



# Bulldog

BULLETIN

January 2023

## Happy New Year & Welcome Back

### Superintendent Community Conversations

I will be sharing district efforts with our strategic planning process, the capital project, which impacts all of our schools, and also discussing the budget process for next school year. I hope to see you there!

#### All meetings at 7:00pm:

- BHS January 11
- Sargent January 18
- South Ave January 25
- RMS February 2
- Glenham February 15
- JV Forrestal February 23

Welcome back!  
-Matt Landahl

### girls who CODE create and inspire

BHS' Girls Who Code club celebrated Computer Science Education Week by getting their classmates and others to participate in unique activities promoting STEM initiatives. The week is an annual call to action to inspire grade school students to learn computer science, advocate for equity and celebrate the contributions to the field.

When club advisor Frances Vakirtzis told seniors Eleanor Lopez, Crystal Chen and Labibah Hassan about the week, they decided to come up with a different coding question every day with a \$5 prize incentive.

"I was actually pretty surprised with how good it turned out," Lopez said. "I saw a bunch of people looking at the problems while in the hallways and stopping to think about it."



The girls are considering bringing back coding questions monthly to keep up interest in computer science. Lopez appreciates the mission of girls working in a typically male-dominated field. "I thought it would be a fun club to be involved in," Lopez said. "It's good to have women involved in computer science."

Chen and Lopez also demonstrated coding without the use of any electronic device at the Poughkeepsie Galleria. One exercise involved using plastic cups.

"The goal was to find a little object that we hid and we challenged the kids to find which cup it was under," Chen explained. "You pick the number in the middle and then we eliminated the other numbers and we kept dividing until it got smaller and smaller, until they found the object."

Hassan plans to go into the computer science field and joined the club to keep her skills sharp.

"You can do graphic design, you can program things," Hassan said. "I can create something out of nothing."

The girls have also helped with technology in 2019 some Beacon senior citizens came to school and learned how to use tablets they received through a grant. Vakirtzis noted that they were thankful for their help and were eager to learn more.

A former computer science programmer, Vakirtzis loves seeing her students in the club and others express interest in STEM initiatives.

"It's nice to see that they want to do it and that they do get involved," Vakirtzis said.

### Coat drive yields many donations

In a collaborative effort between Beacon High School's Key Club and Glenham Elementary School, around 120 coats were donated to community members in need through Dutchess Outreach.

BHS Social Studies Teacher Tim Newman recently revived the Key Club for students, who are not in the National Honor Society, but still want to perform community service. Newman was eager to collaborate with another school in the district so it could have a greater impact.

"Glenham Student Council jumped on it," Newman said.

"I feel like if we can do these things together, it makes it a bigger, better event that people rally around."

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### District Commendation Ceremony



We are taking a moment as a Beacon leadership team to commend students and staff for amazing accomplishments and contributions to the community.

Be sure to join us on  
January 9<sup>th</sup> at 6pm at BHS



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Glenham Teacher Monica Taylor really came through and consistently had coats ready for Newman to pick up.

"It was nice to pair with Glenham on this," Newman said. "They hit it out of the ballpark."



Newman was in touch with Dutchess Outreach the week of December 12 to figure out when and where to bring the coats so they be distributed.

"They're already distributing coats, so hopefully we'll restock them," Newman said. "I'll bring them up there as long as they're ready for them."

With school returning to normalcy, Newman is hopeful that the coat drive and other charitable initiatives put on by other clubs occur for years to come. He appreciates the community's generosity.

"I'm appreciating the support," Newman said. "We did a coat drive this year, we're going to have a coat drive every year."

## Congratulations Inductees!



**1973-74 Boys Basketball Team**  
Head Coach Rick Pam

**2016 Boys Indoor Track & Field Team**  
Head Coach Jim Henry  
& Coach Ron Hammond

**Varsity Track & Field: Class of 2016**  
Rayvon Grey  
Terrel Davis  
David Adams

**Varsity Basketball/Volleyball:  
Class of 2017**  
Lauren Schetter

**Varsity Soccer: Class of 2017**  
Gabby Lucas

## Celebrated percussionist performs at Forrestal



Beacon resident and percussionist Jeff Haynes, who has performed with the likes of Chaka Khan, Pete Seeger and most recently Brandi Carlile, played and told stories for JV Forrestal students December 9.

Forrestal's Parent Teacher Student Organizer and parent Tessa Dean originally scheduled this event to for the 2019-2020 school year, but was rescheduled following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Students enjoyed Haynes' music as well as his historical storytelling about the various instruments played and the musicians who joined him. A special guest dancer performed during a few of the musical pieces.

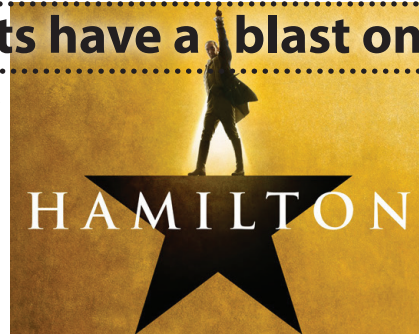
"His visit was great and students were engaged," Principal Crystal Sessoms-Wiggins said. "Students learned about instruments and musical styles ranging from Benin, Gambia, South African countries and Switzerland."

Haynes also demonstrated how some instruments are used in films and theatre productions for special effects and how the sounds are often used in suspense films. "The students loved it," Sessoms-Wiggins said.

## Students have a blast on Broadway

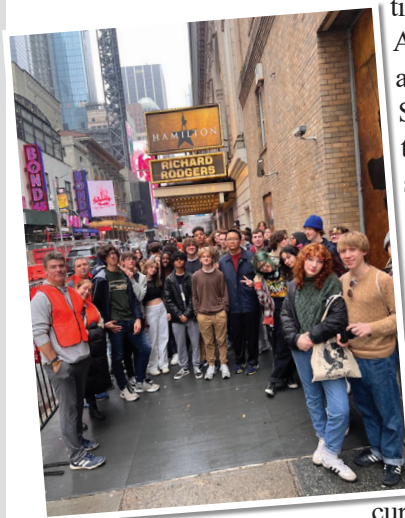
A lucky 51 students from Beacon High School's AP US History class had the opportunity to see a December 7 matinee of the celebrated musical "Hamilton" on Broadway performed exclusively for high schoolers.

The trip was a part of the Hamilton Education Program, or EduHam, created by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. BHS Social Studies Teacher Dawn Clemens applied for the program for her students to get discounted



Students had the opportunity to send questions to the musical's cast and crew prior to showtime that were answered on stage, making the trip even more unique.

"Our students asked about the rotating stage," Clemens said. "This directly applies to many of our students since the Beacon Players are using this type of set for their spring production of 'Les Miserables.'"



tickets in August and by late September, they were selected to attend.

In order to attend, Clemens' students needed to take part in a curriculum

laid out by EduHam, which included creating and performing an original performance in the form of a song, poem or scene from Alexander Hamilton's life.

"The written performance needed to be submitted to EduHam as well as a video of the 'best' student performance," Clemens explained.

"Students created pieces about events in the lead up to the Revolutionary War, the Constitutional Convention, Washington's Presidency and even the dual, which ended Hamilton's life."



For many of Clemens' students, they dreamed of seeing "Hamilton" since middle school and it exceeded their expectations.

"I had several students tell me that they had an emotional response to the show," Clemens said. "It was a wonderful experience for the students and one that they will not soon forget."





# White Out for a good cause



As part of Winter Spirit Week at Beacon High School, which ran from December 16 to 21, the Student Council asked everyone to wear white on December 16 to support the Varsity Boys Basketball team.

When the team's coach Patrick Schetter asked Student Council advisor Tim Newman about having students across the district wear white Bulldog shirts during the day in conjunction with a basketball game that same night where attendees were encouraged to wear white.

One of the council's goals is to show appreciation for what is going on at school and in other clubs.

"We thought maybe our reach is a little bigger as a student organization to get people involved," Newman said. "All of the students are part of what we're trying to foster – different sports, different clubs."



Student Council Vice President and junior Sara Gonzalez said having an additional Spirit Week gave students something to look forward to during the winter months and lift their spirits.

"Seeing everyone in the school come together to do these spirit weeks is just fun," Gonzalez said. "This year we've been trying to focus more on connecting the school and increase the school spirit."

Junior Vanessa Piciacchio, who serves as council secretary, credits Newman for encouraging her and her classmates to promote school spirit and they already have more plans to do so for the remainder of this school year.

"He really wants us to work together with the student council and other classes to get school spirit going," Piciacchio said of Newman. "I'm just excited to see what we do in the future."

## NEW YORK STATE MASTER TEACHER PROGRAM

South Ave. Elementary Library Media Specialist Aaron Burke recently completed his tenure



in State University of New York's Master Teacher Program taking with him knowledge to make him a better teacher.

The Master Teacher program is a professional network of more than 1,400 public school K-12 Science, Technology, Engineering and Math teachers throughout the state who share a passion for their own STEM learning and for collaborating with colleagues to inspire the next generation of STEM leaders.

During his tenure, Burke honed and focused his teaching skills in workshops and trainings with other teachers.



He learned about topics such as aquaponics, a blending of fish and plant production, which he now teaches in his classes. Currently there are so many exciting STEM curriculum ideas that at times, he feels like a cat chasing too many mice. "All of those things were inspired by workshops and trainings that I did," Burke explained. "I've learned so much."

As an emeritus Master Teacher, Burke can attend any further workshops the program offers and highly recommends it to his Beacon STEM colleagues.

"I wish there were more teachers involved, because it's an amazing program," Burke said. "It's really one of the best things I've done professionally."

Congratulations!  
BCSD

## Winter concerts warm community's heart

*Between December 6 and 20, all six schools in BCSD put on a Winter Concert for families and the community to hear their children perform beautiful seasonal music.*



Produced by Dutches BOCES Desiree Gagnon, Graphic Designer and Daniel Zuckerman, Public Information Officer

