



# The Highlander Press

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## SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE



Welcome to our newly launched newsletter, *The Highlander Press*. Here you will find information about our schools and our District that will give you a glimpse into the many things in which our students, staff and our school community are engaged. In this issue you will find articles from all of our schools and departments, important dates, special programs, and a host of other interesting information.

During the November Board of Education meeting, the Administrative Cabinet and I reported on the status of the **District's Strategic Plan Action Plan**, accessible on the District website. We are currently in the second year of implementation, and the action plan will help us to hold ourselves accountable for progress toward achievement of our goals and objectives. Goal areas include Learning & Academics, Hometown Pride, Facilities & Operations, Well-being and Financial Stability. The plan addresses student achievement, technology, the use of data to inform instruction and a wide range of other important activities that are intended to support our students as they learn and grow. I hope you enjoy this issue of The Highlander Press!

### *Our Mission Statement:*

**The West Milford Township School District recognizes that each student is an individual with unique educational needs.**

**The District is committed to challenging and helping each student maximize his or her personal potential to promote academic excellence, good character, and physical fitness in a safe, supportive learning environment, as well as providing a positive school climate based upon mutual respect and responsibility.**

**The District further recognizes the need to support and develop a professional, dedicated, accountable staff that will partner with parents to foster the emotional, intellectual, social, and physical maturity of each student, and to encourage a lifelong love of learning and discovery.**

(Continued on page 12)

## Curriculum News: Eureka Math Parent Night by Daniel Novak



On the evening of Wednesday, October 18th, the West Milford Public Schools presented “Eureka Math Parent Night”. Eureka Math(2), pronounced Eureka Math Squared, is the district’s new Kindergarten through 5th Grade Mathematics Program. The new program was launched this past September for the new school year and promises to bring West Milford Mathematics instruction to a whole new level in regard to student and staff user-friendliness and the program’s acclaimed alignment with New Jersey Student Learning Standards.



Eureka Math Parent Night invited district families to visit the High School cafeteria for a presentation provided by district math consultant, Nancy Shultz, owner and operator of Conquer Math located in Pequannock, NJ. Parents in attendance were able to hear all about the best practice professional development that West Milford teachers have been receiving, ask questions, and visit display tables and hands-on demonstrations. Daniel Novak, the Director of Education, welcomed parents and hosted the event in collaboration with a dedicated team of teachers and principals. Parents were able to get their hands on and interact with student math materials, peruse curriculum documents, test out new digital resources, and ask questions about how they can best support students.



### WMHS Students Visit the Metropolitan Museum of Art!

by Sharon West

Mrs. Gallagher, Mrs. Monego and Mr. Shaver organized an exciting trip on a beautiful Fall day to the **Metropolitan Museum of Art** in

**New York City on November 2.** Students had a rare opportunity to view a side-by-side exhibit of Edouard Manet and Edgar Degas which examined “one of the most significant artistic dialogues in modern art history”. Our Art teachers capitalize on proximity to New York City and the multitude of artistic opportunities it offers for our students, this trip and exhibit among them.

### Did you know?

- Did you know that the District is utilizing a new assessment tool for students in grades K-8 in both Language Arts and Math? It's called iReady and the results of your child's first Diagnostic Assessment have been sent home for your review or shared with you during your Parent/Teacher Conferences during Thanksgiving week. Please visit the following link for additional resources, information, and support. <https://i-readycentral.com/>

## Character Education at Apshawa School by Dr. Dana Swarts



Apshawa School continues to focus on Character Education in the 2023-24 school year. This fall we have continued our Full Value initiatives and added a focus on social/emotional learning. Our students and staff are focused on recognizing our strengths as Hawkeyes and will be using our Full Value mission to demonstrate to our community that

“Hawkeyes SOAR”. SOAR stands for Safe, Optimistic, Accepting and Respectful. We have had two assemblies run by our Character Club students, emphasizing the traits we want to embody and honor students who were seen SOARING that month. Students from Character Club help to build lessons and activities that they share in the classrooms with their peers K-5. Each month will focus on a trait connected to pillars of character and what the Apshawa community core values (November is our month of Gratitude). Our Character Club ambassadors enjoy sharing their mission with the classes and the students in class are excited to participate in the fun! Go Hawkeyes!



## Therapy Dogs Visit Marshall Hill School

By Patrick O'Donnell



Marshall Hill has brought back its much anticipated and well-received therapy dog program again for PreSchool-5th grade students. Started last year, therapy dogs certified by Bright and Beautiful Therapy Dogs, Inc. (a non profit 501 (c) 3 organization), came into Marshall Hill School a couple of weeks ago. Students got to visit with Tyler, Beauty, Brownie, Oreo, and Hazel and absolutely loved it! This wonderful program helps support our school and district goals of addressing social-emotional well being. Thank you to one of our PTA parents, Kerry Metzger, for helping us schedule this great program and to all of our parents, staff, and students for supporting it.



# HOMETOWN PRIDE NIGHT

Join us for Hometown Pride Night

on November 30, 2023 at

West Milford High School

from 6:00pm—9:00pm



## Human Resources Update

The West Milford Township Public Schools have the following positions available. Please apply on [Applitrack](#) found on the District website under Employment Opportunities:

- ◆ Supervisor of Buildings & Grounds
- ◆ Electrician – Districtwide
- ◆ Administrative Assistant to the Director of Special Services
- ◆ Science Teacher – High School
- ◆ Technology Education Teacher – High School
- ◆ Special Education Teacher (ERI) – High School
- ◆ 0.5 Nurse – Highlander Academy/Prep
- ◆ 0.6 Encore Teacher – Marshall Hill School
- ◆ Special Class Aides

## Macopin Students Enjoy Activities

by Dr. Greg Matlosz



Macopin's Grade 6 students attended the annual Fairview Trip [November 6 -8] which gives students an opportunity to explore nature through hands-on activities and lessons by the Macopin staff. The objective of the trip is to unify sixth graders as each came from a different elementary school.



8th Grade students attended the Broadway Play: Back to the Future on October 18th.



Macopin's annual Bonfire Activity Night was held on October 13th. Students had the opportunity to dance, play sports, and enjoy vampire style food.



## WE'RE HIRING... SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

### BASIC REQUIREMENTS:

- NJ Driver's License
- Excellent Driving Record
- U.S. Citizen or Legal Resident in accordance with State and Federal regulations
- CDL Training Available

Apply Online at:  
[WWW.WMTPS.ORG](http://WWW.WMTPS.ORG)  
or CALL (973) 697-0777



## A Message from Special Services

by Dr. Derek Ressa



The West Milford Township Public Schools would like to acknowledge and thank the West Milford Rotary Club for our Children's Holiday Party on December 5 from 11:00-1:00 for our students with special needs. The students will be bused to the event, provided with a lovely lunch from Pomptonian food services, and will engage with the WMHS National Art Honor Society students in a craft. for students from our Transition program. Our thanks to all the teachers, staff, transportation department, and Pomptonian for their support!

Also, a special thanks to Helen Franke, Assistant to the Director of Special Services for her 9 years of service to the Department of Special Services as she will be retiring from public service at the end of the calendar year. We are so very grateful for her commitment to the special education students and their families in West Milford, and for the knowledge, sense of humor, and professionalism that she has brought to the school district. We wish her the very best!

## Therapy Dog Visits Highlander Academy & Prep

By Chris Porochniak



West Milford's Highlander Academy hosted a visit from Ginger, a therapy dog from Danielle Baird, one of our agency school social workers. Ginger interacted with staff and students alike, and it was a well-received and fun experience for the students to receive the benefit of a dog trained in how to support children emotionally.



## Hamish Brewer: Inspirational Speaker Donates Skateboard

By Kristi Clave



Hamish Brewer was this year's guest speaker at the opening District session for all staff. Mr. Brewer is a school principal, inspirational speaker and skateboard aficionado. He donated a skateboard, which was presented to one of our staff members. The Skateboard was given to a student who used to go to Maple Road & now goes to Apshawa, Francis. Francis has such a big heart!



## The Cove; Transition at WMHS

by Kathy Mendes

The Cove has been very busy this month! In addition to working in the community and in the High School, the students met with Butler High School for Martial Arts for a social gathering at Panera Bread. On Friday, the students are meeting students from Jefferson Township and Roxbury for a "Friendsgiving" in Jefferson Township! They have been preparing side dishes and desserts all week. The students in the Cove also donated canned food to the Highlands Family Success Center where they also painted kindness rocks with Debbie O'Brien and shared them with their peers in other districts. In addition to all of the wonderful things they did this month, some of the students helped with fall clean up at The New Weis Center to prepare for the Center's Fall excursions. Last week, the class met in person with the Shoprite Dietician Lauren Bladek to learn about healthy eating and cooking. They prepared two nutritious snacks using Greek yogurt, pretzels, fruit and sun butter. The coffee cart is busy every morning delivering coffee and tea to the faculty and staff with the help of The Career Awareness class.



## Veteran's Day; Highlander Prep

by Peter LaBarbiera

All Middle School Special Services programs were honored to participate in the Veteran's Day celebration and parade held at Macopin School. All students were honored to be able to support some of the world's finest service men and women! The students were especially excited to see family members and neighbors who have served our country.

## Elementary Schools Honor Veterans submitted by Elementary School Principals

November welcomed a month of civic responsibility and patriotism in our district elementary schools. All West Milford elementary schools hosted a Veterans Day celebration where we welcomed veterans related to students and staff members to be honored for their service by the school community. In addition, each school raised funds for our local VFW through the Island of Flags program. The flags outside of each school helped to provide a warm welcome to our veterans. Furthering our students' civic duty, our district elementary schools also participated in the VotEd program, allowing for students K-5 to learn more about the voting process and how their voice has meaning.



Aphsawa



Marshall Hill



Upper Greenwood Lake



Maple Road



Paradise Knoll





## Phishing Scams Are On The Rise. Don't Get Hooked!

By Robert Winston

Phishing is a type of online scam that has become increasingly common in recent years. The goal of phishing is to trick people into giving away their personal information, such as passwords or credit card numbers. Phishing scams usually start with an email

or message that appears to be from a reputable source, such as a bank or social media site.

The message will ask the recipient to click on a link which will then direct them to a fake website that looks like the real thing. Once on the fake website, the user will be asked to enter their personal information, which is then captured by the scammer.

To avoid falling victim to a phishing scam, it's important to always be cautious when receiving emails or messages from unknown sources. Never click on links or download attachments unless you are absolutely sure they are legitimate. Additionally, make sure to keep your software and security systems up to date to help protect against these types of attacks.

Remember, if something seems too good to be true, it probably is. Stay vigilant and protect yourself from phishing scams.

### Example: Gift Card Phishing Scam #1

A typical gift card phishing scam works like this: the scammer sends an email or text message to the victim, claiming to be a representative of a well-known company, such as Amazon or Walmart. The message informs the victim that they have won a gift card or that there is a problem with their gift card and they need to take action to resolve the issue.

The message will often contain a link to a fake website that looks like the real thing, where the victim is asked to enter their personal information, such as their name, address, and credit card details. In some cases, the victim is asked to download a software program or app that will supposedly help them redeem their gift card.

Once the scammer has obtained the victim's personal information, they can use it for a variety of fraudulent activities, including making unauthorized purchases or opening credit accounts in the victim's name.

To protect yourself from gift card phishing scams, it's important to be cautious when receiving unsolicited emails or text messages. Always verify the legitimacy of the message by contacting the company directly through their official website or customer service line. Be wary of offers that seem too good to be true, and never provide personal information or download software from an unknown source. (continued on page 8)

or download an attachment,

### Great News!

- ♦ **The Chromebook Protection Plan due date has been extended.** The fee to enroll is \$25. Payment can be made by check or money order made payable to "West Milford Township Public Schools". To enroll, please follow this [link](#) and complete the form found in the **Chromebook 1-1 Student/Parent Handbook**. Submit the completed form and payment to the main office of your child's school no later than **January 4,, 2024**.



(Phishing Scams continued from page 7)

### **Example: Gift Card Phishing Scam #2**

In this type of phishing scam, the victim receives an email from someone impersonating someone the victim trusts, such as a friend or colleague. The scammer typically claims that they are in trouble and needs the victim to purchase gift cards from a specific retailer and provide the scammer with the card numbers and PINs.

The scammer may use a variety of tactics to convince the victim to comply, such as threatening legal action, promising a refund or bonus, or claiming that the victim's personal information has been compromised. The victim may be instructed to purchase multiple gift cards in varying amounts and to provide the scammer with the card numbers and PINs over the phone or via email.

Once the scammer has obtained the gift card information, they can use it to make purchases or cash withdrawals, often with little chance of being caught or prosecuted.

To protect yourself from this type of phishing scam, it's important to be wary of unsolicited emails that request personal information or payment. Never provide gift card information or other sensitive information over the phone or via email, and be wary of any request that seems suspicious or too good to be true.

## **Character Kick-Off at Paradise Knoll School** by Jennifer Miller

On Friday, September 29th, Paradise Knoll School held its annual Character Kick-Off event. Students were dressed in rainbow order by grade level and they paraded into the All-Purpose Room proudly representing the nine pillars of character: respect, citizenship, empathy, tolerance, kindness, responsibility, courage, perseverance, and teamwork. Each trait was announced and defined by a member of our Character Ambassadors. Those students are: Giovanna Somma, Samantha DeWilde, Robert Bajda, Owen Gartner, Daelynn Perez, Elyana Rodriguez, Brianna McCall, Victoria Kessel, Jaylen Fonseca, and Calla Brennan.



As always, parents were in attendance for the “trait parade” and then were invited back to the classrooms to complete an activity together with students. This year’s theme is “We Are in Our Mixtape Era.” This theme is certainly a nod to the hugely popular Taylor Swift, but it also came from something a little closer to home. The entire district was able to participate in an awesome Professional Development training before the students came back to school in September. The presenter, Hamish Brewer, who is a uniquely energetic principal from Virginia, likened every student we work with to a “mix tape.” If we all made a mixtape, some



of us would have similar or maybe even some of the same songs and some of us would have very different songs. All of us have many similarities while still having many differences—and that is OK! All of our PK students are unique, and “our mixtapes” are meant to be celebrated. Mr. Brewer played a lot of music during his presentation and the whole staff danced, even to songs they wouldn’t have necessarily chosen for their own tapes, because we can appreciate all the songs and the music. Students and staff at PK respect and appreciate one another regardless of differences.

## WMHS Internship to Tomorrow's Teachers



Our Tomorrow's Teachers program spent time working with the Highlander Fawns Preschool program this Halloween. A wonderful time was had by all. We look forward to watching the progress of our future educators!



## WMHS Culinary Arts Program: Culinary Creations submitted by Nick Pollaro



*Pumpkin Pie*



*Pasta Carbonara*



*Teriyaki*

We are so proud of our Culinary Arts students and their ability to compose such delectable culinary creations! Food science is alive and well at WMHS.

## WMHS Business Courses

submitted by Nick Pollaro

### Marketing

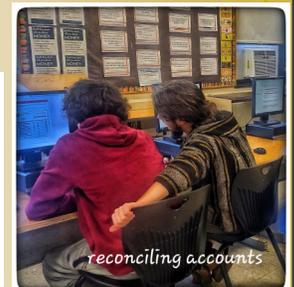


#### Cereal Box Project

Students created an original cereal while learning about target marketing and the marketing mix. This included designing a cereal box and slideshow presentation.

#### Guess the Brand Assignment

As part of the branding lesson, students designed a turkey or scarecrow to represent a famous brand. These will be on display for Highlander Pride Night along with an answer key.



## Hospitality & Tourism

### Design a Food Court Project

As part of the restaurant chapter, students worked in groups to design a food court. This included choosing a variety of restaurants, designing the layout, and creating a color scheme.

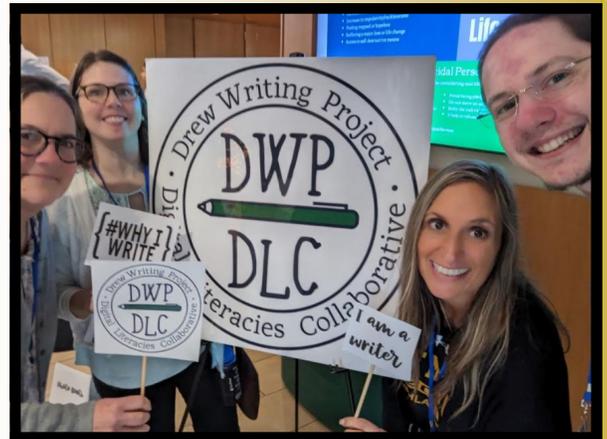
## WMHS Students Attend Conference at Rutgers University by Sharon West



On October 30, the West Milford High School **Journalism, Literary Magazine, Yearbook, and TV Science** students attended the annual **GSSPA Conference at Rutgers Busch Campus**. Students attended various workshops to hone their writing, research, and reporting skills in a collegiate setting. Mrs. Petrosillo, Mrs. Metcalf, Mr. Jordan and Mrs. Portman organized and chaperoned this excellent opportunity.

## Drew University AI in Writing Symposium by Sharon West

On October 20th, several of our English teachers (Mrs. Ruglio, Mrs. Salle, Mr. Kypers, Mrs. McGowan and Mrs. Mackesy) attended the **Drew University AI in Writing Symposium** to explore questions about AI, and celebrate the **National Day of Writing**. Sessions were led by university faculty, K-12 teachers and administrators, National Writing Project Teacher Consultants, and instructional designers. Teachers expanded their understanding of how AI may impact writing across disciplines and how educators might reframe both the questions being asked and the use of tools by teachers and students.



## Poe at Pax Amicus Theater by Sharon West

Freshmen in all levels of English were able to experience *The Life, Loves and Tales of Terror of Edgar Allan Poe* brought to life on stage at **Budd Lake's Pax Amicus Theater** on October 30th and November 14th. Coordinated by Mrs. Paton, students were also joined by Mr. Botsolas, Mr. Rowe, Mr. Milko, Mrs. DeMicco, Mrs. Lore, Mrs. Petrosillo, and Mrs. Rockey for this fantastic opportunity to view a live performance. Poe's selections included *The Tell-Tale Heart*, *The Raven*, and *The Cask of Amontillado*. Juniors will return to Pax Amicus in February for *Macbeth*!



## Journalism and Modern Media at Highlander

by Regan Mackesy



In a groundbreaking exercise within our new Journalism and Modern Media course at Highlander Academy, students recently embarked on a transformative journey of self-discovery and digital enlightenment. Engaging in a unique exploration using toothpaste and one-word intentions, symbolizing their aspirations for the year or the release of mental clutter, our students intertwined the tangible and the digital. This activity transcended conventional boundaries, guiding students toward a profound understanding of the delicate balance between the tangible and the digital in our interconnected world. Through thoughtful dialogue, the toothpaste and intentions exercise became a metaphorical bridge, connecting students to the heart of our course—digital citizenship. As students navigated the depths of their thoughts and intentions, they not only unearthed personal insights but also applied these ideas to that of being a responsible digital citizen where they understand once something is put out into the digital world, it is impossible to take back. This assignment stands as a testament to our commitment to nurturing responsible digital citizens, as we celebrate the triumphs of our students and recognize the invaluable lessons learned—lessons that will undoubtedly shape their journey in the digital world and beyond.

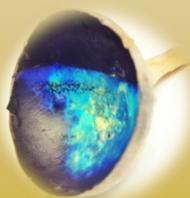
Students at Highlander Academy embarked on an exciting venture into the realm of video game creation! The assignment challenged students to craft compelling and relatable characters that could seamlessly integrate into existing video games or be featured in ones of their own creation. Under the guidance of the course, students undertook the fascinating task of developing characters from the ground up. They meticulously conceptualized each element, including the character's name, distinctive personality traits, a captivating backstory, and envisioned how their creation would dynamically respond within the gameplay environment. Furthermore, students were encouraged to explore the character's growth arc, delving into the evolution and transformation their creation might undergo throughout the gaming experience thus staying at the forefront of educational innovation and preparing students for the evolving landscape of modern media.

## Unified Sports at Macopin by Candice Carlisle

Macopin will be starting Unified Sports for the winter season. Students will have the opportunity to participate in bowling and/or basketball. Some of the students have been helping to create the basketball jerseys. Pictured is of one of our unified pairs who will be playing basketball together this season.



## Biology R Students Study Iridescent Tissue by Mary Kennedy



Our Biology R classes started the year by dissecting a Sheep's eyeball. Of particular interest to students was the tapetum lucidum, an iridescent tissue that contributes to the superior night vision of some animals. If you've ever witnessed a dog or cat's eyes "glowing in the dark", it was because of the tapetum's ability to reflect available light!

## Upper Greenwood Lake Kind Kids

by Dr. Jared Fowler

UGL Kind Kids collected food for their annual Thanksgiving Food Drive during the month of November. On November 15th they took a trip to the Highlands Family Success Center to deliver and sort the food in order for the donations to be ready for families in need during the holidays. Special thank you to Ms. Magnotta, Ms. Pappas and Ms. Patrio for organizing the event!



## WMHS Students Participate in Pinewood Derby Activity

by Lisa Lubarsky and Lauren Rembrandt

We are extremely proud of our Physics students in the resource room and self-contained classrooms and their Pinewood Derby creations! Students started with a plain block of wood and had to design and cut each block. Our students in the woodshop class made the designed cuts and then weights were added. Axle angles were changed on the vehicles, based on students' knowledge of Physics!!! Students also built the ramp they used to race!!! They are amazing!!! A wonderful job was done by all.

In the near future, we will be designing and making small gingerbread houses for the holidays. Students will also be doing the spaghetti marshmallow challenge and bridge challenge, and resource/self contained chemistry students will be creating crystals in solutions for ornaments.



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## APEX Power Fun Run at Maple Road School

by Bill Kane

Maple Road School students and staff recently participated in an Apex Power Fun Run fundraiser to raise money for our school community. The students collected pledges for their Apex Power Fun Run laps throughout a two-week span leading up to the fun run on Wednesday, November 15th.

The Apex Power Fun Run not only raised money for our school but also provided an opportunity for our students to learn about power, responsibility, and leadership. Throughout the two weeks of the fundraiser, Apex team members provided classroom lessons about these important character traits...all characteristics that tie into Maple Road School's character education mission.

On November 15th, our students and staff had a blast during the fun run, completing their laps on our upper field with music, laughter and cheers. Maple Road School students and families raised over \$18,000 in pledges and donations for the Apex Power Fun Run. Go Mustangs!!



## More Macopin Happenings by Dr. Greg Matlosz



The WMHS Marching Band visited Macopin School's eight grade to perform in front of the future marching band members and speak about the entire experience of joining the Marching Band. A huge congrats to the following students for earning Macopin School's Citizens of the Month for October: A huge shout



out to Troop 97403, who created a Girls Preparing Closet aka GPC. The kick off included an official ribbon cutting ceremony. Best of luck to Kaitlyn, Lily, and Sonny as they complete their Bronze Award with the Junior Girl Scouts. Former Dallas Cowboys player, Duane D. West, visited Macopin on October 4th to speak to our students about Bullying. He shared his own experiences and empowered our students to do the right thing.



# More from Special Services In Our Schools



Room 4 @ Maple Road  
"Our Happy Place"



Talia reading to our CLIMB preschool buddies



Apple Picking Community Trip



Custodian's Day



Choose to Include Banner Signing Day  
at Maple Road



Pumpkin Picking Community Trip



Halloween Math &  
Science

## The Fine & Performing Arts

by Sharon West

**Art Club Students**, with the guidance of Mrs. Gallagher, working behind the scenes in October and November to envision, design, paint, build and generally create magic for this year's Fall Drama, **Radium Girls**.



**West Milford HS Theatre Arts** presented **Radium Girls** for 2 nights at the WMHS Auditorium on November 17th and 18th. In 1926, radium was a miracle cure, Madame Curie an international celebrity, and luminous watches the latest rage—until the girls who painted them began to fall ill

with a mysterious disease. Inspired by a true story, **Radium Girls** traces the efforts of Grace Fryer, a dial painter, as she fights for her day in court.



The award winning **West Milford Highlander Marching Band** capped off another incredible competitive season. After years of success in USBands A class, the band was **promoted to the prestigious USBands Open Classification** and did not disappoint. The band placed 1st in every local USBands competition, were silver medalists at the Ludwig Musser Class (at MetLife Stadium) and the USBands New Jersey State Championships, and placed 4th

out of 16 bands at the USBands National Championships, which were also held at MetLife Stadium. The 2023 field show, **The Hive**, featured Rimsky-Korsakov's *Flight of the Bumblebee*, *The Wasps Overture* by Ralph Vaughan Williams, *Seal's Kiss from a Rose*, *Imma Be* by the Black Eyed Peas, and *The Hive* by Erik Morales.



Our very own two-time National Champion **West Milford Highlander Band**, led by Band Directors Mr. Gramata and Dr. McLaughlin, and their outstanding band, color guard and section assistants, hosted its **Second Annual Highlander Marching Classic** on Saturday, September 30, 2023. In it, they performed their much-awaited 2023 field show, **The Hive**, for an eager and appreciative home audience. This year's event included a larger and greater number of guest bands, new participants, and fine-tuned amenities for the audience, as well as outstanding performances by all. This continues to be an event the entire West Milford community can be proud of and which would not be possible without the unwavering support of the **West Milford Band Parents Association**.

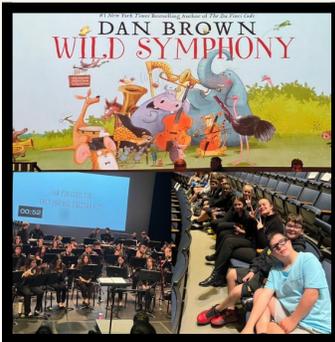


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(continued from page 15)



**West Milford High School Choir students** took a trip to **Rowan University** on October 18 to attend the **14th annual Tenor/Bass Festival**, which gathered hundreds of high school tenors and basses from three states. The festival organizers sought to “uplift voices, break barriers and elevate the gift of singing and uniting through music”. Mr. Weaver organized a new and highly specialized opportunity for these choir students.



**Macopin Unified Percussion students** took a trip to **William Paterson University** to see the **WPU Chamber Wind Symphony** perform **Dan Brown’s Wild Symphony: A Multisensory Concert** performance. Two Macopin Band Alumni were part of the ensemble, making it particularly fantastic! We are grateful to Miss McPartland, Mrs. Carlisle, Mr. Callie, Ms. Murphy & Ms. McConnell for facilitating this enriching musical experience.



Thirty-eight **Macopin Band and Choir students** participated in the **Sussex County Junior Honors Band and Choir Concert** on November 15, at Vernon High School. Students went through an audition process to be selected for these prestigious groups and then had only four rehearsals to pre-



pare for their concert. Congratulations to all on a stellar performance.

### **WMHS World Language Trip** submitted by Karen Johnson



The **AP Italian and AP French classes** visited **Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty** on October 25th. Before their trip, students learned about the rich history of immigration through Ellis Island. During their visit, classes had the opportunity to watch clips of interviews with people who had immigrated to the US through Ellis Island. Many of these people had donated to the museum some personal belongings carried with them at the time of their entry. Students also learned about the conceptualization of the Statue of Liberty, how it was built, and how it stands as a symbol of freedom.

## Veterans Day at Maple Road School



Maple Road School was fortunate to have a special Veterans Day visitor, Michael Nowacki, who serves as an aide at Highlander Academy. Mr. Nowacki is a former Maple Road student who served in the Marines.

**Shoprite Community Trip, Room 4 students preparing for Thanksgiving Feast from start to finish: Special Thanks to Destiny Gerety, a former student who works at Shoprite!**



## Updates from the Business Office

**By Bill Scholts**



I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and provide the District an update on recent changes that have taken place in the Business Office. I'm Bill Scholts, the District's new Business Administrator/Board Secretary. I previously held the positions of District Accountant and Assistant Business Administrator/Assistant Board Secretary for the District.

I'm a graduate of West Milford High School, a resident, and my 3 children currently attend school at Maple Road Elementary. I look forward to working with the Board of Education, District Administration, Staff and Community as a whole to assist the District any way that I can.

Our previous Business Administrator, Barbara Francisco, began her well-deserved retirement in October 2023. Mrs. Francisco held the position of Business Administrator/Board Secretary for over 13 years in the District, and I had the pleasure of working with Mrs. Francisco in my various positions for over eight of those years. I learned a great deal from Mrs. Francisco and truly appreciated my time working with her. Please join me in wishing Mrs. Francisco the best in her retirement and in thanking her for her countless contributions made to our District during her tenure!

I would also like to welcome Mrs. Melissa Bertagno, who has taken over the role of Assistant Business Administrator/Assistant Board Secretary for the District. Mrs. Bertagno previously served the District in the Accounts Payable department, and I now look forward to working with her in her new role as a member of the District Administration.

## A Message from Buildings & Grounds

**by Christopher Kelly**

As part of the District's Strategic Plan, Goal 3, new air handlers were installed and completed at Marshall Hill and Maple Road all-purpose rooms, and the cafeteria at Macopin. They provide better filtration, using MERV13 filters, heat and air conditioning. The new air handling units were funded through the \$1.3m federal ESSR grant. We also replaced the lights and wiring at Macopin tennis courts with LED, providing brighter light and energy savings.



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**23rd Annual Military Concert & Tattoo**

by Dr. Lydia Furnari & Kristy Smolinski



On November 11, 2023, the West Milford Highlander Band hosted the **23rd Annual Military Concert and Tattoo**. The event can be viewed in its entirety on the West Milford TV Science Channel, by clicking on the link above. This annual event featured our own West Milford Highlander

Marching Band, and West Milford Pipes and Drums, hosting several visiting bands including the Claddagh Pipe Band, Clifton High School Mustang Marching Band, the Bergen County Firefighters Pipe Band and the SHOTS, the West Milford Percussion and Celtic Friars Pipe Band. All of these groups eagerly shared their expertise and dedication to their craft, performing with great skill and musical passion. The Highlander Band was honored to dedicate this year's Tattoo to our local Veterans. We are so proud of our young musicians and look forward to their future performances.



**Maple Road Balloons Over Broadway Thanksgiving Day Parade**



**Maple Road; Predicting Outcomes Reading Unit**

**Plus a little bit of science mixed in!**



## Health and Physical Education, Clubs and Activities

by Joe Trentacosta

### Project Adventure

Freshmen climbing during their Project Adventure PE class 1st marking period this fall. Students are challenged by choice in order to learn and practice teamwork, developing trust, full value connections, communication, and language skills.



### Heroes and Cool Kids

Student leaders participating in our Heroes and Cool Kids program had their fall training in preparation for their visit to the 5th graders at each of our five elementary schools. Mr. Dougherty has led this student group for a number of years and the elementary students love their educational, fun visits to their schools each year.



### Driver Education

Students in Mr. Dougherty's Driver Education class got a hands-on demonstration about how to change a tire. Thanks to Mr. Dougherty and Mr. Marzalik for working together to create this opportunity for our students.



### Varsity Club

This fall, the Varsity Club designed and sold spirit apparel in effort to raise funds for the "pump-up bags" and gifts they provide to our athletic teams.



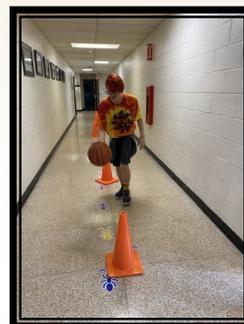
# West Milford Special Olympics & Play Unified Sports

by Kristi Clave

West Milford Special Olympics attended the Family Wellness Festival and Health Fair where a registration table was provided for this year's Special Olympic program.



Coming up: December 1 - Basketball Skills Area 2, Passaic County Competition hosted at WMHS, 6pm



WMSO Basketball Practice for our Traditional 8 and up team



Play Unified Bowling team



# West Milford Athletic Department

by Joe Trentacosta

## Gymnastics

The gymnastics team had another successful season advancing to the NJSIAA Sectional Championships and under Coach Rembrandt's leadership, hosted another successful Passaic County Tournament this season.



## Football

The Football Team participated in numerous team building and community events this season, as well as, winning key games against Nutley, Highpoint, Northern Valley Demarest, and Jefferson. Through the guidance of Coach Maslanek and his staff, the football team supported the band at their 2nd Annual Home

Competition, moved books from the library to the Wallish Farm, participated in teacher/player jersey swap day, assisted the gymnastics team with their spring floor, and continued the annual Punt, Pass, and Read program.



The Annual Punt, Pass, and Read Program, a tradition lasting over a decade at WMHS was held this fall at our elementary schools where our senior football players read their favorite books to students. The Annual Coaches v. Players 7 on 7 contests was a fun final day for these hard working Highlanders and their Annual Youth night produced some lasting friendships, like #18 and #18 pictured below.

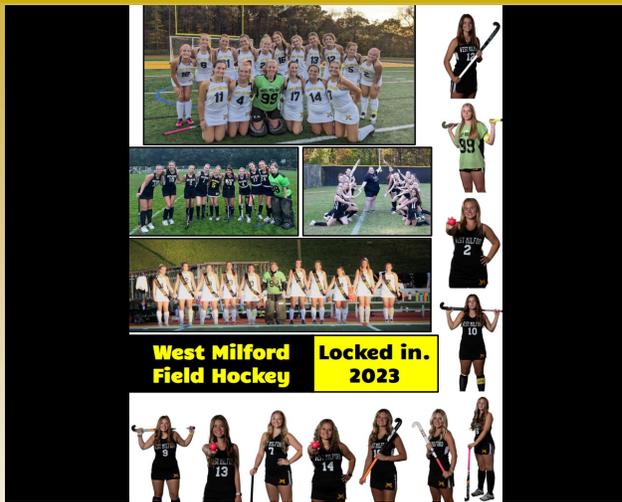


#wmhometownpride



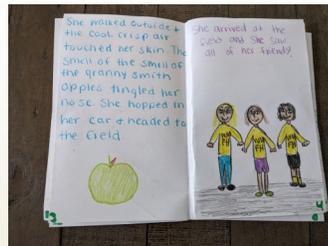
The football team also participated in the 1st Annual Player/Teacher Jersey Swap where they each chose a staff member to wear their away jersey to school on Homecoming.





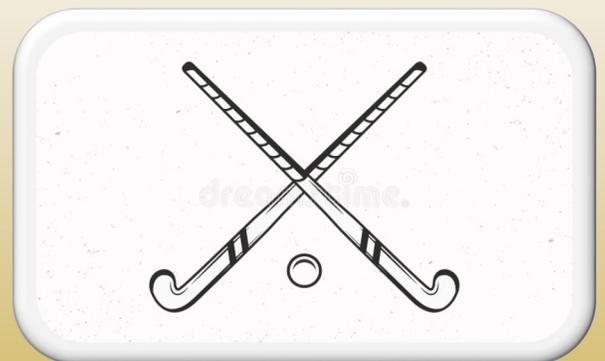
## Field Hockey

The field hockey team advanced again to the Pas-saic County Cham-pionships and had a lot of success under the leadership of Coach Provost including hosting team/family breakfasts, fun, competitive practices. The varsity team hosted the JV and freshman teams at their OPENING DINNER in August. Everyone was dressed up and the 18 varsity players prepared the entire party. It was almost like a Sweet 16 party. Then, the HS team joined up with the youth program and held a full program team break-FAST. We



created fun WMFH stories (drawings and literature) and then read the stories together like story time.

Besides having successful seasons (Varsity 17-3-2; JV 11-1-2; Frosh 2-7-2), we created a lot of memorable OFF field moments. We were also runners up in the conference and county.



### Girls Volleyball

The girls volleyball team advanced to the semi-finals of the Passaic County Tournament and finished strong this season. The program also held its annual Dig Pink fundraiser for breast cancer awareness.



### Cross Country

The Girls XC team had a landmark season winning the Passaic County and Big North Independence Championships this season. The team also advanced to the Group 2 Championships this season. Coach Andrea Jones was also named Coach of the Year for both! Congratulations!

The boys cross country team also advanced to the Group 2 Championships this season and continue to prosper and grow with Coach Chris Jones at the helm.



### Girls Tennis

The Girls Tennis Team, led by Coach Grimshaw planned and chaperoned a trip to the US Open this summer and bonded as a team with various activities at practices and contests. One of the highlights was a victory over Wayne Valley this season.



### Girls and Boys Soccer

The teams held various themed practices throughout the season and participated in the Challenger Soccer Program where student-athletes worked with students with special needs. Coach Ferriola and Gwinnett both fostered an environment where the soccer program has raised the bar competitively while having a fun experience.



### Cheer Team

The cheerleaders participated at all of our football games, cheering on our Highlanders. Under Coach Tripodi's leadership, the team participated in a variety of team bonding events, youth nights, and charitable fundraisers, such as their annual clothing drive.





## District Calendar 2023-2024

December 2023—March 2024

DECEMBER 22—Early Dismissal

December 25 - January 1, 2024 Holiday Recess – Schools Closed

JANUARY 2 Schools Resumes

January 15 Dr. Martin Luther King Day – Schools Closed

January 16 Professional Development Day – Early Dismissal for Students

FEBRUARY 19 President’s Day – Schools Closed

February 20 Professional Development Day – Schools Closed

MARCH 18 Professional Development Day – Early Dismissal for Students

March 29 Good Friday – Schools Closed



*Look for  
our next issue in  
February 2024!*

# Board Notes

The West Milford Township Public Schools Board of Education is engaged in a search for the next Superintendent of Schools. Please visit our website for the most up-to-date information about our search.

[Superintendent Search 2023-24](#)

## Board of Education

- Kate Romeo, President
- Claire Lockwood, Vice President
- William Cytowicz
- Teresa Dwyer
- Ray Guarino
- Peter Lippe
- Debbie O'Brien
- Tara Racano
- Lynda Van Dyk

## [ *Contact Us!* ]

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We're on the web! [www.wmtps.org](http://www.wmtps.org)