Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School

A Community of Learners Seeking Excellence Together

A Message from the Principal

Dear SPF Community,

We hope everyone had a restful Spring Break, and we are eager to hit the homestretch of our school year. Before we do that, let's share some of the highlights from a busy March.

Sincerely,

Warren Hynes

Congratulations!

Isabella Mirenda

Valedictorian,
Class of 2026



Congratulations!

Gabriella Suriani

Salutatorian,
Class of 2026



SPFHS Announces Valedictorian, Salutatorian

Our school is thrilled to announce this year's valedictorian and salutatorian. The SPFHS 2026 valedictorian is Isabella Mirenda and our salutatorian is Gabriella Suriani. Both students had tremendous academic careers at the high school while also serving as leaders in extracurriculars as well. The

full news release on these honors is here.

Guys & Dolls Takes SPFHS By Storm

From March 12-15, the Manya Ungar Auditorium was the domain of Nathan Detroit, Sky Masterson, Harry the Horse, the Hot Box Girls and all the remaining characters of *Guys and Dolls*. The SPFHS Repertory Theatre performed an electric revival of the classic Frank Loesser musical with tremendous acting, singing, music, set design, costumes, lighting and so much dancing! The cast and crew made the larger-than-life Damon Runyon characters and setting sparkle with life, bringing audience members to their feet. Congratulations to the musical's director, Mr. Morgan Knight, and its producer, Ms. Kelly Ruggieri.





Guest Speaker Inspires Freshmen & Sophomores

Kaleb Joseph, a former collegiate and professional basketball player, spoke to our freshmen and sophomores in a powerful March 17 assembly about mental health in the Manya Ungar Auditorium. Mr. Joseph, a former Division I player at Syracuse and Creighton, as well as an international professional player, was known more during his college career for the potential he did not fulfill. He has now become a noted motivational speaker who speaks honestly and directly about mental health. During the assembly, he shared his own journey with depression and anxiety, using his story as an example of how to turn pain into purpose, and how to heal from our past. During his visit, Mr. Joseph worked to dismantle the stigmas surrounding mental health, and to encourage students never to suffer in silence. After his talk, Mr. Joseph met with dozens of students individually and in small groups.





SGA Hosts Senior Citizens Day

Senior Citizens Day is a community event run by the Student Government Association. On March 13, some 100 senior citizens attended this event from all over Scotch Plains and Fanwood along with about 80 student volunteers. Our guests were able to enjoy some exciting games of bingo (complete with prizes!), a preview of our Rep Theatre's performance of *Guys and Dolls*, a rousing game of Name That Tune with our award-winning Moonglowers, and some school spirit from our Raiders Varsity Cheerleaders. Those attending enjoyed a wonderful breakfast and lunch provided by our Pomptonian food services staff. In addition, our students sat and interacted with some new friends, some of whom were making their very first Senior Citizens Day visit and some who have been attending for years. Overall, it was a fun day filled with happy faces and entertainment!









SPFHS Senior Honored as Unsung Hero



SPFHS senior Zhaoxiang Chen was honored during the Union County School Board Association's Unsung Heroes awards celebration on March 11. The Unsung Hero Award is given out annually by the Union County School Board Association in coordination with the New Jersey School Boards Association. The award recognizes one graduating senior from each high school in Union County who has made outstanding contributions to the school and community. The full news release on Zhao's deserving award is here.

Raider Robotics Completes Superb Season

The SPFHS Raider Robotics team competed in the FTCNJ State Championship on March 15 at Hillsborough High School, competing along with 47 other teams. The squad overcame some technical challenges and finished 2-3 on the day. Raider Robotics received exemplary marks in judging and interviews, and the team is excited for next year's competitions. In its ongoing STEM community-service work, the team will participate in Astronomy Day at Trailside Park on May 16.







Italian Exchange Travels to Campania

Our SPFHS Italian exchange students experienced a taste of "La Dolce Vita" on their 10-day exchange trip in March. Students lived with the families of those Italian students who were here in SPF in October. They spent their time attending a local high school in Teggiano in the region of Campania. Students also visited the cities of Naples, Matera, Salerno, a local market and farm. They enjoyed their first gelato, margherita pizza and local cuisine. Thanks to the Unico Chapter of Scotch Plains, students were able to enjoy an overnight stay in Sorrento and tour the island of Capri! Chaperones were Signora Lambert & Signora Barcelona.







Spanish Exchange Partners Visit SPF

The Barcelona exchange program welcomed students and chaperones from Spain to SPF from March 16-25. Our partner students toured spaces near and far, from Scotch Plains to Philadelphia to Central Park to the Jersey Gardens Mall. Having spent time together in Spain and New Jersey, the Spanish and American students shared many memories in their closing activity on March 25. Students spoke not about the sites they had seen, but about the welcomes and acceptance they had experienced in one another's homes.





French Exchange Visits

From February 27 through March 8, our French exchange trip to Vannes took place. This was a truly transformative experience for our students, rooted in authentic cultural immersion and meaningful human connection. From the moment our group arrived, the generosity of our partner families from Lycée Saint-Paul set the tone. They welcomed our students with warmth and attentiveness, sending them off each day with generously packed lunches. Discovering what was in them was a daily delight.

Because this is a true exchange, students experienced life with their own French family. Every day was a new cultural adventure, where even routine dinners unfolded into multiple courses - including the very real and much-discussed cheese course. A visit to the lycée itself was equally eye-opening; students were struck by the long academic days paired with a surprising level of independence. Beyond the classroom, highlights included exploring the open-air market in Vannes, where everything from butter-glazed Bretton sweets to bountiful bouquets of flowers gleamed in the spring sunshine. Not least was an evening gathering at Café Jules, where French and American students sampled oysters, escargots, and even frog legs - embracing new experiences with a mix of trepidation and enthusiasm!

The group’s time in Paris provided an unforgettable conclusion to the trip. Students walked kilometers through historic neighborhoods, visited iconic sites, and quickly grew confident navigating the metro system - many becoming impressively competent travelers! Additional excursions enriched the experience further, including time in the Loire Valley with visits to Amboise Castle and the remarkable Clos Lucé where Leonardo daVinci lived and is buried. Across every setting, students demonstrated curiosity, adaptability, and a willingness to step outside their comfort zones. This exchange fostered not only language growth, but also independence, cultural awareness, and a deeper understanding of the world. Best of all, friendships were formed that have every chance of lasting a lifetime.

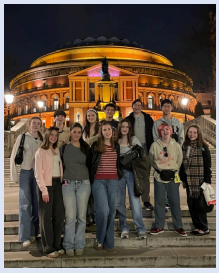




English Teachers Chaperone Trip to England

During Spring Break, Mr. Koetzner and Ms. Birkett led 12 students on an immersive educational tour of England, bringing classroom learning to life through travel and literature. This was not a school-sponsored tour but was affiliated with ACIS, the American Council for International Studies, which has been a leader in quality educational travel since 1978. The group explored Bath, Stratford-upon-Avon and London, visiting historic landmarks such as Bath Abbey, the Jane Austen Centre, Shakespeare's school and birthplace, Windsor Castle, Westminster Abbey and Oxford University. Students also experienced British culture firsthand, traveling through idyllic villages of the Cotswolds and attending memorable performances of *Henry V* and *Wicked* -- not to forget a serendipitous meeting with famous international author Yann Martel. The trip was an unforgettable experience that left a lasting impression on everyone involved.







Juniors Attend Human Rights Conference

On March 27, a total of 45 Global Perspectives students and their teachers attended the 18th annual Human Rights Conference at Kean University. The theme for this year's conference was "Sustainability in Action." The students learned about environmental issues and their impact on human economic and political rights. Featured speakers were Mary Robinson, the first female President of Ireland and a former UN High Commissioner on Human Rights; Monique Coleman, a UN Youth Champion who also starred in *High School Musical*; and Sabs Katz, a content creator focusing on sustainability in the fashion world. A great time was had by all.











SPFHS Youth and Government Program Debuts

On March 15, students from the Civics and Debate Club attended a legislative conference at Westfield High School for the YMCA's Youth and Government organization. YAG is a program that helps students learn how the government works by participating in a hands-on simulation of the democratic process. Students take on roles such as legislators, judges, lobbyists, or members of the media while creating and debating their own bills. The program will culminate in a conference where students run a mock legislature and court system at the South Brunswick Hilton from April 24-26. Through these activities, students practice public speaking, critical thinking, and leadership skills. This is the first year a delegation from Scotch Plains - Fanwood High School will attend the conference.

Environmental Club Plants Pocket Forest

This month, the SPFHS Environmental Club had the opportunity to make a huge impact on our campus by planting 170 saplings as a part of the Pocket Forest. With the help of more than 40 student volunteers, this project transformed the SPFHS Courtyard into a lively ecosystem designed to support local biodiversity and sustainability. The pocket forest, consisting of native plants, helps absorb carbon, reduce runoff, and improves the health of the soil. It also provides habitats for essential wildlife like bees and birds. By using native plants, the Environmental Club will help native species naturally adapt to our area. Our efforts enhance the school grounds and maintain a significant conservation legacy that will benefit the community and our ecosystem for years to come.







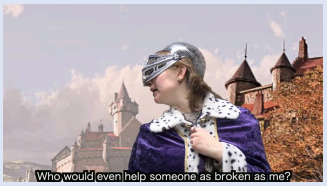
TV Students Shine in PSA Contest

Two SPFHS TV students, Rocco Trainor and Riley Boozer, won honorable mention honors in the Academy of Scholastic Broadcasting's national video PSA contest. The contest received more than 250 entries and the top 20 are listed on the website. Rocco and Riley were given a prompt of a pre-written script related to suicide prevention and were told to interpret the script in any way they wanted. The contest was on a tight

time limit, with slightly more than a week from when the prompt was provided until the video had to be turned in. Rocco and Riley spoke to the theme of “Not Alone” in medieval fashion.







April Calendar

April 14 Harlem Wizards EEF Fundraiser, 7 p.m.
April 15 Yom HaShoah Holocaust Remembrance Event, 6:30 p.m.
Nettingham M.S.
April 15 End of 3rd Marking Period
April 22 District Chorus Festival, 7 p.m.
April 23 College Athlete Commitment Day, 10 a.m.
April 29 District Art Show, 7 p.m.
April 30 A Night of Social Justice: The Revolution Reimagined, 6 p.m.

Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education | 512 Cedar St | Scotch Plains, NJ 07076 US

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