



Bulldog

BULLETIN

December 2025

Message from the Superintendent

I want to wish everyone Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year! I hope you enjoy the latest edition of the Bulldog Bulletin.

I want to give a shout-out to the hundreds of music students who performed in our Winter Concerts and our music teachers who prepared them for these impressive performances. Our music program has grown in both the number of students participating and the quality of performances.

Thank you to our families and broader community for making this great work possible!

—Matt Landahl

Winter Concerts are SNOW Much Fun!

December may have started off on a cold and snowy note, but the music coming from the district's finest musicians during the annual Winter Concerts warmed hearts.



The first of six concerts, began Dec. 4 in the Pete and Toshi Seeger Theater at Beacon High School, featuring **Rombout's** varied bands and choruses performing quirky and iconic holiday tunes including



"Deck the Halls" from the seventh and eighth grade chorus and "Somewhere In My Memory" from the classic "Home Alone" by the sixth grade band.



Music Teacher Mark Rubinstein, who conducted using a giant candy cane given to him by students, shared how he keeps practice interesting for his young musicians by changing the dynamic and tempo.



"One of the things that we strive for this year is watching the conductor and how to respond musically," Rubinstein said. "As they stretch



out the beat and change dynamics, they should follow the conductor."

Students also arranged for a holiday sing-along where they invited family members up to sing three classics, including "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer."



Beacon Players go Back in Time with "Little Women"



This November, the Beacon Players put on its annual fall show from Nov. 12 to 14 and this time it was a musical adaption of the classic novel



"Little Women." The story follows the adventures of the March sisters, including Jo who is trying to sell her stories for publication. However, when the publishers are not interested, her friend

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BEACON STUDENTS SHOW THE MEANING OF THANKS & GIVING

BHS' PROJECT DREAM FUNDRAISER

Students in Beacon High School's National Honor Society chapter carried on its long-standing Project DREAM initiative where they sought donations of canned and dry foods and hygiene products.

NHS President Nadeen Ahmed, a senior, got involved to help fight food insecurity, an issue she feels is overlooked. Students received over 600 food and hygiene



products that were delivered to local food pantries. "Food insecurity is such a big problem in this country," Ahmed said. "It feels rewarding that you're making a difference in people's lives."

To continue the awareness of food insecurity, Ahmed hopes to implement a program where students can take home a backpack of food for the weekend, while NHS Treasurer Gaby Khalil, a senior, noted that the chapter sponsors other drives all year to help people.

Khalil wanted to volunteer to help with food insecurity issues, especially since SNAP

benefits were in jeopardy due to the recent government shutdown.

"We're coming together as a whole school to bring stuff in and help people out," Khalil said. "Even doing our own small part makes a difference."



Teacher and NHS Adviser Jake Arbor appreciates NHS students' efforts. "It's been a really positive, inspiring experience," Arbor

said. "A lot of this stuff we do in NHS, I can't claim responsibility for, it's almost all stuff students have taken on."

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Beacon Players go Back in Time with "Little Women"

Professor Bhaer, suggests she write more about herself and she begrudgingly does, by weaving together her family's experience of growing up during the Civil War.



Senior Samiha Golden, portrayed Meg, the eldest of the March sisters. She related to her character a lot because she is an older sister in real life and relished the opportunity to sing and dance especially on a number titled "Five Forever," about the sisters' bond with a character named Theodore Laurence.

"That song is really fun because we're dancing, acting like kids and doing harmonies, I like getting to do a duet and a love song," Golden said. "I feel like I fit in pretty easy into the role."



Golden has made many great friends during her tenure with the Beacon Players. "It's what I look forward to everyday, it makes school worth it," Golden said. "It's like my second home."



Sophomore Elise Moran was stage manager for this show and had to memorize the lighting and sound cues, which can be tough, but is always fun. She offered this advice to students who wish to tackle her role.

"Be calm, it's stressful, but when you're calm it makes it a lot easier," Moran said. "I get to help out and do the thing I love."



If you missed the show, no worries. A full video of this show and the Beacon

Players' other great performances can be found on its YouTube channel.



BEACON STUDENTS SHOW THE MEANING OF THANKS & GIVING

FORRESTAL THANKFUL MATS



Kindergartners in Jessica White's classroom at Forrestal had plenty to be thankful for and

showed it in the form of colored and laminated placements.

White highlights a different theme for every month and in November, focused on families and their diversity, as well as the significance of food in their lives. However, the lessons go beyond the holiday.

"This month was about food, shopping, family and then thank you ... they learned all of those and then



they've been working to combine those phrases together," White said. "The placemat gives a picture representation of what they're thankful for since we're in kindergarten and we're still learning how to write initial sentences."



Cameron Nelson shared that he was most thankful for his dog and he liked gluing the things on the mat.

SARGENT THANKSGIVING LUNCH



Sargent students and staff treated seniors, some of whom were family members, to a pre-Thanksgiving

lunch, stuffed with great food and performances from Beacon students of all ages.

Sargent's fifth graders, donning white aprons and gloves, served the seniors a traditional meal of turkey with all the sides, while members of the district's administration staff, including Superintendent Dr. Matt Landahl, plated the food for students to take to the tables.



Denise Byrnes thought the event was well organized. She appreciated having her grandson, Everett, serve her and seeing the kindergarten class use sign language as they sang



Thanksgiving themed tunes.

"My grandson was the best," Denise Byrnes

said. "It's just one more thing to experience with my grandson."

BHS Financial Aid Night Gives Families Plenty of Options

Beacon High School's (BHS) guidance department hosted a representative from Dutchess Community College (DCC) to talk with families and answer questions about everything related to financial aid.

DCC Assistant Director of Financial Aid Rachel Craparo noted that the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) collects information about a potential student and their parent that both have to complete. The form must be completed by only the applicants and no one should be charging applicants to fill it out.

In addition to attendance costs and determining a student's financial need, Craparo highlighted "gift aid," which includes scholarships and grants and "self-help aid" which include loans that students are required to pay back.

BHS Guidance Counselor Michele Santiago recommended students research and apply for as many scholarships as possible, including local ones from the Beacon Teachers Association and St. Rocco Society, to name a few. While rules and deadlines for all scholarships are different, most require an application and a brief essay.

"Millions of dollars of free money each year goes undispersed because students are not applying for scholarships," Santiago said. "Throw your net as wide as it possibly can go... it is work, and we have to encourage our young people to apply, but it's worth it."

Junior Lauren Antonucci found the session informative and is considering applying for a scholarship from Energizer Holdings, awarded to engineering students, as she is interested in pursuing civil engineering. She encouraged her classmates to attend similar events.

"I think it would be good for not only the parents, but the students to also come so they can form their own opinions," Antonucci said. "I'm a lot more easygoing now that I've heard what is to be expected."



Fire Prevention Day Ignites Glenham Students' Interests



It was Fire Prevention Day at Glenham, but it was not just an ordinary safety talk, kids learned in real time how to escape burning vehicles, saw firetrucks up close and even met Sparky the Fire Dog, the National Fire Protection Association's mascot.

"Part of fire safety is trying to prevent fires," former Glenham Fire Department Chief John Broas said. "We can't stop every fire unfortunately, but we want to give you guys different ideas of trying to stop fires before they start."

Broas, an alumni of the school, spoke with students about the danger of



lithium batteries and how to properly dispose of them, as well as fire safety basics, including calling 911 to

report a fire and crawling on hands and knees when escaping a burning building to avoid getting hit with smoke.

"This is one time you get to be a baby again," Broas said as he



demonstrated how to crawl properly. "If you ever see heat, it's why it takes more time to get a house warm sometimes, it goes all the way up and works its way back down."

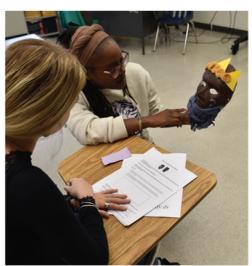
Firefighters are also called upon to provide lifesaving care by using automated external defibrillators, or AEDs, with Broas noting that any adult can operate one.

"If they don't know how to do CPR or how to use an AED, it tells you how to do it," Broas explained. "All you have to do to save a life is to give this to an adult."

Fourth grader Cora Edmonson cited meeting Sparky and seeing a brown firetruck as her favorite parts of the day which she said is important to learn about preventing fires.

"I liked going into the brown truck because I don't normally see brown trucks," Edmonson recalled. "I love Sparky."

BHS Mask Painting Brings Lessons to Life



Students in the Advanced Placement African American Studies class at Beacon High School got more in tune with the cultures of

various African countries they studied about by painting culturally appropriate masks.

Teacher Melanie Hammitt heard about the idea from other schools that have the class and wanted to introduce it to her students, who picked one African country to focus on. Their masks, which were later displayed in the school's art gallery, included elements of the country's religion and trade commerce, as well as one of their choice.

"What I really wanted to do was have the students use the information that they learned and put it to use and then display it as a gallery showing, it's multifaceted," Hammitt said.

"These kids are super-duper creative and I love to watch them work."

Later in the year, Hammitt will lead more hands-on project for the course, including having students, in groups of two, practice their public speaking skills by presenting a 45 minute

lesson on topics they will focus on for their research projects.

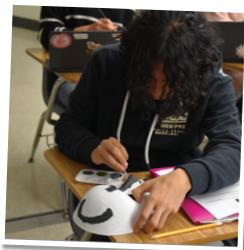
"They're building those skills up together," Hammitt said of this project. "We're incorporating more hands-on stuff to get the kids more interested."

Junior Zamaya Cone painted a mask inspired by the culture of Mali and incorporated a crescent moon and star to represent Islam, the country's primary religion. While Cone proclaimed she is not a gifted artist, she had fun working on the project as it enhanced what she learned.



"We actually learn how to ingrain it in our memory, so we actually remember it better than just paper assignments," Cone said. "It's a great way to end your day."

For Cone, the class is much more than getting an extra AP credit. "It's really cool to learn about because you're getting the full history," Cone said



South Avenue Families Help the Community



Just before the start of the holiday season, the South Ave. PTA hosted its annual Family

Service Night where students and their families gave back to the community.

Representatives from Fareground Food & Community, a nonprofit organization combating food insecurity, encouraged attendees to bag up black beans to help feed the community, while other attendees made toys and treats for cat adoptees from Mid Hudson Animal Aid. Families also supported the school by purchasing items at the PTA's second annual Used Book Sale.

South Avenue parent Elias Primoff came to the event with his two children to



help send some of the school's spirit of helping one another out to the community and the world.

"The community here does a good job of looking out for each other," Primoff said. "It's important for kids to learn early on that when you're part of a community, you help each other out."



Out of all the tables, South Avenue fourth grader Emma Hughes most enjoyed making a

cat toy out of a stick, yarn and a feather. She felt good knowing that it would help cats in need.

"I like helping out the community," Hughes said.

Salvation Army Captain Jessenya Alicea, whose daughter previously attended South Avenue, engaged students in making holiday cards for local seniors and veterans. She appreciates the support students showed in making cards for veterans, who in return are thankful for the thoughtful gesture.



"I love that they get so excited and it's nice to give a little bit of themselves to someone who has given so much," Alicea said of the student card makers. "To receive something that is personalized, that someone's heart and soul went into, is so special."