HALDANE HORIZONS

A newsletter of the Haldane Central School District



Middle School PE Hikes

OCTOBER 2025

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Message from Dr. Duffy

Dear Haldane Community,

As the seasons change, I am grateful for the wonderful community we have here at Haldane. I hope that you were able to join us for our curriculum nights to meet your child's teacher and learn about the exciting opportunities that will be taking place this school year. A huge thank you to our amazing community partners - the Haldane PTA, the Haldane School Foundation, the Blue Devil Booster Club, and the Haldane Arts Alliance for sharing information about their events and ways we can support their work this year.

I am thrilled to welcome our two student ex-officio board members - Maxwell Sanders and Luciano Ruggiero - who attended their first board meeting last month! Their perspective is so important and welcomed. You can read more about them and the important role they'll play in this newsletter.

THE HALDANE ESSENTIALS

Critical Thinking
Problem Solving
Communication
Growth Mindset
Emotional Intelligence
Wellness

Last month, I shared information regarding the Haldane Essentials in the Haldane Horizons and we highlighted examples of teaching and learning that support the Essentials. You will find new examples in this month's newsletter. I have also seen the Haldane Essentials come to life during my learning walks with the building principals. A learning walk is a quick, informal visit to multiple classrooms designed to provide a "snapshot" of what teaching and learning look like day-to-day across the school. I look forward to the learning walks that are taking place on a monthly basis and I am so excited to see our students growing.



Thank you for all that you do to support our children and school community.

Dr. Gail Duffy
Superintendent of Schools

New York State's Big Apple Crunch

Haldane Elementary School participated in the #BigAppleCrunch, an event organized by the FarmOn Foundation where all students gathered in the courtyard to highlight and support our local apple growers and their contribution to our community and healthy diets. A huge thanks to Fishkill Farms, who donated 4 bushels of delicious and crunchy Gala apples again this year. From our littlest PreK crunchers to the Blue Devil himself, everyone showed up to take a synchronous bite. Special thanks to Haldane dad, Aaron Ernst, who memorialized the exciting morning in video, complete with a custom Haldane song. Check it out!









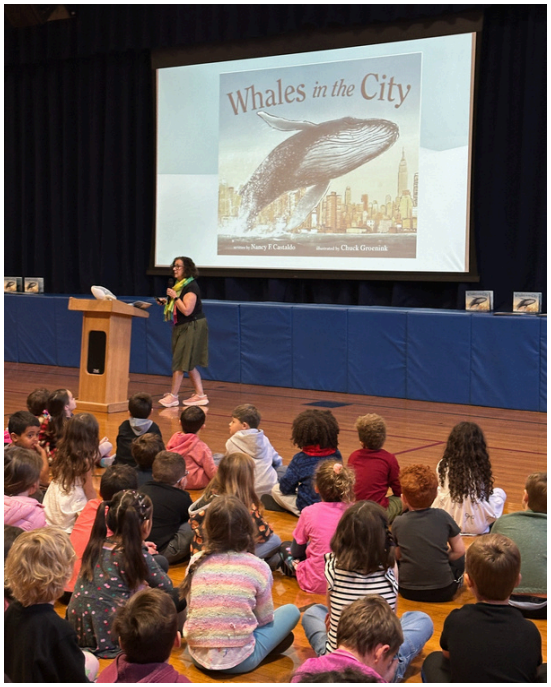




Whales in the City

With support from the Haldane PTA, Haldane Elementary students enjoyed a reading of *Whales in City* by author Nancy F. Castaldo.

This true tale chronicles how the industrial revolution, overfishing, and pollution drove whales away from the Hudson River - and how, thanks to clean up efforts, they were spotted again in 2019 for the first time in over 100 years.



Herbs in the Lunch







Ms. Casey's 4th grade students harvested and delivered herbs to our school cafeteria where Nancy Norton and her team used some of them fresh and froze others for the future. Sweet basil, lemon basil, Thai basil, oregano, parsley, and sage were all offered in abundance.

Students have been learning about the contemporary and historical importance of various plants for sustenance, spirituality, health, and more. Hands-on projects in the garden bring the wider 4th grade curriculum to life. **The Haldane Essentials of Problem Solving, Critical Thinking, Wellness, and Emotional Intelligence** are all part of a fun class in the garden.

Meet Haldane's New Ex Officio Student Board Members

Max Sanders and Luke Ruggiero become Haldane's first Ex Officio Student Board Members.

Student representation is a long-standing priority for the Haldane Board of Education. Over the years, students have participated in Board discussions both as regular attendees at the table and as rotating presenters at the podium. This year, New York State mandated the selection of one or more high school students to serve as Ex Officio Student Board Members.

Senior Max Sanders and sophomore Luke Ruggiero are the first at Haldane to serve in this capacity, following an application and interview process.

Max and Luke now serve as non-voting members, participating in public meetings, providing student perspectives on district issues, and sharing updates on elementary, middle, and high school happenings. We asked each one about their new gig.



Max Sanders

What sparked your interest in Haldane's Board of Education?

My interest in Haldane's Board of Education began with wanting to understand how the decisions that shape our classrooms are made. As a student, I've seen how policies directly affect our experience. I wanted to be part of that process, not just observe it. Joining the Board allows me to bridge the student perspective with the administration's goals, helping ensure every decision reflects the voices of those it impacts most—students.

When you think about the future of Haldane, what's important to you?

I want Haldane to keep evolving without losing what makes it feel like home. I'm excited to have a voice in creating a school culture that values curiosity, balance, and creativity. I want to make sure we're shaping a future that supports both achievement and joy.

What do you love most about being a student at Haldane?

I value the tightly knit community that Haldane offers. Whether I'm walking into Ms. Linda's classroom for the tenth time that day for a quick chat or asking Mr. Sassano a calculus question in the hallway, there's always a sense of connection that makes every experience enjoyable. Haldane is different from other high schools—students collaborate rather than compete, and that culture of support is what makes our school so special.

Luke Ruggiero

What sparked your interest in Haldane's Board of Education?

I enjoy having an active role in my school and education. I enjoy building relationships with my classmates and feel that I can use my voice to advocate for those not on the Board.

When you think about the future of Haldane, what's important to you?

The most important thing to me is that the voices of the students are heard. I feel that my voice in student council will be used as a voice of the many students that walk around the school every day. Things like having lights for the field or having more of our student-created art work displayed around the campus are things I would advocate for.

What do you love most about being a student at Haldane?

I love the community and the togetherness of the students. I love that everyone feels welcome and accepted into this community which allows for the students to then be themselves with no limitations.

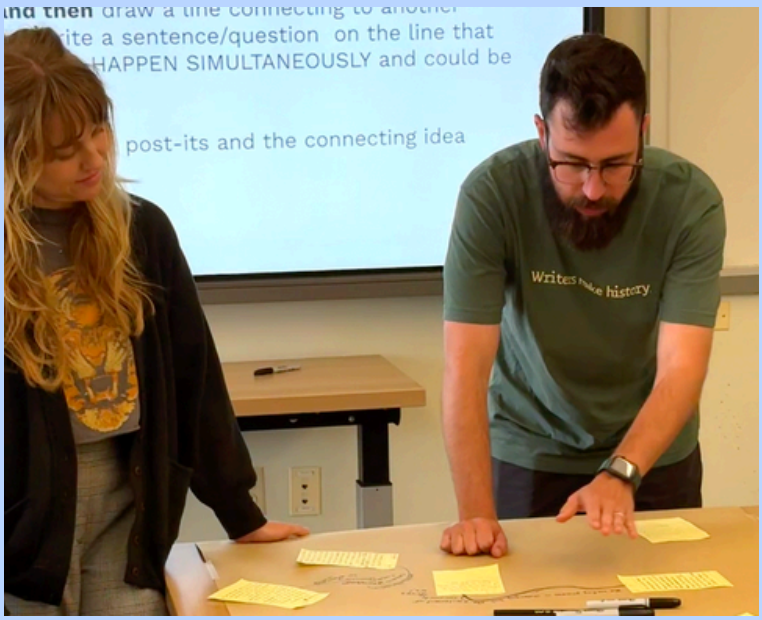
Haldane Faculty Spotlight



High school teachers Jenna Isabella and Michelle Cordaro, recognized by Haldane Board

On October 7, the Haldane Board of Education recognized the accolades received by two Haldane High School teachers. Michelle Cordaro was awarded the 2025 Outstanding High School Social Studies Classroom Teacher Award by the Westchester Lower Hudson Council for the Social Studies. Michelle was nominated by Social Studies Department Chair, Jackie McGrath for her dedication, innovative teaching, and commitment to fostering critical thinking and civic understanding in her students.

Jenna Isabella received the Ruth Everett Award by the New York State English Council, which honors teachers who have mentored future English language arts teachers. The student teacher who nominated Jenna for this award stated that: "Jenna is an incredible educator that is dedicated to her students inside and outside of the classroom. She acts as an incredible guide to those she teaches and an incredible colleague to those around her."



Middle school teacher, Chris Blair, to lead Hudson Valley Writing Project Session at SUNY New Paltz

This weekend, Middle School English teacher Chris Blair led a Saturday seminar on, “What happens when we introduce students to jazz and the all-important act of improvisation?” The workshop helped educators explore ways to harness the power of music as inspiration for revision, and what happens when writers in grades 5-12 are invited to take an improv stance toward their drafts.

Haldane Haunts





















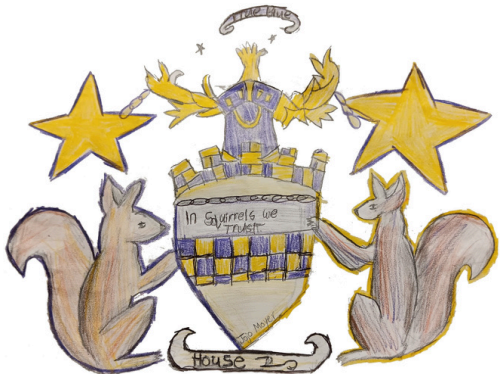
Essential Experiences

Bringing The Haldane Essentials to life for our students.

Critical Thinking Problem Solving Communication Growth Mindset Emotional Intelligence Wellness



House 1: Students A-F
Scylla
designed by Parker Fyfe



House 2: Students G-N
Squirrel Trust
designed by JoJo Moyer



House 3: Students O-Z
Fist Bump
designed by Henry Budney

Middle Schoolers Show Support for Their Houses and One Another

This year, Haldane Middle School is engaged in a PBIS TRUE BLUE House Program designed to help students feel safe, supported, and proud of their school community during this important stage of growing up. By setting clear expectations and celebrating positive choices, the program makes it easier for students to understand what it means to be successful in both learning and relationships. When students know what is expected and see their efforts recognized, the school becomes a place where they feel respected, connected, and motivated to do their best.

The program is built around the TRUE BLUE motto, which gives students a shared language for how to treat themselves, others, and their school. These expectations are linked to the New York State social-emotional learning standards, so students are not only practicing good behavior but also building important skills like self-awareness, empathy, and responsible decision-making.

Through lessons, activities, and positive recognition, students learn how to live out TRUE BLUE every day. Students are assigned to a multi-grade-level house by last name. Students in each house engage in friendly competition and collective tasks, such as designing their house crests. This creates a sense of belonging, reduces conflicts, and helps everyone focus more on learning. Most importantly, the TRUE BLUE House Program empowers students with the skills and confidence they need to thrive in middle school and beyond.

Special thanks to ELA teacher, Nicole Murphy's family who donated the house stickers that are showing up on Chromebooks and water bottles school-wide.

Essential Experiences

Bringing The Haldane Essentials to life for our students.

Critical Thinking Problem Solving Communication Growth Mindset Emotional Intelligence Wellness

Embracing Wellness Through PE Hikes

Fall is arguably the best time to take in the world around Haldane - and phys ed classes have been doing just that.









Essential Experiences

Bringing The Haldane Essentials to life for our students.

Critical Thinking Problem Solving Communication Growth Mindset Emotional Intelligence Wellness

Jackie McGrath's AP U.S. History students participated in a two-day lesson designed to foster **Critical Thinking** through textual analysis and questioning, **Problem Solving** through historical interpretation, and **Communication** through structured, student-led dialogue that promotes collaboration and civic discourse.

Students were asked to think critically about the upcoming 250th anniversary of the Declaration to deepen their historical understanding of the ideals on which the nation was founded. They read and annotated the text, identifying key arguments and discussing why the colonists felt it necessary to separate from Great Britain. As a class, they examined how the document outlined grievances against Parliament and the King while also acknowledging its bias, particularly the omission of colonial misconduct such as smuggling and violence toward royal agents. Students also analyzed which groups were excluded from the ideals expressed in the document, such as Indigenous peoples, enslaved and free Black individuals, and women, and considered the historical context that led to these omissions.

During a Socratic Seminar, students engaged in evidence-based dialogue, building on peers' ideas through respectful discussion and reflective listening. Listed are the central questions students crafted:

- To what extent was the Declaration of Independence "revolutionary"?
- In what ways does the Declaration reflect both unity and division among the thirteen colonies in 1776?
- Would the American Revolution have had the same moral authority without the Declaration of Independence?
- Does the Declaration of Independence still have relevance today, or has its meaning changed over time?





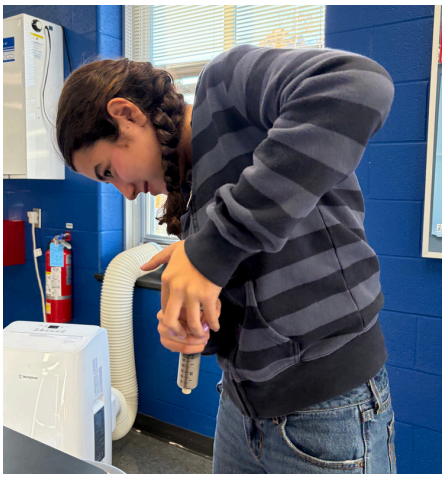


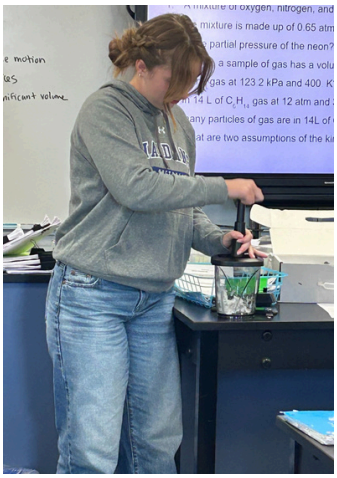
Essential Experiences

Bringing The Haldane Essentials to life for our students.

The Haldane Essentials are coming to life for students all across the campus. In the high school, students are seeing their practical application in every classroom.

Critical Thinking & Problem Solving





How do different states of matter look at the particle level?

The expansion of shaving cream occurs as we remove air using a vacuum. Students see how reducing the number of particles in the vacuum chamber reduces the number of collisions between particles and thus the pressure, allowing the shaving cream to expand.

Growth Mindset & Communication

An extra credit Historical Pumpkin Contest gave high schoolers the chance to showcase creativity by decorating pumpkins to represent a historical person, event, or topic they're studying. A sampling of the more than 20 entries:



Sybil Lundington's Ride
Sydney Merritt



Mikhail GORDachev
Frances Donahue



Theodore Roosevelt
Alexa Arcigal

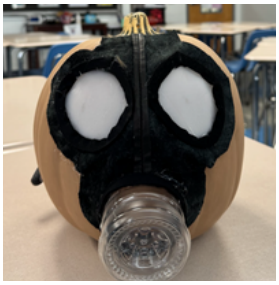


The Stamp Act
Ollie Sanders



Tar & Feathering
Naydine Alayon





Close Shave
(the use of Gillette Razors during WWII for servicemen to fit their gas masks)
Marco DiLello

Essential Experiences

Bringing The Haldane Essentials to life for our students.

Communication, Growth Mindset, and Emotional Intelligence

Ms. Goehl's 3rd graders spent time reading with their new buddies in Ms. Moeller's PreK class, building their communication skills, confidence, and friendships. In Ms. LeMon's kindergarten class, students are focused on recognizing numbers and counting - a tie-in with counting and prepping apples for their apple crisp.





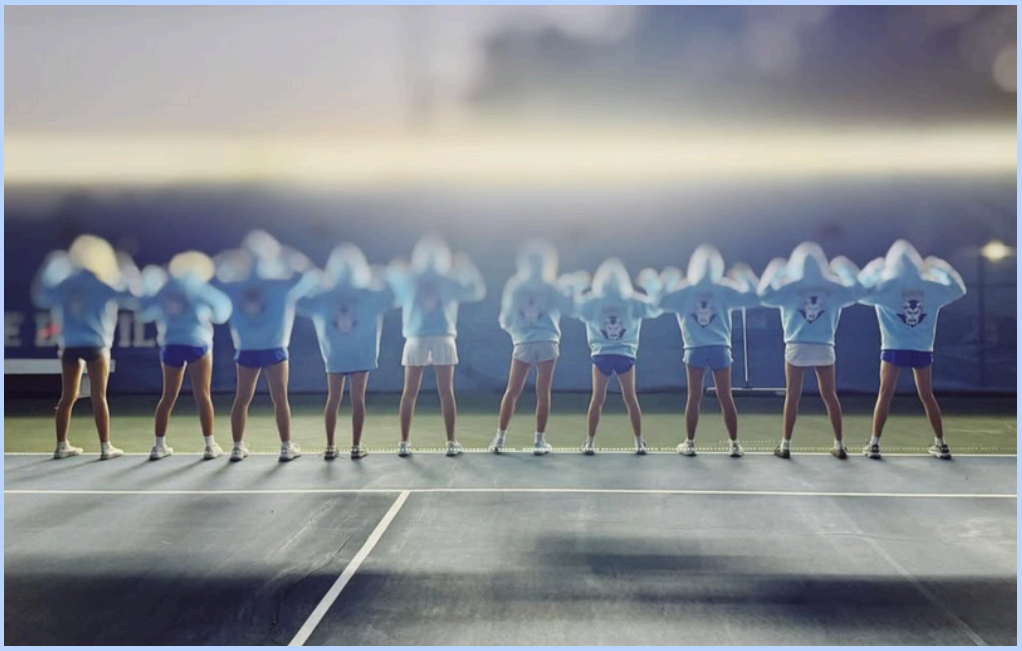






Haldane Tennis Shines Bright as League Champs

Thanks to a grant from the Blue Devil Booster Club, along with the team's fundraising efforts, the Haldane tennis courts are now lit for night play! And those bright lights led the team all the way to League Champs this year! 🎾💙



The Haldane tennis team now boasts a roster of 17 girls - none of whom are seniors. So get ready for more great moments from Haldane Tennis as they raise the game on and off the court.

From One Eagle to Another

Haldane Senior, Daniel O'Sullivan, pays respect to Haldane's historic eagle.



In pursuit of his Eagle Scout rank, Haldane senior, Daniel O'Sullivan worked to restore beauty and respect to Haldane's historic eagle.

Nestled on Haldane's campus for more than 125 years, the eagle was commissioned by Daniel and Julia Butterfield to memorialize General George Washington.

Daniel and his team raised the funds and invested the elbow grease to scrub the eagle back to life, adding plantings around the base.

The Highlands Current recently covered the project.

NOVEMBER 2025

TUE 4 — SCHOOL CLOSED Superintendent's Conference Day

TUE 11 — Blue Devil Booster Club Meeting 7PM

TUE 18 — PTA Public Meeting 7:30PM Butterfield Library

WED 5 — Garrison/Manitou Student Visit 9AM Parent Visit 6:30PM

THU 13 — High School Parent/Teacher Conferences by Appt

THU 20 — BOCES 9/10 Parent Info Night 6:30PM

THU 6 — Ice Cream Social 5:30PM Student/Faculty Volleyball Game 6PM

FRI 14 — PTA FREE Winter Clothing Swap 3-5PM

MON 24 — National Honor Society Ceremony 5:30PM

TUE 11 — SCHOOL CLOSED Veterans Day

TUE 18 — Hidden in Plain Sight Parent Event 6:30 PM

WED 26 - FRI 28 — SCHOOL CLOSED Thanksgiving Recess

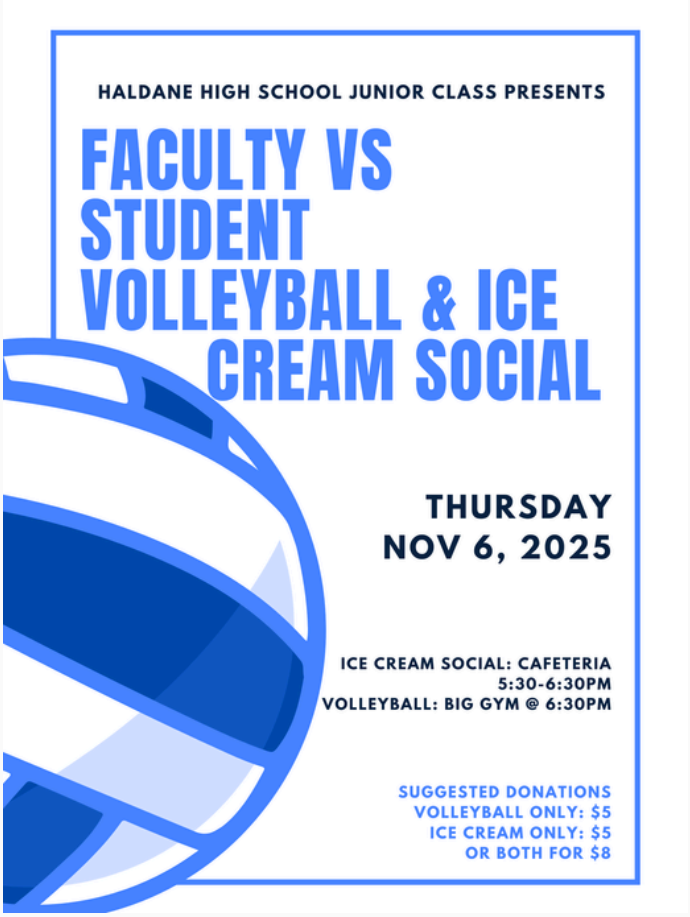


HALDANE

Looking ahead... School Closed:

Wednesday, December 24 - Friday, January 2





September Students of the Month



Congratulations!
William Mueller, Grade 6
Brynn Cavanaugh, Grade 7
Michael Beglan, Grade 8

NARCAN Readiness at Haldane



Haldane parent and ER doctor, Aric Kupper, MD, provided NARCAN training for high school students and district staff, highlighting recent trends in drug-related emergencies.

Assemblyperson Dana Levenberg Presents PreK Funds

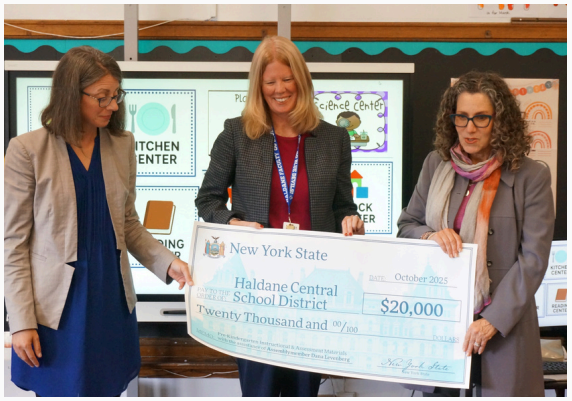
Through a grant opportunity initiated by Interim Superintendent Carl Albano earlier this year, Haldane was awarded $20,000 in pre-kindergarten program funding. Assemblyperson Dana Levenberg visited Haldane's PreK class with Superintendent Dr. Duffy and Principal Christine Jamin to have a little fun in their learning centers. Haldane Senior Dylan Ambrose, intern in Levenberg's office, joined in.











BOARD OF EDUCATION

Peggy Clements, PhD, President
Maggie Valentine, Vice President
Ezra Clementson, Trustee
Sean McNall, Trustee
Michelle Kupper, PhD, Trustee

Ex Officio Student Members:
Luke Ruggiero
Max Sanders

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Christine Jamin, Elementary School Principal
MaryAnn Seelke, EdD, Middle School Principal
Julia Sniffen, High School Principal
Erin Piquet, Director of Pupil Personnel Services
Josh Elder, Director of Curriculum and Human Resources
Tom Cunningham, Athletic Director and Dean of Students
Leah Horn, Director of Technology/Chief Information Officer
Dave Robertin, Interim Director of Facilities and Transportation
Catherine Platt, School Business Manager