

Tusker Nation

SOMERS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWS
FOR SCSD FAMILIES

Science and Engineering Fair Draws Thousands to Somers



WESEF grand prize winners and Somers High School seniors Angie Ayoubi and Maya Donnelly will compete in the International Science and Engineering Fair in Los Angeles in May.

Twenty Somers High School Science Research students presented at the prestigious Regeneron Westchester Science and Engineering Fair (WESEF) on March 16, held here

in our Somers schools. WESEF is the largest regional science and engineering fair in the country. Hundreds of community members attended and 500 experts participated as judges.

Out of the 750 projects on display, 15 Somers students won awards. Seniors Angie Ayoubi and Maya Donnelly each won a grand prize as "best in category." The award earns them spots at the International Science and Engineering Fair in Los Angeles in May.

"I never expected to win," said Donnelly. "I'm honored and excited to be able to continue presenting my research. My research, Investigating Fear and Anxiety in Adolescence by Distributing the FSSC-R in a High School Setting, is really important to me and I'm so thankful for the science research program and the opportunities it's given me."

Angie Ayoubi's study analyzes the relationship between pesticide exposure and Parkinson's Disease.

"I'm a firm believer that hard work pays off," said Angie, "but we don't always know how, when, or where. I'm honored to be an ISEF Finalist, I'm excited to compete, and I'm more excited to experience it with so many other hard-working student researchers."

The WESEF competition is one of the biggest events for students in the Science Research program at the high school. Those who enroll in the class are inspired to take on the challenge of a three-year research project while working closely with mentors. The class culminates in presenting their findings at regional and state science fair competitions.

"I knew I wanted to do something cancer-related because my grandpa had cancer at the time," said Conner Entenberg. "He was going through chemotherapy, so I was drawn to chemotherapy research."

Conner's project, Emigration Defects in Endogenous Thymic Regeneration After Chemotherapy Insult, studies how the thymus gland and the immune system are affected by chemotherapy. He spent hours each week studying the samples provided by his mentor at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, where they handled the chemotherapy testing.

Taylor Bassi completed a science research project twice. Her first project was inspired by an episode of *Grey's Anatomy* that featured 3D bioprinting tissue for transplants. Taylor found her mentor in her first year of the program and then spent the summer between her sophomore and junior years researching at Brigham and Women's Hospital. Taylor presented her project, Tuning Phase Morphology and Mechanical Properties of Porous Hydrogels for Tissue Engineering, during her junior year.

"Doing that research was enlightening because it gave me a very clear idea of what I wanted to do, which is biomedical engineering," said Taylor. "I have a passion for tissue engineering."

She spent the summer between her junior and senior year doing research for her second project at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York with a new mentor. This time her project was Human T-cell Lymphotropic Virus Detection and Optimization from Formalin-fixed Paraffin-embedded Blocks.

"I optimized a method to detect the virus from biopsies to help make testing more accessible," said Taylor. "That protocol has now been published for use. It's a new way to diagnose the virus."

Being a part of the science research program and her experience in the labs gave her a clearer understanding of what to look for in college research facilities, allowing her to focus on what schools might provide her with the opportunities she's hoping for.

"This was a turning point for me. Science research told me this is what I want to do," said Taylor.



Charlotte Senitta, a Somers High School freshman and member of the Team USA synchronized skating team.

High school is a new experience for ninth-grader Charlotte Senitta, but balancing school and high-level competitive figure skating is not. She's been doing it successfully for years.

"I love getting to represent my country," said Charlotte, a synchronized skater for Team USA.

Charlotte started skating at seven years old. Inspired by her mother, who was also a competitive figure skater, Charlotte joined Team Image, a synchronized skating team, at age eight.

"I love performing our no-hold element, where we skate in the shape of a block to showcase lineup, edges, turns, and some individual skills," said Charlotte. "We also do fun choreography to show off the personality of our music and skating, and it can be one of the most enjoyable parts of the program."

Charlotte skates for Team Image at both the Junior and Novice levels, the two highest divisions in U.S. Figure Skating. The Junior team was selected as Team USA this year and competed internationally, traveling as far as Finland to compete for the Marie Lundmark Trophy and the Netherlands for the Lumière Cup where they earned a bronze medal. The Novice team competed domestically and traveled around the country throughout the season.

"It was challenging to learn three different routines at the beginning of the season," said Charlotte. "Like anything new, it takes time to learn and get used to, but eventually it becomes muscle memory."

Charlotte currently skates for more than 12 hours of scheduled practice each week and it can be tough to balance practice and competitions with schoolwork, social life, and family life. Charlotte can often be found in study hall at school, diligently working to get ahead on her schoolwork.

In Tusker 101, a class all freshmen take that focuses on the 10 learner profile attributes of the International Baccalaureate Programme, Charlotte is developing helpful life skills.

“In Tusker 101, we talked about prioritizing time management, the use of school resources, and getting good amounts of rest, which all lead toward a healthy athletic lifestyle,” said Charlotte. “Although I don't have as much free time, I've learned how to get my work done fast so I have more time with my friends.”

Somers High School physical education classes helped Charlotte build more strength and stamina which translated into more efficient and effective conditioning training during skating practice, both on and off the ice. In biology class she learned about carbohydrates and proteins and how they work together to give her body more energy, helping to make her the best athlete she can be.

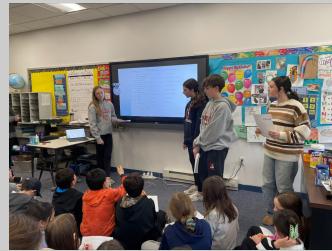
This skating season, Charlotte's Junior team placed sixth at the Fall Classic in California, third at the Boston Classic, and recently received a bronze medal at the US Nationals in Las Vegas. Her Novice team won its division in Boston, earned a silver medal at the Eastern Sectional Championships, and received a pewter medal (4th) at the U.S. Nationals in Las Vegas.

“I love training with the team and getting to skate as a group,” said Charlotte. “We share many good memories both on and off the ice. It's awesome to experience things together.”

□ Seen Around Somers □



A record number of students interested in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (DP) attended a forum with current DP candidates and DP graduates. There was standing room only at an IB information night held in the library at the high school, where teachers and students described the benefits of the Diploma Programme.



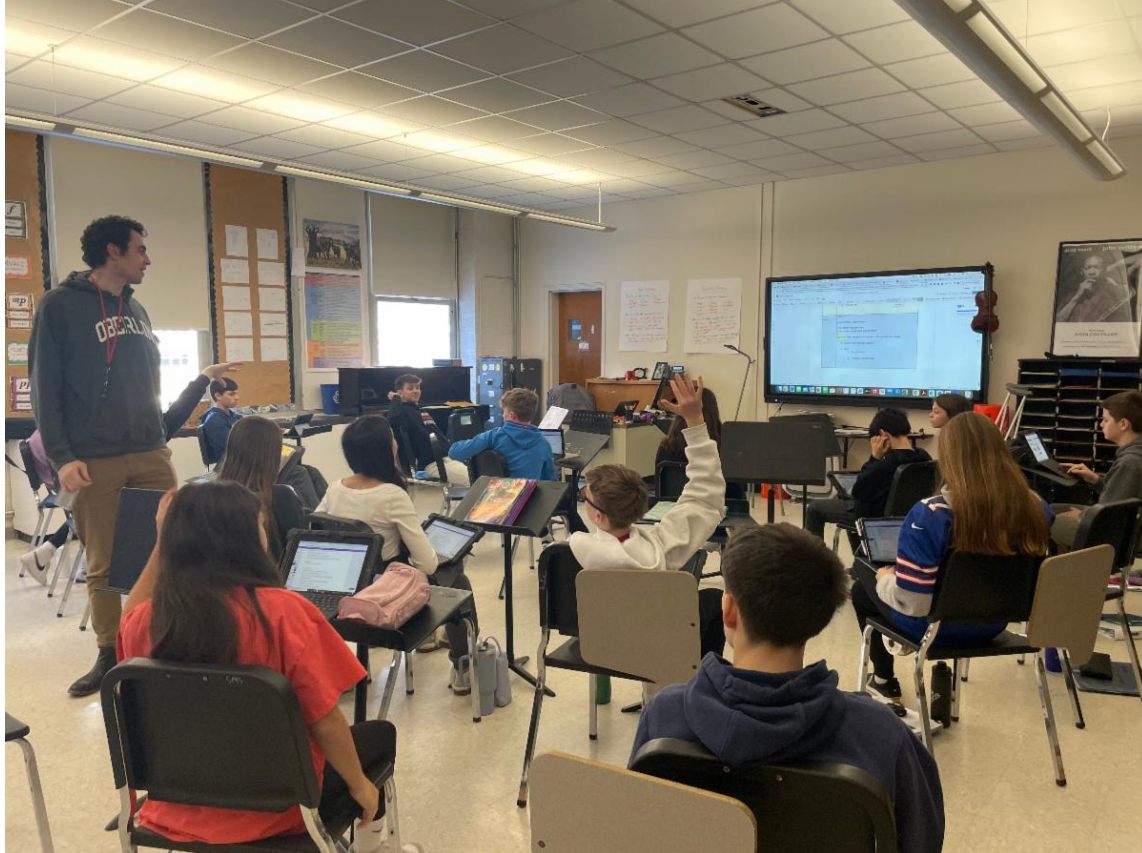
Eighth-grade Italian language students taught an Italian lesson to fifth-grade students. They introduced Italian culture and greetings through songs, pictures, and engaging activities. French and Italian students from Somers High School are also making visits to various classrooms throughout fifth grade this month.



To help kick off the first day of spring, the Service Club members at the middle school planted seeds to take home and nurture.



Jazzing Up Music Class



Is it ragtime, bebop or, big band? Middle school students learn about jazz in music class.

The soulful sounds of saxophone, bass, drums, and piano filled the classroom of a seventh-grade music class as students studied jazz at Somers Middle School.

“I think it sounds smooth and calming,” said Cole Kennedy.

The students listened carefully to music selections and referenced their notes to identify the four subgenres of jazz they have studied: ragtime, bebop, big band, and New Orleans styles. A new addition to the lineup was fusion.

“Fusion is characterized by electronic instruments,” said music teacher Miles Gilbert. “It often, though not always, utilizes creative improvisation.”

“It’s scripted and not scripted because of the middle section,” said Harry Dugmore, when sharing in the classroom discussion after listening to a jazz piece.

Students discussed tempo, style, instruments, and other attributes that set each subgenre apart, developing their Middle Years Programme Approaches to Learning skills of finding, interpreting, judging, and creating information they’d covered in class so far.

“It’s fun to listen to music in class,” said Harry.

Students have also learned about famous jazz artists and how they influenced and shaped the genre over time. Studying different artists and subgenres of jazz helps students develop their open-minded learner attribute by becoming more active listeners and even discovering new artists they enjoy.

“I admire Art Tatum because he is very talented while being almost completely blind,” said Cole.

Mighty Mayan Projects at SIS



An intricate, colorful headdress was created by fifth-grader Andrew Lawrence as part of his project on ancient Mayan civilization.

Colorful, ancient Mayan artifacts were on display in the fifth-grade wing at Somers Intermediate School in March. Students studied the ancient Mayan civilization by reading articles about various aspects of the Mayan culture, such as religion, cities, art, writing, math, and astronomy. Their studies culminated with both an essay and the creation of a Mayan artifact replica.

“I made a Mayan ball game,” said Kylie Schreiber. “I made it because I loved hearing about it, and it was very interesting to me.”

Students prepared to write an essay about a few aspects of Mayan culture by doing research online and reading magazines and books.

“I didn’t know anything about them before,” said Mia Romano. “One interesting thing that stands out to me is that they had human sacrifice. If you lost at Kylie’s game (Mayan ball game), you got sacrificed.”

After they’d written their essays, students were tasked with hand-creating an artifact of their choice that would complement their essays and provide context as to how the Mayans used the artifact.

“I chose to do a headdress because I wanted to do something that I knew I could decorate a lot,” said Andrew Lawrence. “Some of my design came from looking at pictures and some of it was from my imagination.”

Each artifact was unique in the way it was created. Some students crafted with materials like clay, beads, feathers, and paint, while other students used small toys such as Lego blocks and figurines to help bring authenticity to their creations. No matter what materials were used, all students showed great resourcefulness and imagination with their artifacts,

100 Ways Smarter in 100 Days



Falco Cipollaro & Joey Karnbach get into character on the 100th day of school, imagining what they'll look like when they are 100 years old.

Starting on the first day of school, students in all grades at Primrose Elementary School counted the passing days in many ways. Some used popsicle sticks, blocks, or stickers to count each day, then made groups of ten as the weeks went by. For some, it was their first exploration of the base ten number system.

Kindergarten students marked the one-hundredth day of school with a classroom celebration. Family members visited the school, helping their kids count to 100 by dabbing paint, stringing pieces of cereal, and sorting colors of candies, among other activities.

"We're celebrating the one-hundredth day of school," said Joey Karnach as he dotted paint "sprinkles" onto a giant cupcake drawing. "I'm making a cupcake. I'm dotting it with ten of each color."

"I can't believe it's the one-hundredth day of school already," said Caitlin Karnach, Joey's mom. "I don't know where the time goes, but he's loved every minute of it. I'm so happy to celebrate with him in the classroom today."

Kindergarten students also made projects that represented the one-hundredth day of school to decorate the hallways. Some students used 100 Lego pieces, some used 100 pieces of their favorite candy, while others used 100 stickers of their favorite animal to create a collage.

"Mine is the monster truck one," said Joey proudly about his one-hundredth-day collage project.

Other students in the school had different assignments for their one-hundredth day of school. Some answered the question: What would you do with \$100? Others discussed things they'd like to accomplish by the time they reach 100 years old, while other students



SOMERS SOARS WHEN EVERYONE BELONGS

April 30, 2024
6:00 to 8:30 PM

Somers Middle School cafeteria
250 Route 202



RSVP with QR code or email
belonging@somersschools.org

**An event to enhance a sense of belonging for all members
of the Somers community, co-hosted by the Town of Somers and
Somers Central School District.**

You are invited to attend the first annual Somers Soars When Everyone Belongs event, co-hosted by the Town of Somers and SCSD. We will engage in small group discussions focused on what it means to belong to a community and how we can foster a sense of belonging in each other.

Don't miss this unique opportunity for food, fellowship, and connection.





Somers PTA

Welcome, Spring! A season full of activities!

Over at SIS, the PTA hosted Science Night. 5th grade scientists shared their experiments with attendees. SEPTA held a successful Parent's Night Out and now they are preparing for the SEPTA Awards on June 10th. Literacy was on the agenda at Primrose as the PTA hosted the Book Fair. The SHS PTSA has been busy preparing for the college essay workshops and its annual Get Egg'd fundraiser.



The PTA Council is hosting the Bus Driver Breakfast. Help us celebrate our drivers and monitors by donating on MySchoolBucks ~ PTA Council Donation.

All 5 Somers units will be holding elections in May for new officers. Please consider volunteering today!



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