



# Bulldog

## BULLETIN

WINTER BREAK 2024

### Message from the Superintendent

I want to wish the Beacon community a Happy New Year! In this edition of the Bulldog Bulletin, many powerful examples of community events were hosted at our schools over the past month. These events brought together families, school staff, and students and are part of the fabric of what makes our community so great.

Thank you for supporting these activities and celebrating the achievements of our students. I greatly appreciate it!

Here's to an amazing 2025!

—Matt Landahl

### Breakfast Celebrates Special Connections at Sargent ES

Instead of bringing in only a parent or grandparent to school, Sargent's kindergarten students invited **anyone that is special** in their lives to be part of a different kind of breakfast held Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>.



The Special Person Breakfast was the brainchild of Sargent's head custodian Kaeleigh Beahan who was inspired to have one at Sargent after attending a similar event at her daughter's school.

Principal Cathryn Biordi liked the idea and the two worked with cafeteria staff to

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### Community Events Inspired by the Season!

#### Sargent Winterfest



It was a cold night in Beacon on Dec. 6, but it was nice and toasty inside Sargent's gym during the third annual

Winterfest, hosted by the school's PTO. Holiday songs and dance favorites like "Gangnam Style" pumped through the speakers that got students, some of whom dressed up, energized, while a projector showed Muppet Christmas movies to set the mood.

There were also snacks and hot chocolate, a festive themed photo booth and a table where everyone could make "Jingle Bell" friendship bracelets or get temporary holiday tattoos.



The event has been a hit with students and their families, who enjoy spending time together, PTO president Ryan Biracree said. "Any chance for the kids to all to be together and be in a big room with music, that's kind of all they want," Biracree said. "It's a good time in the year where they've made good friendships and they're excited to be here."

#### Glenham Paint & Sip

Glenham's PTO welcomed tables of families to have some hot chocolate and paint a snowman during the inaugural Winter Paint & Sip.



Seeing students and their families be creative together was something PTO member Nadia Geary very much appreciated.

"It was nice to see that parents were also painting with their kids, not just overseeing them," Geary said. "It is

a family fun night and parents could participate."

PTO member Chelsea Merando found that even the adults enjoyed themselves and she was happy to see a good turnout.

"I honestly think the adults had more fun than the kids," Merando said with a laugh. "I think it's so important to have a creative outlet as a family."

#### BHS Holiday Lights

BHS students celebrated the holiday season with a party of their own Dec. 13 as part of the school's monthly Friday Night Lights program which encourages students to spend a fun night together socializing rather than being home.

In the spirit of the season, teachers who organized the party dressed in ugly Christmas sweaters and even some of the students donned antlers and Santa hats.

Some kids took their turns at karaoke, while others built gingerbread houses and trains that were judged on their sturdiness and design.



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## South Ave. Gifting Shop

Between all the holiday celebrations the district offered, luckily there was still time to shop, thanks to South Avenue's PTA.

The week of Dec. 9, South Avenue students, divided by class, could purchase anything from books to hand knitted socks for their families, but had to make sure they stayed within their budget at the school's Gifting Shop, where nothing was over \$3.



The shop was hosted partially to give students life skills where they could independently purchase items they thought their family members would like.

"I love watching them think about giving a gift to someone they care about," PTA member and shop organizer Helen Ehmann said.

Ehmann and her fellow PTA members ensured that every student could participate, so those who needed it received a \$10 voucher.

"If they came in without money, they could still shop with their class," Ehmann said. "No one gets left out."

## Rombout Turkey Bowl

In the run-up to Thanksgiving and the various football games that play on TV around that time, Rombout staged its own game Nov. 15 with a festive twist. The Turkey Bowl saw middle school students compete on the BHS football turf playing against each other in quarters both for fun and to see if the sport is right for them. Despite the chill in the air, eighth grader Marcus Brooks enjoyed the game nonetheless and had one simple goal he wanted to achieve.



He shared one aspect of the game that makes it more unique than a regular football game. "It's nice that some kids who don't know how to play football can play it," Davis said. "It's been a lot of fun."



## Turkey Caroling Delights Glenham Classrooms

Glenham's three kindergarten classes, decked in turkey hats, marched through the school's hallways Nov. 22 to do some caroling, but instead of gobbling they sang lovely songs in honor of the holiday about thankfulness.



The kids were true professionals when they visited several classrooms and the main office to sing such tunes as "We Eat Turkey" and "If You're Thankful and You Know It."

Teacher Shannon Davidson noted that this unique tradition was brought back after many years because the kindergarten students love to sing and wanted to share their songs with everyone.

"They like to work hard on something and then be able to show it off," Davidson said. "They are really proud of themselves for their hard work, but they're also really thankful for their family and friends and just coming to school every day." For Charlotte, her favorite song she sang was "The Turkey is a Funny Bird," for one simple reason. "I like it because it's funny," she said.

## Forrestal Fall Festival



It was a festival that was smaller than one might expect, but it was tons of fun regardless of size. Second grade students and their families, gathered together in Jennifer Gall's classroom Nov. 21 for the annual Fall Festival.

The students colored in turkey and scarecrow cutouts, wrote down what they were thankful

for and played "Thanksgiving Celebration Bingo" Every 20 minutes they rotated so everyone had a chance to try the different activity stations manned by parent volunteers.

They also enjoyed an impressive array of snacks with sparkling apple cider to wash them down.



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## Breakfast Celebrates Special Connections at Sargent ES



provide a light breakfast of donuts, cereal, fruit, juice and coffee for everyone. It served as a chance for students to spend quality time with parents, aunts, uncles and even babysitters at their school, which they are immensely proud of.

"They get to show off a little part of their school," Biordi said of the students. "The teachers all come down and say 'hi' and get to meet the student's special person ... it's a fun way to start the day."

Sasha Beckerman invited her babysitter Kalli Price to breakfast, which Price considered a real honor as she has not seen Beckerman for a while. "I'm shocked she wanted me here," Price said. "It's been great to see all her friends and see how she interacts with other kids." First and second graders will be able to bring their own special person to breakfast on Jan. 10 starting at 8 am in the Sargent cafeteria. A larger scale breakfast exclusively for fifth graders will be held at the end of the school year to celebrate their moving up to sixth grade.





## TRACK TEAM GOES TO MANHATTAN COLLEGE INVITATIONAL



Members of BHS' cross-country team represented Beacon at the state level during the Manhattan College Cross Country Invitational at Van Cortland Park in the Bronx during early fall where students worked hard and challenged themselves.

Freshman Elise Moran placed 21<sup>st</sup> out of 100 runners in the Freshman Girls "A" category and enjoyed the run because it was shorter than a typical run she does. She felt honored to represent the school at such a level and took a few lessons with her that she will use on the track during future runs.

"I learned not to be hard on myself and to tell myself positive things," Moran said. "I really liked it."

While sophomore Rudy Vergolina, who placed 69<sup>th</sup> out of 110 sophomores and freshmen, found the run stressful and ran through half of it with a cramp, he still enjoyed the race where he went out of his comfort zone. He advised future athletes to not be afraid to do the same.

"I definitely pushed myself more than I do at typical races," Vergolina recalled. "It was a nice experience."



## BHS JUNIOR NABS BASKETBALL HONOR

Junior Michai Thompson made BHS proud when he was selected to participate in the Basketball Coaches Association of New York's Annual Mid-Hudson Hoops Showcase held in late October.



For Thompson, it was exciting to be picked because he loves playing basketball on behalf of BHS and felt honored to play at such a level, even if he did not win anything.

"I love my town, I love to play for them anytime and I couldn't see myself playing for anyone else," Thompson said. "I'm just happy to play and do what I can."

Basketball coach Patrick Schetter was happy that Thompson got a chance to show off what he can do during the showcase. He described Thompson as a consistent hard worker and coached him on how to stand out as the game was more about showing off skills, than competing.

"He loves the game, but he also loves

the hard work," Schetter said of Thompson. "He puts in the extra stuff that not everybody sees on game day that makes him a little more special."

## BHS STUDENTS REPRESENT BHS AT SPORTS CONFERENCE



Two of Beacon's star athletes, senior Reilly Landisi and sophomore Elijah Epps, represented the district at the Student-Athlete Leadership Summit, presented by the Mid-Hudson School Study Council, Mount Saint Mary College and Sections I and IX of the New York State Public High School Athletic Association.

Landisi was excited to have the opportunity to attend the summit and learned what coaches keep an eye on during games. "Your body language matters to coaches ... I'm going to keep that in my mind," Landisi said. "It was a perfect time for me to hear it because I'm about to, hopefully, play for a new coach in college."

Epps enjoyed seeing schools coming together to learn all about leadership in sports. He hopes to connect with more attendees at future summits. "The summit has shown me how leadership develops throughout the section," Epps said of the summit. "It really helped me with what I want to do moving forward."

## ROMBOUT MS FLAGS FOR VETERANS



Nayomi Gillman was honored to show support for local veterans, including her grandfather who served in the Navy. "I think he would be proud and like, 'Yes, that's my girl,'" Gillman said of her grandfather. "Always respect your ancestors so you can know what they went through to protect our country."

## SARGENT ES LOCAL VETERAN VISITS

Tye Tedford, an Army veteran who served from 1988 to 1991, visited Sargent on Nov. 7 to talk to his daughter Mary Rose's first grade class about his military experience. He was a combat engineer who was stationed in Kitzingen, Germany and then in Kuwait during Operation Desert Storm.

## BCSD HONORS LOCAL VETERANS

Members of Rombout's Student Council spent time on the morning of Nov. 8 planting 100 American flags outside the school's entrance in honor of 100 veterans who live in the area. This show of appreciation dovetailed nicely with the school's "RMS Honors Our Veterans Initiative" where over \$800 was raised for Beacon's chapter of Veterans of Foreign Wars. Assistant Principal Mike Carofano brought the idea to Rombout after seeing a similar display New Jersey in honor of Memorial Day.

"I thought that we could put our own stamp on it and honor all veterans, living or deceased for Veterans Day," Carofano said. "It's been a really positive initiative." He noted that much can be learned from veterans simply by hearing their stories.

While planting the flags into the ground proved to be hard work, sixth grader



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## SARGENT ES LOCAL VETERAN VISITS CONT'D...

"It was one of the best decisions I ever made," Tedford recalled. Tedford's visit was arranged by his wife who spoke with teacher Dawn Hammond about bringing him in. He explained how service members protect freedoms using an analogy likening to being forced to eat only one kind of ice cream to ensure students could relate.

"We protect all freedoms, from big choices to small choices," Tedford explained. "They understood that."

For Tedford, it is important to give talks like these to show that veterans are ordinary people who do extraordinary things.

"Veterans are real heroes for America and they could be everyday people that you know," Tedford said. Students enjoyed Tedford's talk, including Dean Murphy who appreciated seeing him in uniform. "It was really, really exciting," he said.



## Holiday Concerts Take a Bite Out of the Winter Chill

Beacon High School's Pete and Toshi Seeger Theatre was filled with the sounds of beautiful holiday music this December performed by some of the district's finest student musicians from all grade levels.



Sargent's show consisted of choral and band performances of such tunes as "Carol of the Bells" and a medley of holiday standards titled "On with the Snow." Fifth grader Nyla Jordan, who pulled double duty playing clarinet and singing, enjoyed performing "Carol of the Bells" best for a peculiar reason.

"It was a little bit of a challenge because it was kind of fast," Jordan said of the song. "I had a lot of fun."

Before the official performances, the BHS Chorus did a practice run of their set list for all the elementary schools during the week of Dec. 9, including South Ave. who thanked the chorus on its Instagram page.



The Rombout band started Glenham students' morning on a festive note Dec. 16 when they played holiday classics such as "Deck the Halls" and "Good King Wenceslas" in the school's main lobby as they shuffled their way to their classes. They also toured the other elementary schools spreading holiday cheer.

We hope everyone enjoyed the shows and that you have a wonderful holiday with your loved ones.



## 20 BCSD Students Attend NYSSMA festival!

Twenty of Beacon High School's excellent student musicians were selected to participate in New York State School Music Association's (NYSSMA) Zone 10 Area All State Music Festival in late November.

The students were selected from their spring NYSSMA solo scores to attend the festival which features high school musicians from across Dutchess, Putnam and Columbia counties.



It was the first time freshman flautist Zora Nicholls participated and while she was initially nervous to perform, she found it was similar to when she previously participated in NYSSMA's

all county festival. She appreciated everyone's professionalism.

"It was super fun to have everyone actually care about what they were doing and we sounded good," Nicholls said. "I respect the good players in our band."

Sophomore Atlas Baltz, a low bass singer in the chorus, found that the festival was a challenge but it helped

him grow as a choral singer. He appreciates being able to come together with fellow student musicians through music.

"It's really a beautiful thing that we all just create music together," Baltz said. "I was very glad that I participated in it."

