



Bulldog

BULLETIN

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Message from the Superintendent

I hope you have a moment to read this latest edition of the Bulldog Bulletin. This issue has so many great stories about our students and staff achieving excellence in music and sports, helping each other and their community, and celebrating our diversity.

Please enjoy this edition!

—Matt Landahl

BHS Student Voices Herald Change

As these BHS seniors plan to graduate in June, they are leaving a legacy with proposals that can benefit students and the community at large.



As part of their involvement in BHS' Seal of Civic Readiness initiative, Vanessa Murphy and Jaidev Galvin proposed

repairing a skateboard park within Memorial Park. The Beacon City Council agreed to fund \$10,000 for this measure.

Murphy championed this cause because few spaces in Beacon are solely dedicated for younger children and teenagers. She appreciated the council's interest in something that will benefit locals.

"It was a great feeling to know that they're not just trying to improve the town to get more people from the city to come, they're actually recognizing the locals," Murphy said of the council. "Having a space that is accessible, safe and used by children and teenagers is definitely something I'm happy about."



Galvin agreed with Murphy about young people having a place to socialize and appreciates that BHS gives students opportunities to help the community.

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Rombout Student Musicians Hit a High Note at Annual Festival!



Fifteen of Beacon's best musicians in seventh and ninth grades participated in the Dutchess County Music Educators Association's Junior High Festival in late January at Dover High School.

While the festival could make some nervous, seventh grader Luna Ayers-Uekawa, who plays the flute, felt more at ease. Performing last year helped her become more familiar with the festival's expectations.

"It gives me a lot of confidence in myself that I could do it again," Ayers-Uekawa said. "We knew what we were doing and we were just there to make beautiful

music." Ayers-Uekawa is appreciative of her music classes and enjoys seeing the effect music can have on listeners.

"I just love music and how it sounds and how it can move people," she said. "Being able to create that music means a lot to me."

A standout moment for eighth grader Shane Signorelli, who plays bass saxophone, was when he and other students epically collaborated on a rendition of William Owens' piece "Great Wall" with brass and woodwind instruments.

"There was a bass line in the beginning where it was just me and the baritones playing and the trombones were in the background kind of like a battle cry," Signorelli recalled. "It felt really good to play." Signorelli plans to participate in next year's festival and advised any student interested to practice vigilantly, but not dwell on mistakes. "If you make mistakes it's fine because you can still learn from it," Signorelli said.



BEACON HONORS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

HERE'S A SELECTION OF THE VARIOUS PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES HELD IN BCSD WHERE AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE AND HISTORY WERE CELEBRATED.

SARGENT

On Feb. 6, author and illustrator Nina Crews stopped by Sargent for morning assemblies where she discussed her approach to writing and illustrating and took questions from students.

Crews, a recipient of the 2023 New York State Library Association's Empire State Award, highlighted how many people are involved in publishing a book, such as an editor, art director and her agent. The first step of any book for Crews is jotting down ideas on paper.

"All the ideas are in my head," Crews explained. "So I've got to figure out what I want to say, what I want to draw."

Students were treated to a reading of Crews' first nonfiction book "Extraordinary Magic: The Storytelling Life of Virginia Hamilton," an illustrated biography of the late African American author whose books Crews read in her childhood.



"The stories you're reading and getting really excited about and loving and connecting to, are stories that meant a lot to me too," Crews said. "Books are this great thing that connects us to other people that we don't even know."

Fourth grader Oona Giuata most enjoyed working on a collage project with Crews after her talk.

"That was really cool to learn the background of the author," Giuata said. "I've read a lot of her books."

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It is important for people of all ages to speak up if they believe change is needed and Murphy has some simple advice for students who want to get involved with their community. “One place to start is asking your parents or teachers how you can help,” Murphy said. “It’s important to recognize all the valid opinions of people of all ages.”

According to Galvin, the key in getting involved with any cause is to do what feels right and think outside the box. Social studies teachers Erin Haddeland and Dawn Clemens advise students with this initiative where they take what



they learned in class and put into action, whether that be in-school or out. Clemens is immensely proud of the students’ efforts. “It’s amazing,” Clemens said. “They’re just so poised and so passionate about the various topics that they chose.”

Buddy Program Makes Role Models of Students

Since January, two BCSD schools have hosted the “Buddy Program” where older students work with younger students once a week on their academics which has been beneficial to all.

Glenham

At Glenham, second graders in Shannon Davidson’s class help kindergartners on reading and math activities and accompany their buddies to assemblies.

Some students have previous experience in looking after someone younger, as they have younger siblings.



“It’s great for them to care for someone that’s younger

them and look out for students,” Davidson said. “They’re great role models.” “We want to instill this in our school for years to come,” Davidson said. “Glenham is bringing out the student voice.”

Second grader Jack Squilla sees the program as a great way to help others and plans to do it again if given the chance.

Second grader Penelope Conklin is proud to be a buddy because she was able to meet someone new and help them with their academics.

DUTCHESS BOCES | Students Experience Different Career Tracks BOCES Offers

Stephanie Sumano sifted through the cabinet to the left of the hospital bed, walking a group of Beacon High School students through its contents: A kidney basin. A nail care kit. Toothpaste. A small clear tub containing teeth. “These are real dentures,” Sumano said, eliciting a laugh. “They were donated to us to practice denture care.”

Through BOCES, Dutchess County students can enroll in a variety of courses designed to give targeted training in a professional field. Students were able to get hands-on experience in such areas as culinary arts, automotive technology, graphic design and other fields, like nursing.



“I know a lot of people say it’s hard work,” BHS sophomore Laci Brown said of the nursing field, “but to get to help people, it makes me want to do it more.”

BOCES student ambassadors, including Sumano, introduced visiting students to tools, such as several full-body mannequins in practice hospital beds, and subjects they may use in BOCES’ health sciences courses.

The ambassadors also made clear the commitment necessary to thrive in the courses. Sumano noted it takes roughly 400 hours of various learning and training to be ready for the certification exams that follow the Nursing Assistant program.

“You’ll get a lot of experience if you truly want to continue in the medical field,”



Sumano said. “You’ll gain that experience in one-on-one contact

with patients and gain that connection someone else may not have.”

Brown said she is considering joining the nursing program. Even talk of denture care was not enough to quell her interest. “It was a little weird,” she said, laughing again at the donated dentures. “But you got to do what you got to do.”

When students toured the Culinary Arts



facilities they made pinwheels; pastry dough the students cut to resemble a

pinwheel, before adding a cream cheese filling and a mandarin orange in the center.

Working under Chef Instructor Darcy Sala, students practiced the proper way to cut the dough, handle a knife safely and pipe in the filling.

BHS junior Christopher Werse said he did not expect such an active day when he arrived at BOCES, and said he is more interested in joining after seeing the facility.

“I want to get into cooking and knowing how to cook,” he said. “Maybe start my own restaurant.”

South Avenue PTA PUTS THE FUN IN FUNDRAISING

South Avenue’s PTA was able to raise around \$883 in January during a fundraising event where students were able to put into practice what they are learning in school.

The Change Challenge was started by South Avenue PTA secretary and parent Shana Westlake with the idea of students in all grades donating coins and bills, rather than having parents make a large donation. “People have change sitting around at home in jars,” PTA co-president Erica Hughes said. “Pennies count as much as everything else.” Money earned will go toward field trips and end of year celebrations for students.



The activity served as a learning opportunity for students as they are figuring out the value of coins. “The little ones are still learning what a penny is worth,” Hughes said. “It was a good way to involve students.”

The class who raised the most money was given a special party for their efforts. A combined team of Pre-Kindergarten and first grade students emerged victorious earning \$248.79. In total, 7,351 pennies, 1,111 nickels, 1,527 dimes, 1,553 quarters, 10 dollar coins and \$203 in bills were donated.

Kindergartner Laila Johnson likes working with her older buddy, especially on reading and drawing activities. "It feels great," Johnson said. "I like being with a buddy."

J.V. Forrestal

The program was brought back recently at J.V. Forrestal following a pause during COVID-19. Kindergarten teacher Theresa Losito introduced the idea to fourth grade teacher MeriAnne Keogh, who immediately loved it.

Keogh finds that the program serves a dual purpose because her students determine their buddy's reading level, while reinforcing their



own skills. "It's a win-win," Keogh said. "The little

kids are getting that exposure to feel more comfortable reading with another student and then they're getting exposure to practicing and teaching as well."

When fourth grader Mason Walker was in kindergarten, he worked with a fourth grader on reading – now he is returning the favor. After the sessions he already knows what he wants to teach next.

Fourth grader Abeni Buffin's advice to future volunteers is to ask their buddy about the reading to assure they comprehend it. "Ask them questions about the book," Buffin said.

"My reading partner loves animals, so after we're done with a few pages I ask her if she can tell me anything about them."

Landisi & Senior Players Honored



During a February 14 game against Liberty, Landisi scored her 1,000 career point. She was met with roaring applause from the audience and her family, the latter of which came down to the court wearing homemade t-shirts bearing her image and name and holding a poster celebrating this milestone.

COACH of the YEAR 2023-2024

BHS social studies teacher and boys basketball coach Patrick Schetter had a lot to celebrate recently. Not only did his team make it to the Section IX championship, but Schetter was given a very special award himself.



during the down times, but also keep his ego in check, adding this honor will not alter his coaching methods.

"They're there to support me and keep me level headed," Schetter said of his coaches. "Whether I got this award or not, my

mindset wouldn't change."

While the team had a rough start to the season, Schetter gave them a plan do better from New Year's Day on and they have come through with shining colors. Additionally, team members receive enormous support from their parents and the community.

"They've been exposed to the game the right way since they were young," Schetter said. "We want to make our young men better students, better people and better athletes."



The Dutchess County Basketball Association named Schetter its Coach of the Year for 2024. Schetter was honored to receive the distinction especially since he was recognized by his fellow coaches, some whom he has competed against.

"It's nice to be recognized by peers," Schetter said. "This is my first time being named Coach of the Year."

Schetter attributes his success to his assistant coaches who support him

Girls Basketball Team has Successful Season

While it did not make the finals, the BHS girls basketball team gave its best shot, winning several matches over the course of the season and one player achieving a rare feat.



The Secrets to Success

Coach Christina Dahl credits her team's success to its speed, which helps create easy offensive moves, as well as the players' ability to match an opposing team's strengths with effective and varied defensive moves. "You can have a bad shooting night but you're always in control of how to play defense," Dahl explained. "When we're able to press a team is when we score high points."

Camaraderie and plenty of practice before a game has helped lead the team to victories, according to junior Daveya Rodriguez. She added that winning games helps boost her confidence. "Every game we get prepared well so we know what we're going up against," Rodriguez said. "We feed off each other's energy."

Compared to male athletes, senior Devyn Kelly noted that she and her teammates are less selfish because they work together and each bring a different skill set, thus bringing a desired result. "Each one of us has put in points and defense," Kelly said. "We've definitely developed more of a family relationship."

Junior Reilly Landisi considers Kelly a mentor of sorts because of her positive outlook and encouragement when she feels down. "She might not admit it, but I think everyone does look to her," Landisi said of her friend. "If I get upset about a call she's always the first one to be like, 'Reilly, you're good.'"



It was also senior night, where Kelly, as well as fellow seniors Shadaya Fryar, Kiara Rodriguez and Shy'anne Kush were honored for their achievements before the game started. Their teammates shared heartfelt sentiments about their time together, while their families came down from the bleachers to pose for pictures and give them flowers.

Beacon's own Hughes Gives Back

Elijah Hughes, a player for the Milwaukee Bucks' affiliate team the Herd, has shown loyalty to his home school, BHS, by making a generous donation to the boys and girls basketball teams.

Each athlete on the two teams received a pair of Nike sneakers with a note from Hughes himself.

"For those who work tirelessly to perfect their craft, without ever looking at the clock," Hughes said in his note. "This shoe is for you, on your pursuit to becoming the best you can be."

In early February, Hughes reached out to both teams to congratulate them as they geared up for sectionals. He wanted to donate sneakers for the players as they began their postseason games.

Hughes even stopped by briefly to a Feb. 14 girls basketball game to wish them well and pose for some pictures.

"As a former Bulldog, Elijah has always been a supporter of both programs and is always willing to give back," girls basketball coach Christina Dahl said. "His support makes a significant impact on the program and we are incredibly grateful for his contribution."



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GLENHAM

Mia Hernandez, Mackenzie Thorpe, Isaac Viera and Amar'e Whittle in Jaime Riveccio's fifth grade class worked together to create a unique bulletin board outside their classroom. Under the title of "Celebrate Black History!" pictures were displayed of historical African American figures from abolitionist Frederick Douglass to former First Lady Michelle Obama with mini biographies on the back.



Thorpe most enjoyed discovering new information about abolitionist Harriet Tubman, and historical figures she did not know before. "She kept risking her life for others," Thorpe said of Tubman. "I knew some things about her, but I learned more during this project."

Viera was excited to work on the project and was most enamored with civil rights activist Ruby Bridges because of her lifelong dedication to the cause. "She continues to fight for civil rights to this day," Viera said of Bridges. "We were learning about new people and what they did."

In addition to the display, Riveccio had her students write short essays about these figures with prompts such as, "How is America a better place because of them?" Riveccio was surprised to see students resonate more with historical figures such as Tubman, as opposed to contemporary ones like Michael Jordan. "These are figures that they've learned about for so long," Riveccio said. "It's something they really understand and feel knowledgeable about."

BEACON HONORS BLACK HISTORY MONTH SOUTH AVENUE



Starting off the month on a high note was a performance by the Zulu Acrobats who showed off their skills in South Avenue's gym on Feb. 1. The Acrobats are a Tanzanian troupe who bring modern culture and passion with them and base their performance off of 2,000 years of history.



In addition to this, one of the hallways on the second floor featured two display boards with the phrases "We come together" and "Together we stand, divided we fall" with a heart decorated streamer connecting the two.

BHS

During the week of Feb. 12, the Black Student Union (BSU) hosted its second Annual Black History Month themed Spirit Week with special days centered on everything from students



representing their respective culture to showing off their natural hair.

BSU advisers Ron Hammond and Gahiji Manderson noted



that Spirit Week events, such as Natural Hair Day, are opportunities for students to embrace the beauty and culture they were born with. "Some-

times people are afraid or ashamed of what is given to them," Manderson said. "This is just telling them it's OK to be you."

Throughout the years, the BSU has invited older African Americans, from college students to senior citizens, to talk about their life experiences.

"They know what it's like to have traversed all of those years of living," Hammond explained. "Each one of



them has something they can add to the group."

Open to all students, the BSU's mission is to create synergy between students of all races and backgrounds and

make their voices heard. Many students, including last year's class president, have recognized the club's efforts to unify BHS and its members assisting at events.

"We've used that voice for the betterment of the school," Hammond said.

"This is about inclusion and deepening the bonds that you can have with people who you don't normally have associations with."

