



Tusker Nation

SOMERS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWS
FOR SCSD FAMILIES



At Primrose Elementary School, students learned about Lunar New Year and the accompanying celebrations in January. This year is the year of the rabbit in China and other countries (the year of the cat in Vietnam), a year predicted to be one of hope. Students watched videos of parades and dances and heard about delicious foods served in many homes, as well as the symbolism behind some of the dishes. Listening to music, students moved to the songs in music class and kindergarten students played along with cymbals and triangles.



Katie Palumbo, SHS class of 2010, appeared on Jeopardy in January. She won on her first day with earnings of \$23,100. Many of Katie's



Each morning students at SIS are eagerly sharing



Students at Primrose honored the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. by

teachers in Somers said they were not at all surprised by her success.

quotes of positivity and perseverance on the morning announcements. The main hallway is filled with these quotes for everyone to read as daily reminders.

brainstorming how they can spread kindness and be positive contributors in their classroom communities.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors



The high school Social Action Club volunteered at Neighbors Link Family Night, a monthly event at the Mount Kisco-based organization committed to the healthy integration of immigrants into the local community. The SHS volunteers served dinner to the families and then helped with childcare activities while the parents participated in a nutrition workshop. The snowflake craft and cookie decorating planned by the students were a big hit with the children.

Building Community with Choir Fest



The chorus students from the intermediate, middle, and high schools rehearse a song they learned together during Choir Fest.

“Clap once if you can hear me,” calls middle school choral director, Marie Williams. A feeble *clap* comes from a handful of students.

“Clap twice if you can hear me.”
The collective *clap* is stronger and the group quiets.

“Clap three times if you can hear me!”
Three strong *claps* come on command and the auditorium is silent.

That is how you get the attention of nearly 200 energetic chorus students, from fifth through twelfth grade. The students gathered for Choir Fest at the high school, a day of fun activities and songs, organized by the music teachers at Somers Intermediate School, Somers Middle School, and Somers High School.

“We’re here today to meet each other and show the younger kids how things will change in chorus through grade levels,” says sophomore Olivia Peck, “And to give them an idea of what it’s going to be like in the future.”

The high school students led the younger students through icebreaker activities and helped lead a Master Class-style session to learn a song they would all sing together. Sixth grader Lily Rivera is having a great time with her friends and learning from the older vocalists.

“They are more advanced, but they are teaching us in a way that we can understand,” says Rivera.

“I’m getting a new experience,” says fifth grader Alex Schnapper. “It’s like a forecast into the future for me, so I can see what happens as time goes on.”

Marie Williams, along with high school chorus director Chris Russo and SIS director Deborah Nomani, brought the chorus students together to provide support for the younger singers and to create a music community across the schools.

“The voice goes through an enormous amount of change during the adolescent years,” says Williams, “And this trip is meant to foster camaraderie amongst peers and acceptance for where their voice is at this given moment.”

The day was capped off with performances from each school chorus, and a group performance by all of the song, “I Sing Because I’m Happy.”

“I really like how everybody included everybody, even if you don’t know them,” says sixth grader Ila Schoenberg. “They’re being really kind.”

The entire day was filmed by high school students and will be produced as a documentary. **Watch the performance of “I Sing Because I’m Happy” [here](#).**

Sounds Like a Great Idea



EvaMarie Mastrantoni, Tyler Brownstein, and Jenna Jagrs set up the new soundboard and audio equipment in the middle school auditorium.

When high school junior, EvaMarie Mastrantoni, and senior, Tyler Brownstein were helping with the Somers Middle School musical last spring, they quickly noticed that the soundboard and audio equipment in the auditorium were in serious need of an upgrade.

“The microphones were cutting out at random times, and you couldn’t mute some of them,” says Mastrantoni.

Mastrantoni and Brownstein, both sound technicians on the stage crew at the high school, took matters into their own hands. Mastrantoni wrote a proposal for a new soundboard and equipment, which the middle school decided to fully fund. This fall, the students helped professional sound tech, Frank Dickinson, install the new soundboard, which is a smaller version of the soundboard at the high school.

“It’s all compatible,” says Brownstein. “So, if you learn at the middle school and come up to the high school, it’s the same program, which is one of the things we love about it.”

The crew prioritized making the new board organized and accessible to students who are new to working with audio equipment.

“Their efforts have made such a difference for our programs at the middle school,” says Jeff Getman, middle school principal. “The new soundboard is so much easier to use, and we are so grateful to them.”

Mastrantoni, who was pulled into sound tech reluctantly and initially only did it to help her friend, Tyler, has fallen in love with the craft and plans to pursue technical theater and sound design in college. Brownstein is following his other passion, cooking, and has been accepted into the Culinary Institute of America.

Donation Reboots Robotics Class



Students in an Electronics and Robotics class at Somers High School are building robots capable of playing "Team Freeze Tag."

Once the high-priced gadgets of adult hobby enthusiasts, remote-controlled cars, boats, airplanes, and even ride-on cars for small children are everywhere today. Students in the Electronics and Robotics classes at Somers High School are learning how to create these gadgets through a hands-on, state-of-the-art, and engaging approach.

"I really like this class," says tenth-grader Jackson Frankie, "because we get good coding experiences where we implement classroom skills into hands-on activities."

When enrollment nearly doubled for this school year in teacher Eddie Amato's robotics classes, he needed some upgrades.

"I was getting by with what I had—older VEX robotics equipment—but that was only enough for one section, which included about 20 students. I needed to find a way to acquire more material to meet the demand," he says.

The new VEX EXP Robotics and Programming equipment came courtesy of a fund created by Michael and Melissa Neborak and their daughter Margaux (SHS 2015), in memory of their son and brother, Mikey (SHS 2011).

"From a young age, Mikey loved creating or programming any form of technology," said Melissa Neborak. "And at SHS he excelled in advanced videography. He always wished that SHS had more advanced computer and technology offerings; he would be happy about the donation of the robotics and programming equipment."

"The vision I had," says Amato, "was that there would be enough materials to engage every student. I wanted each student to research, design, construct, program, test their creations, and consider and value each other as helpful resources in the process."

A visit to Amato's class will find students adjusting robotic parts after a competition reveals a weakness in their design, changing block coding to affect a new challenge, discussing their achievements with fellow students, and documenting results after meeting a challenge.

Amato's students are currently completing the "Team Freeze Tag" unit, wherein students program the robot's screen to turn red when tagged by another robot. Their next challenge

will be "Castle Crasher" where they will explore how to use optical and distance sensors to seek, crash, and clear Buckyball "castles" to score points in the competition.

The Neborak family is delighted with the results of their donation to the Electronics and Robotics class and the family is enjoying the renewed connection with Somers High School. After graduating from SHS, Mikey Neborak went on to Cornell University, graduating with a Master of Engineering in Computer Science. He worked as a software engineer, interning or as a full-time employee, at Factset, Ericsson, Google, and Interactive Brokers.

Amato and his students are grateful and excited to work with the VEX EXP Robotics and Programming equipment.

"Thanks to the Neborak Family's generosity," says Amato, "students in my classes learn to be problem solvers, hone their coding skills, think creatively and, ultimately, develop a foundation to be successful in our competitive workforce."

Click here to watch these students work with their creations.

PTA Corner - PTA Drives Safety Campaign



Westchester County School Bus Safety Campaign

Every day in New York State, 50,000 cars illegally pass our children's stopped school buses, putting our kids at risk as they step on and off.

This fall, two pilot programs in Somers and Hendrick Hudson school districts captured more than 600 illegal passings in a two-month period!

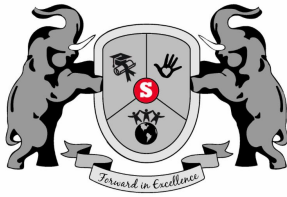
This needs to stop. School bus stop-arm enforcement technology exists and is available to our districts at zero cost. This technology is being used by all our neighboring counties including Dutchess, Albany, Suffolk, and others.

Westchester County is the only County in the Lower Hudson Valley that has NOT approved this program.

We need help from parents and the PTA groups in our schools to help us by contacting the County Executive and having their voices heard.

Thank you for your help to keep our kids safe as they get on and off their school bus every day. For more information contact your school PTA.

Want more news? Follow Somers Central School District on **Facebook** and **Instagram** for daily updates. You can also find frequently updated articles about SCSD on our website at www.somersschools.org.



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