



Bulldog

BULLETIN

February 2024

Celebrating



Black History Month

Message from the Superintendent

Welcome to another amazing issue of the Bulldog Bulletin!

This issue celebrates some amazing accomplishments of current and former students.

The issue also highlights some parent engagement events we have been creating this year as well. As always, I want to thank our amazing students, staff, and community for making all of this possible.

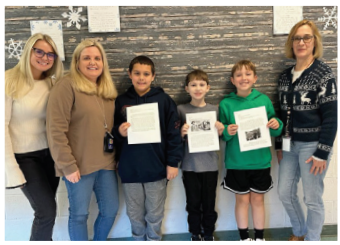
—Matt Landahl



Students Impress with MLK Essays

Six BCSD students from different grades were honored at the 10th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day Essay Contest for their essays that highlighted famous quotes from the late civil rights leader.

Glenham ES



Essays from three fifth graders, including Sam Mack, were

some of the many chosen by contest organizers. Mack felt honored to win for his essay focusing on King's quote of "Only love can overcome hatred, bitterness and fear," which he described as inspiring and explained why it was important to honor King.

"I think it's very important because he was a great inspiring person who lived a great life," Mack said. "Everyone who lives a great life should be honored."

Evan Pantojas' essay focused on the same quote as Mack's where he had

to think about what it meant and how it relates to the issues of today. He was happy to have his essay chosen, but hopes more students get involved next year so they learn about King's legacy.

"It's really important that the younger generations know about it," Pantojas said. "I hope it will move on throughout the generations."

Kevin Boyle's essay focused on the changes King brought and noted that had it not been for his efforts, schools would still be segregated by race. His advice to students who want to enter an essay in the future is to not get discouraged.

"If anyone says that your essay is bad, you don't listen to them because they're jealous," Boyle said.

Back by popular demand,

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3 more community screenings

Sargent ES



After his sister and fellow winner Suvi was going to enter an essay, second grader Conan O'Shea

was encouraged to submit one of his own by his mother. His essay centered on the phrase "Weapon of Love" that King used frequently.

What Conan most appreciated about King was that everything he said came from his heart and he hopes his legacy lives on.

"I hope it can last for long," he said. "It's really important."

Rombout MS



Seventh grader Suvi O'Shea was eager to submit an essay because she wanted to challenge herself to complete a piece during winter break. Her essay focused on how love, is different from being nice, and how some see it is a weakness.

"A lot of people pretend to be unhappy because it's cooler," Suvi said. "It's not uncool to love people."

Suvi appreciated the fact that King stood up for what he believed in. "He was actually being brave," she said of King. "No one's really the kind of person to be brave, you just have to be brave."

Beacon HS



Freshman Syeira Kozlik originally wanted to submit an essay because of all the positive efforts King made to achieve racial equality and wanted to highlight how King's efforts continues to effect Americans today. "He made some really powerful messages to the world," Kozlik said. "It made me proud of my country."

While Kozlik sometimes found the task challenging, she described it as a rewarding experience. She then presented her essay to an audience at the Springfield Baptist Church on MLK Day. "It was challenging, but really fun," Kozlik said. "I felt very proud."

"Truly, a must see!"

By popular demand, there are three more community screenings coming up

THE RISE UP PROJECT AT ST ANDREW AND ST LUKE EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND THE FOUNDATION FOR BEACON SCHOOLS PRESENT:
LINES OF DEMARCATION STARRING BLSO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, RISE UP INTERVIEWER ALICIA "LEE" WILLIAMS AND BEACON SENIOR RESIDENTS:
DOUG JACKSON, ANTHONY LASSITER, DAVID LUCAS, GEORGE MACKENZIE, MURRAY WILLIGAN, CONNIE PERDREAU, AND MARY LOU WILLIAMSON.



New dates
Feb 27th
Tuesday, Feb 27, 6:00 pm
- Beacon High School /
Seeger Theater

Saturday, Feb 24, 2:00 pm
- St. Andrew and St. Luke's
Church (15 South Ave.)

Thursday, Feb 29, 6:00 pm
- Howland Public Library
(Q&A to follow)

LINES OF DEMARCATION

MEMORIES FROM BEACON'S BLACK COMMUNITIES OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Of Note:

We wanted to clarify information that was stated in last month's article "Student made films are smash hits" about the short film "Lines of Demarcation: An Oral History of Beacon's Black Communities."

Andrea Barrow-Williams, a volunteer with the Rise Up Project, stated that the film could not have been completed without the help of Foundation for Beacon Schools Director Anna Sullivan, filmmaker Eve Morgenstern, BHS alum Alicia "Lee" Williams who interviewed participants and edited scripts and retired BHS film teacher Mike Gersh, who edited it and contributed content. Gersh and Morgenstern also taught students about film techniques and how to feature different narratives.

Additionally, BHS foreign language teacher Ron Hammond served as faculty advisor for the film, while Rise Up members Sandy MoneyMaker and Patricia Lassiter attended most sessions with students where they provided additional historical information and shared personal experiences.

Community partners such as the Beacon Historical Society and Howland Public Library provided pictures, articles and other information for students, while Leonard Sparks, senior editor for "The Highland Current" and I Am Beacon Board Member Brooke Simmons taught students how to interview effectively.

During a ceremony on January 10, 2024, Kelleher was presented a certificate and tablet from Jay Keel, Optimum's Market Business Manager for the Northeast Region.

Kelleher's essay was about growing up half Argentinian and how it differs from other Hispanic cultures in terms of traditions and how they speak Spanish. Additionally, she shared about feeling right at home during a family trip to Argentina two years ago.

"It was very different for me to see a lot of people who spoke the same way as I did in Spanish," Kelleher explained.

Keel thanked Kelleher for her efforts and offered some advice. "The one challenge I can give to you is to inspire everyone in the school before you leave to do the same thing next year," Keel said. "Be an example for those [students] and also continue to grow on your own."

Sargent Fourth Graders Complete

Sci²¹ence Lab



It's electric – but it's not the Electric Slide, it was kinetic energy.

Sargent's fourth graders recently completed the first part of Unit 2 from

the Science 21 curriculum which focused on energy and how it is transferred and conserved. While teachers Nicole Winchell and Gessica Stufano have always taught about kinetic and potential energies, Science 21 enhances the lesson by having students ask questions and explore the answers to their questions through varied experiments and activities.



"The new implementation of Science 21 has helped students to really understand potential vs. kinetic energy through hands-on

experiments," Winchell said.

"Science 21 gives all the materials – we just have to set it up."

Students tested the relationship between elastic potential energy and kinetic energy by taking rulers and attaching them to strings with binder clips, called "Ruler Rockets." A rubber band is then stretched around the ruler's base and students are given different measurements to stretch the rubber band to.

Groups of students then charted, discussed and compared the distance traveled by the rulers on string depending on how much stretch is in a rubber band.



"The further the rubber band is stretched, the further the 'ruler rocket' will 'fly,'" Winchell explained.

"Students learned that elastic potential energy is converted into kinetic energy."

Winchell found that students loved the experiment, especially when they witnessed how far their ruler rockets could "fly."

"This was just one of many hands-on experiments we do and we can tell they really enjoy engaging in different



engineering practices," Winchell said. "They look forward to these lessons and ask when the next one is."

Gus Greenberg said it was fun to learn about how things move and seeing how much kinetic energy there was when the rubber band was stretched, while Hazel Harvey enjoyed seeing how much the ruler moved based on how she held it.

Rombout Student Named Runner-Up in Essay Contest

Davia Kelleher, a Rombout seventh grader, had an excelente reason to celebrate this January. She was named a runner up in Optimum's 2023 Hispanic Heritage Essay Contest of which 1,500 entries were received in New York alone.

Hispanic Heritage Essay Contest

optimum. | Televisa Univision



Kelleher entered the contest to share her story in the hopes that people from varied Hispanic backgrounds could relate to it.

"It's really important for them to feel like they have other people that are like them and they can connect," Kelleher said. "Even if I didn't win, I just wanted to see if I could do it."

Rombout Spanish teacher Erica Hughes described Kelleher as an excellent student who is wise behind her years and hopes that her win encourages other students to embrace their heritage too.

"She shares her perspective from having learned Spanish through her family and her heritage," Hughes said. "It makes her comments and participation in class that much more rich."



Thanks for reading our

If you have a submission idea, email: desiree.gagnon@dcbores.org

BEACON'S BEST INDUCTED

The 2023 inductees to the Eric J. Romanino Athletics Hall of Fame were celebrated during a ceremony at St. Rocco Society Banquet Hall on January 5.

The hall recognizes athletes, coaches and others for their athletic achievements in BCSD, but also at the local, state and national levels. In 2014, it was renamed in honor of Romanino, a retired BHS wrestling coach and teacher.

THE NOMINEES

Oluwatofunmi Jummie Akinwunmi, Class of 2018, placed fifth in NYS at the 2017 Outdoor Championship in the High Jump category and qualified for state track and field championships eight times across three different events.

Former Beacon Mayor Randy Casale, made an impact on BCSD by serving as a JV boys' basketball coach from 1990 to 2012, greeted students when BHS opened at its current location and made sure soccer, baseball and softball fields were ready for play as Highway Superintendent.

Dave Eraca, Class of 1973, set a BHS batting average record in varsity baseball at .500 during his senior year. He was also named the DCSL Baseball MVP, the highest possible award an athlete could achieve in the early 1970's.

Rodney Paulin, Class of 1974, was the ball handling point guard for the 1973 basketball Section 1 title winning basketball team. As a senior, Paulin set the record for a



IN ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME

Bulldog single game where he poured in 41 points against Hyde Park and led the Bulldogs to the Section 1 finals.

Joe Simmons, Class of 1974, set the single basketball game scoring record in sophomore year as he torched the nets for 40 points against Valley Central. In a Section 1



championship game against Hendrick Hudson, Simmons led the Bulldogs with 26 points while chipping in 15 rebounds and also led them to the Section 1 championship game.

Lineras Torres, Jr., Class of 2018, gained national prominence during a sensational run that saw him being drafted at number 41 overall in the first round of the 2018 Major League Baseball Draft by the Cleveland Indians. Additionally, he was a NYS Player of the

Year during his senior year.

The 2012 girls varsity softball team, led by Head Coach Brian Antalek, successfully defeated Brewster 8-3 in the Class A championship game, marking BHS' first league and sectional championship since 1989.

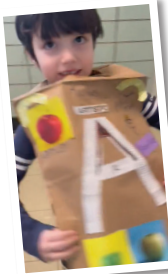
CONGRATULATIONS TO EVERYONE!

JV Forrestal Alphabet Couture is trop stylé



They wore outfits so fabulous that they would make Tommy Hilfiger shudder.

The halls of JV Forrestal looked



more like a runway on January 25 when a group of kindergartners paraded in homemade costumes bearing the letters of the alphabet for the annual Alphabet Couture event.

The students proudly showed off their unique costumes to

showcase the letters they are learning about in class, while older students waited patiently in the hallway to cheer them on as they passed by.

Principal Crystal Sessoms-Wiggins noted that this is an event that she looks forward to every year.



South Ave Math Night multiplies students' interest

As part of its Family Fun Night series, the South Avenue PTA organized a Math Night on January 18 that was anything but average.

Families were invited to rethink and learn about how they use some form of math every day by participating in fun activities and games that helped foster the belief that math is all around in sports, art, dancing, building and of course, money.

Students could visit fun zones where they explored math through art with shapes, patterns and compassions and played card and board games centered on the tough subject. This, however, was only a



fraction of what families did.

Ballet Arts Studio's Artistic Director Katie Bissinger showed how math can correlate into dancing, South Avenue Math Specialist Amy Dinkins helped planned a scavenger hunt with questions and Library/Media Specialist Aaron Burke assisted families in building an amazing city and bridges. Parents even had their own session where South Avenue teachers explained how to do fun math activities with their children at home.

The South Avenue PTA thanks everyone, including students from BHS and Rombout, who volunteered their time to make this event possible.

Former Rombout Student Brings the Rhythm

It felt like a party in the Spanish classrooms at Rombout on January 5 when a local dance instructor showcased bomba y plena, percussion-driven musical traditions from Puerto Rico to get people dancing.

Former Rombout student Christine Alicea, dressed in a traditional outfit, first demonstrated the dance before leading some students and even a few teachers in this tradition dating back to the 17th century. She also brought along simple instruments to keep the rhythm going.

The dancing was a form of expression for slaves brought to Puerto Rico who found common ground when they heard a drum beat.

“Even though some of the communities didn’t have the same languages, they spoke with the movements of the body and connected with the drum,” Alicea explained. “One thing that they felt was this beat and that was the thing that brought people in the communities together.”



Eighth graders who attended one of Alicea’s sessions enjoyed the dancing and some are now interested in trying it for themselves including Zoran Nichols.

“I’m probably going to end up getting a long dress just so I can do that,” Nichols said. “I’m usually not very good at dancing but I just want to do it.”

Gabriel Peluso, who performed with Alicea, enjoyed trying

something new where he got to express himself. He noted that people should never be nervous to share how they feel.

“You shouldn’t be nervous to express your feelings,” Peluso said. “Your feelings matter in life.”

Heidi Maeng was mesmerized by Alicea’s performance and dress and feels grateful to see Hispanic culture up close.

“Not a lot of people get the opportunity to see this amazing performance,” Maeng said. “I want everyone to experience it because it’s truly magical.”



to work their magic at BHS

The world-famous Harlem Wizards, who provide interactive and fun community basketball events will visit Beacon High School on February 16 for an evening of great fun and fundraising.

Beginning at 7pm, the Wizards will play against a team of BCSD teachers, principals and community leaders for an electric game filled with infectious laughter, awe-inspiring dunks and mesmerizing teamwork. It will serve as a fundraiser for BHS’ PTO and National Honor Society and Rombout’s PTO. Since 1962, the Wizards have played over 15,000 games in the United States that have raised over \$25 million for schools and charitable causes.

The game promises to be interactive with audience members asked to volunteer in different contests and acts all cumulating with a dance celebration with the Wizards that all students are invited to participate in. Additionally, any student with a Wizards jersey is invited to join in a pre-game warmup with the team.

“We are thrilled to host the Wizards again,” Rombout PTO President Dottie DiNobile said. “The last time the Wizards were in Beacon was 2019 and it was a huge success.”

To purchase tickets please visit:

<https://pretix.eu/harlemwizards/beaconny02-16-24-07-00pm/>

No-cost meals available to all students

Beacon families no longer have to worry about shelling out extra money for school breakfasts and lunches, thanks to various funding sources.



The United States Department of Agriculture reduced the threshold for all schools to apply for a Community Eligibility Provision to cover school meals from 40 percent down to 25.

The New York State Education Department agreed to assist with additional funding in October, prompting BCSD to apply for it. BCSD was not eligible under the previous threshold sitting at 33%, based on families’ eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Medicaid.

Students began receiving free meals on January 3 and the district will need to reapply for the program in four years.

“Parents can just send their children in for breakfast and lunch and not have to worry about the fees,” Director of Food Service Karen Pagano said. “That’s a big relief for so many of our families.”

Last month, BHS’ cafeteria saw a 20 percent increase of students getting lunch and a 78 percent increase for breakfast. Pagano believes this opportunity helps quell stigmas surrounding needing free meals.

“It’s really exciting to see students who look at you and say ‘I can just take this?’” Pagano recalled. “Whoever walks through that door is just another student.”

Pagano encourages families and students to take advantage of the opportunity where they can choose from a variety of foods from fresh fruit to hot and cold sandwiches.

“Everything in this cafeteria is a reimbursable meal,” Pagano said. “The more students we serve, the more revenue is generated from the feds and the state and the more we can do with the program.”