck, a DJ, and playing field games with their friends. The SHS PTSA Class of 2023 parents held the Meals, Wheels, and Deals fundraiser with vendors, food trucks, and entertainment. Somers PTA Council hosted its Annual Bus Appreciation Breakfast to show how thankful we are to the people who keep our children safe. Thank you to everyone for your support of our PTA events!

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