

School Gram

Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda Union Free School District

Making the Most Out of Winter



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Physical Education classes no longer have to spend all winter indoors thanks to snowshoes acquired through the Physical Education Program (PEP) grant. Pictured here are Lindbergh Elementary students Annie Ferguson, Mia Aiello, and Mia Mogavero giving their new snowshoes a try. **Page 10**

Two Schools Pilot Exciting New Reading Framework

Readers are flourishing in Ken-Ton schools! A newly implemented reading framework, piloted in two Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda elementary schools, supports student achievement by growing students' reading levels, according to enthusiastic principals and teachers taking part in the pilot.

The framework, provided by the American Reading Company, motivates, empowers and engages our students as readers while giving teachers the tools they need to better understand each student's strengths and weaknesses. This allows teachers to address each student's unique needs.

"As a kindergarten teacher, I value that the framework is based on the understanding that all of our students enter school – especially kindergartners – at various skill levels and with a very different understanding of literacy and books and reading. I think this is going to be a great way to approach that and meet



Clockwise, from top left, Franklin Elementary kindergarten students Decklan Hartman, Noah Gullia, Kyera Wytenbach and Isabella Haynes choose books at their own reading levels.

students where they are," said Tracy Wilson, a kindergarten teacher at Franklin Elementary School, who shared her experience at a recent Board of Education meeting along with other educators involved with the pilot.

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A MESSAGE FROM DAWN MIRAND, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Consolidation planning is underway, and the District is moving along on schedule! Remember that on April 1, 2014, after two years of exhaustive study, the Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda UFSD Board of Education voted to initiate district reorganization scenario "I." The closing of Hamilton Elementary, Roosevelt Elementary, and Kenmore Middle School will take place on or around July 1, 2016.

Though the transition plan will not fully take effect until the beginning of the 2016-17 school year, a great deal of work has already taken place and is underway. Three committees comprised of teachers, administrators, Board members, and parents – one for the elementary school level (grades K-4), one for the middle school level (grades 5-7), and one for the high school level (grades 8-12) – have been hard at work to ensure a smooth transition.

Next school year, beginning in September 2015, all kindergarten classes at Hamilton Elementary and Roosevelt Elementary will begin at their new consolidation schools. In addition, all incoming sixth-graders at Kenmore Middle School will begin their sixth-grade year at Hoover Middle or Franklin Middle according to the boundaries and new feeder school patterns set in April 2014. The elementary and middle schools that will receive these additional students are excited to welcome them to their school families!

The District administration team has been busily anticipating and preparing for all possible scenarios to accommodate our families as a result of redrawn district attendance lines and the recent closure of Jefferson Elementary School. These cases are identified at www.ktufsd.org/transition. Families affected by these cases have been contacted by mail, but if you believe you are among these families and have not received a letter, or if there is a scenario that we have not yet thought of, be sure to email transition@ktufsd.org or call us at 874-8400 ext. 20699. We want to help and work with our community for the smoothest of transitions.

The High School Transition Committee is planning for the changes that will take place beginning in 2016-17. Our next year's seventh-graders at Kenmore, Hoover and



**Dawn Mirand,
Superintendent**

Franklin middle schools will begin their eighth-grade year at either Kenmore East High School or Kenmore West High School as both schools convert to a grade 8-12 configuration.

The Middle School Transition Committee is working to support next year's fifth-graders as they transition to their new middle schools. Brainstorming ways to assist next year's fourth-grade classes throughout the District

is also on the agenda as they make the move to the middle school level with Franklin and Hoover middle Schools transitioning to grade 5-7 schools.

Finally, the Elementary School Transition Committee is working to support next year's first-, second- and third-grade classes at Roosevelt and Hamilton elementary schools transition to their new elementary schools. All are very excited to welcome the students to their school communities.

Communicating, guiding, brainstorming solutions to issues, and working together for the smoothest of transitions remains a priority for our District. The transition committees have been instrumental in anticipating and supporting the transition – with representation from teachers, administrators, Board members, and parents – and will have guided the district as Hamilton Elementary, Roosevelt Elementary and Kenmore Middle School prepare to close their doors.

I encourage everyone to visit www.ktufsd.org/transition, which will be the central point of information on everything related to the transition plan. Take advantage of the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school locators to identify where your own children will be attending school, find answers to frequently asked questions, follow the work of the transition committees, and communicate any questions or concerns you might have about the transition plan, which may be emailed to transition@ktufsd.org. Your input is welcomed as the district undergoes this exciting and historic transition! Together, we will continue to "educate, prepare and inspire all students to achieve their highest potential!" Thank you for your continued support!

Dawn Mirand,
Superintendent of Schools



Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda Union Free School District

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Board of Education

Bob Dana, President
Stephen Brooks, Vice President
Todd Potter, Trustee
Annemarie Gibson, Trustee
Jill O'Malley, Trustee

Dawn Mirand,
Superintendent

Board Meetings

Regularly scheduled Board meetings are open to the public and usually begin at 6:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of every month.

Call 874-8400 ext. 20342 to confirm the time and location.

SchoolGram

The SchoolGram is the official newsletter of the Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda Union Free School District and regular editions are published four times a year.

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For the latest Ken-Ton news, visit www.ktufsd.org and visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/kentonufsd

District Honors Two Newly Board-Certified Teachers

Two Franklin Middle School teachers were among only eight teachers in Western New York to earn National Board Certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards during the 2013-14 school year.

Kathleen Reiser, an eighth-grade ELA and academic intervention services teacher, and Jeanette Yoder, a sixth-grade reading teacher, successfully completed the year-long certification process, both on their first try, after initiating the process in September 2013.

They each had to design, implement and videotape lessons and submit detailed reflections on evidence that demonstrated their students' learning. They also had to demonstrate their contributions to the community and teaching profession.

"It was a huge challenge, but I



Teachers Jeanette Yoder, left, and Kathleen Reiser, right, are honored by Superintendent Dawn Mirand and Board of Education President Bob Dana.

enjoyed working together with my students to improve my teaching," Reiser said. "I also look forward to sharing what I have learned with other teachers, especially about meeting students' learning needs."

"The support of the Ken-Ton district and the Kenmore Teachers

Association was critical to being able to achieve this milestone," Yoder said. "I feel I am a stronger, more reflective reading teacher. The process renewed my commitment to impact student learning with positive and effective practices."

National Board Teaching Certification is a performance-based peer-review process similar to board certification in medicine. To date, more than 110,000 teachers have achieved the profession's gold standard for accomplished teaching based on standards that were created by teachers for teachers to define what teachers should know and be able to do to advance student learning, according to the NBPTS.

The Board of Education honored Reiser and Yoder for their achievement during a Board meeting in January.

Staff Email Addresses Change With Conversion to Google Apps

The Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda UFSD has converted to a new email platform, which has resulted in a change to all staff email addresses. The domain name for all school district email addresses has changed from "kenton.k12.ny.us" to "ktufsd.org," short for "Ken-Ton Union Free School District." Though the change has already taken place, school district personnel will still be able to receive mail sent to their old email addresses until May 1.

The change resulted from the district's conversion to Google Apps for Education, which will lower infrastructure costs while providing many benefits for users and those with whom they communicate.

Beginning in the early 1990s, school and district personnel have used the software suite FirstClass to manage email, calendars and other functions. By transitioning to Google Apps for Education, a free suite of web-based applications provided by Google, the district can manage these functions without having to spend money on things like software and servers. The district can also leverage the innovative applications and support provided by Google, one of the world's foremost providers of information technology solutions.

The Information Technology Department has led this effort by transitioning staff members to Google beginning in November with a small number of staff in order to identify



and solve conversion issues. The rest of the staff followed beginning in January.

Until May 1, staff can still receive email sent to their old FirstClass "kenton.k12.ny.us" email addresses since emails are being redirected to their new "ktufsd.org" Google email accounts. After May 1, inbound and outbound email in FirstClass will be disabled in preparation for the shutting down of the FirstClass servers.

Benefits of Google Apps for Education include lower infrastructure and support costs, the elimination of redundancies through the consolidation of various communication platforms, the ability to log in anywhere there is internet access, and access to cutting edge applications through Google. The migration to Google Apps for Education also benefits students, who will be able to use the new platform for educational purposes.

The school district website domain name has also changed to "ktufsd.org." Though users can still access the district website at www.kenton.k12.ny.us for the time being, the URL is now www.ktufsd.org.

ATHLETICS

Students Compete in Section VI Championships and Beyond

The following is a summary of high school teams and athletes who competed in the New York State Public High School Athletic Association Section VI playoffs and beyond:

Rifle: The combined Ken-East and Ken-West Rifle team placed second in the Section VI team championships. Junior Morgan DiMaria from Ken-East earned a spot in the State Rifle Championships as part of the Section VI team, which ended up placing second. Morgan placed 10th overall in the state.

Ken-East Boys Bowling: The Bulldogs narrowly beat Tonawanda in the Section VI Boys Bowling Championship by a score of 5,577-5,573 in a match that came down to the final bowler of the final frame. The Bulldogs placed fourth in the state championships in Syracuse with 5,782, just 14 pins shy of a third-place finish and 32 pins shy of second place. Dominic Germano and Kyle Fetes led the team, finishing eighth and 10th overall in the state respectively.

Girls Hockey: The combined Ken-West and Ken-East team were again the team to beat this year in Section VI. They defeated Williamsville 6-3 to win their fourth straight Section VI championship. They won the state semifinal against Alexandria Bay/Thousand Islands by a score of 2-1 but they lost the state championship game to Massena 3-0. In the Federation playoffs, the Devil Dogs beat West Seneca/Hamburg 3-0 and then Williamsville 1-0, earning a place in the championship game, where they fell to Monsignor Martin 1-0.

Ken-West Wrestling: Mitch Currey easily secured a place in the state wrestling championships after a spectacular showing in the Section VI championships, where he ran the table in the 195-pound weight class. Anthony Argentieri also had a strong showing in the Section VI championships but lost the final match in the 120-pound weight class. But he had enough points through the season to secure a wild card spot and accompanied Currey to Albany, where he placed sixth overall in the state championships.



Top, the Kenmore Girls Hockey team (Section VI champions); bottom, the Ken-West Girls Basketball team (Niagara Frontier League champions); and at right, Ken-East junior and Rifle competitor Morgan DiMaria (10th overall in the state championships).

Ken-West Swimming: Swimmer Justin Sagasta qualified for the 200 IM in the state championships before the Section VI championships even started. There, he placed second in the 500 freestyle, missing the qualifying time by only six one-hundredths of a second. He also placed third in the 200 freestyle.

Ken-West Indoor Track: Competing in the Section VI championships at Houghton College, two runners placed in the top 10: Aaron Dobozi, placing fourth in the 600, and Jordan Sobon, placing eighth in the 1500.

Ken-East Boys Varsity Hockey: With a 13-5-2 overall record, the Bulldogs entered the Section VI playoffs as the second seed, earning a bye in the pre-quarter finals. They went on



to defeat West Seneca West by a score of 5-2, and then got revenge against Hamburg, which beat them twice in the regular season, with a quadruple-overtime 1-0 win. The Bulldogs ended up falling 2-0 to Williamsville East in the Section VI championship game.

Ken-West Girls Varsity Basketball: After winning the Niagara Frontier League season championship title for the first time in school history with a stellar 17-2 record, the Lady Blue Devils entered the Section VI playoffs as the third seed. Their only losses in the regular season were to Ken-East and rival Mount Mercy. In the Section VI quarterfinals, they lost to Clarence 54-39.

ATHLETICS

Ken-West Again Hosts NYS Gymnastics Finals

For the second time in just over a decade, Ken-West was chosen as the host site for the NYSPHSAA Girls Gymnastics Championships on Feb. 28.

Members of the Ken-West team along with coaches and parents were responsible for all aspects of organizing the competition, which included the vault, uneven bars, floor exercise, balance beam, and all-around.

"We've gotten rave reviews," said co-coach Kelly Blaszak. "People like coming to Kenmore West."

Gymnastics is a fall sport in Section VI but a winter sport elsewhere in the state. Ken-Ton students weren't among those competing in the championships, but there are high hopes for next year. The recently combined Ken-East and Ken-West team has a lot of upcoming



Teams gather at Kenmore West for the state gymnastics championships.

talent and will be competing as part of Division I next year, which means they are counted as among the top six teams in Section VI after this season's success.

Buffalo Turners, Gleason's Gymnastics, Greater Buffalo Gymnastics, and Stumpf's Gymnastics Center continue to be a big driver of the local talent for the team, according to Blaszak.

Scholar-Athletes

Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda students once again continue to shine in the classroom as well as on the field.

A total of 13 winter varsity teams were honored by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association with the Scholar-Athlete Award for carrying cumulative team GPAs of 90% or higher.

The following teams earned the prestigious state honor. From Kenmore East: Boys Basketball, Girls Basketball, Boys Bowling, Girls Cheerleading, Boys Ice Hockey, Girls Ice Hockey, Girls Indoor Track, and Rifle. From Kenmore West: Girls Indoor Track, Boys Indoor Track, Girls Bowling, Boys Ice Hockey, and Girls Basketball.

Ken-Ton Community Education Rated Best in WNY

Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda UFSD Community Education programs were voted the best in Western New York in the regional "Forever Young Faves" awards.

"Forever Young" is a Western New York magazine geared toward readers age 50 and above and a division of "Buffalo Spree." This is the second year the magazine has sponsored the Forever Young Faves awards to provide a list of the best of what Western New York has to offer.

Winners are determined by vote and the Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda UFSD was voted No. 1 in

the Community Education category. The district's Community Education Department received a plaque in recognition of the distinction and was featured by "Forever Young."

"Ken-Ton offers hundreds of courses on a wide variety of subjects, with three sessions (fall, winter and spring/summer) each year," the magazine stated. "Classes are open to all, but Ken-Ton School District residents age 60 and over are eligible for Gold Card discounts. Want to learn how to do professional voice-overs, hone your psychic abilities or become adept at a new computer program?

Ken-Ton has you covered."

You can find the spring course catalog at www.ktufsd.org/communityeducation.

According to Deborah Atkinson, community education coordinator, staff didn't even know they were contenders for the Forever Young Faves and notification of the win came as a surprise.

"Our department is proud of this recognition," she said. "It's nice to know we are providing a service to the community that is appreciated."

To see the complete list of winners, visit www.foreveryoungwny.com.

Students Help Make 28th Annual Sleepout a Tremendous Success

Approximately 50 people participated in the 28th Annual Jerry Starr Ken-Ton Schools' Sleepout on Feb. 6. They slept outside to raise awareness for the homeless and collect more than \$5,000 and other donations for those in need in the community.

Special guests and speakers included Tonawanda Town Supervisor Anthony Caruana and State Sen. Robert Ortt.

There were many school fundraisers supporting the event including paper teddy bears sold by Roosevelt Elementary's K-Kids Club and a chili cook-off by Roosevelt faculty. At the event, the Boy Scouts sold pizza and pop to raise extra money. A plaque was awarded to retiring Roosevelt teacher Christine Fricano in recognition of her longtime support for the cause. Food and clothes were donated to St. Luke's

Mission of Mercy in Buffalo.

"It was just a good night. There was a lot of energy. I'm already looking forward to the 29th Sleepout next year," said Sleepout coordinator Stephen Ash.

Ash expressed gratitude toward the Brighton Volunteer Fire Department, which lends its support each year, as well as Sen. Ortt and Supervisor Caruana.

A First Stop for Support

Family Support Center Addresses Non-Academic Barriers to Learning

Over the past 12 years, for thousands of students of all ages, the Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda UFSD Family Support Center has helped improve social and emotional well-being and parent involvement, both of which have a direct correlation with academic outcomes, through a unique family-oriented model of support.

There is a lot that makes the Family Support Center unique, but above all is the support it receives from all corners of the Ken-Ton community. The counseling staff is comprised of two dozen school counselors, psychologists and social workers from Ken-Ton schools who work extra hours after their normal work days at a significantly lower rate than their regular salaries. Every year, teachers and staff donate to a United Way fund to provide cab service for families who would have difficulty traveling to and from the center. The Girl Scouts Troop #30755 supply bags containing every item a family might need to throw a birthday party for a child. All year long, schools and community organizations provide donations of food, clothing, and other items so they are always on hand for families in need. And that's just a few examples.

"The success of the Family Support Center is truly a community effort," said Janet Cerra, Family Support Center coordinator. "The support that we receive from all corners of the district and the community is what sustains us. Without this collaboration, the Family Support Center would not be what it is today."

Cerra has coordinated the activities of the Family Support Center since it was first established in Ken-Ton in 2003. At the time, district officials used a program operated at another district as a model; in fact, Cerra, who ran that



program, was recruited to spearhead it in Ken-Ton. The fundamental goal was to provide a resource for families to address a range of issues that adversely affect students' performance in the classroom.

"This program is set up to be a family, community, and school collaboration," Cerra said. "Just like schools address academic barriers to learning, we address the non-academic barriers to learning."

Their work has paid off. District administrators cite the Family Support Center as an extremely valuable resource not only for families but for the district as well since it helps to keep students on track academically and reduces the financial costs and academic interruptions associated with long-term suspensions. Also, in a report released in October 2013 by the John R. Oishei Foundation's Mobile Safety-Net Team and UB Regional Institute on communities most affected by the 2008 economic downturn, the Family Support Center was identified as one of the three greatest assets to families in need in Kenmore and the Town of Tonawanda. There is also data that demonstrates the positive impact the center has had on the social and emotional well-being of children

and families and a major impact on parent involvement.

A Family-Oriented Approach

Walk through the Family Support Center, and one of the first things that might catch your attention are the ornate mobiles made of copper wiring that hang from the ceiling in the waiting area and counseling rooms. They represent multiple generations of one family, symbolizing the fundamental philosophy that gives the center its name.

"This is a family counseling center. Kids don't come here alone. They come here with their families. If something is going on with someone in the family, it affects everyone on up to grandma and grandpa," Cerra said.

If a student is having trouble in school because of issues related to behavior and social and emotional developmental health, counseling is provided to the entire family. This is because issues at home might be the cause of the child's struggles and what is causing the child to struggle might be affecting the entire family, compounding the problem. These are just a handful of examples:

- A child is identified as having an auditory processing disorder that makes it difficult to follow verbal commands. At home, parents are

interpreting the child's failure to follow direction as misbehavior and are disciplining the child. Counselors educate the family about the nature of the disorder, help the parents to understand that the child is not being disobedient, provide guidance for parents on issuing commands that are easier for the child to process, ensure the child is receiving individualized support, and help the family heal from the negative confrontations that have taken place at home.

- A child is misbehaving in school because of a serious issue at home. Counselors work with the entire family to get to the bottom of the issue, help everyone understand how that issue is affecting each member of the family, and help the family address the issue. This benefits the child's younger brothers and sisters, who might have found themselves facing the same challenges in school later on in life had the issue not been addressed.

- A child is struggling in school because of anxiety. While counselors work with the child on the sources of the anxiety and ways to overcome it, they work with the parents to help them understand the nature of the anxiety and ways they can help their child at home.

"If we can give families the skills to address what's going on, it's like the old adage of teaching someone to fish," Cerra said. "Systemic changes happen at the family level. Engagement between the school, community and parents – that's what's going to help a child stay in school and do better in school."

A First Stop for Families

More than 18 months ago, the Family Support Center moved into its new home in the building on Myron Avenue behind Kenmore Middle School. The building has had many uses over the years – classrooms, athletics, storage – and it was transformed by district building and grounds crews, who rebuilt the interior from scratch.

Art adorns virtually every wall in the center, all of it by students. An inviting waiting room with a voluminous lending library of books and informational materials



adjoins a reception area and office. In one direction is a circle of family counseling rooms – five in total along with a conference room and play therapy room. Through the middle of the counseling rooms runs a corridor which allows counselors to view each room through one-way mirrors.

The one-way mirrors play an important part in family counseling. Two counselors join with the family in the counseling room while another takes his or her spot on the other side of the one-way mirror, listening with headphones to ensure privacy. Everyone is aware of the presence of the third counselor, who plays a critical role by observing, taking notes, looking up information, and communicating through a wall-mounted phone when needed.

The waiting room also leads to a kitchen, lounge, and food storage area. The Family Support Center is not a food pantry, though it always has food on hand, especially for families that struggle with food insecurity – meaning they do not have consistent access to food at times during the year. Likewise, the center keeps winter jackets on hand and asks children to leave their coats they have outgrown for one their size if they need it.

The center works closely with many local agencies so that specialists can provide more specific, individualized support at the center

in addition to family counseling provided by the center's two dozen licensed counselors, social workers, and psychologists from the schools. The center is not a provider of direct mental health care, though these connections are made at the center.

"As parents, it's hard to sort their way through all the resources that are available," Cerra said. "The Family Support Center is a first stop."

'A Wonderful Resource'

Last year, the Family Support Center served 699 families from all socioeconomic groups. Rarely are families served for only one session, which means it can get busy – as many as five or six families served each hour and 30 served in a day. The center is open for all school district residents as well as employees of the districts.

In August 2012, tragedy struck Kenmore Middle School teacher Elaine Grant and her three children when her husband passed away in a bicycling accident during a triathlon. It was at the Family Support Center that she received the help she needed to recover from the devastating loss.

"She really helped me get through the grieving process and keep things in perspective," Grant said of Cerra, from whom she received counseling on a weekly basis following the accident. "It's so helpful to have someone else coach you through the process. I definitely could not have healed the same way without the counseling I received there."

Grant still visits from time to time when she needs it. While going there for counseling, she encountered one of her own students and observed the student undergo a transformation because of the support available there. Now, Grant wants to find a way to help children and families at the center the same way she herself was helped.

"It's such a wonderful place and a wonderful resource for families in the community and staff members too. I didn't know how much really went on there until I started going there myself," Grant said. "It's a wonderfully warm and inviting place. It's a place you want to go to because you see people really being helped." ■

Continued: Helping Readers Flourish Through New Framework

Continued from Page 1

Through American Reading, schools are able to determine individual students' reading levels like never before. Classrooms receive hundreds of books that are organized by color levels that match reading levels. Students are able to choose what books they want to read based on their reading level. Students are being challenged and empowered with confidence in their reading abilities, according to Franklin Elementary kindergarten teacher Kim Ingerson.

"The focus on reading books at their independent level is actually going to help provide them confidence, which I'm excited about, so that they can view themselves as a better reader," she said.

Ingerson observed how excited her own students were to have the ability to choose what books they would read as part of the required 60 minutes of reading per day – 30 minutes in class, and 30 minutes at home. That is key, according to American Reading coach Sandy Jelkovak.

"The effort and energy that goes into teaching children how to be strong readers, good comprehension, and self-monitoring strategies is the basis of great performance," Jelkovak said. "We know children need to have strong reading abilities. We know they need to have the ability to process and absorb content knowledge. They need to be motivated, and one of the highest motivators for students is choice."

Students are further motivated with incentives, medals, and the pure joy of reading beloved books. Students receive incentives as they meet milestones and targets and advance their reading levels.

The American Reading framework was a response to indications that our students need to be reading at



Students in Katherine Sacco's first-grade class at Franklin Elementary School read with their new American Reading materials.

or above grade level grade in order to achieve and be successful. The American Reading Company is a provider of educational services that is now in all 50 states with the goal of ensuring that all students are reading on or above grade level. In addition to providing books and a system for identifying students' reading levels,

American Reading provides innovative tools to monitor students' progress in real-time as well as professional development, resources for parents, and more.

"It's a framework to identify where our students are as readers, to work alongside teachers to learn about each student as an individual reader, and coach the student to the next level," said Superintendent Dawn Mirand.

Recommendations from the principals and

teachers who are participating in the pilot will help refine the reading framework, the literacy block, and instructional materials so that the programs offered in elementary schools yield the highest possible growth for students as readers.

For Michael Huff, principal of Hoover Elementary School, the

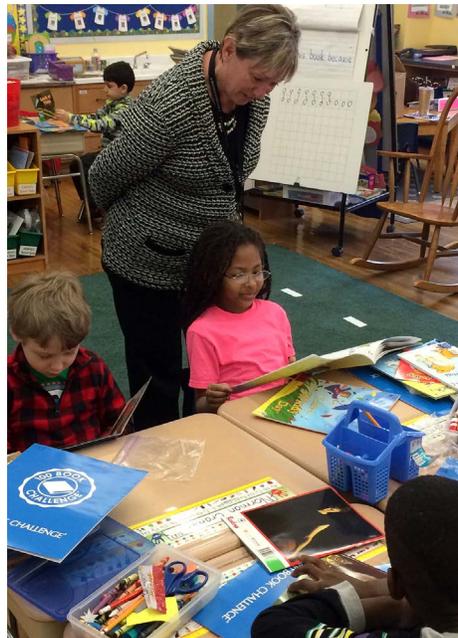
ability to monitor student growth individually as well as at the group, classroom, grade, and building level through the framework is a tremendous benefit since it will allow teachers to modify instruction based on each student's unique needs and drive professional development and support.

"American Reading is a framework that truly provides us with a response-to-instruction model for both students and teachers," Huff said. "I wanted Hoover Elementary School to be part of the American Reading implementation because of its processes around formative assessment and the use of technology for data collection. Once routines have been established, teachers will have built the structures in their classroom that provide a continuous check of each child's needs and progress. It not only has the potential for setting student-specific learning goals, but also facilitates small group and whole-classroom instruction."



"It's so important for the students to know where they are at all times and to have a say in what their goals are."

– Patricia Kosis,
Franklin Elementary
School Principal



Educators pilot the American Reading framework for students at Franklin and Hoover elementary schools, allowing their students choose books that are at their own reading level and giving teachers more opportunities for individualized support.

That data, according to Franklin Elementary School Principal Patricia Kosis, will change the nature of group instruction so that students are grouped together based on their strengths and weaknesses, not just a general level, and are able to move on once they advance individual skills.

“Ongoing checks to determine instruction are so important,” Kosis said. “We need to make sure teachers know exactly where their students are and what they need. With those ongoing checks for instruction, they can determine skill-based guided reading groups. No longer will students be grouped by a level – like everybody is reading at a level B so those kids are coming to me for reading instruction. Now it’s going to be – these students need decoding, they’re coming to me; these students need some fluency, they’re coming to me; these students need letter identification, they’re coming to me. And when they master it, they move on. They’re not tied to that group forever.”

Wilson observed that the process of assessing students’ progress is shorter and more meaningful, providing specific information about each child to help drive instruction.

“I like that the system has a diagnostic tool. I can use that for relevant assessment, and it has a

clear link to the instruction. It’s not assessment for the sake of assessment. It’s going to help me make decisions. I see that as a positive change,” she said.

According to Lisa Chiavaroli, a second-grade teacher at Hoover Elementary School who is also taking part in the pilot, the American Reading framework is giving her a better understanding of her students as readers while also allowing her to focus more on individual student coaching while the rest of the class remains engaged.

“It appears that this is a very flexible framework and it seems to be able to give me as a teacher a way to very deeply understand my students as readers,” she said. “Instruction will be targeted very personally in an individualized way. I am impressed that it appears that, while the assessments are shorter, they appear to be more meaningful and give a bigger picture of my students as readers. I also see this as an opportunity with this frequent coaching to be able to strengthen my one-to-one relationships with my students, which I know is tied to their achievement, as well as looking at reading behaviors carefully.”

Another plus for Chiavaroli is that the framework brings parents into their children’s development as readers

to a greater degree than before.

“I’m also impressed with a very strong home-to-school connection including information on how to show parents how to be a very good literacy coach,” she said.

According to Kosis, the parental component will give parents a better understanding of how they can help support their children as readers. It goes beyond just encouraging parents to read with their children by identifying strategies that parents should be incorporating into their daily reading routine.

“One of the things I truly loved about the system is that there is a parent participation component,” she said. “As teachers, we expect the parents to read with their children every night. But now they’re going to have a purpose for it and they’re going to have a better understanding of it.”

Another thing that excited Kosis is the fact that the system empowers students to take charge of their own growth as readers.

“It’s so important for the students to know where they are at all times and to have a say in what their goals are,” she said. “It’s one thing to have a teacher set a goal for a student but it’s another thing for the student to take ownership of the goals. That’s extremely important.” ■

HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Snowshoes Provide Great Outdoor PE Activity

Through the Carol M. Wright Physical Education Program (PEP) grant, the Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda UFSD Physical Education Department has acquired snowshoes so elementary school students can get their heart rates up outside and enjoy some fresh air even in the dead of winter.

The snowshoes were acquired last year but it was too late in the season for students to enjoy them. This winter, with a snow pack that just never went away, physical education teachers had plenty of time to put them to good use.

“One of the main focuses of the PEP grant was to provide our students with the opportunity to stay active in the winter,” said Heather Ratka, health and physical education curriculum learning specialist. “Snowshoeing is an activity that doesn’t require much equipment and it can be done just about anywhere, which makes it a great family activity.”

According to Ratka, it’s important to identify fun outdoor physical education activities in the winter especially in Western New York because short days, cold temperatures, and lots of snow are often a deterrent for people to get outside and exercise.

Snowshoeing, she said, is a great physical education option because it’s fun for the students, the students love

the chance to get outside, and it’s great exercise.

Snowshoes have been deployed in all elementary schools and the Buffalo Audubon Society has joined the effort by helping physical education teachers and students get acclimated to the equipment.

“Our main objective was to get the kids outside enjoying a cardiovascular activity in winter,” said Lauren Makeyenko, director of education for the Buffalo Audubon Society.

Makeyenko and other representatives from the Buffalo Audubon Society also taught students about the history of snowshoeing going back to its origins. They drew connections to nature, identifying winter wildlife that can easily traverse the snow without snowshoes. They also accompanied students outdoors, showing them what they can observe outdoors in nature even with the trees barren and three feet of snow beneath their feet.

Students are lucky to have access to snowshoes since few schools have their own, Makeyenko explained. To introduce their students to snowshoeing, most schools invite the Buffalo Audubon Society to schools to bring the equipment or they take a field trip down to the Beaver Meadow



Students Hannah Nielsen and Rebecca Sliwa navigate snowdrifts outside Lindbergh Elementary with their snowshoes during PE class.

Audubon Center located in North Java.

“We’re excited to be here in Ken-Ton. It’s great to come here as educators and see the teachers getting their kids outdoors and fostering this kind of activity,” Makeyenko said.

Restaurants Partner to Promote Fruits and Vegetables

As part of the Carol M. Wright Physical Education Program grant, local restaurants are partnering with the Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda UFSD wellness program to promote wellness and nutrition. It’s part of an ongoing effort by the district and Town of Tonawanda Youth, Parks and Recreation Department to cultivate a healthier community in the Ken-Ton area.

Each month, the wellness program highlights a particular fruit and vegetable as its fruit and vegetable of the month. Students learn about the healthy food choices, the specific nutrients they provide, and their other health benefits. Students can try them as part of school lunches and a recipe is featured on the back of the school lunch menu for families to try at home.

“What I like best about the program is that kids can take what they learn in school about healthy eating and

nutrition, then try the foods at home with their families and at participating local restaurants,” said Heather Ratka, Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda UFSD health and physical education curriculum learning specialist and wellness coordinator.

Through the Ken-Ton Healthy Communities Program, participating restaurants highlight a specific fruit or vegetable dish or menu item to correspond with the district’s fruit and vegetable of the month. In February, bananas and sweet potatoes were featured.

Participating restaurants include Amigo’s Restaurant, Buffalo Tap Room & Grill, The Delaware, The Grill at the Dome, Marotto’s Restaurant, and La Hacienda.

The PEP grant is a three-year award the district received from the U.S. Department of Education which is now in its third and final year.

‘Think, Create, Soar!’

Lindbergh Classes Harness Their Musical Creativity With Help from Buff State Students

A partnership between Buffalo State College and Lindbergh Elementary School yielded a unique musical experience this year for second- and fourth-grade students that taught them how to harness their creativity and confidence and transform a familiar melody and rhythm into something new through the art of improvisation.

Kerry Renzoni, assistant professor of music and coordinator of Buffalo State College’s undergraduate music education program, teamed up with Lindbergh Elementary music teacher James Holden to provide his second- and fourth-grade music classes the opportunity to develop their improvisational skills through this partnership.

Under Renzoni’s leadership, first-year music education students at Buffalo State College conceptualized the concert around Lindbergh Elementary’s “SOARS” motto (short for Sharing, Opportunity, Achievement, Risk-Taking, and Spirit) and the college’s theme “The Year of the Innovator.” Combining the two, they named the concert “Think, Create, SOAR!”

“Our mission was to empower Lindbergh students to take creative musical risks using knowledge and vocabulary that they had already developed so that they could soar to greater heights as musicians,” Renzoni said. “We accomplished that through guiding students in applying tonal and rhythmic vocabulary that they have already developed throughout the years to create and share new music ideas.”



Top, James Holden, music teacher at Lindbergh Elementary School, introduces his second-grade students to a new activity as (left to right) Augustina Williams, Olivia Orchalski, Samuel Munro, and Adrianna Schmidt laugh along. At right, music education students from Buffalo State College lead a concert with Holden’s classes that focuses on improvisation.

By doing this, Renzoni and her students taught Lindbergh Elementary classes that musicians can leave creative footprints on society by manipulating tonal, harmonic, rhythmic, and metric components of familiar songs to generate their own musical ideas.

“The concert was designed to scaffold creative risk-taking for students, moving from no risk-taking to assisted risk-taking to full student creative ownership,” Renzoni said.

Renzoni and her students provided resources to prepare Holden’s classes for the concert, including instructional videos to help familiarize themselves with the songs “Mary Ann” and “Joshua.”

Guided by Renzoni’s musicians, who provided instrument accompaniment, Holden’s students sang the melody, bass line, and inner voices of “Mary Ann,” sang the



melody and bass line of “Joshua,” created a melodic improvisation over the harmonic structure of “Joshua,” and improvised rhythmic patterns characteristic of “Greensleeves.”

They also guided Lindbergh students in learning to sing a student composition over the harmonic structure of the song “Mary Ann” and performing it as a large group with instrumental accompaniment. This symbolized the transfer of creative ownership from the college musicians to the students.

“The partnership between our schools provided extensions to our learning in the classroom,” Holden said. “After practicing discrete skills in music class, our performance together included solo and ensemble singing, harmonizing and composition through improvisation. My kids had a blast creating with the big kids!”



Make the Grade

with SCHOOL BREAKFAST

Be wise! Energize with school breakfast!



Why eat school breakfast?

- It's a great way to spend time with friends.
- Breakfast at school costs less than at the convenience store.
- Students who eat breakfast have better attention and memory.
- Students who participate in school breakfast show improved attendance, behavior, standardized test scores as well as decreased tardiness.
- Breakfast has vitamins and nutrients for a strong and healthy body.
- Starting the day with a healthy breakfast revs your metabolism and keeps it going strong for the rest of the day.
- Studies show that when you eat breakfast you are less likely to overeat during the day.

School Breakfast is Served Monday – Friday
 Check with your child's school for times and locations

School Breakfast Always Includes:

- ✓ Fruits and/or veggies offered daily
- ✓ More whole grains
- ✓ Fat-free or low-fat milk
- ✓ Limited calories, fats and sodium

What's for Breakfast?

Daily Breakfast Options are as follows:

Choose One Entrée:

- English Muffin Sandwich
- Warm Bagel
- Breakfast Burrito
- Breakfast Bar
- Yogurt & Belly Bears
- Cereal & Belly Bears
- Muffin & Belly Bears

May Choose Two Fruits:

- 100% Juice Cup – 4 oz., Apple, Orange or Grape Juice
- Fresh Fruit or Canned Fruit

Choose One Milk

8 oz. Carton Milk, 1% or Fat Free

Each student must take a minimum of 3 items to be a complete breakfast.

A half cup of fruit must be chosen with all meals.

Breakfast Prices:

Reduced Price Student \$.25
 Full Price Student \$1.00



ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Elementary Students Raise Money For Polio Vaccinations

Elementary and high school students representing two different global service organizations have teamed up to support the effort to eradicate polio.

Through the Purple Pinkie project, spearheaded by students in the Rotary-affiliated Challenge/Interact Club at Kenmore West High School and the Kiwanis K-Kids Club at Roosevelt Elementary, approximately 1,000 children in Third World countries will be vaccinated against polio. It is part of a worldwide effort that has transformed what was once one of the most feared diseases in the world into one in which new cases are now confined to only three countries.

“We saw two different service clubs joining hands in the effort to eradicate polio,” said Larry Coon of the Rotary Club of Kenmore and liaison to the Challenge/Interact Club. “Their passion and dedication have been inspiring to us as Rotarians. It is humbling that they are so very committed to this effort.”



From left, Roosevelt Elementary first-graders Matilda Lesmeister, Payton Soto, Ella Ponivas, Aydan Paulk, and Sierra Smith line up to have their pinkies painted purple assisted by Kaylie Schemm, a junior at Ken-West.

Approximately 1,000 elementary school students at Roosevelt, Lindbergh, and Edison elementary schools paid \$1 to have their pinkies painted purple as a gesture of solidarity behind the effort to eradicate this crippling and potentially fatal disease and to raise money for vaccinations.

During a Rotary International world conference 10 years ago, Coon learned about the Purple Pinkies program from the Rotarian who

founded the movement in Florida, where it had quickly taken off. The Roosevelt Elementary School K-Kids Club embraced the idea, and other schools have come on board.

“We are teaching students to think globally and act locally,” said Michele Dean, K-Kids co-advisor and teacher aide at Roosevelt Elementary. “Over the past several years our students at Roosevelt have helped thousands of children to be vaccinated for polio.”

According to Coon, once a country goes an entire year without a new case, it is considered polio-free and there are only three countries that have new cases of polio: Nigeria, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. However, there is now a danger of losing ground in the effort.

“With people traveling more, the world is becoming smaller,” Coon said. “There have been flare-ups similar to what we have here with measles. Polio is coming back in Third World countries because of world travel and because not enough people are getting vaccinated.”

Students Take Part in Dance Assembly

Roosevelt Elementary recently presented its 10th annual Dance Assembly.

All students participate in a dance unit in physical education class each school year and students learn many different types and styles of dance. Aside from the physical benefits that dance provides, this unit provides students with a unique way to learn about appropriate social behavior and self-expression, and provides an opportunity for all students to gain confidence.

Each year, second-grade through fifth-grade students perform different dances. Second-grade students perform a square dance and third-grade students learn a slow dance: the “Roosevelt Fox Trot.” Fourth-graders perform a group dance, and this year, the girls battled the boys in a breakdance competition. Fifth-graders choreograph their own dance in



Students take part in the Dance Assembly including Vinny Grisanti, front left, and Gavin Sutton, front right.

small groups. They create their own groups, pick their own song, and create a dance using a rubric that they are given and skill set that has been built over their previous years’ experiences.

Year after year, this unit is a favorite of both the students, teachers, and parents. The skills and knowledge learned throughout the unit carry through to other aspects of the students’ lives and last a life time.



New After-School Clubs

This year, the Roosevelt Elementary School Parent Teacher Association has organized two after-school clubs available to students in kindergarten through grade five. One is Drama Club run by parents Rachel Zeller and Kerri Gallivan and the other is Science Club run by Lisa Vitello and Heather Gianni. Above, students stay after-school as part of Science Club.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Holmes Students Celebrate Award of 2,000 New Books

On Feb. 5, students at Holmes Elementary School were joined by representatives of Governor Andrew Cuomo, Project Flight, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library and the Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda UFSD to celebrate the award of 2,000 books through the Martin Luther King Jr. Leaders Are Readers literacy initiative.

The importance of reading and the connection between literacy and King's vision of equality and justice were discussed before a backdrop of some of the 2,000 books that were donated.

"Reading empowers our children. Smart is not something you are. Smart is something you become. And one way to become smart is to read," said Superintendent Dawn Mirand during the assembly. "Developing understanding, compassion and respect are also benefits of reading. What King described as the true goal of education – intelligence plus character – that is what comes from reading."

The celebration took place in the auditorium. Books were handed out to every student in school by William Hill, New York State Office of General Services assistant commissioner, and



Town of Tonawanda Library Director Dorinda Darden leads a reading of "Martin's Big Words" during an assembly at Holmes to celebrate the award of 2,000 books.

Elizabeth Cappella, Project Flight co-director. Students were able to follow along with a reading of "Martin's Big Words," a picture-book biography of King for young readers, which was read by Dorinda Darden, Town of Tonawanda Library director. They were also joined by Mary Jean Jakubowski, Buffalo & Erie County Library director, and the library's owl mascot, Reada Book, in singing the school anthem.

"We are grateful for this amazing

collection of books for our students that will help us promote literacy in and out of school," said principal Lisa Cross.

Project Flight is a non-profit literacy organization that has donated 126,000 books to 23 schools through the Leaders Are Readers initiative. Each school then initiates a program that promotes King's vision of equality and justice through literacy and strengthens its relationships with their local public libraries.



Edison ES Pinterest Night

Craft and wellness activities inspired by the photo sharing platform Pinterest were the focus of the school's recent Pinterest Night. Approximately 75 students and their parents attended and rotated through different craft-making stations and a wellness activity in the gym. Pizza was served by the school's PTA. The event was a big hit for parents and students alike, who worked together to complete the fun craft-making activities.

Buffalo Bandits Visit Hoover, Hamilton

Buffalo Bandits players recently paid a special visit to both Hamilton Elementary School and Franklin Elementary School for an assembly at each school.

The Buffalo Bandits represent Buffalo's professional indoor lacrosse team. Bandits players Dhane Smith, Ryan Benesch and Mark Steenhuis attended the events at both schools and player Brandon Goodwin also accompanied his teammates at Hamilton.

Bandits players talked to the students about healthy lifestyle choices, bullying, the importance of reading, and character during assemblies at each school. Students also had a chance to learn about the game of lacrosse with players demonstrating



Hamilton Elementary students interact with Bandits player Dhane Smith.

shooting, passing, and catching a lacrosse ball and try on the players' equipment.

The assembly at Hamilton was coordinated by PE teacher Lisa Siegel. During the assembly at Franklin, the school's Lightning Leaders were also celebrated.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Students Learn Strategies to Face High-Risk Situations

With the help of the Town of Tonawanda Police Department, students from Lindbergh Elementary School and Hoover Elementary School learned strategies that will help them make the best possible decisions later in life when they face high-risk situations involving drugs, tobacco, and alcohol.

Fifth-grade students at both schools were celebrated for completing the DARE Program, and the lessons they learned were evident when a handful of students shared with the audience their winning essays on what they learned from the DARE Program and how they will apply it. In addition to learning about the dangers of drugs, alcohol and tobacco and how to make good choices for themselves, students learned how best to handle things like



Students are honored during DARE graduations at Hoover and Lindbergh Elementary.

bullying and peer pressure.

Instructing the students were Detective Scott Sprague and Lieutenant Dan Murphy of the Town of Tonawanda Police Department. Students Tommy Christiano, Sean Hargrave, Grace Riordan and Molly Frothingham were the essay winners



at Lindbergh Elementary and students Johnny Manke, Jason Vullo, Natalie Zuefle, and Zachary Zayatz were the essay winners at Hoover Elementary.

Students at the other Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda elementary schools will participate in the DARE Program in the spring.

Hamilton Students Mark Valentine's Day by Remembering Veterans

Through the Valentines for Veterans Program, Erie County Legislator Kevin Hardwick works with younger students to help them understand the importance of remembering veterans and expressing their appreciation for the sacrifices made by all those who serve and have served in the Armed Forces.

Hardwick kicked off this year's Valentines for Veterans Program at Hamilton Elementary School, visiting teacher Christine Murdola's kindergarten class in the library to talk with them about the importance of veterans and to help the students make special tokens of appreciation to send to soldiers serving in Afghanistan.

"Our lesson taught students what a Valentine is – something you send to a special person – and they learned about the special people who protect our country," said Grace Morrison, school librarian.

This is the fifth year of the Valentines for Veterans Program and more than 1,200 students participate each year.



Erie County Legislator Kevin Hardwick helps kindergarten students at Hamilton, including Abigail King, center, make Valentines for Veterans.

"It was wonderful to see the respect and love that Hamilton students showed for our service personnel," said Hardwick, who represents District 4 in the Erie County Legislature including Kenmore and the Town of Tonawanda. "It serves to bolster my faith in the future of both our community and our nation."

The students also had the unique chance to learn about government and the job of Erie County legislators from one of their own elected representatives.



100 Days, 100 Years

To mark the 100th day of school, three kindergarten classes invited students to dress up in a way that reflected how they envision they will look when they are 100 years old. Students greatly enjoyed the activity, drawing upon their creativity with glasses, fake mustaches, wigs, hats and canes, as well as scarves, suspenders, ties, and other fashionable attire.

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Students Raise \$5K to Build Water Well in South Sudan

Inspired by the novel "A Long Walk to Water" by Linda Sue Park, which is part of the new seventh-grade ELA module, students at Kenmore Middle School raised \$5,000 in just over a month which will be enough to have a water well built in South Sudan to provide clean drinking water for an entire village.

"Congratulations to everyone involved!" stated ELA teacher Scot LaFalce and special education teacher Kelley Loomis, whose students spearheaded the effort beginning in January. "With this total, Kenmore Middle School's name will be on a well drilled in South Sudan. This is an amazing accomplishment, and we should all be very proud!"

"Our hard work has paid off big time," said seventh grader Allen Derisley during an assembly on Feb. 27 celebrating the success of the fundraiser. "This well will bring many opportunities to the villagers there, such as schools and new businesses opening. The villagers' quality of life will greatly improve as they will no longer have to spend hours and hours each day walking to get water."

Students organized many different activities aimed at raising money, such as a movie day, can and bottle drive, spirit week, and electronics collection days.

The highlight of the initiative came during the Feb. 27 assembly, when names were drawn to select students to come on stage and dump a bucket of water on a teacher of their choice. Teachers Greg Minorczyk, James Badgley, Julie Hodge, Marjorie Waldron, Paul Arnold, Tom Ryan, Warren Bush, and LaFalce were the lucky ones chosen.

The money will be donated to Water for South Sudan, an organization that drills water wells in the region. The organization was founded by Salva Dut, now a resident of Rochester who survived the Second Sudanese Civil War



Kenmore Middle School student Karla Dobozi dumps a bucket of water onto teacher Warren Bush as other teachers and student Da'Naeya Rainey, far left, look on.

after being separated from his family at a young age. Dut is a character in "A Long Walk to Water."

"This fundraiser could not have happened without the help and support of a lot of people," said student Kristen Butkowski, following with a long list of people and organizations who supported the effort.

Last on that list were the most important ones: the students, who drove the effort from start to finish.

"Whether you donated money, brought in cans and bottles, or just passed the word along that South Sudan needs your help to someone else, you are the reason we have been so successful," she said.

Hoover Middle School Students Prove that Hoover's Got Talent

Hoover Middle School students took part in a talent show on Feb. 24 with a total of 18 acts divided by an intermission for food and games.

Hosting duties for the evening were distributed between four students. William Benk and Jenna Juskiewicz opened the evening welcoming the audience and later running a "Let's Make a Deal"-style gameshow in which audience members won an assortment of gift cards and humorous prizes. Audrey Holden and Celia Lynch introduced each act, chatting with performers about what they chose to perform and why.

Sixth grader William Burhans kicked off the evening by accompanying a recording of "The Kill" on drums. Esther MacDonald, Sarah Gustafson,



Hoover Middle School student William Burhans kicks off the school's talent show playing "The Kill" on drums.

and Ashley White sang "Thousand Years," "One Last Time," and "New York, New York." Zacharia Lo dazzled onlookers by quickly and efficiently solving several Rubik's cube puzzles. Jordan Espsito danced and added

gymnastic flourishes to "A Little Party," and Oscar Macias rapped to "Shell Shock."

After intermission, singers Joey Cannizzaro, Madison Nice, Luci Weatherbee, Emma Newman and Tabitha Peterangelo took to the stage. Gymnastics and dance performances by Nyna Garduno, Emma and Abby Grzekowiak, and Owen and Harper Lake transformed themselves from old to young, and Skylar Nebrich using many hula hoops offered variety and spectacle. Matteo Mendola accompanied singer and guitarist Emma Newman while Judy Siwec, Keelyn Librock, Amanda Whalen, and Willam Burhans backed up Tabitha Peterangelo, who played piano while singing "Skyfall."

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Franklin Middle School Students Learn About Internet Safety

On Jan. 13, all Franklin Middle School students attended a presentation given by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children on Internet Safety coordinated by school counselors. Various applications and social media sites were discussed in an effort to draw awareness to the potential dangers associated with using these applications. Parents are encouraged to talk to their children about what forms of social media children are using, monitor their child's accounts, and remind them that their "digital fingerprint" can be traced and cannot be erased once they create it.

In other school counseling-related news, all eighth graders also had an opportunity to meet with their counselors and plan their coursework for next year. Parents who did not attend a scheduling appointment and have not seen their child's course requests may view this

information on Parent Portal. Requests for changes will need to be processed at the high school level, and middle school counselors may be contacted for more information.

This year, all seventh-grade students used the Career Cruising program to complete the Career Matchmaker, an interactive online career interest inventory. Using this, students identified two career areas related to school subjects that interest them and researched these areas to learn about job responsibilities, work conditions, required education, and salary. Career Matchmaker includes real-life interviews so students can learn first-hand what a typical day is like for professionals in these career areas. Students also had the opportunity to complete the Learning Styles Inventory to discover how they learn and retain information and find tips to improve their study habits to suit their learning style.



Fostering Positive Thinking

From left, Matthew Catani, Aiden Love, Arianna LaFalcone, and Alex Padilla of the Kenmore Middle School Chain Link Group recently posted notes with positive messages on students' lockers to continue the club's focus on promoting kindness, compassion, and a positive atmosphere of acceptance at the school.

HMS Students 'Race to Read'

Nearly 100 students competed in Hoover Middle School's recent Race to Read contest. Students read as many books in the Reading Counts Program as they could, passing quizzes to earn tickets for a drawing. Two students earned 32 tickets; more than a dozen earned 20 or more.

Grand prize winner Rozannette Woods won an iTunes gift card and runners up Anthony Clontz and Alexa Schlotterbeck chose Barnes & Noble gift cards and a Fun Aquarium. Other winners were awarded advance chapters from a new series by Scholastic and five students won the chance to sit at reading teacher Penny DePasquale's desk in class for a day.

Franklin MS Students Distinguished at Physics Competition

After weeks of preparation, it was a well-deserved win for 12 Franklin Middle School students at the recent 11th annual Physics Olympics at Buffalo State College.

The team was coached by seventh- and eighth-grade social studies and ELA co-teacher Amy Izquierdo and her father, Donald Dean, a retired science teacher from Buffalo Public Schools who helped the team prepare for the competition.

"Our students did a fantastic job at the competition using what they have learned in the classroom and applying it to real-world problems," Izquierdo said. "They stepped up and represented their school admirably and

professionally. They also demonstrated creativity, teamwork, and superior problem-solving skills to solve the challenges they were presented with."

Students Joshua Brill, Rachel Hamilton, Ryan Hamilton, and Mara Volle won first place overall in the middle school division. They also won first place in the "Stress, Straws and Structure" event, in which students had to build a structure with a small amount of tape and limited number of straws that could support the weight of at least one textbook. Placing second in the event was a team consisting of students Gabby Basso, Jeremy Lopat, Owen Manch, and Ginger Thompson.

Students Joey Brooks, Lily Dimmig,

Jonae Moore, and Casey Rymarczyk also won first place in the "Laser Pinball" event in which students had to hit a target with a beam of light by arranging mirrors in perfect alignment.

The competition was sponsored by the Western New York Physics Teachers Association and the Physics Department and New York State Master Teacher Program at Buffalo State College. More than 150 middle school and high school students competed in three separate events. The third event challenged students to place an egg and break it with a metal ball attached to a pendulum that would swing down and drop after coming into contact with a razor.

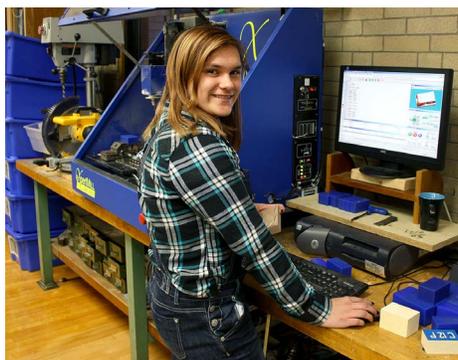
HIGH SCHOOLS

New Project Lead the Way Course to Debut in 2015-16

The Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda UFSD is introducing a new Project Lead the Way course to provide students in the internationally-recognized pre-engineering program with a variety of skills that are essential in some of the most high-demand and high-wage jobs.

The new course – Computer Science and Software Engineering – will cover a variety of computing topics and will provide students with a foundation in many different areas that are relevant in today’s engineering and industry sectors.

“This new computer science course covers a wide variety of contemporary topics, including mobile app design, website development, databases, data analysis, and internet security. A



Kenmore West High School student Elizabeth Codick works at the pre-engineering program’s CNC rapid prototyping equipment.

variety of programming languages will also be explored, including Python, HTML, PHP, and MySQL,” said Joel Maerten, technology education

curriculum learning specialist.

The new course includes four units: one on algorithms, graphics, and graphical user interfaces; one on internet topics including security and cryptography; one on visualizing and analyzing data; and one on intelligent behavior covering topics such as the fundamental nature of advanced computing, artificial intelligence, agent-based modeling and computer simulation.

“The district has in place a comprehensive sixth- through 12th-grade technology and engineering education program that provides the opportunity for all students to prepare for the high-tech careers that are demanding qualified applicants,” Maerten said.

Ken-East Photography Students Featured in CEPA Exhibit

The artwork of Kenmore East High School photography students were celebrated during the opening reception of their “Transformations” exhibition on Jan. 30 at the CEPA Gallery in Buffalo.

The collection included photographs taken by students inspired by a CEPA exhibition they viewed entitled “Transformational Iagemaking: Handmade Photography Since 1960.” The students’ exhibition was displayed through March 22.

Earlier this year, a grant from Target allowed Denise Carr, art teacher at Kenmore East, to initiate a collaborative project with the CEPA Gallery. Students visited the gallery twice and then created a series of works inspired by the exhibition they viewed there.



Photos from the exhibit can be found at ktufsd.org/cepaexhibit.

Ken-West Students Among Award Winners at Visual Arts Exhibit

Five students from Kenmore West High School were distinguished for their award-winning submissions at the Western New York Student Celebration of the Visual Arts, which was held Feb. 7 and 8 at the UB Center for the Arts.

For more than a decade, the Student Celebration of the Visual Arts exhibit has showcased student artwork from public and private schools throughout Western New York. This year, approximately 40 schools participated.

The award-winning submissions were senior Sarah Sinopoli’s mixed media photograph entitled “Exploration,” senior Grace Zabielski’s prismacolor Photoshop construction on paper entitled “Tyson,” senior America Bostaph’s Photoshop construction entitled “Ignorance,”



“Exploration” by Sarah Sinopoli, top, and “Tyson” by Grace Zabielski. See all the pieces at ktufsd.org/scvaexhibit.

senior Laura Stockman’s painting with charcoal entitled “Revolutionary,” and freshman Anna Cryan’s Photoshop work entitled “Symbolic Self.”

The five are students of art teachers Dave Rogalski and Amy Veltri.

HIGH SCHOOLS

Ken-East Students Celebrate Hockey, Winter and Chicken Wings

For the past eight years, the Kenmore East High School community has gathered together for the Mid-Winter Wingding Classic, a celebration of hockey, chicken wings, and single-digit temperatures.

This year's event, held in February, featured a hockey tournament, snow sculpture contest, burn barrels for warming up and socializing, and food donated by Western New York businesses including chicken wings from La Nova, hot dogs from Ted's, rolls from Constanzo's, and ice cream from Lake Effect Artisan Ice Cream.

"The Wingding bonds everyone together," said Michelle Schwab, a senior at Kenmore East. "It's fun to see my friends. It's free. The food is great and I love the chicken wing soup."

The hockey tournament is designed to include players at all skill levels. Each team includes male and female players and no



Taylor Windsor, left, and Erinn Kiehl compete in the hockey tournament at the Mid-Winter Wingding Classic.

more than three players who currently play for a school or travel hockey team. Students provide their own equipment and build team spirit by decorating commemorative Wingding T-shirts, which are free for all participating students.

[Continued on Page 20](#)

Ken-West Student Shares Experience at Global IB Conference

Kenmore West High School senior Hannah Knab recently shared her experience at the International Baccalaureate Student World Conference in Montreal, where she collaborated with her peers on creative community service initiatives, bringing the framework back to Ken-Ton.



Each day in Montreal, Hannah and students from 19 countries heard from a variety of speakers discussing some of the most important global issues such as human rights. Then, groups of nine to 12 students collaborated on community service projects that could be emulated at other schools. CAS, short for community, action and service, is a cornerstone of the IB program and a requirement for graduating with an IB diploma, the most prestigious high school diploma in the world.

[Continued on Page 20](#)

High Schools Recognize National Honor Society Inductees

Kenmore East High School and Kenmore West High School recently honored 91 students who were inducted into the National Honor Society for their academic achievements and contributions to the school community.

To qualify for the National Honor Society, students had to demonstrate the four NHS pillars: scholarship, character, leadership, and service. They had to maintain a grade point average of 90 percent or higher through their junior year. They also had to articulate their service to the school and community, an excellent record of behavior in and out of school, and leadership roles during a screening and scoring process run by members of the faculty.

Inductees at Kenmore East were Jessy Atallah, Angelina Azzinaro, Emily

Bailey, Sarah Bandinelli, Julianne Beiter, Francis Boeck, Margaret Brooks, Haley Brucato, Claire Butler, Elyse Cinquino, Ethan Coniglio, Alyssa Donn, Zachary Elgie, Hannah Emminger, Joel Fernando, Marina Frears, Melanie Georger, Chelsea Gibson, Paige Gilmar, Ashley Guskowski, Andrew Hall, Brittney Haynes, Ashley Henderson, Bradley Hermann, Jacob Jurewicz, Zachary Jurewicz, Theodora Lauzau, Erin Lexner, Mariana Maniscalco, Alexandra McGee, Devin Miller, Sarah Nesic, Jasmine Orrell, Anna Pitliangas, Ariana Porter, Danielle Rambuss, Jonathan Rusch, Thomas Sawyer, Paul Schmidt, Alexandria Sorrento, Bailey Valint, Mitchell White, Taylor Windsor, and Frank Wozniak.

Inductees at Kenmore West were Ben Cambria, Rand Aushaqi, Peyson

Beale, Nicole Benner, Sierra Bork, Christina Catalano, George Ciancio, Meaghan Curtin, Neoma Daniel, Kaleigh Davidson, Anthony Dileo, Alexis Dymond, Christopher Ewald, Matthew Fuzi, Quinn Gallagher, Jessica Gavadin, Melanie Gleason, Lauren Gorney, Noah Greene, Cali Karpinski, Destiny Kausner, Nell Kennedy, Emily King, Robert Kirisits, Anna Lange, Caitlyn Larson, McKenzie Lee, Katie Licata, Sean McDonough, Robert Oberkircher, Sydney Pelino, Joseph Saeli, Kaylie Schemm, Allison Sherry, Grace Simmons, Michael Sindoni, Elena Slawson, Jordan Sobon, Michael Streicher, Heng Ta, Chantal Towns, Owen Trzaska, Spencer Vogt, Nolan Waggoner, Nathaniel Weinhoff, Andrew Widmer, and James Zaccagnino.

MUSIC EDUCATION**String Concert Brings Together Ensembles from 12 Schools**

For the third year in a row, string ensembles from all 12 schools in the Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda UFSD joined together for a combined orchestra concert that featured more than 500 fourth-grade through 12th-grade students and 10 different orchestra directors and music teachers.

The annual concert took place March 19 at Kenmore West High School and might very well be the largest event of its kind in Western New York with entire ensembles from 12 different schools participating.

“It’s a great opportunity to demonstrate how students progress through the different grade levels,”

said Laura Anderson, curriculum learning specialist for music and an instrumental music teacher at Edison, Lindbergh and Hoover elementary schools. “It’s also a great opportunity for the high school students to model what they have learned through the years, making it an educational experience for the younger students.”

To begin the concert, fourth-grade students combined for a performance of “French Folk Song” by composers Albert Stoutamire and Kenneth Henderson. Fifth-grade students combined for a performance of “Mythos” by composer Sean O’Loughlin.

The combined Franklin, Hoover and Kenmore Middle School orchestras performed “Velocity” by Brian Balmages and an arrangement of Leonard Cohen’s “Hallelujah” by Robert Longfield. The combined Kenmore East and Kenmore West high school orchestras performed an arrangement of Franz Schubert’s “Unfinished” by Robert D. McCashin and Edvard Grieg’s “Prelude from the Holberg Suite.”

The grand finale of the show included all middle school and high school ensembles joining together for a performance of “Royals” composed by Ella Yelich-O’Connor and Joel Little and arranged by James Kazik.

Continued: Conference Focused on Community Action Service Projects**Continued from Page 19**

For Hannah’s own CAS project at Kenmore West, she resurrected the school’s annual powderpuff football game to raise money for breast cancer research. In Montreal, her group designed the framework for partnerships between wealthier schools that have strong art programs and schools where art programming is virtually non-existent, such as in poorer schools in Third World countries. The framework was for a two-way art exhibition that would promote the importance of the arts while simultaneously fostering cross-cultural understanding.

Hannah was able to attend the conference because of a scholarship she received from the Guild of IB Schools of the Northeast, which had her give a presentation on her experience at the recent GIBS Northeast Annual Conference. Attending the conference in addition to Hannah was her classmate, Kenmore West High School senior Julia Via.

There are only three IB schools in Western New York: Kenmore West, Kenmore East, and City Honors in Buffalo. The IB program is in its third year at Kenmore East and its fourth year at Kenmore West with 64 graduates last year.

For students, there are many benefits of successfully

completing the intensive two-year program. Graduates have been accepted into some of the most prestigious and selective colleges in the U.S. Last year’s graduates earned a combined \$8.7 million in scholarships. And students can and do earn college credit. For instance, those who score 30 or better out of a possible 45 points on their final IB grade will earn 30 credits at UB and begin as sophomores.

“It makes you a better person,” Hannah said. “You’re learning how to deal with the workload – the time and energy that go into it. You’re also learning how to deal with the people. You’re with the same people in all of your classes. You learn to work with these kids. You develop relationships with them. Because of the rigor of the program, you get close with them.”

It’s a major commitment, but Hannah finds time for sports and extracurricular activities. She is varsity cheerleading captain, Model UN president, a Community Club member, Student Council vice president, a lifeguard, and works at Watson’s Chocolates. Hannah is narrowing down her choices of colleges to attend, and because of her experience in Montreal, she has decided to pursue a career in international law with a focus on human rights.

Continued: Kenmore East High School Mid-Winter Wingding Classic**Continued from Page 19**

Kenmore East Student Congress advisers Jeff Liss and Jeff Diegelman are the creators and organizers of the Wingding. Ten years ago, the two English teachers decided that a winter carnival would be a great way to celebrate the students and offer them a fun-filled day of activities.

The word “wingding,” defined as a wild

and lively party, caught the attention of Diegelman and Liss. They added a Buffalo twist with a nod to the NHL’s outdoor game and named the event the Mid-Winter Wingding Classic.

“The students and teachers come together,” said Liss. “The Wingding builds relationships with students and the entire Kenmore East community.”



Student Conor Hoar snacks on ice cream at the Mid-Winter Wingding Classic.