

SACHEM SHOWCASE



VOLUME 4 ISSUE 2

MARCH 2009

SACHEM CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT AND HIS CABINET

Dear Staff,

Once again, I am pleased to share another edition of "Sachem Showcase" with you. As in the past, this newsletter is designed to share the many highlights and happenings taking place throughout our school district.

As I'm sure you know, Governor Paterson recently chose Sequoya Middle School as the venue to announce "good news" for school districts throughout the state. I am pleased to report that the Governor announced that the federal stimulus money that the state received would be used to restore next year's state education funding to the 2008-09 level. In short, this means that we are no longer facing the possibility of a 7.2% cut that was proposed by the Governor back in December.

While sharing this wonderful news with our Sachem community, Governor Paterson sang the praises of Sachem by noting our fiscal responsibility over the past three years but, more importantly he noted our students' improved academic performance and growth. This would not be possible without the efforts of our entire professional and support staff. With that in mind, this publication is dedicated to all of you... the Sachem family. In the pages that follow, we celebrate just a few of the many wonderful goings on in Sachem.

Thank you for all you do.

Sincerely,

Charles J. Murphy

Charles J. Murphy, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Inside this issue:

Highlights and Happenings	2
High School Highlights	3
Middle Schools Make a Difference	6
Elementary Excitement	10

HIGHLIGHTS AND HAPPENINGS...



Sachem East DECA Students Perform Well at Competition

On a rainy January morning, thirty-six **Sachem East DECA** members boarded a bus headed for Suffolk Community College's Selden campus to participate in the DECA regional competitions. DECA is an international co-curricular business club designed to promote business and marketing education. The Sachem East students had selected their competitions in late fall and had been preparing for competitions throughout December. Overall, Sachem East placed twelve students in the top of their category and one student winning an honorable mention. The winning students were **Michael Ferrara** (Automotive Services Marketing), **Matthew Traina** (Business Services Marketing), **Kenneth Vasquez** (Marketing Management), **Aditya Ramesh** (Retail Merchandising), **Kaitlyn Monahan** (Public Speaking – Prepared), **Ryan Hill** (Sports and Entertainment Marketing), **Christopher Caggiano** and **Christopher Occipinti** (Business Law and Ethics (team event)), **Sujay Cherian** and **Trevor Magnani** (Buying and Merchandising Management (team event)), **Christopher Liu** and **Ya (George) Wang** (Financial Analysis Management (team event)). **Joseph Kellaheer** (Food Marketing) received an Honorable Mention in his category.



Tamarac Student Honored

Daniel Margolis a third grade student at **Tamarac** Elementary School was honored January 21, 2009 by the Long Island Ducks during a school assembly. During the month of October, Daniel Margolis was 1 of 350 contestants who accepted the challenge to participate in an essay contest sponsored by the Long Island Ducks. The presented topic was "Why My Community is Important to Me." Using 250 words or less, our young author conveyed a powerful message to his audience expressing how being an active Cub Scout assists him in remembering to be a helpful and responsible member within his neighborhood. Furthermore, Daniel went on to mention how his school community is helping him to be a more caring and considerate person by being a Bucket Filler, which means helping without being asked, offering praise, and spreading kindness. "When our bucket is full, we are happy," Daniel wrote. Daniel concluded by mentioning he lives in a community of Bucket Fillers! Representatives from the Long Island Ducks, Commerce Bank and former Met Player, Bud Harrelson, spoke to students from grades 3rd through 5th grade. Mr. Harrelson spoke how with hard work and perseverance any student can achieve his/her dream. Students enjoyed shaking hands with the team mascot, Quaker Jack and listening to Bud Harrelson. Representatives returned to **Mrs. Monaco's class**, Daniel's third grade class, wherein pictures were taken with students and Mr. Harrelson and Quaker Jack autographed baseballs and autograph books.



Grundy Gets Grants!

The **fifth grade teachers** at **Grundy Elementary School** just received educational grants from both the Sachem Teacher Center and Target Retail Stores. The grants from the Sachem Teacher Center, totaling more than \$5,000, were used to purchase a document camera, projector, smart board and laptop for the teachers to share! Target Retail Stores provided the fifth grade teachers with \$800 to use for transportation and admission costs to the Long Island Museum at Stony Brook. In these difficult economic times, it's important to take advantage of opportunities for educators!

Sculpture Artist James Cook Visits Hiawatha!

Mr. Cook worked with the students in **art** class during the week of January 5-9. Mr. Cook is working on a unique sculpture for **Hiawatha** that will be permanently installed in the cafeteria. Each student created a drawing that will be incorporated into Mr. Cook's sculpture so every student has a part in the finished product! The students learned about air brushing and were able to use the air brush to add details to their special drawing. It was a great experience for the students to learn hands-on from a sculpture artist!



SACHEM NORTH'S HIGH SCORES AT THE SUFFOLK COUNTY DECA REGIONALS

Twenty-seven students from **Sachem North** led by first year **DECA** advisor, **Mrs. Penwell**, and accompanied by **Mr. Sullivan**, Chairperson of Business and Career Development, competed against fifteen hundred other students at the Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) Regionals held at Suffolk Community College on January 7, 2009. DECA is a student-centered organization whose program of leadership and personal development is designed specifically for students enrolled in business education classes. It is a co-curricular organization and serves as an integral part of the classroom instructional program, as students learn the vocational understanding necessary to compete in marketing, management, business and merchandising career while still in school. Regional competition is rigorous as Suffolk County is the largest DECA region in New York State.

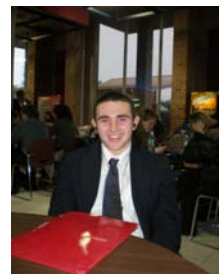
Students were broken up to their different categories and were sent off to different classrooms in different buildings around campus to compete against others in their categories in different ways, including taking tests, completing billboards and participating in role plays.

When all competitions were done, all of the competitors went to the gym and filled in the bleachers. As the different categories were announced, all students that competed in that category had to stand while, the winners were announced. The Sachem North name was announced repeatedly as student after student qualified for the State Competition.

Out of twenty seven entrants from Sachem North, thirteen students qualified for NY State DECA Competition to be held March 3 through March 6 in Rochester, New York. In the category of Marketing Management, twelfth grader, DECA returnee, and current DECA President **Samantha Lewis** placed sixth in Suffolk County. In the Quick Serve Restaurant category, DECA returnee, senior, **John Edom** brought home a fourth place in Suffolk County. DECA newcomer, **Arun Parmar** scored a third place qualifying score in Suffolk County Regionals in the Career & Financial Management category.

Junior, **Gaby De La Garza** opened the door for State Competition by placing in the Public Service Visual Category while Juniors, and DECA newcomers **Sara Rizik** and **Harry Roberts** scored a solid fifth place Suffolk County qualifying score in the Business Law Category. Sports and Entertainment Management opened the door for major distinction with **Mr. Paquette's** student, Junior, **Tom Sasso**, competing as a solo entrant earning an impressive third place qualifying score, Mrs. Penwell's students, DECA newcomers, Senior, **A.J. Gallina** and Junior, **Mike Turo** earning a notable seventh place finish, and DECA returnees and Seniors **Matthew Smidowicz**, of Mrs. Penwell's class and **Stephen Rodriguez**, from Mr. Paquette's class, bringing home an exciting first place finish by earning the top score in the county, with Matthew Smidowicz earning the highest overall mark in the entire County. This team is well poised for NY State Competition and beyond. Finally, Seniors and DECA newcomers **Dom Purificato** and **Jordan Manger** received Honorable Mention in the Financial Analysis category.

All twenty seven entrants who prepared for this competition, including the students who qualified for Regionals and did not place including **Sam Hodes**, **Vinnie Porcaro**, **Eddie Hosek**, **Shawn Laljit**, **Valerie Schiereck**, **Brittney Redmond**, **Dakota Wiegand**, **Jon Rizik**, **Kevin Clarkson**, **Ryan Barrett**, **Dana Kelly**, **Vanessa Barahona**, **Maham Ahmed**, and **Chris Tellarico** should be extraordinarily proud of their accomplishments not only for their academic efforts, but for achieving a one hundred percent attendance distinction and following through with the commitment that they made to DECA and the Sachem Central School District.



SACHEM EAST EXCITEMENT

Students Attend Historic Presidential Inauguration

Forty-four students from **Sachem High School East** boarded a bus and headed to Washington D.C. to witness the inauguration of President Barack Obama. Although the day was long and cold, the students truly appreciated the magnitude of the event. "President Obama made an amazing speech. Hopefully it will unify us. For about five minutes, the entire crowd of about two million people felt like one family." said Sachem East senior **Scott Inter-rante**. After the Inauguration, the group was invited to attend an Inaugural Ball at Martin's Crosswinds. The students also had an opportunity to tour the Smithsonian Institute, The National Museum of American History, The National Portrait Gallery, The National Library of Congress and The National Air and Space Museum. During the last day of their 3-day trip, the students also witnessed a live session of the Supreme Court. Senior **Dhara Patel** commented "For years we have learned about all of the cases and court justices who have made the decisions. And this time, we sat inside the Supreme Court and witnessed a live session. Who knows? This could easily be in future textbooks and we will be able to say "I saw that when it was happening."



All-County Academic Elite Recognition for Sachem East Athletes

Five members of the **Sachem East Boy's Varsity Volleyball Team** were recognized by the Suffolk County Boy's Volleyball Coaches' Association as All-County Academic Elite. This is quite an achievement since the organization only recognizes fourteen athletes from Suffolk County. The criteria was based on grade point average, class rank, SAT and ACT scores and course work. The five team members are **Ryan Merrihue, Eric Mlodzinski, Dylan Thorstensen, Kevin Harrington and Dan Jones**.



Sachem East Sophomore Earns Third Prize in Essay Competition

Julisa Chrysafi was honored at an awards ceremony at the Florence Gould Hall of the French Institute in Manhattan. She submitted an essay in response to the question "What does the European Union mean to you?" Entries from over 400 French students in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut were reviewed for originality and creativity by members of the organizing institutions. The awards ceremony included an address by the Consul General of France.



Sachem East Students Organize Care Packages for Soldiers Abroad

Members of the **Sachem East Volunteer Interact Club** collected items in an incredible show of support for American soldiers serving overseas. The extraordinary effort and tremendous spirit of giving resulted in over 150 boxes being shipped to soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan.



Sachem East Students Honored as Suffolk Zone Award Winners

Congratulations to **Sachem East seniors Merideth Lewando and Joe Botti** for being honored at the Suffolk Zone dinner sponsored by the Suffolk Zone of New York State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.



Sachem East Student Artwork Displayed at Brookhaven Town Hall

Student artwork was displayed at Brookhaven Town Hall during the month of December. **Sachem East art** students were responsible for hanging their work themselves which truly brightened the inside of Town Hall. They were proud to be able to expose the community to their exceptional work which received rave reviews.



Sachem East Students Give to Little Flower

In the true spirit of giving and kindness, members of the **junior class** collected over 150 gift boxes for children at the Little Flower School in Wading River. This is the seventh year that Sachem East students have collected for the Little Flower School. This project was made possible with help from members of the **National Honor Society and Student Leadership**.



SENECA CHALLENGERS— LEGO LEAGUE SUCCESS

On behalf of **Seneca Middle School** I would like to congratulate our **Lego Robotics Team** the **Seneca Challengers** for winning 2nd place in the team-work competition on January 11th, 2009 at Longwood High Schools First Lego League (FLL) championship tournament.



Teamwork is critical to success in the FIRST LEGO league and is the key ingredient in any team effort. FLL presents this award to the team that best demonstrates extraordinary enthusiasm, exceptional partnership, and the practice of FLL values.

Proudly representing Seneca Middle school; **Alex Algeri, Daniel Pinto, Nick Roughly, Jordan Weiss, Joe Gair, Jesse Selvaggio, Joseph Pelosi, & Tejas Prasad** of the Seneca challengers competed against 49 other teams from Nassau & Suffolk County to win this award. Congratulations Team from **Mr. Silva!**



D.E.A.R. PROGRAM IN FULL GEAR AT SENECA

Seneca Middle School kicked off its Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) program for 2009 on Thursday, January 8. Every Thursday for the remainder of the school year will be DEAR Thursdays during lunch periods. Students at Seneca bring a book, magazine, newspaper, or graphic novel to read on Thursdays after they have eaten their lunches. Seneca librarian, **Cindy Keith**, provides additional reading material for use in the cafeteria each Thursday, as well. The cafeteria rivals the library on Thursdays, as students have become accustomed to the new program and begin reading when they have finished eating.



INAUGURATION DAY 2009 AT SENECA

On January 20, 2009 the **Seneca** student body was treated to a viewing of the inauguration of our nation's 44th President, Barack Obama. Seneca's Little Theater was transformed by **Mrs. Keith** (School Media Specialist) into an inaugural celebration fit for Georgetown or DuPont Circle.



Mrs. Keith's aesthetic sensibility simulated the zeitgeist of the day by focusing on the pride and optimism felt by the millions watching this monumental occasion live on the steps of the Capitol, the lawn of the National Mall, and the comfort of their school auditorium.

Students from social studies classes were instructed, under the guidance of **Mrs. Bowman** (Social Studies Dept. Chair) and **Mr. Mundy** (Literacy Coach), to view the historic event and subsequently take notes as if they, the students, were covering the event for a national media source.

Each student who attended the assembly received a folder outlining the speakers of the day, and a template that defined the steps and style of news reporting.

Upon completion of the inauguration, the attending students became the proxy for the event – explaining through their notes and analysis key features and interesting thoughts provided by participants and dignitaries.

Several Social Studies teachers used this information as the primary source for discussion in their ensuing classes. Mr. Mundy provided detailed notes outlining the inauguration – citing key quotes and phrases as a catalyst for class discussion and student analysis. Consequently, students were asked to complete the following focused activities:

- Discuss the significance of the day to present-day Americans.
- Discuss the significance of the day in regard to America's history.
- Analyze how these events will affect individuals, the Nation, and the world.
- Create a written response of non-fiction, newspaper copy focusing on the creation of a well organized lead and an equally powerful body that establishes the gravity of the occasion.

Student created news articles, that meet predetermined requirements, will be placed in the upcoming issue of our newspaper *Seneca Outlook*.

SAGAMORE'S OPEN MIC POETRY CAFE

Why write poetry? Why study poetry? Why is it that for thousands of years human beings have been creating and thinking and writing their thoughts in the form of poetry? These are all good questions.

On February 26, 2009, the **Sagamore** Poetry House (a.k.a. the Sagamore Library) held a poetry read-a-thon for **8th grade students and staff** and a renewed sense of appreciation for this form of expression was achieved. More than 100 students participated in our Open Mic Poetry Café Event.

Poetry can make us laugh, cry, think, and wonder. Like prose, poetry entertains. Reading poetry allows us to enjoy language itself. Teachers and students alike read from their favorite poems or from poems they wrote themselves. As students entered, they were given hot chocolate and cookies. Magnetic poetry was waiting for our 8th graders to play with as everyone assembled.

You would have to search high and wide to find a more polite yet enthusiastic group of 8th grade students. Our students truly exemplified the "Sagamore Way," with their snapping fingers to show their appreciation for the poems and words of encouragement as their friends came to the stage. A good time was had by all!



SEQUOYA SPOTLIGHT

Character Education at Sequoia

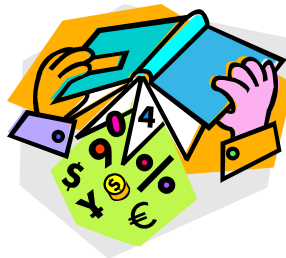
Doreen Schaefer and the **Renaissance Club** teamed up with **Student Assistance Counselor, Susan Lorenz**, for this creative, Character Education initiative. Students and staff fully filled out “bricks” describing an act of kindness they performed and how it felt. The bricks were then used to create the “Wall of Kindness” right outside the cafeteria. Of the many bricks, here is one: “I raked my Poppy’s leaves for him. It felt good because he didn’t have to do it. It made him happy.” After the 2 week “construction” period, raffles were held during each lunch period for all students who participated and the winners received a t-shirt. Let’s make kindness contagious!

He Makes Us Proud

Brandon Cohen, a **sixth** grader, has been in the spot light for his creativity and outstanding writing skills. **Mr. Panasci** and **Dr. Mauro, Principal of Hiawatha**, presented Brandon with a certificate honoring his achievements in writing at the Board of Education meeting in November. He was awarded the 5th Grade Author award for his story “The Bad Dream” and for his 1st place award winning poem, “The Wonders of Spring through the Senses” in October at the “Princess Production Awards”. Brandon continues to create wonderful, creative stories in his current 6th grade ELA class with **Ms. Higbie** here at Sequoia Middle School.

Fourth Annual Math Mania Festival

Sequoia’s **8th grade Math Skills students** taught by **Ms. O’Boyle** participated in the Fourth Annual Math Mania Festival at Cayuga Elementary School on December 19, 2008. The eighth graders created many exciting math activities for **Mrs. Lam’s** fourth grade class. The activities, which included math puzzles, painting by number murals, “cookie mix in the jar” measuring activity, and original computer games, were based on NYS learning standards for fourth grade. In an effort to build confidence and alleviate any “nervous jitters” associated with teaching a group of enthusiastic fourth graders, students practiced social skills and role played prior to the Festival. After the activities were completed, both classes celebrated with a pizza party. It was a fun-filled day which was enjoyed by all!



SAMOSET ACTIVITIES

The second quarter of the school year was filled with activities here at **Samoset**.

In November, students and staff participated in Multicultural Week which called attention to our differences and similarities. Students were involved in many activities which included bringing in artifacts from various cultures to be displayed in our showcase, placing commonly used words in Spanish, French and Italian along with the English translation in the hallways, watching an assembly with a film from the Tolerance Center and then a showcase of ethnic singing, dancing, drumming and martial arts. Mix-It-Up at Lunch day, a national program to promote tolerance, was a success as students met and mingled with new found friends and acquaintances during regular lunch period and finally, on Friday, wore clothes that reflected their heritage. The week was an interesting experiment that helped to promote greater understanding of our similarities and differences.

The holiday season brought multiple acts of charity and generosity from both students and staff. The annual **Student Government** Thanksgiving Food Drive provided holiday food baskets for 34 area families. Our **Leaders Clubs** collected toys for families in the Sachem community as well as for the Brookhaven Interface toy drive. The response was truly overwhelming and the excitement contagious as students sorted bags and bags of toys according to age and gender. The students took extra care as they collected toys for "their" families, trying to be sure that each child had toys to make the holiday bright.

Our **music** department had students performing for senior citizen at a local nursing home, much to the delight of the seniors and the students.

Paul Failla, a retired Suffolk County Police Officer, brought his program, "Theater as a Motivation for Life, A Human Diversity/Tolerance Workshop to Samoset for all **8th grade students** on December 22. His workshops are always well received by students and students always interested in his presentation.

Sixth graders completed the G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education And Training) program, brought to us by the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department. Their thirteen week course concluded with a celebration that had students sharing posters, slogans and songs that reflected upon what they had learned during the program.

Students kicked off the New Year by celebrating Environmental Awareness Week with lunch period assemblies organized by the **Environmental Club**. Students watched a Power Point slide show that displayed photos of commonly used items in a way that would help students understand their impact on the environment and encourage them to use more environmentally friendly products. Students participated in a number of activities including answering environmental trivia questions, wearing green for "Green Day", and beginning our paper and plastic recycling program. Students and staff have all taken responsibility for decreasing our carbon footprint by pledging to turn off lights, use less fuel, and to reduce, reuse and recycle when possible.

The month ended with the long awaited "Pajama Day" promised after students completed reading 1000 books. This is the first milestone reached in our quest to complete reading 10,000 books during this school year. Pajamas, lounge pants and sweats all made for a cozy and comfortable last Friday in January and helped to encourage students to keep reading to reach our next milestone of 2000 books.

It is hard to believe that we have already come to the end of the second quarter of the school year! We look forward to sharing more news in the next Showcase.



LYNWOOD'S SECOND GRADE SHINING STARS

In early December, **Lynwood second grade** students took a journey with Teepee Ted . As they huddled under a large furry buffalo skin blanket, the children listened to stories about real life experiences he encountered while living with the Native People of South Dakota. Soon, some students were beating on drums made from buffalo parts, others drew symbols on necklaces, while still others played games with authentic buffalo bones. A great time was had by all!

Second graders returned from the holiday break ready to blast into 2009 learning about outer space. Their beautiful diagrams and creative poetry about our solar system are out of this world and prove Lynwood is home to many shining stars.

CAYUGA SAVES LIVES

On Thursday, January 29th, Cayuga set out to host one of their largest blood drives in years. It was a huge success! Overall we collected **71 pints** of blood.....what a turnout! That almost doubled our previous record! As a result of the blood drive, Cayuga received a call from an administrator at the head office of LI Blood Services thanking us profusely for a wonderful drive.

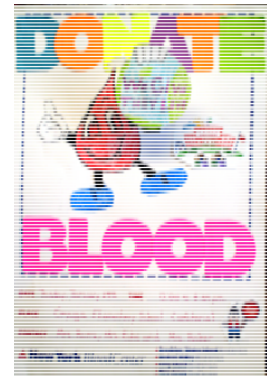
The blood drive coordinators, **Stacey Heinz, Faith Baker** and **Kristin Ruhs** thank everyone who helped in any way, whether it was by hanging posters, volunteering time at the drive, donating a pint of blood or just popping in to say hi. Everyone made a difference in someone else's life.

To help get the blood drive underway, Cayuga had a blood drive poster contest. Students had to create a poster that would advertise the importance of donating blood. They did a phenomenal job! There was one winner selected from both the primary and secondary grade levels. **Alexa Wienclaw** (1st Grader) and **Emily Sill** (4th Grader) both won a Friendly's gift card for their amazing posters. Congratulations ladies!!!

Cayuga's Student Leadership members played an integral part as well. The student volunteers assisted blood donors at the canteen and also helped out with "babysitting" services provided during the blood drive. Thank you to **Loretta Woods** for organizing this much needed help.

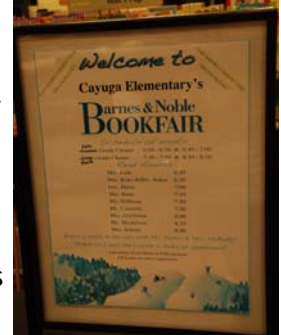
Thank you to the amazing staff members who donated their blood:
Faith Baker, Stacey Heinz, Vanessa Veltri, Sarah Steiner, Mike La Regina, Tracey Bazarewski, Nicole Magro, Kim Heiser, Betsy Boyle, Tammy Michelsen, Steve Esposito, Jill Gallagher, Ellen Schare, Amy Hollmann, and Cathy Droll. A *special thank you* goes out to **Matthew Wells** and **Jason Plantamura**, who donated on the ALX machine and, therefore, their donations counted as **2 pints** of blood each!

Overall, Cayuga's blood drive was a huge success! Remember--*donating blood saves lives.....save a life today!*



FUNDRAISER AT BARNES & NOBLE FOR CAYUGA

Despite a terrible rainstorm, Thursday, December 11th was a fantastic night for Cayuga Elementary School! Barnes & Noble bookstore at Smith Haven Mall was the setting for a fun and festive Book Fair. **Mrs. Schare, Miss Rosenthal and Mr. Sloan** hosted the event with lots of other faculty members stopping by to help or just to visit. **Mrs. Lam, Mrs. Ruhs, Mrs. Baker, Mrs. Kern, Ms. Hollmann, Mrs. Goldstein, Ms. Caminiti, Ms. Michelsen and Mrs. Heinz** performed read-alouds in the children's book area. Cayuga's 4th and 5th grade chorus groups performed a fabulous selection of holiday songs and beautiful student artwork was displayed throughout the store. **Ms. Taylor and Mrs. McNally** helped out in the café while Casey the Cougar 'high fived' his way through the crowd.



Our **spectacular PTA parents provided gift wrapping. Mr. Sangiorgi, Mrs. Schare, Mrs. McNally and Mrs. Trepiccione** even brought their own children along to join the fun! **Mr. Plantamura, Mrs. Gallagher, Mrs. McCormack, Mrs. Bennett, Mrs. Woods, Mr. Tougher, Mr. Fiore, Mrs. Ayasse and Ms. Kim** all showed up to help or to just do some shopping! The parent and student turnout was spectacular and far exceeded our expectations. The Book Fair generated over \$8,000.00 in sales which translated to a profit for Cayuga of over \$1,100.00! Proceeds will be used for **Miss Rosenthal's and Mr. Sloan's Drama Club** as well as adding to the Library's book collection.

A huge THANK YOU to our awesome Cayuga community for supporting this event!



NOKOMIS MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Mrs. Clifford's and Mrs. Grieco's third grade class had a busy February collecting boxes of cereal. Class 3-2 collected 471 boxes of cereal from **Nokomis** students, faculty and even bus drivers. All the boxes of cereal were donated to a busy Holbrook food pantry. Every day the students of Class 3-2 collected boxes of cereal from their assigned classrooms and every morning gave Nokomis students a running tally during morning announcements. Our talented art teacher, **Mrs. Isaksson**, created a meter of the progress that was posted in the hallway so the children could see how many boxes were collected.



CHIPPEWA'S BUCKET FILLERS

At **Chippewa**, we introduced the philosophy of "Bucket Filling" starting in September. Each classroom teacher was encouraged to read the book at open school night to their student's parents. The book was very well received and the parents were given suggestions on ways to implement this philosophy at home. We received a lot of positive feedback from the parents, their enthusiasm and follow-through at home has been an important dynamic for our programs success. Many of our teachers took it one step further and have buckets in their classrooms for each student. When the teacher sees a student "filling a students bucket", she/he fills that student's bucket in return.

Our "**Bucket Committee**" took the ball and ran with it. We developed a beautiful showcase with each staff members buckets and displayed a large plastic bucket in the lobby. When visitors enter, they enjoy looking at their favorite teachers uniquely decorated bucket. Our PTA has "filled our bucket" in the lobby with stars and hearts that contain the names of all the families and teachers who have joined. We also release a monthly "bucket bulletin" and we enjoy the "Bucket Fill-osophies" from the website bucketfillers101.com.

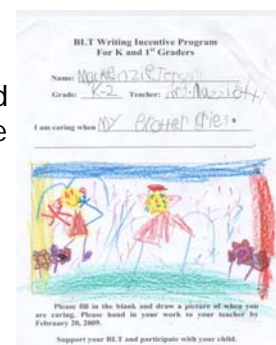
In December, each class wrote a letter to our Principal **Ms. Pontius**, explaining how they practice bucket filling in their classroom. Each class was awarded the "Principal's Star Award" and the letters were displayed in the cafeteria. The students were so excited to read the letters from all of the classes while they ate lunch! This second half of the year we will be working on the following: writing friendly letters about bucket filling, designing posters for our hallways and a culminating activity including a wonderful assembly. We are all very excited to welcome a speaker from bucketfillersforlife.com to present a staff development and interactive assemblies for our students.

Below are samples of our bulletin boards, pictures of our displays and a letter that received the "Principal's Star Award." We love being a "bucket filling" building and we look forward to seeing what the students and staff are doing in other buildings!



GRUNDY'S CHARACTER EDUCATION WRITING PROGRAM FEBRUARY=CARING

The students in **Grundy** have been writing about a different character trait each month through our *Character Education Writing Program* initiated by the **Building Leadership Team**. The goal and focus of this program is to encourage children to be thoughtful and creative writers. As the students are writing about each trait they are learning invaluable lessons about character through their discussions in school and at home. It has been a great success and it will continue throughout the year.



WENONAH KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS CELEBRATE A NEW PRESIDENT

On January 20th, **Wenonah kindergarten** students celebrated the historic inauguration of Barack Obama as the 44th President of the United States. Our kindergartners joined the rest of the school in watching our new President take the oath of office and address the nation, and then celebrated the event by attending an "Inaugural Ball" dressed in their finest formal wear. Festivities included taking pictures with a life-size figure of President Obama, conga and circle dancing, and enjoying snacks and "Presidential Punch." Prior to the event, our kindergarten students researched facts about the President, including where and when he was born, his favorite foods and activities, and learned about the First Family. They also learned new vocabulary and facts about voting and the White House. As a final activity our students wrote "Yes We Can" lists with their ideas about what we can all do to make our school and America great. Our students proved we are off to a great start with the "can do" spirit of our next generation of leaders!



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS AT TECUMSEH

As part of our school goal to learn more about important people in our community this year, Suffolk County Legislator Brian Beedenbender was invited to speak with the students at **Tecumseh**. Legislator Beedenbender's visit on November 20th was no ordinary event. Instead of a traditional speech he challenged the students to hold a mock legislative hearing. A proposed law was put up for discussion and a vote: *"Tecumseh students will be required to wear a set uniform to school each day."* Fifteen students prepared pro and con arguments for this bill. After presenting their ideas, the student legislators voted 9 to 6 to not have school uniforms.



A real treat in this program followed when the entire student body was asked to participate in a referendum on the issue. Legislator Beedenbender arranged for a voting machine to be delivered to Tecumseh. All of our students from kindergarten to grade 5 had a turn in the voting booth casting their vote. While the vote cast was 347 against and 167 for school uniforms, the priceless part was the real voting experience our students had. Pulling the level was "cool" and "I felt important" remarked student voters. This experience followed our recent student straw vote for President. Our student body has had a taste of democracy. The result, they want more.



HIAWATHA HAPPENINGS

Hiawatha has School Spirit

Everyone at **Hiawatha** is getting into the school spirit kick. All students, faculty and staff have been given Hiawatha spirit shirts from the PTA. They are worn every Friday and the school has voted on a school Mascot (the Hiawatha Husky). The **student council** helped purchase a Husky mascot costume and he makes visits at school and evening events. Bulletin boards around the building show off our school spirit. The school is really feeling the spirit, GO HUSKIES!



Hiawatha is Filling Buckets

BASIC CONCEPTS OF BUCKET FILLING:

We all carry an invisible bucket. This bucket contains our feelings. When our bucket is full, we feel great; when it's empty, we feel empty. A bucketfiller is someone who says or does nice things for other people. By doing this, they are filling other people's buckets and filling their own bucket at the same time. On the other hand, a bucketdipper says or does things to cause other people to feel bad. This simple but profound philosophy applies to every aspect of life.



The **Hiawatha** community will be filling each others buckets verbally and in writing. The experience should lend to the character development of our students as well as the enrichment of our staff.

GATELOT KINDNESS AND JUSTICE ASSEMBLY

On Friday, January 27th, **Gatelot** celebrated citizenship, compassion, honesty, integrity, responsibility and respect. During the Kindness and Justice Assembly, members of our P.T.A., staff members and students lit candles as we reflected on what each character trait means. The **fourth and fifth graders** listened to Martin's Big Words by Do-reen Rappaport, in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

The **kindergarten through third grade students** listened to a book called, Fill a Bucket by Carol McCloud and Katherine Martin. To fill someone's bucket means to make a person feel good. You can be a bucket filler in a number of ways. One can do a good deed for another, say a simple hello in the hallway, or help someone in need. The primary grades reflected on ways they could fill someone's bucket.

As a Gatelot community we stride to be "bucket fillers." We each wrote down one way we could be a "bucket filler." Students also signed a contract to promise to exhibit good citizenship, compassion, integrity, responsibility and respect for one another. It is hanging up in the cafeteria to be a constant reminder of what Martin Luther King fought so hard for. The Kindness and Justice Assembly was put on by Renaissance Club. It was a beautiful way to celebrate the life of Dr. King, as well as coming together to make our school community a better place.

GATELOT'S FIFTH GRADE UPDATE

As the month of January comes to an end, the **5th grade students** and teachers of **Gatelot** have come to the conclusion that "time flies when you are having fun!" Students have successfully completed the New York State Social Studies exam as well as the ELA, and have been working hard to gain valuable reading, writing and listening skills. Students continue to work on decimals, fractions, as well as various types of graphs in math. They are working diligently to learn all about Canada and Latin America and are excited to visit Don Juan's Restaurant to culminate their unit. In conjunction with the Health Smart program, we are excited to begin "Choices", a program that was created by the Suffolk County Health Department. This program will give students valuable information as well as advice in dealing with different health concerns. In addition, we will also be participating in a LIPA energy conservation program to ensure we are doing our part to conserve energy.

On January 20th the staff and students of Gatelot had the wonderful opportunity to witness the inauguration of our country's 44th president, Barack Obama. Students and teachers alike were inspired by the president's address. Cheers could be heard throughout the building. The inauguration is something we will all remember as well as President Obama's words, "On this day, we gather because we have chosen hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord."

We eagerly anticipate all the wonderful events to come in 5th grade such as Don Juan's Restaurant, Wagon's West, The Goldilocks' Trial, and especially our Broadway show, "Wicked". The year has gotten off to a wonderful start that is sure to continue!

HAVE YOU FILLED THE TAMARAC BUCKET TODAY?

During the month of October, **Tamarac** students learned about helping children in need. Students learned about the program "Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF", which helps protect and improve the lives of children around the world through immunizations, medical care, education, nutrition and clean water. Children were excited about the opportunity to "make Halloween count" by collecting coins, and donating their collections to make a difference in a child's life. After Halloween, student volunteers assisted in collecting the boxes from classes. When all the coins were counted, students had collected over \$2300! We are so proud of the enthusiasm shown by Tamarac students during our first UNICEF fund-raising event. Tamarac students truly are Bucket Fillers.



Pictured (l-r): **Deena Kay** (standing), **Dylan Modugno**, **Carrie Fontana**, **Jessica DeGennaro**, **Sophie Hannigan**, **Jordan Moyers**, **Samantha Pompa**, **Lori Capozzi** (standing), **Vishrath Kumar**

TAMARAC 'S BROWN BAG LUNCH SERIES

This year, **Tamarac** has implemented a Brown Bag Lunches Series. This is a unique enrichment opportunity for all **fourth and fifth grade students** at Tamarac Elementary School. The Brown Bag Lunch series allows students the opportunity to occasionally eat their lunch while participating in an enrichment seminar.

In early October, all Tamarac 4th and 5th graders were administered an interest survey. The result of these surveys were used to plan seminars aligned with student interests. Once a seminar is planned, each class is given a number of tickets, which is distributed to students based on their interests.

In the past few months, we have had many fun and informative Brown Bag Lunch seminars. Presenters have spoken about animals, dance, radio and television, volcanoes and earthquakes, and advertising. These seminars have been amazing opportunities for students to learn about topics they are interested in! In addition to the seminars, some "Brown Bag Extension" ideas have been provided to interested students. These are ideas for students to extend their learning about one or more of the Brown Bag topics they are interested in. We are looking forward to more Brown Bag Lunch Seminars at Tamarac!



WAVERLY CELEBRATES HEALTHY HEART MONTH

Waverly Avenue Elementary School celebrates Healthy Heart Month all throughout February. **Physical education classes**, led by **Mr. Tom Erb** and **Mrs. Terri Doon**, began the month's activities with The American Heart Association's Heart Power program. Children learned to "Eat Healthy Stuff, Move Around Enough and to Live Tobacco Free!" Each heart healthy tip was accompanied by a fun physical activity such as, Food Tag, Couch Potato, and the Don't Smoke! game.

The children's favorite concluding activity was the circulatory system scooter course designed by their physical education teachers. The children became the blood cells in the body and traveled throughout the circulatory system from the Vena Cava, to the heart, the lungs, and back to the heart to be pumped to the Aorta. With this fresh, oxygenated blood they went to the "gym" to workout using a variety of activities like jogging, jumping, and step aerobics. Here children also had an opportunity to use a stethoscope to listen to their hearts at work!

Waverly's students enjoyed learning heart healthy tips for a lifetime of fitness!



EXPERIENCING HISTORY IN THE MAKING AT MERRIMAC

The **third, fourth, and fifth grade students** at **Merrimac Elementary School** witnessed first hand the Inauguration of the 44th President of the United States. The preparations began in November with cable hook-up placed in the Multi-purpose Room, Cafeteria, and the Library. Classroom teachers prepared their students for the upcoming event by discussing the Inauguration process, the significance of the event, and tying in the elections last November and Martin Luther King, Jr. cause and speech. Third grade conducted great classroom discussions and journal entries based on past presidents and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The fourth grade students utilized Time for Kids. They incorporated map skills, compare and contrast skills, and sequenced the events through history including the elections in November to the Inauguration. The fifth grade students prepared for this historical event by participating in an Inauguration cyber hunt. One of the activities they received was to create a list of important words and phrases they would hear during President Obama's speech and swearing in.

During the viewing of the Inauguration, students referred to their list of important words and phrases and marked the ones that they hear during the speech and swearing in. After the speech and swearing in, teachers conducted rich discussions in each classroom. Third and fourth grade students wrote letters to send to the first family. Fifth grade students implemented their interviewing skills by interviewing their parents with such questions as, "What made today historic?", "What would you like to see President Obama accomplish during his presidency?", "During Obama's campaign he spoke about lasting change, what can you do within your school and community to create lasting change?" This information is part of a President's Day project that will be sent to the White House.

The students at Merrimac Elementary School will not have to read about this historic event in a text book. The third, fourth and fifth grade students were able to be an important part of American history. It has made democracy come alive for them.

BOARD OF EDUCATION GOALS

Goal 1: Enhance Student Achievement and Quality of Instruction

Goal 2: Improve Parent, Community and Staff Communication

Goal 3: Improve Fiscal Responsibility and Accountability Throughout the District

Goal 4: Provide Safe and Secure Schools

Goal 5: Technology Integration