



# Tusker Nation

SOMERS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWS  
FOR SCSD FAMILIES

## New Varsity Sport Kicks Off



*The inaugural Somers High School varsity flag football team.*

The 20 girls working hard on the football field are thrilled to be the first official varsity flag football team at Somers High School.

“We are so incredibly excited,” said senior Juliana Bockhaus, who plays wide receiver, tight end, and defensive lineman. “We are making history as the first girls to play varsity flag football at Somers High School. It’s such an incredible opportunity.”

Somers High School is one of the nine Section 1 high schools participating in the girl’s flag football pilot program initiated by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association. The team is made possible by a \$60,000 donation from the New York Giants.

For the new high school team, Katie DiChario, who helped organized a girl’s flag football league for elementary school in 2018, is the head coach, with Marta Parker and Steve McNamara by her side as assistants. DiChario and team manager, Jenn Kisslinger, were instrumental in making the team possible through the Nike/NFL pilot program and asking the New York Giants to sponsor teams in the area.

“It is amazing to me to see how well the girls picked up the sport,” DiChario said. “These girls are athletic and capable and show intelligence and motivation. I am not surprised

though. We know they are an amazing group of girls.”

Many of the girls who joined the team came to try something new and found that the team exceeded their expectations by leaps and bounds. “I didn’t know I would like it but now I wish that we had had this opportunity when I started high school,” said senior Savannah Baloy, a running back and cornerback on the team. “When you hear about girls playing football, you have a certain idea about it. I have had so much fun waiting for the first game and I am so excited to see for myself what we can do.”

Senior quarterback Lily Carino grew up in what she calls a football family and always wanted to play the game herself. “I am so excited for the first game,” she said. “All the girls bring their individual talents and together we have such good chemistry. I honestly think people will not expect us to be this good.”

Senior Alicia Hawkins, who plays wide receiver and safety, said since the girls are all new to the sport, the “nothing to lose” mentality plays a huge role in the positive and successful beginning of the team.

“What we are doing has never been done before, and therefore there are no expectations,” Hawkins said. “I am incredibly grateful for the chance to set the tone for a program that I undoubtedly believe will grow into one of the most popular this area has ever seen. I think there's still work to be done towards improving football as a women's sport. We have clearly demonstrated that we are perfectly capable of carrying out field goals and playing on the same size field as the boys' varsity team.”

The season kicked off with a jamboree held on Tusker turf, attended by various New York Giants players.

Somers will meet each of the nine area high schools in the pilot program for one game. They are Scarsdale, Peekskill, Brewster, Lakeland, Panas, Hastings, Greenburgh-North Castle, and Mahopac.

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## Art Festival Returns in Person



The halls of Somers High School were adorned on April 21 with the exceptional artwork of



Somers students in kindergarten through grade 12, as the Somers Festival of the Arts returned in person for the first time in two years.

Angela Holder, Somers K-12 Fine and Applied Arts Department Leader said the assortment of pieces gave attendees a chance to see the art curriculum in action. "There is a wide range of projects these young artists complete while moving through the Somers Arts program. The Festival is a great representation of all levels of art from each school," she said.

Artwork by students dotted the common areas on the first floor of Somers High School, including the Library Media Center and the cafeteria. There was also a designated section to exhibit the work of seniors, as well as a look at the student projects from upper-level International Baccalaureate Programme arts courses.

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## Presenting Parr at Primrose



It's okay to be different. In fact, it's our differences that make us unique. That's the message best-selling children's author Todd Parr shared with Primrose students in March.

Primrose welcomed Parr to virtually share his messages of inclusion, empathy, and kindness. During the grade level Zoom visits, Parr spoke about his books and shared messages celebrating individual diversity and joy such as *be kind*, *love yourself* and *be who you are*. Parr is famous for these messages of individuality and his signature vibrant images of stick figures using bold primary colors.

Students created their own Todd Parr-like works of art celebrating what makes them unique. Primrose art teacher Eileen Olsen guided the students to fashion their own faces and feelings creations and bulletin boards around the school are splashed with bold and colorful faces representing the individuality of each student.

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## Building Bridges to Engineering



***Student-engineers put their bridge to the "earthquake test" during a STEM project offered by the Challenge Island program.***

Towers? Check. Cables? Check? Suspenders? Check. But can this bridge endure an earthquake? Third graders in Sandra Dulyk's class were up to the challenge.

Students created their suspension bridges using paper towel rolls, pipe cleaners, popsicle sticks, straws, string, tape, and more to withstand the fictitious "San Francisco Earthquake of 2022" – the shaking of their bridge spans by Jill Schantz of Challenge Island.

The ideas were flying as students got to work designing their bridges. One group used popsicle sticks reinforced with tape for a jersey barrier, so cars stayed on during a quake. They also created an extra safety mechanism - a railing by folding up the cardboard bridge lane. "I am making a railing so that the cars don't fall off," said Charlotte Frankie, who with her group, created the Green Gate Bridge.

Their group also stuck the pipe cleaners inside the straws for suspension railings. "I think that putting the pipe cleaners inside the straw is going to make it stronger and more stable," Donovan LaLuna said. Turns out he was correct. During the shake, the suspension railing stayed intact.

Carter Iglesias and his group used the popsicle sticks under the road to ward off buckling during the shaking. "Putting the sticks under the road was a little challenging," Iglesias said. When they tested out their bridge, Fruity Cheering Bridge, they learned that the popsicle sticks kept the road intact but the gap between the two lanes proved to be the demise of several toy cars that fell into the bay.

"It was great how they all came up with some different ideas and really worked so well with their team for the challenge," said Schantz, who will be visiting all third grade SIS classes for bridge-building this week as well as other STEM enrichment activities for fourth and fifth grade coming up.

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**Playing with their Futures**





**Justin Thomas explains how to succeed in the board game he created, *Life to 25*.**

Using the iconic *The Game of Life* as their starting point, seventh-graders explored the different paths and roadblocks they might face between now and reaching the age of 25.

Students designed their own board games complete with accomplishments, goals, setbacks, milestones, and varying paths. Teacher Karen Paciullo said the students' creativity with their board games was boundless.

"Some used designs from childhood games like *Candy Land* or *Chute and Ladders* as a base while others came up with their own unique plan," Paciullo said.

Molly Cutler's game "Double Path" gives players the chance to follow different paths to 25. The object of the game is to attain more achievements and reach more goals although there are some roadblocks along the way. "I thought about the *Game of Life* and how it's like a road for you to follow," Cutler said.

Danielle Donnelly made her game "Time Till 25" a colorful board around her personal goals for success. Her first goal is to get her driver's license. "I am excited to paint my parking space at Somers High School," she said. Her game board has other life events she plans on attaining – graduating from high school, then college, a move to Toronto and possibly playing professional hockey.

Nick Frey's "Route 25" is a game of curvy paths to successes like going to college, getting a job, making money, and buying a house. But since life is not always easy or predictable Frey gives players options– take a safe route making less money or a risky route with more money and chances to lose.

Paciullo said she was impressed with what her seventh graders came up with. "They used

their own original concepts in thinking about what kinds of goals and achievements they want for themselves,” Paciullo said.

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## **Success with a Prom Dress Drive**



Somers High School sophomore Nikki Hershfield collected more than 100 prom items to donate to the Community Center of Northern Westchester's Prom Drive. The items collected in the Prom Drive will be available in the CCNW's Pop Up Prom Boutique which offers formal wear and prom items to help offset the financial burden for some high school students so they can attend their upcoming event. Nikki delivered the prom items to CCNW on April 9.

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## **PTA Sponsors Many April Events**





## PTA April Happenings



The Primrose PTA is proud to provide opportunities for Primrose students to learn through literature. Katie Petruzzello came to visit to discuss her book, *Mighty Mila*. Todd Parr virtually shared his messages of inclusion, empathy, and kindness. SMS PTA sponsored a presentation by the Da Vinci Science Center. Hovercrafts, the magician's tablecloth trick, and breaking boards were all part of the science assemblies. Kids had a blast trying to outwit the Science Center educators.

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