

North Tonawanda City Schools



Two NT Students Inducted Into National Technical Honor Society

Congratulations to two of our seniors: Michael Finn (Building Maintenance and Management) and Duncan Metlak (Welding) who were recently inducted into the National Technical Honor Society at the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center.

Out of all the high school students in the United States, the National Technical Honor Society students who receive this honor comprise 1.6% of that population. Students must maintain an 89.5 average in their career and technical education class and an 84.5 average at their high school, have superior attendance, exemplary behavior, be a member in good standing with SkillsUSA and be recommended by a faculty member.



(LtoR) Michael Finn and Duncan Metlak.

Giving Thanks to Those Who Served

Students at Spruce Elementary have added more names to the Veterans Walk at their school.

Teacher Joanne Le Van says the Veterans Wall started about five years ago when she organized a school assembly for grades three to six. "The ceremony was held outside around the flag pole for the whole school," she explained. "The students would say the pledge, sing a couple of patriotic songs and release some balloons with either a trumpeter playing Taps or our high school students performing a song."

Over the years Mrs. Le Van invited guest speakers who were veterans, like Mayor Pappas, Senator Robert Ortt and others like a veteran who lost both his legs in the war and authored a book about his experiences. "We would invite local veterans who were related to our students to be honored at our ceremony," says Mrs. Le Van. "We would present them with a carnation and play their branch's song as the students would applaud. In the last two years we would take their photo and add it to our wall. It was quite the event, as it made a connection between the school, parents and the local community."

Since the building has changed from a K-6 to a K-3, the administration and Mrs. Le Van felt the celebration might be too much for the younger students, so they chose to make the wall larger instead of having a ceremony. "I was very fortunate that many people volunteered to help me from previous assemblies. It has been a wonderful thing to be able to thank those who have done so much for our country."



Mrs. Le Van's class in front of the wall.

Matthew Cook Named New Athletic Director

Matthew Cook has been named the new Athletic Director at North Tonawanda City School District.



Mr. Cook comes to us from Tonawanda City School District, where for the last three years he has been in the position of Athletic Director. Before that he was employed as a physical education teacher at Enterprise Charter School in the City of Buffalo and served as Athletic Coordinator for all the charter schools. He received his undergraduate from the College at Brockport in Physical Education and his Masters from Canisius College in Physical Education and Sport Administration.

"This is a great opportunity for me to come to North Tonawanda City School District," says Mr. Cook. "I am very excited about continuing to bring excellence to the Athletic Department." He laughingly says that his wife is as excited as he is about his new position. "My wife graduated from North Tonawanda and is a proud Lumberjack. She said that there is no way she could root for Tonawanda during the T-N-T game despite me being the Athletic Director there. It is really rewarding that the pathway I have taken throughout my career has brought me to this position."

Superintendent Greg Woytila says Mr. Cook will be a great addition to the staff. "All applicants went through two rounds of interviews, then the top candidates did two more for a total of 4 interviews. There was a district committee as well as central office and a parent member on the different committees. Matthew has experience doing the job and that came through in his interview. He understands the community and the deep sports history it has. We look forward to a successful future for the Lumberjacks and their supporters "The Lumberyard".

High School Students Learn Police Procedures

Lieutenant Rob Kalota from the North Tonawanda Police Department came into NTHS and demonstrated to the Forensic Science class how to take a fingerprint from the adhesive side of duct tape. Student Victoria Wachowicz is processing the print.



Intermediate Students Help Out Kids Escaping Drugs

To celebrate Red Ribbon Week (October 23-31), the North Tonawanda Intermediate School decided to help young adults through the Kids Escaping Drugs organization by collecting personal care items for the population they serve. "We focused on the students making healthy choices for their minds and bodies," says School Principal Katie Smith. "Clearly at this age level they are very impressionable and we want to empower kids with decision making capabilities so that they do say no to drugs. We also want to teach them about serving others, and this organization helped us to do both."

Red Ribbon Week is about engaging youth in dialogues about the importance of making positive life choices and avoiding the temptation to use drugs and alcohol. As many are aware, there are many children in crisis here in the Western New York area. Kids Escaping Drugs is dedicated to ending the drug epidemic and empower families to live a life free from disease of addiction through community outreach, education and their residential treatment facilities for adolescents ages 12-23.

"We are getting ready to open our Promise House which is a stabilization facility for boys, 15 to 23," says Kids Escaping Drugs Director of Development, Suzanne D'Amico. "It is like an old-fashioned detox model and a halfway house. On December 1st, Palmerton Place, which is the girls' stabilization house for 15-23, will open. A lot of kids will come to us without anything and they were asking for essentials to give to the kids."

She says they are very grateful for the donations. "I think what the kids at the Intermediate School did is amazing. I think we need it more now than ever because the facilities will have 77 beds on the campus and a lot of our kids come to us without anything. We like to provide them with the necessities so they feel like they are at home and in a welcoming place."



(LtoR) Gavin Bukoskey, Counselor Haleigh Brown, Hannah Pearce, Emily Vallone, Suzanne D'Amico and Brody Sparks.

NTI Girls in Sport

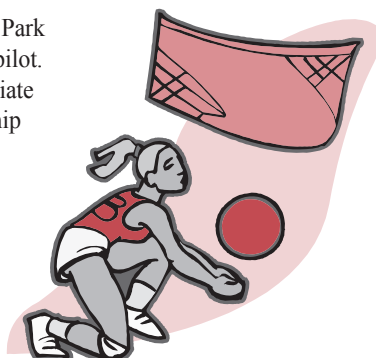
Forty of our fifth grade girls are enjoying their time on the volleyball court, learning about the sport, playing, and forming lasting friendships.

Professor Gail Tylec and the Niagara County CC Foundation received a Ralph Wilson Legacy Grant to promote and grow the sport of youth volleyball in Niagara County by following the outcomes of the “Sport for All, Play for Life” research.

Fifth grade girls from North Tonawanda Intermediate and Hyde Park Elementary in Niagara Falls were selected to participate in this pilot. The participants received six weeks of developmentally appropriate instruction after school in volleyball culminating with a friendship tournament between the two schools that was held in the NCCC (Niagara County Community College) main gym on December 12th. Girls received t-shirts, kneepads and volleyballs so that they can continue their sport appreciation after the conclusion of the program.

There is currently little opportunity for girls, ages 12 and up, in Niagara County schools to receive exposure to sports with age appropriate instruction that will facilitate future interest.

By introducing the sport of volleyball by trained technicians who embrace the concepts outlined in the “State of Play”, a strong foundation will be developed. “We are grateful to Gail Tylec and the Wilson Foundation for affording this opportunity to our NTI students,” says North Tonawanda Intermediate School Principal Katie Smith. “The girls are having so much fun learning from trained coaches, as well as deepening their connections with each other as classmates. We hope to continue this partnership in the future.”



Military Day

December 3rd was Military Day at NT High School. The Counseling Office hosted representatives from all branches of the military.

Career Center Mentor, Lori Graves, said the event was inspired by a career survey that students filled out last year. “Many of our students showed great interest in the military. We thought it would be a great hands-on way for the students to hear about programs and opportunities that they have to offer such as education, training, scholarships and even careers.”



Author Visits Spruce

Author Jennifer Gold was the honored guest at Spruce Elementary School recently. Ms. Gold read to the students from her books "Top Leaf", which tells the story of a very rude leaf who lives at a top of a tree and "Yes, I Knew the Queen" which is a long poem about letting a story get out of hand.

Ms. Gold is a freelance writer who lives in Buffalo. She was born in Zimbabwe and grew up in Swansea, Wales in the UK. She worked for 30 years as a Speech-Language pathologist and 11 years as a volunteer, part-time contributor for WBFO 88.7 FM where she garnered two Associate Press awards.

Her mission at Spruce, was not only to read her stories, but to talk about the process of writing. She told students to not give up on their ideas if they wanted to create a story. "I went to a workshop and was told that nobody wants books where animals or trees talk, but that is what I wanted to write about, so I did." She gave the students tips on writing and editing their own stories. "Read them out loud and if you stop while you are reading, you probably need to rewrite that part." She told the students she has been writing stories for 34 years, but sometimes it takes a while to get one to the point where it is ready to be published. "Sometimes I write things and put them away and come back to them with a fresh eye. You want your story to be the sort that other people want to read too."

The students loved hearing Ms. Gold's amazing and fun stories and look forward to putting her advice into practice when they write their own tales.



Patti Adler (Spruce Principal), Jennifer Gold (Author), Susan Moore (2nd grade teacher/organizer), and Second Grade students: Allison Royer, Mia Randles, Katie Steele, Natalie Valint, Jaxson Harvey, Veronica Cruz and Mayson Cummings.

Outstanding Musicians

The North Tonawanda City School district is proud to announce that twelve student musicians were selected to participate in the New York State School Music Association's Area All State Festivals in November.

The honored students competed at solo festivals last spring in order to be selected for Area All State honors ensembles.

North Tonawanda joined students from across Erie, Niagara, Cattaraugus, and Chautauqua counties to form select bands, choruses, and orchestras.

The Fine Arts Department is extremely proud of the following student musicians.

In Area All State Junior Choruses: From NT Middle School (as pictured): Aaryn Samsel, Madison Koeth, Sarah Baase, Adeline Graff, and Jack Orrange. From NT High School (as pictured): William Terry and Emily James In Area All State Senior Ensembles (as pictured): Isabella Fortunato, Jacob Thompson, Lila Wieclaw, Paul Orrange, Sophia Scime, Keith Vantino, Megan Orrange.



NT Students Take A Vet To School

In honor of Veterans Day, students at the North Tonawanda High School got to take advantage of the Take A Vet to School program. Many classes participated in a discussion with the invited veterans: Senator Robert Ortt (National Guard), Meaghan Weppner (Captain/Marine Corps), John Higgins (Colonel/Air Force), Dan Arnold (Master Sergeant/Air Force), Landie Arnold (Tech Sergeant/Air Force), Joe Buscaglia (Army and National Guard), Mike Jorgensen (Navy) and Jason Jaskula (Sergeant Major/Army).

Students talked to them about joining the military and what their experiences were. It also gave them a chance to thank them for their service.

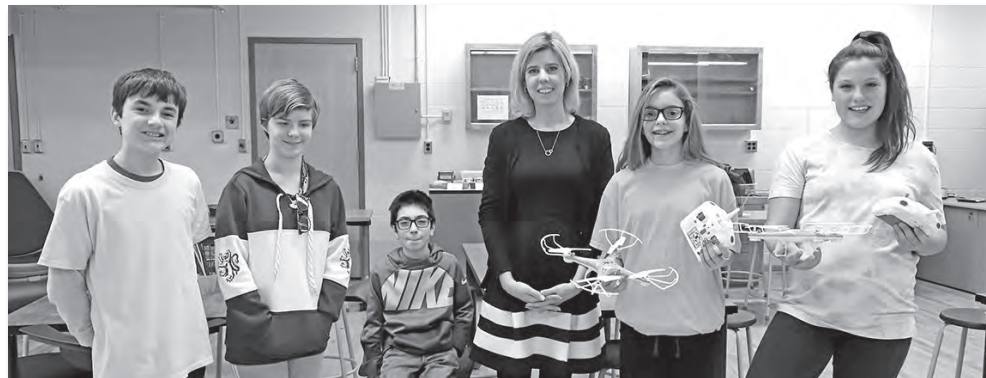


Students with veterans are: Matt Willard (9th Grade), Evan O'Connor (9th Grade) and Josh Wiatr (12th Grade).

Intermediate School Starts New Technology Program

This is the first year that Technology teacher Jennifer Rhoads has taught at North Tonawanda and so far she and her students are having a great time. Not only are they getting to problem-solve with Ozobots and drones, it is helping them to bring real world problem-solving challenges to life with engineering solutions. They also learn about collaboration while encouraging them to be creative. "This is new for the sixth graders," says Mrs. Rhoads. "It is a program that runs for a trimester and it is a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) course. Students can get a third of their middle school credit as a sixth grader, which is awesome."

Mrs. Rhoads also works with the fourth and fifth graders instructing them in two to three week mini-units in engineering, design and problem-solving. Her classes focus on the four Cs: Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration and Creativity. She says the feedback has been great. "I have a lot of parents tell me how their kids talk about technology all the time. It is great because they are solving problems and they are being successful working together as a group."



(LtoR) Allen LaPorte Jr, Isabelle Miron, Cole Heverin, Mrs. Rhoads, Emily Francis, and Brielle Gorcheck.

NT Holds Its First Alumni Tournament

Fifty former Lumberjacks put on their sneakers and hit the basketball court to begin an annual tradition of the NT Alumni Basketball Tournament on January 5th. The players had all graduated within the last 40 years.



The event was the brainchild of current NT Varsity Coach, Ryan Mountain, who was inspired by a similar competition at his alma mater, Maryvale. Coach Mountain said it was a great time for everyone. "There was a lot of positive energy and we are hoping each year it will increase in size."

The fifty players divided into four teams known as Red, White, Blue and Gray. At the end of the championship round, Blue claimed the honors of being the first champions.

Members of the winning team are Coach/ Player Erik O'Bryan (1995), Jeremy Geartz (1995), Lucas Pichette (2010), Darrick Bloomfield (2010), Matt Skinner (2011), Dave MacNeil (1980), Alex Domaradzski (2002), Adam Wentz (2003), Ryan Bradt (2012), Joe Taylor (2012), Zack Woodard (2017) and Jordan Fox (2017).

Congratulations to the other coaches and their teams! Hope to see you next year!



A Song of Holiday Cheer!

Drake Elementary invited the 6th grade chorus from the North Tonawanda Intermediate School to visit them before the holiday break. "It was wonderful," says Principal Janet Matyevich. "There were over 100 singers and a great time was had by all."





Blast from the Past

Thank you to Edward Ammerman who shared a school memory when he was a student in Mrs. Huntley's class.



NT Student Chosen for Honor's Band

Roberts Wesleyan College of Music hosted an Honor's Band on the weekend of October 20th. It was an outstanding weekend experiencing music at a collegiate setting.

NTHS Trumpeter, Lila Wieclaw was selected to participate in the program through the recommendation of her teacher, Dave Manth.

Congratulations to Lila on this accomplishment!



10 Days Summary

Friends of NTI is the parent run not for profit group that supports North Tonawanda Intermediate School. Our goal is to support the intermediate school and enhance the lives of not only our students and their families, but the surrounding community. At one of our first Friends of NTI meetings of the year, we talked about doing some type of community service project. Keri Hearing suggested we collect items for homeless Veterans right here in WNY. Everyone loved the idea and that is how 10 Days of Giving was born.

We are extremely proud of our 10 Days of Giving community service project! We had participation from hundreds of people. Our school has 36 classrooms and is made up of over 730 students and everyone participated in some way! Many of our families donated items to fill backpacks and some families even donated completed backpacks. Even families that could not donate items still got the word out for us and helped us to collect a ton of stuff. We even received donations from families that did not attend our school, but found out what we were doing and just wanted to help! One of the things we wanted to add to our care packages was a personal note or thank you card. Many of the teachers asked their students to create cards and notes in class and some families even sent some in from home. This resulted in hundreds of personal notes and messages going out to our very deserving homeless veterans. The love and support in this community is second to none!

With the help of many volunteers we assembled 300 backpacks for homeless veterans. We have partnered with WNY Heroes to distribute the backpacks for us, as they know who needs them. In addition to the backpacks filled with essentials, we also collected several sleeping bags and blankets that went to our local homeless veterans.



NT Graduate Gives Back to the District

Renee Obringer is a proud graduate of the North Tonawanda City School District. "I went to school here in the late '90's. I started at Meadow Elementary. I have been in NT my entire life until graduation. I would not be the person that I am today if it weren't for North Tonawanda Public Schools and for the music department."



No one would have ever expected this shy girl to become a performer, choreographer and the Fine Arts Coordinator for Buffalo Public Schools. "I got into dance at the age of five at North Tonawanda Studios to start and went from there. As far as what North Tonawanda High School did for me, I was able to choreograph my first musical when I was twelve years old for "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum". Little did I know, or anyone at NT know, that would become part of my profession. At this point I have choreographed over 30 musicals."

She has choreographed six consecutive North Tonawanda High School musicals and directed the last four. "I feel it is important to give back to where you come from and without North Tonawanda I would not be where I am today." She points to Mr. Skibinski, who was in charge of the Drama Club when she was in high school. "He always felt that Drama Club should be a place where everyone was welcome and where everyone felt included. He stressed that it was like a family. He was a great guy and he made sure that we were all safe and that he looked out for us." She says he, in an addition to Dean and Christine Vallas, inspired her to do what she does because it is a great way to give back to the community and give back to the kids.

After graduation she attended college at both Niagara University and Buffalo State College with an undergrad in musical theater and dance. "While I was in college I did Summer Stock Theater, regional theater and worked at Six Flags amusement park as a performer. "I had an amazing experience one summer when I was attending Niagara University. I went to New York City and workshoped with Kander and Ebb on a musical called "Steel Pier". It had not performed well in previews and had a short initial Broadway run. They were hoping to revise it for the potential of a revival on Broadway."

John Kander and Fred Ebb are a famous songwriting team who are known for the musicals "Cabaret" and "Chicago" and scored movies including "New York, New York" writing the song "New York, New York" which became a signature Frank Sinatra song. "I was able to collaborate, learn from and work with with these two legends during the workshop process for "Steel Pier". What a thrill! After my experience with Steel Pier, my focus began to transition toward how I could make a difference. It was the biggest moment I had. So many people never get opportunities like that."

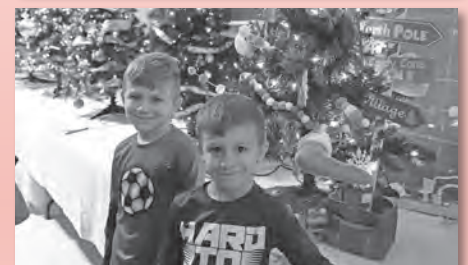
Although Renee was on the fast track to attaining her dreams, she felt that she wasn't really where she was meant to be. "I was performing on stage one night and I had this epiphany that something was missing. After a lot of soul searching I came to the realization that I was meant to be an educator." She wanted to teach theater. She is currently working on her second master's degree. "I want to provide kids with the experiences I had. It feels so good to make a difference through the arts. Without NT and the support of my parents I would not have had the experiences and the opportunities that I have had."

In the Buffalo Public Schools she was able to receive a federal grant to start musicals (fifteen) at the middle school level. "This was unheard of just a few years ago and now we're going to be able to offer this experience to students as a way to express themselves, develop confidence and pride in themselves and their work; as well as skills that are necessary to be successful in life." She also offers a free workshop every summer for NT drama club students. "I know a lot of generous people here in the district and someone always donates a space and I am more than happy to donate my time for students who are unable to attend dance classes during the school year. I love giving back."

Additionally, she is very excited about this year's musical at NT High School, "The Addams Family". "I am so happy that theater and dance are embraced at NT High School. Seeing where the district is now, with the new Fine Arts Center, I am just tickled pink. There are a lot of opportunities for the students now that I didn't have. It is so amazing! I am really excited for them."

Holiday Memories

It is always a wonderful and festive time at the Tree of Hope ceremony. The High School halls were filled with fun, magic and wishes for a great new year!



Students Hear About Sports Broadcasting Careers

North Tonawanda High School students were exposed to careers in radio and television broadcasting as part of the school's career speaker series.

Sal Capaccio, from WGR Radio 550, spoke to the students and fielded questions about sports broadcasting and journalism. Mr. Capaccio is a radio and television media broadcaster who covers the Buffalo Bills beat and is the Sideline reporter/host for WGR Radio 550.

The students were able to find out what is involved in being a part of radio and television media broadcasting in the world of sports.



Guidance Office Challenges Students To Think Out Moves in Game of Life

Career Center Mentor, Lori Graves, recently gave the high school students some food for thought when it comes to making life decisions.

She used her creativity to come up with a fun game outside the Guidance Office to get the students to think about where their lives will take them as they explore career paths.

Well played Ms. Graves!



(LtoR) Career Center Mentor Lori Graves and Guidance Counselor Lynn Wright.

New Middle School Opens Doors at North Tonawanda

The new North Tonawanda Middle School opened its door for its first year this fall. Principal Greg Burgess, his staff and students were excited for the new space in the former Meadow Elementary building. Their old space is now redistricted as the Intermediate School.

"One of the reasons they wanted to redistrict the school was that grades 4,5 and 6 are starting to get into the heavier testing and curriculum and this helps us to build some consistency in those grade levels by having them on their own campus," says Mr. Burgess. "Also K-3 teachers can provide those children with a more early childhood education center. The benefits of the 7th-12th grade campus is that we are able to do a lot of things with mentoring. Having some of the sophomores and juniors come down with our 7th and 8th graders and start to build on those peer relationships and start bonding."

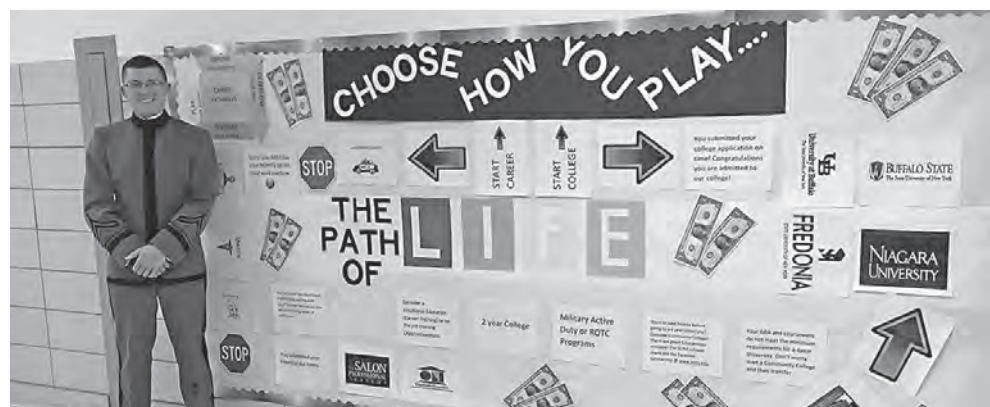
He says being on the same campus as the high school will expand the opportunities for different programs for his students and they are able to share the school resource officer. "It will help us to build on some of our consistency with grades 7-12 and bridge some of those gaps with instruction. It is great to capitalize on that and make it a smoother transition for our students. Our guidance counselors also get to collaborate with the high school guidance office making it a smoother transition. We are really enjoying being over here for sure. It is great to better prepare our kids for that next step."



West Point Cadet Talks Military Academy with NT Students

The North Tonawanda High School recently received a special guest. Cadet Colin Lynch from West Point stopped by to give students and counselors some information and answer any questions they may have about West Point.

West Point is the United States Military Academy and has been educating, training and inspiring leaders of character for the US Army and for the nation for more than 200 years. It provides a 47-month leader-development program steeped in academic rigor, military discipline, and physical challenges, all built on moral-ethical foundation. The academy is an internationally recognized institution for academic, military and physical excellence. Cadets will become tomorrow's military, public and private-sector leaders.



Olivia Hooley Signs With Niagara University

NT Soccer's Olivia Hooley has committed to Niagara University for college. Olivia said she is excited to start the next chapter of her life as she goes from being a Lumberjack to a Purple Eagle.

She has played with the U.S. Soccer Developmental Academy for her junior year and is a solid defenseman and midfielder

for the Lady Jacks. She had six goals and 14 assists for 26 points and was part of the team's 13 win season in 2013 as a seventh grader and an 11-win team as a sophomore.

Interim Athletic Director Cynthia Bullis, who is a fellow Niagara University Alum, says Hooley's determination to succeed is what made her stand out and that she'll be a positive example for the athletic program's future. "It's so nice to see kids that do the right thing. And the kids that put the hard work in and the time in – it pays off," she said. "I just loved watching her play because she was 'go-go-go.' She never stopped. She just hustled for everything and she always had that competitiveness in her, even as a seventh grader. She wanted to win but she did it with grace. It was always a positive way of doing it and that's what I remember of her as a youngster, just coming in and never stopped playing. The drive that she has is amazing."

In front of her family and NT administration she signed her national letter of intent in the school library at the beginning of December. She plans on becoming a nurse and says that NU has a great program. "I have always wanted to be a nurse and they have one of the best nursing programs around. I like staying local and I will also be able to continue my soccer career. It's very cool."



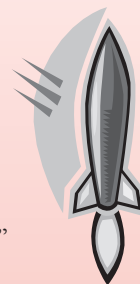
Front Row: (LtoR) Olivia's father Joe Hooley, Olivia Hooley, her mother Erin Hooley and sister Bella Hooley. Back Row: High School Principal James Fisher, Coach Hannah Crouch, Superintendent Greg Woytila and Interim Athletic Director Cynthia Bullis.

Science Project Takes Flight at NT Intermediate School

Mrs. Bertini's fifth grade Science classes completed a high-powered paper rocket STEM activity recently.

Each student prepared a rocket to test out a real launch following a unit on the solar system. Students were challenged to design and build a rocket from different materials available to them in class. "The students had to decide what materials they wanted to use by applying what they learned," says Mrs. Bertini. "They wanted to create a rocket that would reach the highest height compared to the rockets their peers were making."

One of her students, Toby said, "We built these rockets to see how different performances depend on how the rocket was built."



Evan Harvey Shines at Auto Collision Competition

Students in Paul Magyar's Auto Body program at the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center had a chance to show off their skills at the third annual Western New York Auto Collision Competition. The event has high school juniors and seniors being judged on their skills such as dent repair and color mixing to help restore damaged cars to their former condition. Organized by Richard Greenawalt, it gives students a chance to compete at the national level to hone their skills and show their career opportunities in the industry.

Evan Harvey from North Tonawanda High School took first place overall in the junior category and won a \$5,000 scholarship at Ohio Technical College. "I really want to thank Rick Greenawalt and his staff, all the BOCES instructors, the volunteers, Sherwin Williams of Buffalo and our Superintendent, Dr. Clark Godshall, for all their support of this worthy cause," says Mr. Magyar. "This has become a yearly event where the students and teachers can show off their skills to all the people of Western New York and go home with prizes, scholarships and cash awards. It is a great experience for all the students."



Ohio Technical College representative Laura Pronti, Evan Harvey (North Tonawanda) with R.G. Greenawalt from Auto Collision and Glass.

Army Aviation Adventure Comes to High School

Thanks to the Career Center at the High School, students got to fly a drone, an Apache helicopter into a combat scenario and be a truck commander and lead a convoy. The school received a visit from the Army's Aviation Adventure Semi with its high tech simulators. It puts the students to the test in some interactive exhibits to see what their pilots go through.



"This is the aviation exhibit we have, which is part of our entire mobile exhibit company out of Fort Knox, Kentucky," says Sergeant First Class Hamilton. "We travel around 300 days a year doing exhibits at high schools, ROTC events, colleges, medical schools, all the way to larger air shows. We also do events with the National Football League, the Salute to Service, Selfies with a Soldier. It's part of the new Army recruitment initiative – Decide to Lead."

It's a leadership scenario where the students get to experience a four minute mission. Throughout that mission they have to make decisions and the simulators gauge their decision-making process and what kind of leadership qualities they possess and their strength and weaknesses. "It's all virtual reality too, so they can really experience what that really feels like," explains SFC Hamilton. "We also have mannequins with their outfits so that people can see what they would have on. The kids really like it. It is one of the most requested exhibits in our fleet. We have 18 exhibits across the nation, so we keep really busy."

Career Mentor Lori Graves says the students really enjoyed the exhibit. "The US Army presented NTHS students with a wonderful opportunity to explore their Aviation Semi-Truck. They were able to get hands-on experience using their highly skilled equipment. We have a significant amount of students that are interested in joining the military services after graduating high school thanks to experiences like these."

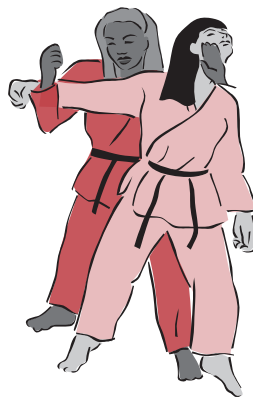


NT High School Students Learn About Self-Defense

The freshman and sophomore classes at the North Tonawanda High School recently completed some training how to defend themselves. The juniors and seniors will be getting training in the near future.

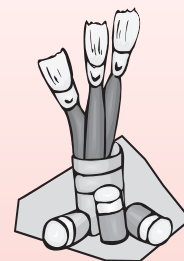
During Physical Education class some special guests from WNYMMA (WNY Mixed Martial Arts and Fitness) and Jonathan Grisafi, who has won the Ontario Provincial MMA Title and is the youngest provincial title holder in Canadian history, worked with the students using Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu based self-defense. Mr. Grisafi is also a two time Jiu-Jitsu World Champion Silver medalist who trains at WNYMMA. "WNYMMA is the best-rounded gym around, with all the best fighters around and I am very fortunate to train with them," he says.

WNY MMA believes that self-defense skills are essential for everyone and the PE teachers at the high school were glad to have them in to work with the students. "This was an important topic to teach our students because we want to make sure that our students leave the high school ready and prepared for anything that may come their way," says teacher Katie Harrington. "WNYMMA was more than generous to come in and reach out to our classes. We are always trying to find ways to teach our students lifelong habits or skills and this is a useful tool for all of them."



Art Update

Many of the Art teachers are enjoying their new or renovated facilities thanks to millions of dollars that the District has invested into their rooms. High School teacher Christina Davis says she loves the new computer lab in her room. "It is the old dark room and they converted it. It took some time and patience because it was extremely complicated. It was a huge undertaking for the school district."



At the new Middle School there are two new bright beautiful art studios. Ms. Davis and Ms. Zobrist and their students are enjoying the larger tables and having plenty of room to work in. "We are still building and tweaking," says Ms. Zobrist. "We are taking some time to get adjusted to it, but it is very positive."

To see what the students have been creating over the last several months, the teachers say to make sure to mark February 28th on your calendar. That is the date for the North Tonawanda Central School District Student Spotlight's Opening Night.

The event will be from 6:00-8:30pm at the Carnegie Center and run until March 19th which is family night from 6:00-8:30pm.

Art teachers - Alexandra Gerbec, Christina Davis,



Jackie Fernandez, Melinda Wright, Susan Zobrist and Chris Cook in the new Middle School Art Studios.

Third Graders Leave Gifts for Library Goers

The third graders at Drake School carried out their first "Kindness Project" of the year.

In October, all of the students at Drake decorated a bookmark with a picture or a quote depicting kindness. After all of the bookmarks were collected, the third graders were sent to the North Tonawanda Public Library where they hid the bookmarks in popular books chosen by the librarians. The hope is that an unsuspecting library patron will discover a bookmark and enjoy the positive message!

More acts of kindness and celebrations of kindness are in store at Drake throughout the year. Stay tuned!





NORTH TONAWANDA CITY SCHOOLS

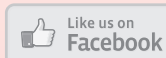
176 Walck Road
North Tonawanda, NY 14120

Board of Education

Cheryl McMahon, President
Matthew Kennedy, Vice President
Colleen Angelow
Erik Herbert
Zachary Niemiec
Erica Robinson
Krista Vince Garland
Jacob Thompson, Student Member

Gregory J. Woytila
Superintendent of Schools

www.ntschoools.org



[Facebook.com/NTCitySchools](https://www.facebook.com/NTCitySchools)



Follow us on Twitter:
[@NTCitySchools](https://twitter.com/NTCitySchools)

BOCES Students Help NT Middle School Students Explore Careers

North Tonawanda Middle School Principal Greg Burgess says he is pleased how the Career Fair at the school went on January 24th. Not only were there representatives from colleges and the military, but North Tonawanda high school students who attend Orleans/Niagara BOCES were on hand as well.

The Orleans/Niagara BOCES students, who attend the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center, set up tables with information and had demonstrations on some of the skills they are learning in their classes. They kept the middle schoolers engaged and certainly made them want to learn more about what BOCES has to offer.

