

Tusker Nation

SOMERS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWS
FOR SCSD FAMILIES



Students in 5th grade music class spent the year studying composers, including Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and The Beatles. **Listen to this class** perform a 3-part arrangement of Beethoven's The Ode to Joy on metallophones and xylophones.

□ Seen Around Somers □



Checkmate! The middle school tech club built a giant chess set for students to use during recess. They used a large Computer Numerical Controlled (CNC) router machine and other tools to cut the pieces from wood.



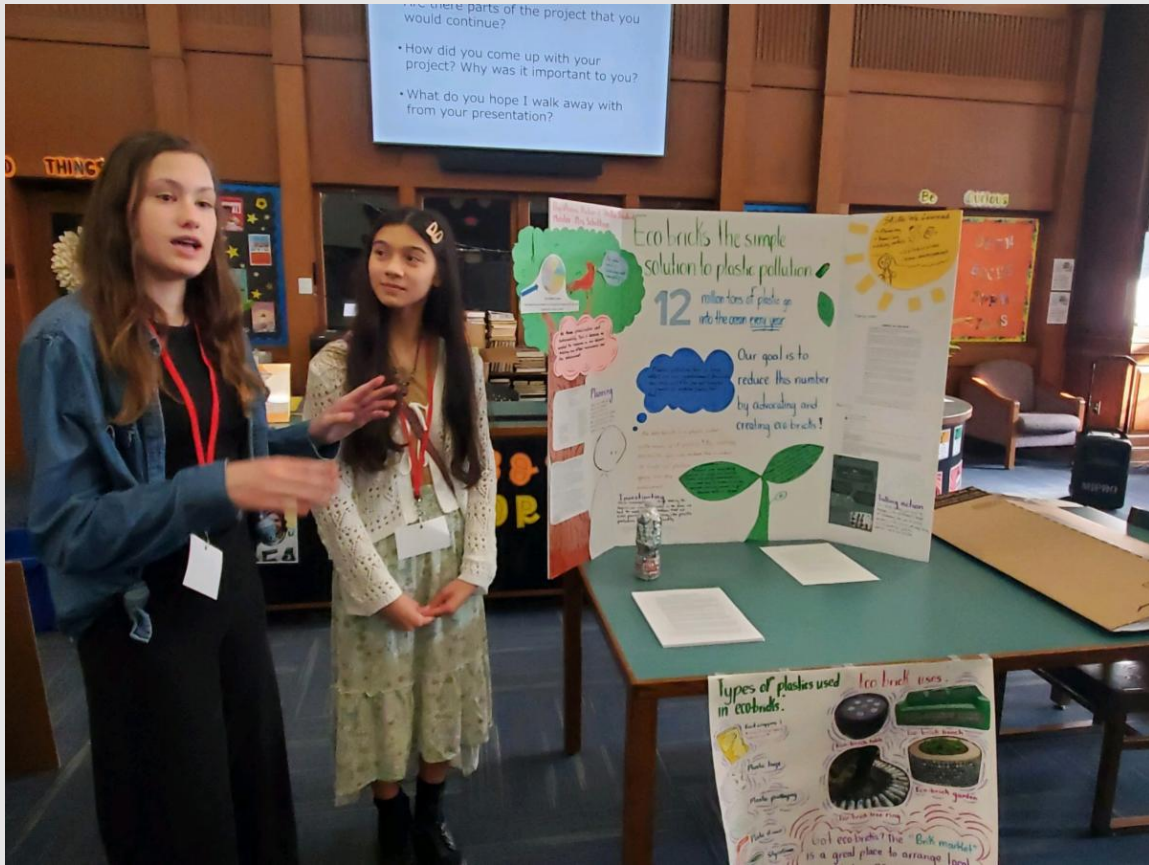
A new computer programming curriculum, Code HS, is in use at the high school. Taught in schools nationwide, students establish a baseline for computer science that gives them the skills to tackle more advanced classes.



Middle schoolers and Primrose students shared a multilingual and literacy experience at SMS. Kindergartners read Elephant and Piggie in

English and the older kids read it in French. Then the older students planned a joint celebration of learning.

Community Project Teaches Global Citizenship



A group of eighth grade students presented the research and findings from their Community Projects, also called Capstone Projects. For this component of the Middle Years Programme, students identify an issue in the community they want to explore in depth. Some of the topics this year included Strings For Joy: Play it Forward, Raise Your Hand, Local Environmental Cleanup, and Safe Crossing in Somers. Next year all eighth graders will complete the community project, an important step along the path to becoming engaged global citizens.

Student Volunteers Essential to Tusker Teams



Junior Noah Volkman in the press box working on the equipment he uses to play music during Somers games.

Four years ago, Samantha Cabo was a competitive dancer. So were her closest friends. But that very significant part of her identity disappeared suddenly when a hip fracture upended her world.

“It took a year to recover, and the doctor told me I could no longer participate in competitive activities like dance and sports,” said Cabo, who is now a high school senior. “I was kind of in a bad place. I didn’t know what to do. I didn’t have anything.”

That changed during the spring of Cabo’s sophomore year when she joined the football program as a team manager. What first became a way to watch her older brother Alex’s games amidst pandemic restrictions soon turned into a passion. Cabo became a go-to person who last fall followed the Tuskers to a state championship.

“It has fulfilled what I was missing and even more,” she said. “Even as a dancer, I had never had this kind of team bond.”

Cabo is one of several Somers student volunteers whose contributions Athletic Director Marc Hattem has deemed invaluable.

“It’s such a wonderful group of kids,” Hattem said. “We couldn’t do what we do without them.”

Like Cabo, Nicholas Maurantonio and Curtis Dustin have served as football team

managers, often in charge of video equipment. Maurantonio found his niche after receiving a drone from assistant coach Doug Carpenter. He brought it home, learned how to use it, and now films practices on the drone. Maurantonio also manages the program's Hudl cameras, which allow coaches and players to watch replay footage on the sideline during games.

"Anything they need tech-wise during a game, I'm there," Maurantonio said.

Junior Noah Volkman also worked at football games last fall, but it was his own idea that brought the partnership to fruition. The self-professed music lover pitched to Hattem that he could DJ live sporting events. He started last October and has been a staple at football, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls lacrosse, girls flag football and track meets since.

"I'm all over," Volkman said.

Volkman makes music in his free time, serving as his own producer and audio engineer. He saw a chance to leverage those skills to improve the game experience for the players and fans.

"I was there one game as an attendee and I just felt like it could be pretty cool if there was music when we scored a touchdown," Volkman said. "I went to talk to Mr. Hattem and here we are."

There are athletic events that simply wouldn't run without the assistance of student volunteers. Hattem pointed toward the district's Special Olympics program as an example. That call for help has been answered, among others, by Ava Rourke.

Rourke's willingness stems partially from personal reasons. Her older brother has autism, so she began helping the Special Olympics teams as early as elementary school.

Rourke now attends practices once a week as well as games. She helps students run drills or supports them at live events.

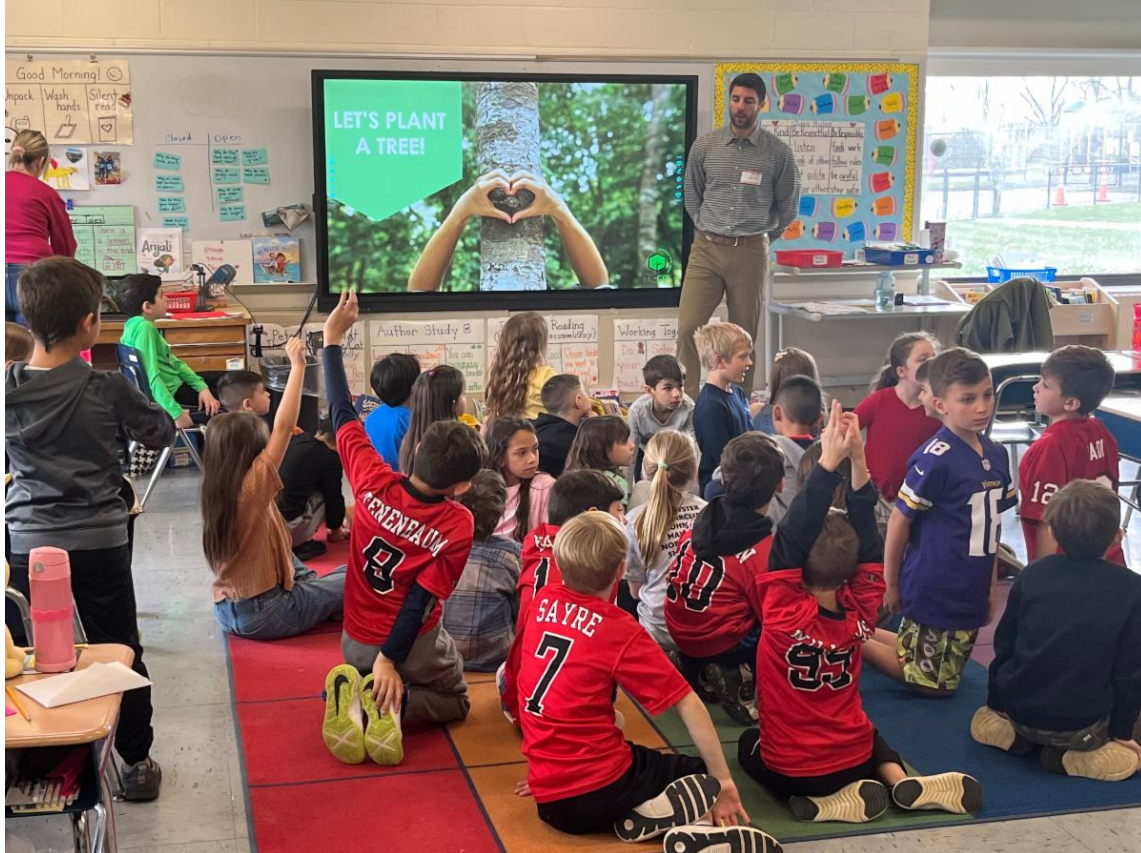
"I've always been someone who loves to help," Rourke said. "I want to help them show other people that they are just as good as anybody else and shouldn't be looked at any differently."

The Special Olympics programs include soccer, floor hockey, basketball, golf, and pickleball. Rourke is one of a half dozen primary volunteers who keep those sports running smoothly.

Some of the volunteers hope to remain involved in athletics in college. Maurantonio, who will major in business at Fairfield University, has already contacted the university's athletic department, hoping to film for the teams.

"As someone who doesn't participate in a sport, I'm glad I was able to do something and it didn't involve having to tackle someone running 70 miles an hour," he said. "It feels good to be able to do something impactful to benefit a team that is so important to Somers."

Primrose Students Can Do Their Part



Trees Into Cartons, Cartons Into Trees, led a series of presentations showing how paper is made, the steps of the recycling process, and the importance of trees.

“What can we recycle?”

That question was posed this week during assemblies on renewability and sustainability, but Primrose students seemed to have the answers. They listed paper, plastic, metal, and even used batteries as recyclable items.

Presenters from Trees Into Cartons, Cartons Into Trees (TICCIT) - an educational outreach program - were impressed by what the young students already knew.

“They know so much more than we did at eight about recycling,” said TICCIT’s Kristen Clark, who is also the mother of an SIS student. “But it’s important for us to reinforce what they already know.”

TICCIT educators led a series of presentations that focused on how paper is made, the steps of the recycling process, and the importance of trees. Afterward, students asked many questions, like how many trees cover the planet, and which trees are the largest.

The back-and-forth dialogue served a greater purpose: To stoke the students’ curiosity about the world around them.

“We talked to them about the environment, how important it is, and that we need to protect it for them, their kids, and their kids’ kids,” Clark said.

Students were sent home from the presentation with more than just an increased understanding of the recycling process and the importance of sustainability. They were each given a pencil and a bag that contained a maple sapling. The bag included printed instructions for how to care for the young tree.

Clark said TICCIT distributed more than 500 saplings.

The message: Plant it and you can do your part.

Said Clark: “We want to make it real for them.”

Young Artists at SIS Embrace the Challenge



Fifth grade artists work on clay pots before the school day starts.

Originally, Giuliana DeMartino intended her clay creation to be a ramen bowl. She decided the shape wasn't right — not so wide, definitely too tall — so it's now a flower pot.

To fulfill the assignment, the fifth grader worked on creating coils to build and decorate the pot, twisting the clay into unique designs. She will soon add a finishing touch: dog ears or bunny ears.

"I thought it would be a cute touch," DeMartino said. "It will probably be bunny ears, though. I have bunnies in my backyard at home."

DeMartino is one student in a group of young artists at SIS who have embraced challenges and allowed themselves to run with their inspirations. The class, which consists of 14 fifth graders, meets two mornings a week prior to school and tests the students with advanced work.

So far, the projects have included stuffed animal sketches, watercolor paintings of a sneaker, and a sculpture built out of egg cartons.

"It's fun because you get to do art and it's a lot of very cool projects," fifth grade student Aden Silk said. "It's a little more advanced than our regular art class."

The students auditioned for the class in December. Their work was evaluated based on a scoring rubric, which considered their skill and willingness to push themselves.

"They are students who have a high level of interest in art and the skills to match it," said Meghan Gioffe, the art teacher at SIS.

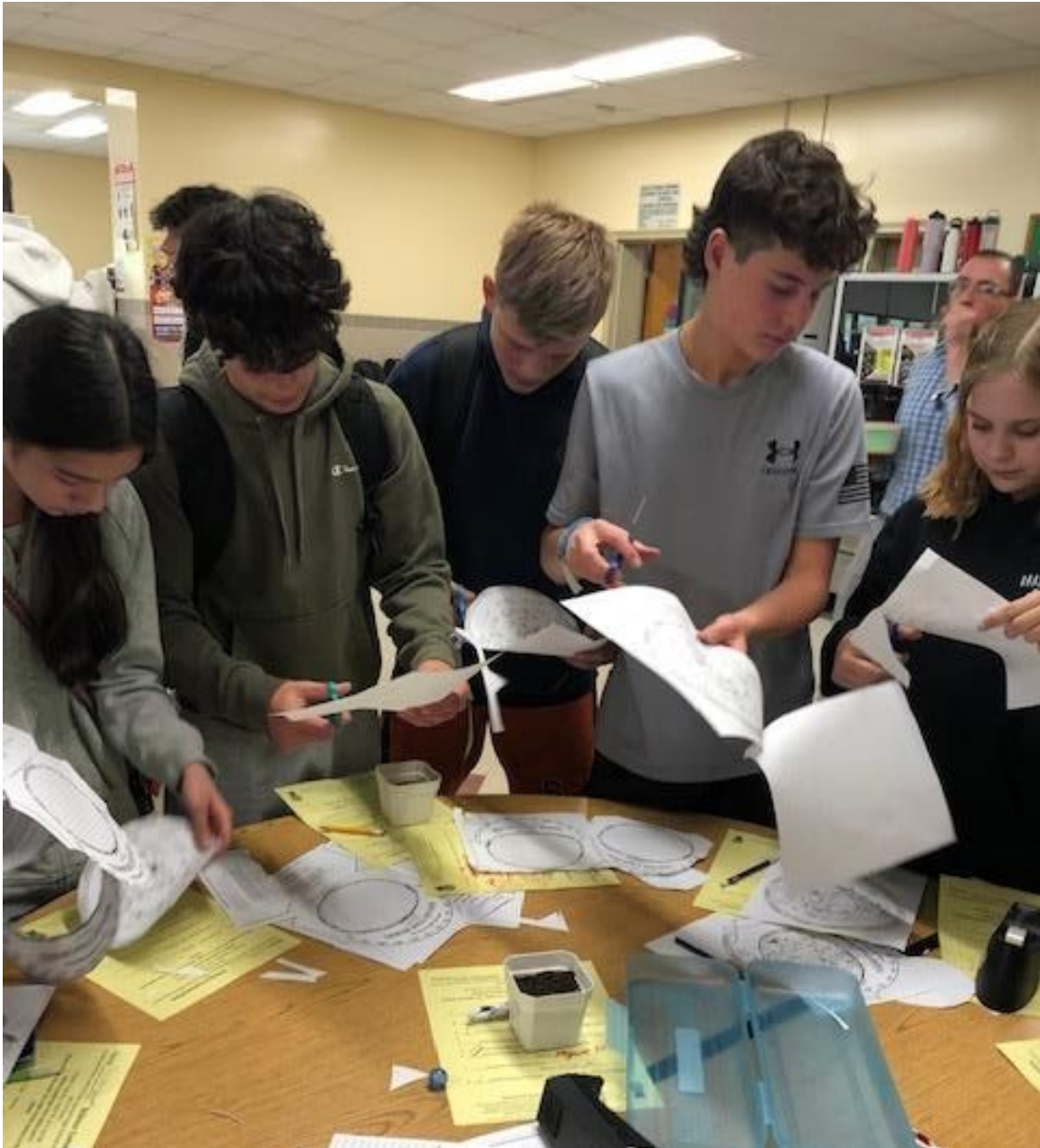
"It's fantastic," Gioffe said. "For instance, they are making beautiful coils out of clay already — even though they just learned how to make them."

Students haven't been shy about their desire to learn new techniques. Those challenges are exactly what they hoped to experience. Some of their work was also on display at the

district's annual Festival of the Arts.

"I really enjoy it," DeMartino said. "I don't like doing projects that are too easy."

SHS and SMS Students Connect through Science



During the science convention, middle schoolers make Kepler Star Wheels to navigate the night sky.

Olivia Boilisi can recall her introduction to high school science clubs. It came at the eighth-grade club fair and was purely informational, but it offered valuable insight into her future options.

"Prior to that, I had no idea what options I'd have for science extracurriculars," she said.

But thanks to Bolisi, many of her classmates, and the Science National Honor Society, some Somers Middle School students have an even larger window into what opportunities await them.

For the first time ever Tuesday, the Honor Society and eight other high school science clubs hosted a Science Convention. The event, which was held at the middle school, did more than just inform. The clubs provided demonstrations and conducted interactive

activities.

“Students were curious about the club,” said Boilsi, a senior and a member of the Astronomy Club. “They wanted to know what we did during meetings and what are the club’s highlights of the year.”

The astronomers assembled Kepler Star Wheels that the younger students brought home. The device will allow them to navigate the night sky any time of year. Of course, Boilsi believes the impact will extend beyond just identifying constellations.

“Generating interest early on will help grow the club,” she said, “and maybe even bring the club to the middle school.”

The SMS students had an opportunity to ask older peers about the clubs and learn what each group’s objectives are.

The Criminology Club crafted “Who done it?” activities to tap into the students’ investigative instincts.

“They were very inquisitive,” said junior Hayden Allen, a Criminology member.

The Physics Club conducted a gravity demonstration. Cancer Research designed cards for cancer patients. Psychology produced a stress ball activity while Biomedical students charted blood pressure and heart rates. The Environmental Club planted spices and Science Research students shared more information about their ongoing projects.

“The turnout was outstanding,” said science teacher Lori Kearns, the Science National Honor Society’s advisor. “The middle school and high school students were able to make connections.”

Those are connections the science department expects will continue. In fact, they have already.

“Some students even continued conversations with club representatives,” said senior Alejandro Tellez, a co-president of the Science National Honor Society who served as part of the hosting team. “They wanted to learn even more about the topics being presented.”

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