

# Tusker Nation

SOMERS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWS  
FOR SCSD FAMILIES



Food on the table. Friends in their class. Mom and Dad. Going to school. These are just some of the many things students are thankful for at Somers Intermediate School.

"I'm thankful for all the teachers at SIS who help me," says fourth grader Sophia Maracallo.

Art teacher Meghan Gioffe created the "SIS is Thankful" turkey as a way to promote the thankful hearts of the school community. For this project, new this year at SIS, students have traced their hands to form tail feathers. Each "feather" represents something that the student is grateful for.

"I'm thankful for air, and for my family," says Marco Avila. "Because they are generous and kind."

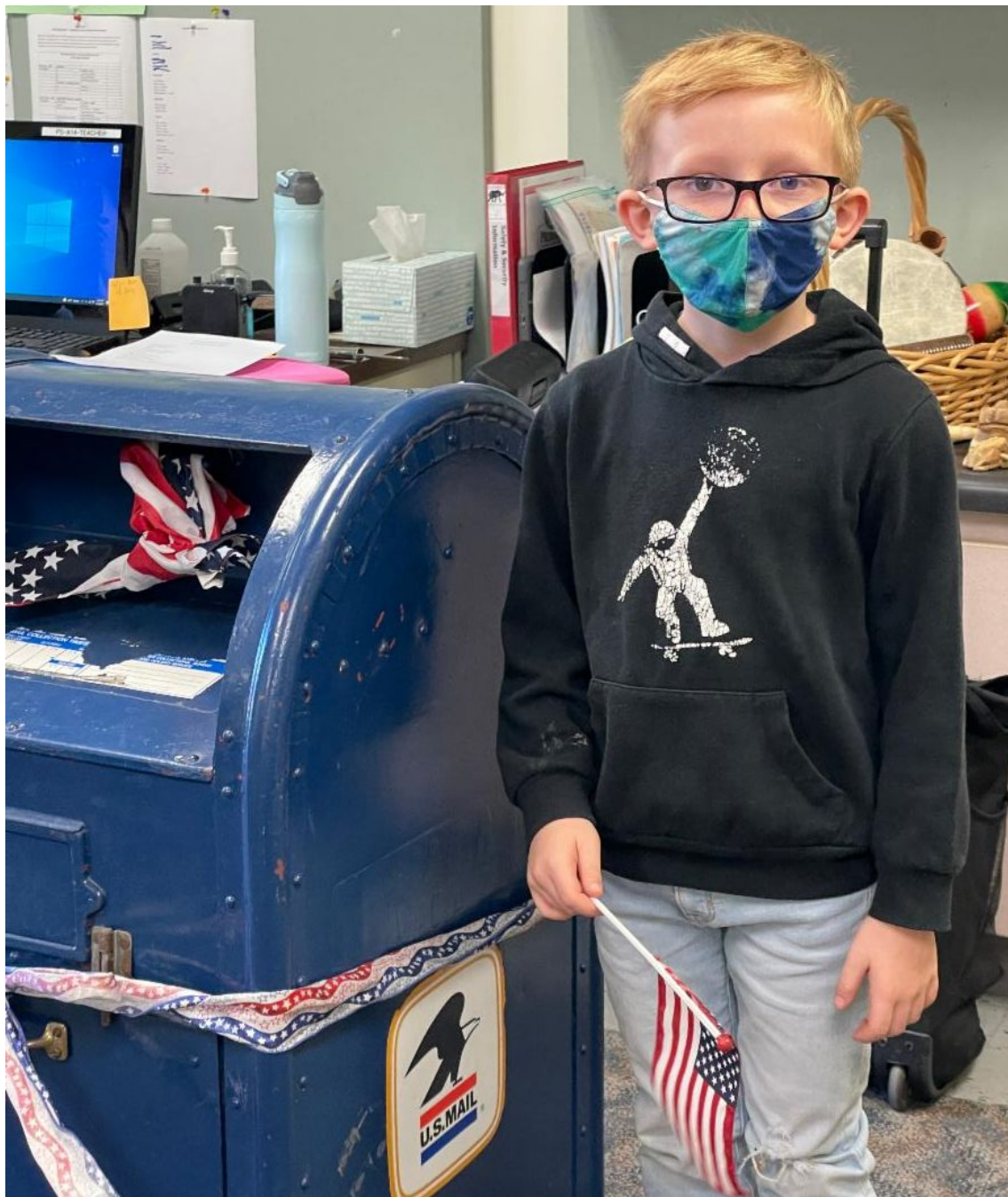
The fan of feathers of the thankful turkey that adorns the hallway near the art room grew as each new feather of thankfulness in hues of red, orange, yellow, and brown was added.

The project was a mini lesson in art and became a whole school project where each student is now represented on the main bulletin board. Gioffe said the students had some fun with it as they not only reflected on the many things in their own lives they feel grateful for but also got a glimpse into some of the thankfulness of others.

"It's fun to read them," Gioffe said "It's a beautiful reminder of everything we are thankful for. It creates an opportunity for us all to stop and reflect on the gifts and people we have in our lives."

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**WEE Deliver Back in Business**



***The first Wee Deliver postmaster of the school year, Samson Pica, officially opens the Primrose Elementary School post office.***

“It was really fun being the postmaster and you get to stamp letters,” exclaimed second grader Samson Pica.

The official bright blue USPS mailbox received the letters to be sorted and delivered by the first shift of the Primrose Elementary School Wee Deliver Post Office. The Grand Opening was marked with a patriotic and music-filled swearing in celebration via Zoom on Wednesday for the 160 second graders who will be the school’s postal workers in the coming months.

“I am so excited for you,” said Principal Katie Winter. “You have all worked so hard and learned so much about the postal service for your new jobs.”

Students took a postal exam, submitted applications, and were interviewed by members in the school community including Superintendent Raymond Blanch and School Resource Officer Brian Pavletich, who did the official swearing in of the students.

The jobs of postmaster, mail handlers, sorters, and mail carriers are filled by eager second graders who will take two-week turns during recess collecting, sorting and

delivering mail to Top City, ABC, and Tusker Town – the school’s kindergarten, first and second grade classroom addresses.

With email, Wi-Fi and the internet more popular pastimes, letter writing is a bit of a lost art. But Winter told the students that many people still rely on the Postal Service for important letters and the sense of community a post office gives.

“The letters carried by members of the PES Postal Service help so many fellow students read and write,” said Assistant Principal Meg Benedetto. She added that the walks of the Primrose postal workers through the hallways show a model of independence to the younger students.

Second grade teachers started the Wee Deliver Post Office many years ago in order to integrate lessons about community life with letter writing while providing older students with some real-life responsibility. Teamwork, time management, task completion, and writing skills are just some of the benefits to students that come from the Wee Deliver Post Office program. **[Watch highlights of the opening ceremony here.](#)**

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## **Top Two of the Class of 2022**



***Matthew Kahn, left, valedictorian of the SHS class of 2022, and Hudson Schantz (right), salutatorian.***

Somers High School recently announced the top two students from the Class of 2022. Valedictorian Matthew Kahn and Salutatorian Hudson Schantz credit hard work, support from teachers, and an excellent course of study in Somers with helping to pave their paths to success.

“I feel honored, shocked, and extremely grateful for having received this award and for having received such recognition,” Kahn said. “Somers High School created a fantastic environment that allowed me to succeed athletically, socially, and academically.”

Salutatorian Hudson Schantz agreed and said being named salutatorian is incredible and he is thankful for the designation.

“I am honored to receive this prestigious award,” Schantz said.

In addition to his studies, Kahn is an avid runner and has been a member of the Somers High School Cross Country and Indoor and Outdoor Track teams during his high school career. He is also a member of the National Honor Society, the Physics Club, Spanish Club, Mock Trial Club, and Investment Club.

“I have not yet decided which college I will attend but I hope to be studying finance somewhere in the Northeast.”

Salutatorian Schantz is captain of the Tuskers varsity tennis team and member of the Student Council as part of the Class Board. Outside school, he serves on the Youth Board of his community Temple. While still undecided on where he will attend college, Schantz said he will likely pursue a business degree. Both students agree that their teachers and the community at Somers High School have been exceptional and have contributed greatly to their academic success. Kahn traces his love of learning to elementary school where passionate teachers inspired him.

Schantz said he was thankful for the teachers who created environments in their classrooms that allowed him to flourish.

“The teachers who showed the most enthusiasm in their classrooms were the ones I connected with,” Schantz said.

With four years on which to look back, the top two students have some advice for their underclass peers-- take advantage of the many opportunities available to them while at Somers High School.

“I would advise that they take Science Research and AP Computer Science if they have the opportunities to do so,” Kahn said. He added that the wide breadth of club activities and sports are great ways for students to explore interests.

Schantz agreed and added that he thinks it’s important for students to take a course of study at Somers High School that’s based on personal interests.

“Take classes you are passionate about. You are in control of your high school journey,” he advised. “Your time at Somers High School will go by fast. Make sure you spend your time here wisely. And make sure you know all the trig functions.”

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## **Student-Athletes Commit to Play at Next Level**



***Luciano, Mandel-Mueller, Sirchia, Righetti, and Parisi after signing their commitment letters to play a sport at their chosen college or university.***

Five student athletes at Somers High School signed commitment letters this week to play a sport at a college or university. The seniors signed their letters in the lower gym at the high school in front of family, friends, and their high school coaches.

“These kids have worked hard, and we are so proud of them,” says Roman Catalino, the director of athletics in the Somers Central School District.

Brian Luciano will be joining the track and field team at Binghamton University, specializing in the hammer throw, discus, and shot put. Lily Mandel-Mueller will play soccer at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. Julie Sirchia is headed to George Washington University to play lacrosse. Victoria Righetti is joining the soccer team at Iona College. Gabby Parisi is going to Stonehill College to play lacrosse.

After the students signed their letters, they took pictures wearing their respective college sweatshirts and hats, surrounded by beaming family members and coaches. Luciano has had his eye on Binghamton University for several years and was accepted into the engineering program. He credits his school and community with his success.

“Somers has really shaped who I am,” says Luciano, “Especially with my friends and coaches, who are really great.

Sirchia, who is also the varsity field hockey captain, says she took her time before committing to a school for lacrosse. She wanted to make sure the school she chose was the right fit, which she found in George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

“I’m a city girl, and I love that Georgetown is right there,” says Sirchia. “I love the environment, and the coaches are just the best.”

There will be another signing ceremony this spring when the next round of Somers student athletes commits to colleges and universities.

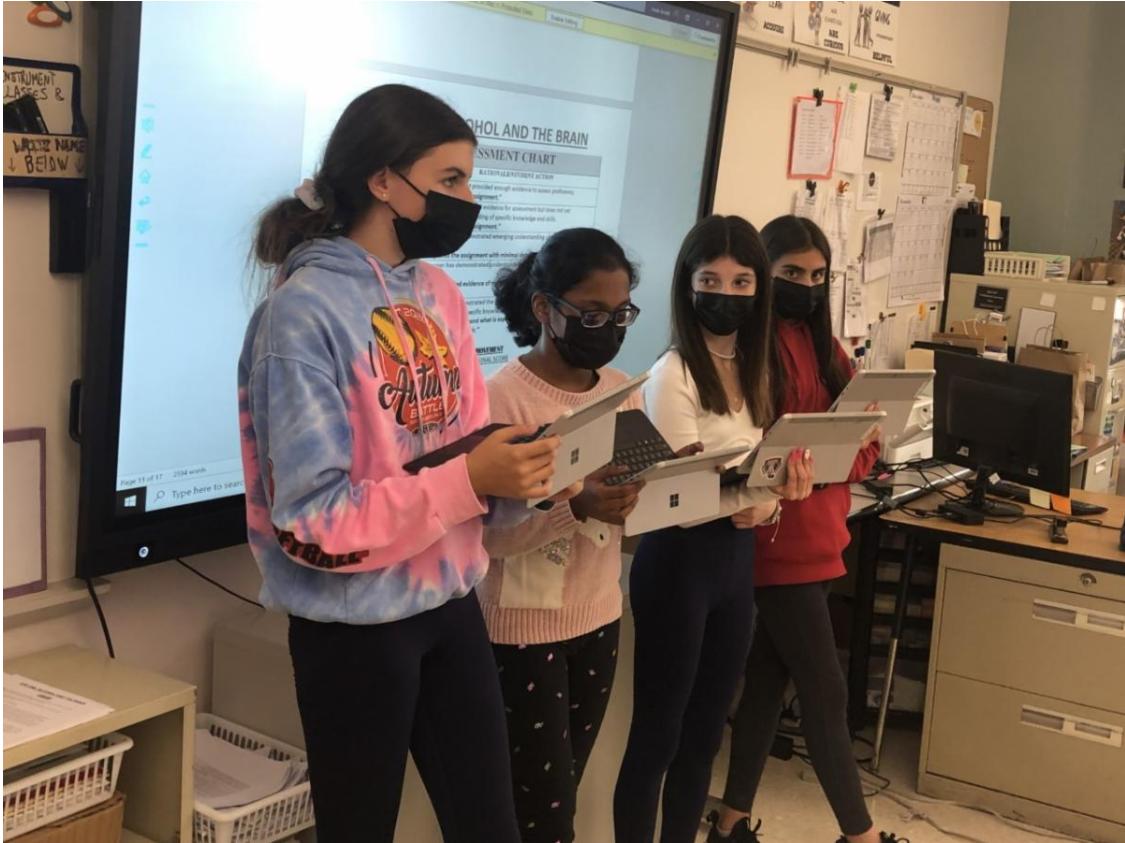
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## **Somers State Soccer Champs**



Congratulations to the Somers High School boys varsity soccer team on winning the New York State Class A Championship. The team beat Amityville High School 7-2 to clinch the title. [Watch the celebration here](#), including an energetic cameo by SHS Principal Mark Bayer.

## Mock Grant Competition Gives Insight on Alcohol Abuse



***Above, Emily Boyle, Smera Thekkenmar, Charly Hirsch, and Olivia Tatela deliver their winning presentation for the mock grant during their period two class. Below, Maylin Mora and Andrea Ruiz Velasquez, winners for period six.***



Informing, sharing, and communicating their research on adolescent alcohol abuse are ways seventh graders at Somers Middle School prepared for a mock grant competition.

Students in Jesse Arnett's health classes at Somers Middle School assumed roles as neuropsychologists working as consultants to an adolescent alcohol rehabilitation center vying for a \$25 million dollar "government grant."

Using the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program learner profile skill of communicator as their guide, student teams researched alcohol's effects on the brain by studying articles and looking at brain scans of teenagers who drank versus those who did not. They also conducted their own field sobriety tests by using Fatal Vision goggles that simulate impaired vision from alcohol and then summarized how alcohol affects the brain, influences behavior, and alters lifestyle decisions.

"Putting themselves in a real-life scenario in which their research and communication helps determine the outcome of a competition for a grant helps them apply what they have learned and makes the learning meaningful," Arnett said. "I am impressed with our students' ability to focus on the skill of communication throughout this project."

To win the "grant" money, students had to present their findings to a panel of judges in evidence-based Fact Sharing Forums. The judges were Somers Middle School educators. For the team of winners in period 2, Emily Boyle, Smera Thekkenmar, Olivia Tatela, and Charly Hirsch, being able to take part in the field sobriety tests and wearing the Fatal Vision goggles during their project were eye-opening.

"The thing that jumped out at me the most is the feeling of disconnect from yourself when you are impaired," Boyle said of her experience wearing the goggles.

"It surprised me how hard it was throwing and catching with the goggles on," Hirsch and Tatela added.

Students said the key lesson for their team was learning the early age at which young people begin drinking and the prevalence of binge drinking among adolescents. The team of Maylin Mora and Andrea Ruiz Velasquez, who won in period 6, said their biggest takeaway from the experience was researching the long-term effects on teen drinking.

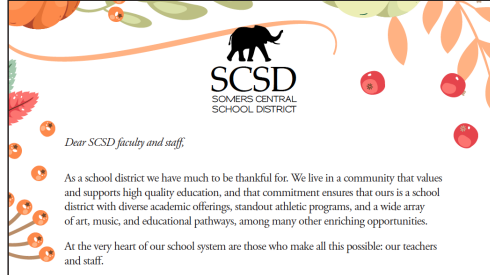
"I learned not only how alcohol affects you now but how it can affect your future," Mora said.

Velasquez said the feeling of instability she felt while trying to even walk while wearing of the Fatal Vision goggles was an experience she will not forget.

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## **BOE Thanks Faculty and Staff**

The members of the Board of Education for the Somers Central School District thanks the entire faculty and staff in Somers Schools for their dedication, compassion, flexibility, and commitment to the students. This letter was sent to faculty and staff, and published in the Somers Record on



## Happy Birthday, Dear SIS...



The Somers Intermediate School Parent Teacher Association celebrated the 49th SIS Birthday Party on October 22, 2021. Families enjoyed a variety of attractions such as Trunk-r-Treat, the ever-popular Haunted Trail, Family Night Book Fair, and an inflatable slide and obstacle course. Students also turned Mrs. Belger, the school's assistant principal, into a mummy, and competed against their teachers in a rock-paper-scissors tournament.

This year's beloved tradition was different in many wonderful ways and would not have been possible without all of the volunteers and sponsors who put their time and energy into making this year's party such a success for our school and community.







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