

# North Tonawanda City Schools



## Have you Registered Your Child for Kindergarten or Pre-K?

Information and registration packets are available on-line at [www.ntschoools.org](http://www.ntschoools.org), or at the Board of Education Building located at 176 Walck Road. Packets must be completed and presented together with the proper documents in order to register.



## NT Box of Hope Drive Makes Holidays Brighter for Community

Five Churches in North Tonawanda worked in conjunction with the North Tonawanda City School District to make the holidays brighter for members in the community.

The idea behind the Box of Hope is to connect local organizations to local families in need of some assistance. The district loved the idea of neighbors helping neighbors especially knowing in many cases some of the children in their schools would be the recipients.

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## Message from Superintendent

As we speed towards the 100th day of school and look forward to signs of spring the North Tonawanda City School district is getting ready for next school year. The board of education and administration is working on a budget for the 2017-18 school year that will provide new programs for students while keeping taxes in check. We are getting ready to break ground on the capital project that will transform Meadow elementary into the middle school. We are excited for these changes in the future and what is in store for the North Tonawanda community.



The board of education will be looking at redistricting the city into three K through 3 sections for our youngest students to attend either Drake, Ohio or Spruce Primary buildings in September of 2018. We hope to have that done before this school year is out to give parents time to plan for the changes that are coming. All of grades 4 through 6 will be housed in the intermediate building in September of 2018. This new intermediate building will be located where our current middle school is on Vanderbilt Street near Ruie and Nash Roads.

While these are some of the big physical changes that everyone will notice, there are many internal moves also happening. The staff has been organized into K-3 and 4-6 committees to discuss scheduling and academic programs for the new structure. The middle school and high school are looking to add a new Academy of Health Science and are considering future scheduling opportunities for our teenage students.

The community that currently uses a worn out cinder track behind the middle school will benefit from a meandering walking track that will go around new varsity and junior varsity baseball fields. While the Meadow complex will benefit from the construction of the latest in multi-purpose stadiums for a multitude of sports.

Therefore, you can see we are excited for the future as the incoming Kindergarten students of 2017 will be the graduating class of 2030! We are trying to imagine what skills and jobs the world will need in the year 2030 and beyond. We look forward to the challenge of educating for the future today here in North Tonawanda.

Sincerely,

Gregory J. Woytila  
Superintendent of North Tonawanda City Schools



## Box of Hope Drive

*Continued from Page 1*

Organizers placed Boxes of Hope in each of the schools and asked for a different food item to be donated each day, which they called their 12 Days of Giving. The school faculty also held fundraisers, like their first ever Christmas tree auction, to be able to purchase gift cards for the 171 families who had registered for assistance from the Box of Hope.

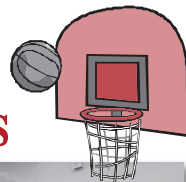
Math teacher Ann Lentsch, who helped to coordinate the district's efforts, says there are 63 families from their district. Students and staff felt great about making sure their efforts would keep them well fed and allow the parents to buy gifts or food with the gift cards that were donated or purchased from the fundraising. "We also donated several of the Christmas trees to Niagara Hospice to give to those receiving their services."

On December 22nd, a moving van showed up at the North Tonawanda Alumni Center, which acted as the distribution center, and the van was completely filled with the 250 boxes the district had filled. Pastor John Paul McLaughlin from the Lumber City Church said they were overwhelmed with the outpouring of generosity from the school district. "I am super excited. I actually just moved here four or five months ago to North Tonawanda and this is unbelievable. I have never seen people come together like this. It's very cool to be part of something like this."



*Pastor Dan Davis from Renewal Church, Pastor John Heineke from Nash Road Church and Pastor John Paul McLaughlin and Pastor Chad Rieselman from Lumber City Church, North Tonawanda Staff: Lori Graves, Ann Lentsch and Karen Anderson.*

## NT Staff and Students Are Jumping Through Hoops To Promote Wellness



To promote their commitment to the district-wide health and well-being of their students and staff, the North Tonawanda staff recently had a rousing game of basketball at the Alumni Student Activity Center.

Staff members Alexandra Bertini, Alyssa Brosius, Nick Casillo, Sarah Corrao, Hannah Crouch, Joe Evans, Lori Graves, Katie Harrington, Sean Kibrick, Ryan Mountain, Jen Reed, Dan Schiesser, Heather Sicoli, Danielle Tollar and Darren Vukovic showed off their teamwork and skills on the court to a full house.

The crowd was also entertained by the Varsity Cheerleading team under the supervision of Lindsey Turner who put on an amazing routine as school mascot the Lumberjack and Superintendent Mr. Greg Woytila gave away prizes during half time.

A special thanks goes to our Boys Basketball boosters who ran the concession stand and all the students/athletes who acted as coaches, kept score, announced the game and gave a stirring rendition of the National Anthem. A great time was had by all!



*(LtoR) Joe Evans, Darren Vukovic, Nick Casillo, Alexandra Bertini, Lori Graves and Jen Reed.*



*Katie Harrington, Dan Schiesser, Sean Kibrick, Ryan Mountain, Danielle Tollar, Heather Sicoli, Hannah Crouch, Alyssa Brosius and Sarah Corrao.*



## NT Students Use RULER Program as Inspiration for Self Portraits

The North Tonawanda School District is in their second year of the RULER Program which focuses on concepts and strategies for social and emotional learning. RULER is an acronym that stands for Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing and Regulating emotions.

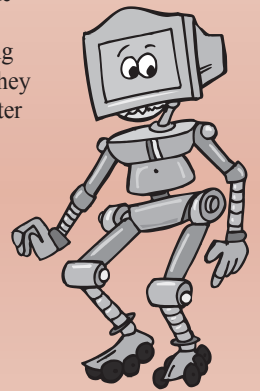
To tie into the exercises that the students are using to explore their feelings and how they express them, Visual Arts teacher Melinda Wright has been working with the students at Spruce, Meadow and Drake Elementary Schools on a unique and creative project. The students in grades 2-6 have been creating expressive self-portraits in a variety of artistic mediums.

Turning their emotions into art, the students' work was displayed at the Albright Knox Museum in the Education Wing for the month of January. "The students did some amazing pieces and they were so proud of what they achieved," said Ms. Wright.



## Robot Takes Charge at Drake Morning Announcements

Students in Kristie Keidel's 6th grade class at Drake Elementary have been giving their robot Jack some new skills this year. In the computer programming unit students learn about problem solving skills and how to think logically like mathematicians and engineers. By writing code for the robot, they are applying computer science and basic technology skills.



The students decided they wanted to program Jack to do the morning announcements. Mrs. Keidel says the students learned about say boxes and how to input information into them. "So we decided to type in the whole entire Pledge of Allegiance and all the morning announcements. They also used the voice parameters to adjust his voice to make it slow enough so he didn't talk too fast for the students. It was the students' idea to have the robot interact with the school and show everyone what they had learned."

Principal Katie Smith says she was very impressed with what the students achieved. "The students were so excited to master programming the fluency of the robot's speech. It was very tricky to get anything coherent to come out of the robot. Our entire school loved it when the students programmed him to read "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer" at the holiday sing along. Programming is not an easy task and requires the students to demonstrate persistence, problem-solving skills and teamwork."

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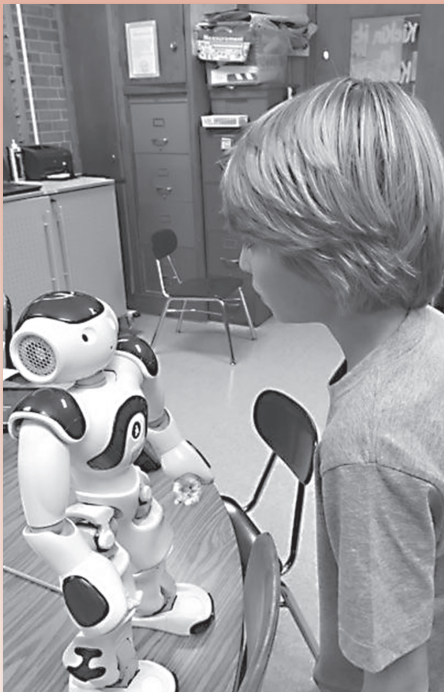


## Robot Takes Charge

*Continued from Page 3*

Mrs. Keidel says the students also learned a lot of math through the robot. "They have learned X and Y coordinates and independent and dependent variables which is really helping them with their math in their equations unit. They are not just using the robot for science, but math and engineering which is really helping them in real world situations."

The students have certainly been challenging their teacher with wanting to push the boundaries of what Jack can do. "It's a very exciting unit. The kids love it! They love the cooperative learning and working with each other and trying to help each other make programs together. I think I am going to have to ask for further training just to keep up with them and their inquisitiveness. I would really like to help them push their learning further," says Mrs. Keidel. Student Jack Porter says the robotics unit is different from other school work. "It was all technology and we had so much access to learning." Classmate Aiden Maher had some words of wisdom for next year's class. "Stay on task because you learn a lot and its fun."



## Drake Embraces Season of Giving Back

The students and staff at Drake Elementary School were busy over the holiday season giving back to their community.

"It really put us all in a good mood," says Principal Katie Smith. "Every day the students and staff were doing something to help out someone in need of some holiday spirit. We participated in the Box of Hope Drive, Holiday Mail for Troops Project, which were delivered to the Niagara Falls Air Base, making cards for the VA Hospital and Make A Wish Foundation, creating small crafts for those who receive Meals on Wheels and our annual gift giving for St. Luke's Mission of Mercy.



The St. Luke's Mission of Mercy is an independent Roman Catholic mission that serves the inner city of Buffalo. Boxes and bags are put together for the homeless that the mission serves. For 15 years the staff gathers and has a holiday luncheon while they wrap gifts. "This year we just asked faculty and staff to participate only in this because the children were actively involved with the Box of Hope," says Annette Beutel. "We were able to make 15 bags for homeless men, 15 bags for homeless women and 10 stockings for homeless children. In the adult bags were small toiletries, a warm blanket, snacks, water and things like that were distributed. In the stockings were puzzles and coloring books, a stuffed animal, socks and other necessities for the children to receive."



Ms. Beutel says that former teacher Debbie Lloyd comes and gets the bags and stockings for St. Luke's and it is a great thing to do together as staff. "We were all talking and we said especially now that we are getting older, it means so much more to give than to receive. It is just awesome experience for all of us."

## Drake's Young Writers Gain Confidence in their Skills

Recently students in Miss Maureen Byrne's first grade at Drake Elementary held an audience, consisting of friends and family, rapt with attention as they showed off the stories they had written as part of their classroom assignment. It was all part of the Writer's Workshop initiative that the North Tonawanda City School District has implemented in grades K-6.

The Writer's Workshop is an interdisciplinary writing technique which builds students' fluency in writing through continuous, repeated exposure to the process of writing. The hope is that it will make writing a lifelong habit. "We want our students to view themselves as writers," says Principal Katie Smith. "They are authors of personal narratives, informational texts and opinion pieces. It has been very exciting here watching them grow in their confidence."

On the day of their performances, some of the first graders admitted they were nervous and got a little teary eyed. Their teacher Miss Maureen Byrne said her students have really grown. "In the beginning, they did not love writing. Now they are much happier writing and are able to write for longer periods of time."

The students started writing what they call "small moments" narratives and have moved on to "how to" pieces. They are also showing off their artistic skills by illustrating their own texts. When Miss Byrne asks them how they know it time to start on their next assignment, they all said, "When you say, 'Off you go! Happy writing!'"





# Meadow Elementary Helps to Create Safe Community through “Kids Escaping Drugs” and “D.A.R.E.” Programs

Meadow Elementary School recently celebrated two accomplishments that will aid in keeping North Tonawanda’s community healthy and safe. Meadow, along with North Tonawanda’s other elementary schools: Drake, Ohio, and Spruce, collected \$3,048 in pennies for the Kids Escaping Drugs (KED) Program. A check was presented to Suzanne D’Amico, Director of Development, and Christina Kruzer, Special Events Coordinator of the Kids Escaping Drugs organization. This donation will aid area youth to break drug and alcohol addictions.

Meadow Elementary collected the most pennies for the program and Meadow’s Mrs. Jafarjian’s third grade class collected the most pennies across the District. Students collected \$203.00, or 20,300 pennies for KED. They earned a party and a recognition ceremony for their efforts. To celebrate the students’ donation, Meadow teachers and social workers along with NTCSD Administrators, Patrick Holesko and Michael Tambroni,

congratulated the students and thanked them for their diligence in their penny collection. In addition, City of North Tonawanda Administrative Assistant to Mayor Pappas, Peter Drossos, visited the class on behalf of the Mayor to deliver a congratulatory message to the kids. “I am happy we were able to help people,” said one student from Mrs. Jafarjian’s class.

Coinciding with the check presentation was the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) graduation at Meadow Elementary. Fifth grade classes proudly wore their newly earned D.A.R.E. shirts and were honored by their D.A.R.E. teacher, Officer Mendola, who routinely visited the students to teach about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse and ways to prevent this misuse from occurring. During the ceremony, students shared what they learned from the D.A.R.E. program and also had the chance to individually be honored and walk the stage to collect their certificates of achievement.



Third grade students from Mrs. Jafarjian's class at Meadow Elementary presenting a check for \$3,048.00 to Suzanne D'Amico and Christina Kruzer of the Kids Escaping Drugs organization.



Officers honor fifth grade students for recently graduating from the D.A.R.E. program at Meadow Elementary School.



Pictured is Mrs. Jafarjian's third grade class, Mrs. Jafarjian, City of North Tonawanda Administrative Assistant to Mayor Pappas, Peter Drossos, Meadow teachers and social workers; Kids Escaping Drugs representatives, Christina Kruzer and Suzanne D'Amico; and NTCSD Administrators, Patrick Holesko and Michael Tambroni.





## Ohio Students Learn about Empathy with Social/Emotional Learning Program

Elementary 4th grade students in Mrs. Ninos' class collaborated during a Feeling Words Curriculum lesson with school counselor, Jennifer Schultz.

The students worked together in small groups to discuss different scenarios and how they would feel in different situations. Each group presented their thoughts to the class and other students participated, adding to the discussion for each scenario.

The February Feeling Word at Ohio Elementary is "Empathy: and the 4th grade word is "Considerate." To further exemplify the Feeling Word, Ohio Elementary students are making Valentine's Day cards for the residents of Northgate Health Care Facility in North Tonawanda and one student from each class will be delivering the cards to the residents on February 14th with Mrs. Schultz and Mr. Hiller.

## First Graders Get An Inside Look at NT Police Station and Court

The first grade students at Ohio Elementary School recently took a fun field trip to the North Tonawanda Police Station where they were given a private tour of the police station by Lieutenant Mahoney and Officer Benjamin.

The students learned how important a police officer's job is and what they do to protect us every day. The students were also able to visit the North Tonawanda City Court. While in the courtroom, the students met Judge Nickerson, asked him questions about his job, and used the gavel to call order to the court!

This was a wonderful field trip, where the students learned how the police work together with the community to keep everyone safe in NT!

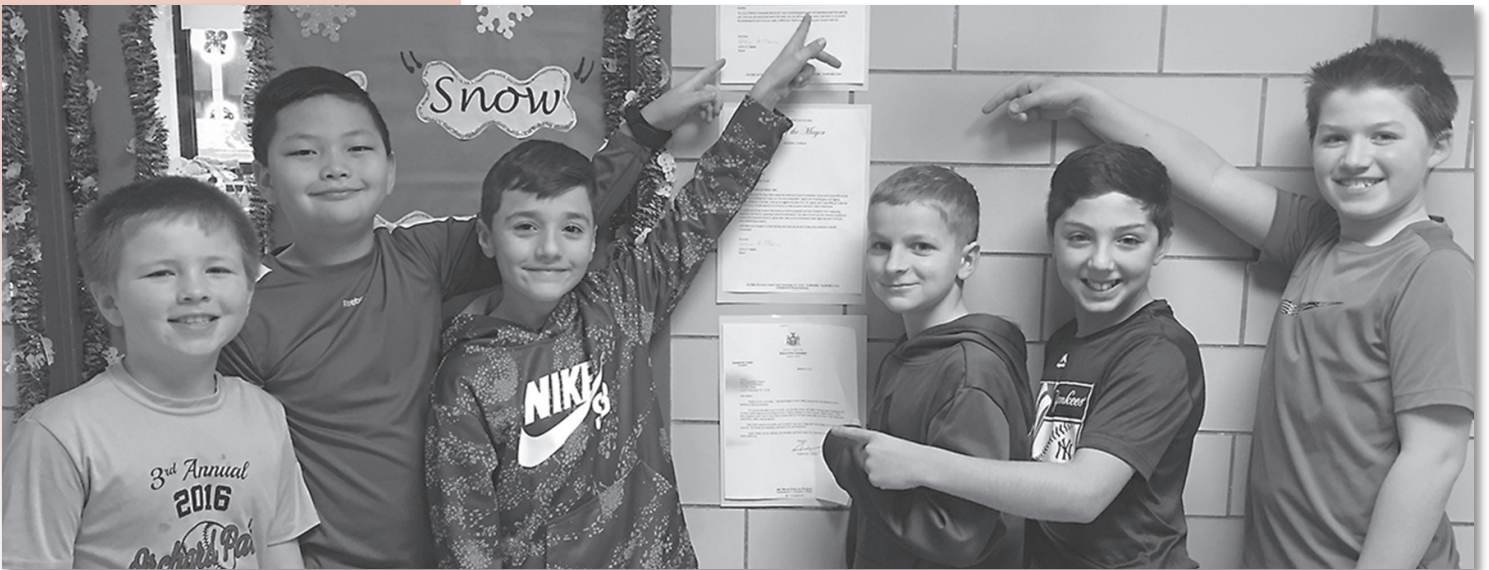


## Fifth Graders Make Their Voice Heard

The fifth grade students at Ohio Elementary School have been taking an active role to become responsible citizens in their government.

These motivated students wrote business letters to a government official, of their choice, about an issue that is affecting their community, state, or country. They were inspired to make a difference by voicing their opinion about issues they believed strongly for.

Noah Matyevich, Dakota Stefano-Guzenski, Tyler Starr, Thomas Polek, and Mason Lake were all elated to receive a return letter from Mayor Pappas about issues relating to smoking and pollution. Mason Gioeli, Mark Tupchik, and Bilal Mukhtasinov were also very delighted to receive a letter from Governor Cuomo, regarding pollution in New York State. Many students are still waiting for responses from the president, vice president, and New York State senators. We are excited for the students to learn, at an early age, that their voice matters and they can make a difference in their government and society!





## Spruce Shines in Holiday Sing-A-Long

Spruce Elementary students and staff got into the holiday spirit with a sing-a-long. The staff performed a skit about what they would really like to be over the holiday season much to the delight of their audience and the students performed a variety of winter and holiday songs.

There was even a sighting of school administrators Superintendent Greg Woytila, Executive Director of Educational Services, Patrick Holesko, and Director of Student Services, Mike Tambroni, in their holiday finest.



(LtoR) Mike Tambroni, Patrick Holesko and Superintendent Greg Woytila.



(LtoR) First Row: Ava Chase, Reno Scaccia, Tia Shahin, and Aidan Cowney. Second Row: Gracie Fogarty, Jayden Miller, Olivia Brown and Summer Steele. Top Row: Logan Kopp, Gabrielle Leonardis, Steven Clayburn, Elizabeth Finley and Tyler Russell.



(LtoR) Kristen Norris (First grade teacher), Patti Adler (Principal), Cyd Green (Computer teacher) and Lynn Kevekordes (School Nurse).

## Spruce Students Brighten Holidays for DeGraff Skilled Nursing Facility Residents

Every year the staff and residents at DeGraff Skilled Nursing Facility look forward with anticipation to Deborah Dexheimer and her students making an appearance.

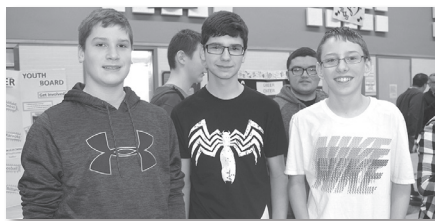
The Spruce Elementary students brighten the holidays with songs and well wishes for everyone. "We travel there every year," says Mrs. Dexheimer. "Last year they invited us back for Memorial Day too and we did a patriotic concert. There was a dove release and we honored a Marine. This year we made holiday cards for all of them and the students personally handed them to the residents. It really put the Christmas spirit in my heart!"



## NORTH TONAWANDA MIDDLE SCHOOL

## North Tonawanda Middle Schoolers Encouraged to Explore College and Career Options

The North Tonawanda Middle School recently held a college and career exploration day. Counselor Sue Everts says the school has been holding this event for over a decade. "Our goal is to expose the students to all their options while in high school and after graduation. We want to give them a framework to get to their end game. By talking to the representatives from colleges and the military they can start to get an idea of what electives and courses they will need to get into a program or branch of the service. We also have students and teachers from our high school to discuss our five Academy programs and from Orleans/Niagara BOCES to talk about career and technical education programs."



Students Seth Franusiak, Matthew Gudleski and Quinton Serrano talk to several representatives about careers and education.

Fairs like this one are a great way to get students at the middle school level to start thinking about their future and show them the relevance of getting on the right track while in high school to pursue their career.

## UB Scholar Athletes Give NTMS Students an Encouraging Pep Talk

University at Buffalo (UB) Scholar Athletes visited the North Tonawanda Middle School to encourage the eighth grade class about the importance of studying, planning for the future, acting responsible on social media, and showing character in all they do.

Family and Consumer Science Teacher, Miss Catalano, coordinated and moderated the assembly as the three UB students shared their wisdom and experience with the assembly.



UB Scholar Athletes teach kids the importance of studying, planning, and being responsible.



(LtoR): UB students, Kelly Moran, Lace Smith, and Devon Patterson speaking to NTMS eighth graders.



**NORTH TONAWANDA  
CITY SCHOOLS**  
176 Walck Road  
North Tonawanda, NY 14120

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## Vision Statement

To develop a nationally  
recognized school  
system focused on:

A collaborative  
environment that fosters  
the academic, emotional  
and social growth of  
each student through  
quality and purposeful  
educational experiences.

Students becoming  
independent, productive  
and globally competitive  
citizens. Instilling the  
belief that each student is  
invaluable.

## NORTH TONAWANDA HIGH SCHOOL

# North Tonawanda Tree of Hope Brings Out Holiday Spirit

The North Tonawanda City School District brought in the holiday season on a very festive and positive note with staff, students and the community on November 28th.

For the second year in a row, the district held its lighting of the Tree of Hope in front of the High School. The Tree of Hope was the brainchild of Ann Lentsch, a Math teacher and the Teacher Union President. "Last year was my first year as the Union President and at that point we had no contract. It was a difficult and tense time to say the least. I wanted to do something that would bring people together and make them forget the past and move forward."

Ms. Lentsch had a vision in her head of the tree at Rockefeller Center and thought why not bring that to the district. "I was dreaming big, but when I realized getting a tree that size would require thousands of dollars, not to mention a flatbed truck, I decided to scale back on my vision."

Instead the senior class of 2016 gifted the school with a smaller tree and planted it in front of the school. "We will watch it grow every year and eventually it will be as big as the Rockefeller Center tree. I probably won't be here to see that though," laughs Ms. Lentsch. "What a great legacy for those students to leave behind."

At the tree lighting the community is invited in to listen to music performed by the district's Music Department, partake of some yummy offerings from food trucks and purchase ornaments and luminary bags that can be decorated with a message and placed on and around the tree. Santa and some of his friends come by on a float wishing everyone a happy holiday and giving out candy canes.

This year Ms. Lentsch added another component to the holiday celebration. "A friend told me how Niagara Wheatfield School District has students and staff adopt trees each year and decorate them in their high school hallway. They have a silent auction and the proceeds go to helping underprivileged families in the area. I thought that would be a great way to get the students involved with giving and helping out those less fortunate. Al Pogel at Niagara Wheatfield High School has generously given us his time and experience to help us with this project."

What she envisioned to be about ten to fifteen trees ended up being 45 trees. "I was overwhelmed with the amount of people here who wanted to participate. I had to turn some people down because I was sure how much would be involved in getting this done. It was very gratifying to see so many people want to take part. I am thrilled with the response we got and how much fun everyone had working together to create these beautiful trees."

The money raised, along with the 12 Day of Giving canned food drives held around the school, will go towards putting together Boxes of Hope that local North Tonawanda churches will distribute to families in need. The money raised will go to purchasing presents and gift cards and the trees not auctioned off will go to area families who do not have a Christmas tree. "We provided the churches with names of families in our district that could use a helping hand this year. I think it is a great thing to do for the holiday season and I am hoping to expand it more next year," says Ms. Lentsch. "I think it has been a great experience for everyone and a meaningful tradition to have at the district."



(LtoR) Patty Brosius (NT Director of Youth and Recreation), Katie Alexander (NT City Attorney), Donna Braun (NT City Council Member), Superintendent Greg Woytila, Ann Lentsch and Mayor Art Pappas.

## NT Music Department Brings "Shrek the Musical" to Stage

The North Tonawanda High School Music Department, under the direction of Music teacher Dean Vallas, brought the beloved musical "Shrek" to the Student Alumni Stage in December.

The musical is based on the 2001 Dreamworks movie of the same name and tells the story of Shrek, Donkey, Princess Fiona and various fairytale characters.

The cast did an excellent job of making the audience "believers" of happy endings.



Princess Fiona (Allison Kujawa), Shrek (Nicholas Kagelmacher) and Donkey (Alex Morgan).



Shrek (Nicholas Kagelmacher) and Lord Farquaad (Samuel Fesmire).