

# NYMILLS

November  
2015

## UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

### Emergency “Go Home” Drill

Dear Parents and Guardians;

On Tuesday, November 24, an Emergency Go Home Drill will be conducted at every school within our Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES area. New York State Education Law requires that we hold this drill each year at least 15 minutes before the normal dismissal time. The purpose of the drill is to prepare students, staff and parents for an emergency that would require us to immediately send all students home. The fastest way to evacuate the building and safely transport students home (or to an alternate safe location) is via our school buses.

You and your child should have a set plan for a safe drop-off within the school district if we need to send all students home in an emergency. Please talk to your child about your plan before Tuesday, November 24 so that there is no confusion on that afternoon. Also, for grades K-6 students, it is important to send a revised “Emergency School Closing Plan” to school if your emergency drop-off location has changed. **There will be no parent pick-ups from school during this drill.** In a true emergency, parent pick-ups would not be possible in most cases. Below is the schedule for this year’s drill:

1:55 p.m. - Grades 7-12 students and staff will evacuate the building. All grades 7-12

students will board buses at that time. No parent pick-ups will be accommodated on November 24. Students scheduled for after-school activities may **remain on their bus** and will be returned to school after the drill concludes.

2:45 p.m. – Grades K-6 students and staff will evacuate the building. All grades K-6 students will board buses at that time. No parent pick-ups will be accommodated on November 24 and there will be **no K-6 YMCA Child Care Program** that day.

Thank you for your assistance with our annual Emergency Go Home Drill. We anticipate a smooth and speedy dismissal on Tuesday, November 24. Please feel free to call your child’s school office if you have questions or concerns. There will be no school on November 25 – 27 due to the Thanksgiving break. Enjoy your Thanksgiving holiday!

Sincerely,



Kathy Houghton  
Superintendent of Schools

### 42nd Annual Turkey Trot Saturday, November 21

Please join us for our annual Thanksgiving Run. Every finisher receives a ribbon. And, thanks to our Optimist Club and our PTSO, there are many prizes given away. Refreshments are available. The event will be run regardless of the weather conditions!

- 9:30 a.m. Pick up your running TAG in the school lobby.
- 9:50 a.m. Tots Run (1/4 mile) - A fun-run on the track for any small child who wants to receive a ribbon.
- 10:00 a.m. Elementary Run (1 mile) - open to all elementary students living within the NYM School District as well as children and grandchildren of school staff.
- 10:20 a.m. High School - Old Timers Run (1 mile) - open to all high school students, alumni, school staff, parents, and residents of the district.
- 11:00 a.m. Presentation of Awards in the gym.

We hope to see you there!



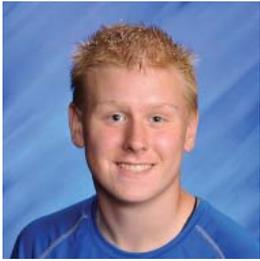
# Grades 7-11 Students of the Month



Students are chosen using the following criteria:

1. Academic effort
2. Positive attitude
3. Respectful behavior
4. School involvement
5. Community involvement

## September 2015



**John Mitchell**  
Grade 11



**Kaily Talerico**  
Grade 10



**Angela Chen**  
Grade 9



**Alesya Avrusevich**  
Grade 8



**McKenzie Brush**  
Grade 7

## October 2015



**Jacob Vennaro**  
Grade 11



**Kaliana Sobolewski**  
Grade 10



**Kaitlyn Kulawy**  
Grade 9



**Robert Murray**  
Grade 8



**Maria Maloney**  
Grade 7

### Dear Parents and School Community Members,

Education has certainly been at the forefront of our local, state, and national news media during this past year! I am sure that you have heard or read about the controversy surrounding the New York State Common Core assessments and the high number of test refusals (commonly referred to as “opt outs”). In fact, New York Mills UFSD was referred to numerous times due to our 77% refusal rate on the 2015 grades 3-8 NYS Math and English Language Arts assessments. I am well aware that many school community members are very proud of our test refusal numbers. In fact, some are even now organizing their efforts to increase the test refusal rate to 100% this year. Although I respect parents’ right to make choices for their children, I feel compelled to let you know that I do not agree with the decision many of you made to “opt your children out” of the assessments this spring.

Our students will face an extremely challenging job market when they complete their schooling. The Common Core standards and assessments are indeed more difficult than our previous standards, but this is by design. We are asking more of students today in order to prepare them for college, careers, and citizenship in an ever changing, more complex global community than baby boomers faced when we reached adulthood. Although I do not agree with using students’ scores on state assessments to evaluate teachers at this increased level of correlation, I do believe that we should test students on the curriculum we teach. I also believe in administering standardized assessments throughout the state in order to ensure that every child receives the same guaranteed curriculum. The only way to be sure that all schools address those same Common Core standards is to administer state assessments to every child in every school. We have been unable to accomplish

this due to test refusals. I know that our students and parents love their teachers, which is why many of you have chosen to refuse the test for your children. You are standing in solidarity with them on this very difficult and emotional issue. I also love our teachers and principals, but the purpose of public education is to prepare all students for their future; and I believe that test refusal does not serve our students well in this regard.

I am asking parents to rethink your position on test refusal this year and instead of “opting your children out” of the state assessments, to encourage them to do their very best on the tests, as well as every other assessment and assignment they encounter at school. That is how we will together prepare them for the challenging, yet exciting future that awaits them. That is how they will get ready for Regents exams, the SAT’s, and the rigor of their life’s work that awaits them.

Thank you for reading and considering my view on this complex and highly controversial issue. I wish only the best to each of you as we continue to collaborate to provide the best possible education for every child of the New York Mills Union Free School District.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathy S. Houghton".

Kathy Houghton  
Superintendent of Schools



## Optimist Student of the Month

Shawn Essafi, a member of the New York Mills Jr/Sr High School Class of 2016, has been named the New York Mills Optimist Youth of the Month for September. Shawn is the son of Mustapha and Juliann Essafi of Yorkville.

Shawn has been involved in many activities in our school and local communities and has served a leadership role in many of them. A High Honor Roll student who has been selected as Student of the Month every year since kindergarten, Shawn was inducted into the National Junior Honor Society in 8th grade and the National Honor Society in 11th grade. Last year he was awarded the Elmira Key award.

Shawn has been very active within our school. This year he serves as Student Council President and works diligently for the betterment of our school community. He has been a member of the Newspaper Club for which he was vice-president and editor and the Yearbook Club, for which he also was the editor and photographer. As a sophomore, Shawn participated in the Healthcare Olympiad. Shawn has also been very involved in our music and theater program. A member of Chorus since 6th grade, he also participated in Select Chorus and auditioned and was selected for the well-respected All-County chorus for two years. Shawn began his time in theater in our Drama Club in 5th grade. Since that time, he has had a role in every school musical and was elected as club officer for the past two years. Furthermore, he has assisted in the Elementary Drama

Club since 7th grade and this year is assistant director for this year's elementary production of *Into the Woods*.

Shawn's involvement is not limited to school-based activities. During his freshman year, Shawn participated in the Young Entrepreneur's Academy, which is a six-month program through MVCC that teaches high school students how to start and run their own businesses. Through this program, he created a tutoring business and since that time has given speeches at multiple orientations for YEA. He is also a member of the Stanley Theater Youth Ambassador Program, for which he critiques Broadway musicals performed at the theater. Shawn has also volunteered for Feed the Vets, the annual New York Mills PTSO Craft Fair, and at our parent night.

Shawn's career goal is to become an attorney. He is considering pursuing a major in the science field and is exploring various 4-year colleges and universities. Shawn has been a positive member of the New York Mills school community and while we will miss him next year, we are excited about the future that lies ahead of him.



Shawn Essafi

## Optimist Student of the Month

The New York Mills Optimists have named Adriana Perretta as the October Youth of the Month. Adriana is a member of the New York Mills Class of 2016 and is the daughter of Rocco and Susan Perretta of New York Mills.

Adriana has been an active member of our school and community. She has earned a spot on our Honor Roll or High Honor Roll throughout high school and was inducted into the National Junior Honor Society in 8th grade and National Honor Society in 11th grade. In addition, she has been recognized as Student of the Month every year since elementary school. At the conclusion of her junior year, Adriana was awarded the Elmira Key Award.

Adriana has been involved in a variety of activities in our school and has earned many accolades and leadership roles. Adriana has run on our cross country team every year of high school and has been recognized as MVP, CSC All-Star, Team Captain and earned the Coaches' Award. She led her team during warm-ups and assisted with our Modified Team. Adriana also ran for our Varsity Track and Field Team, for which she was awarded with Most Outstanding Performance. She is also a four-year member of Chorus, a volunteer on the Prom Committee and a two-year member of Varsity Club, for which she served as Treasurer. Elected Class Secretary since 10th grade, Adriana works toward providing her peers with a positive school experience. Last year she tutored an underclassman in advanced math two days a week. A positive

leader, Adriana participated in the 3-day NYSCLSA Leadership Conference and was nominated for and selected to attend the Rotary Youth Leadership Conference, for which she was sponsored by the Utica Rotary.

Adriana's true passion outside of the school is ballet and she has spent countless hours practicing the art. As a member of the Leatherstocking Ballet, she performed as the Sugar Plum Fairy, Dew Drop Fairy and Nala in the *Lion King of Africa*. She also volunteered for the company and worked as an assistant dance teacher. Adriana currently works part-time at a local fast-food restaurant.

This year, Adriana has an internship in Accounting through the Regional Program for Excellence. Her future plan includes pursuing a major in mathematics and she is considering many four-year colleges. We are fortunate to have Adriana among our student body and look forward to all that she is certain to contribute to our school and community in the future.



Adriana Perretta

## September

## October



## Football

On October 23 the New York Mills football team concluded their 2015 season with a 35-15 defeat at Sauquoit. The Marauders finished the regular season with a record of 4 wins and 4 losses. This year's team began the season with a 35-7 victory at Clinton, followed up with victories against Port Byron, Cooperstown, and South Lewis. Three members of the Marauders were selected to play in the senior All-Star game in November: Terrance Nichols, Griffin Baur and Evan Hall. Seven other members of this year's team are also seniors: Andrew Albert, Gary Scales, Dalton Henry, Dustin Howard, Joe Schaaf, Brian Coughlin and Vinny DeAngelo. The future is looking bright with many key underclassmen getting valuable playing time this season.



## Kids of Character Awards

The following grades 3-6 students were selected as September Kids of Character at New York Mills Elementary School. This award is given for following The Marauder Way on a regular basis.

**Grade 3** – Selen Bilal and Mia Roberts

**Grade 4** – Abigail Evans and Mackenzie Rose Kinville

**Grade 5** – Joseph Cirusuolo and Danni Williams

**Grade 6** – Emma Clements and Jacob Edwards



Cameron (the Eagle)

## Cross Country

Boys' and Girls' Varsity Invitationals:

<b>Oneonta Invite</b>	Boys 7th place, Girls 1st place
<b>Fort Plain</b>	Boys 1st place, Girls 1st
<b>Queensbury Invite</b>	Boys 5th place, Girls 4th place
<b>McQuaid Invite</b>	Boys 20th place, Girls 10th place
<b>CSC Championship</b>	Boys 1st place League Champs, Girls 1st place League Champs

Boys Division Record 5-1 Overall Record 13-6 Girls Division 6-0 Girls Overall 18-1

The 2015 Cross Country team was young and looks to have a bright future. The team set many personal records as well as improvements from the beginning of the season. The Boys and Girls were the 2015 CSC Conference Champions. This was the boys 4th league title in a row and the girls first ever league title. Austin Cady earned CSC All-Stars for the boys. For the girls, CSC all-stars included Gretchen Biel, Abbey Copperwheat, Grace Reilly, Adriana Perretta, and Sarah Sharpe. Currently the boys are ranked 22nd and the girls are ranked sixth in New York state, according to the New York Sportswriters Association.



The New York Mills Cross Country teams performed at the Sectional Meet held on November 7 at VVS.

Thank you to all the seniors and you will be missed. Seniors include Austin Cady, Mike Copperwheat, A.J. Ganim, Ben Kehrl, Brandon Ross, Natalie Ciaccia, Megan Crist and Adriana Perretta.



## Varsity Field Hockey

The New York Mills Varsity Field Hockey team went 6-3-1 in the CSC West and earned 3rd place out of 6 teams in the league. The team was 7-7-2 overall and took the #4 seed in sectional play. They traveled to Liverpool for the Section 3 Class D semi-finals where they faced the #1 seeded Weedsport. New York Mills held the lead for quite some time until Weedsport tied it up; and then, with 1.7 seconds left to play, New York Mills was defeated by Weedsport. It was a very well played and hard fought game. Senior captains were Makenzie Stevens, Brianna Fuccillo and Autumn Hellinger. However, the team will be losing a great and very talented group of seniors this season including Abbey Fitzgerald, Amanda Fitzgerald, Jenna Topa, Courtney Tramacera and Alyssa Murphy. Senior Brianna Fuccillo led the team in goals this season with nine. Behind her were Alyssa Fuccillo, Courtney Tramacera and Autumn Hellinger all tied with five each. Brianna Fuccillo also lead the team in assists with six and Autumn Hellinger was right behind her with five. Madison Cudhea stepped in as the starting goalkeeper this season as a sophomore and brought in 91 saves and two shutouts. Morgan McGauley was moved up to the varsity roster due to a mid-season injury and recorded 13 saves and two varsity shutouts herself.

First picture is after the pink game where the team raised awareness and funds for Breast Cancer Research, as it was important to the team in many ways. The team wore pink uniforms in representation of October being Breast Cancer Awareness month. The total amount raised between the Varsity and Modified pink games was \$319.

Second picture was before the first regular season game at Herkimer.



## Cheerleading

The New York Mills Varsity Cheerleading Team participated in the Fall Center State Cheerleading Championships on October 29, hosted by Frankfort-Schuyler High School. The Marauders' cheerleaders performed their upbeat, high-impact, two and a half minute routine for a huge audience of families, friends and spectators in the school's gymnasium. Squads are judged on stunts, tumbling, jumps, pyramids, cheering and overall sportsmanship.

The Marauders' tiny-team of six athletes packed a powerful punch as they went head to head (and toe to toe) against other cheer teams that were double, triple and quadruple their size. This spirited squad won the hearts of the crowd with their stunning stunts, terrific tumbling, cool choreography and smooth swagger; yet, they fell short of taking home a trophy. At the end of the program, the cheerleaders from all of the participating schools had time to mingle, have some fun and dance to the beats of DJ Roscoe Red from KISS-FM.

Other local schools that participated in the FCSCC were Frankfort-Schuyler, Sauquoit, Oriskany, Little Falls, West Canada, and Mount Markham. The 2015 New York Mills Varsity Cheerleading Team includes Aubrey Geigel (11th grade), Christina Malinowski (11th grade), Rachel Siegel (11th grade), Katrina Briody (10th grade), Kaliana Sobolewski (10th grade) and Lexus Hagenbuch (9th grade), led by coach Ciara Putrello-Parrish.

The cheerleaders also competed at Scarefest Cheerleading Championship on Halloween, hosted by Cicero-North Syracuse and the Section III Fall Cheerleading Championships at South Jefferson on November 7.



## Students Visit Wellin Hall

On September 26 several students from the world history classes and members of the chorus attended a concert at Wellin Hall at Hamilton College. They saw a live performance of the Alash Ensemble who performed Tuvan throat singing. Tuvan throat singing allows a vocalist to sing more than one pitch at a time. Afterwards they were able to meet the performers and get their autographs! Everyone had a great time!

## Jersey Boys

Mr. Ferguson's Modern American Society class, along with Ms. Viel's Advanced Placement Literature class and Mrs. Lovecchio's chorus and theater students attended a performance of *Jersey Boys* at the Stanley Theater in September. Students learned about the life story of four young men from the wrong side of the tracks in New Jersey who came together to form the iconic 1960s rock group, The Four Seasons. It was an evening of song, dance and great entertainment.



## The Second Year of Fall Community Clean-Up

In conjunction with the Oneida County Youth Bureau and the Oneida County Office for the Aging and Continuing Care, Student Council members and various other students participated in The Sixth Annual Intergenerational Fall Clean-Up! On October 24, 2015, students performed general yard clean-up for many of our senior citizens in the community. Clean up duties included raking, carrying leaves, sweeping driveways and sidewalks, and bringing light refuse to the curb for pickup. New York Mills Junior/Senior High School was represented by youth volunteers Shawn Essafi, Brie Fuccillo, Andrew Albert, Stephen Briody, Griffin Baur, AJ Mitchell, Kenny Egan, Claudia Spost, Chris Cirusuolo, Rachel Beaulieu, Nick Briggs-Ellenberger, McKenzie Keator, Kaitlyn Carman, Nina Fellone, Holly Simon, Mackenzie Majka, Kiley Lyons, Judy Chen, Victor Lee, and Sophia Lin. Mrs. Toth chaperoned the event this year.

## Grade 6 Conservation Education Days

On September 22, sixth graders attended the 2015 Conservation Education Days at Delta Lake State Park in Rome. The event is sponsored by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County. The purpose of this popular educational event is to provide area sixth graders the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the ecological balance among humans, wildlife, forest, soil and waters of New York state. It was a fun day for all students and they were instructed by a former New York Mills graduate, Mr. William Girvan, at one of the various outdoor activities.

## Student Council Supports Emmaus House

Over the course of several years New York Mills' Student Council has supported Emmaus House, which is a Ministry of the Sisters of St. Margaret in Utica. Each November, grades seven through 12 adopt families in need for Thanksgiving. The student council members create baskets of food and gifts to be delivered to families, helping to make everyone's holiday a little bit brighter.

## Exciting Week for Spirit – Homecoming Winners

For New York Mills' Homecoming celebration a tally was taken daily, counting the number of students in each grade who participated in "spirit week." Each day there was a different category assigned in regards to the way students dress. The following categories were twin day, pajama day, "-ER" day (dress as something that ends in -er), superhero day, and blue and orange day. The student council asked homeroom teachers to tally student participation and created a friendly competition amongst the classes for bragging rights. Students also decorated hallways in various themes.

The winner for overall spirit was the sophomore class, having the most participation daily. The juniors, class of 2017, won the hall decorating contest.

On Friday evening, we held game night in the cafeteria. Approximately 45 students came to play groups games. We handed out a variety of prizes, namely candy and gift cards from many different eateries in our area. It was a fun event. Please feel free to check out our student council page on Facebook – New York Mills Student Council. You will see a time-lapse version of the limbo competition. Like our page and follow us!

At Saturday's Homecoming football game, the freshmen class dominated the games winning both the pie and pizza eating contest. Winner Hazel Dingle won the pizza contest and Rob Maciol took top honors eating all the chocolate pie. Our eagle, Beeker, took first place in the 2nd Annual Mascot Run against Lite 98.7's toucan Tookie, Herkimer College's The General, Big Frog 104's Jeremiah B. Frog, and Sweet Frog Yogurt's Scoops.

Lastly, 156 students attend the Homecoming semi-formal dance Saturday evening. Students looked stellar and danced the night away!



## Responsible Use of Social Media

When information becomes available online through oversharing and poor decision making, issues can arise that can impact your child's reputation and safety. With the consequences from texting while driving to cyber bullying, from stolen identities to computer hacking, online information can be gathered oftentimes with dangerous and life changing consequences.

However, we may not be fully aware of the impact our online reputation has and how it can potentially affect our plans for the future. College admission officers may view the social media use of prospective applicants when deciding admission or scholarship awards. Recruiters in business may also do the same to screen applicants for potential employment. The importance of effective communication from an early age, in regards to the importance of responsible use of social media, needs to be an on-going conversation.

- Discuss the importance with your child of posting information online that could potentially damage their reputation.
- Encourage empathy and civility with your child when communicating online.
- Periodically inquire about the social media sites your child is using. Ask about how they found out about them and what makes them interesting to them.
- Support the idea of thinking not just before you click, but more importantly thinking before you create.
- Be a role model; avoid venting or complaining in your own posts, especially about people or organizations that may inadvertently view them.
- Discourage oversharing. The world does not need to know where your child is at all times.
- Always secure your profile using passwords of alphanumeric or special characters. Remember to periodically change passwords too!
- Discuss the concept of being a friend both on and off line and highlight the dangers and potential risks of creating "friends" on social media.
- Periodically review your "friends" and delete those you feel may be untrustworthy.
- Understand and educate yourself with the application and importance of privacy settings.
- Discuss the importance of not posting personal information online that could potentially lead to identity theft or open your child up to predators. (i.e., age, birthdate, graduation date, address, driver license number, social security number, school, etc.)

## It's Right Around the Corner - Breakfast with Santa!

Mark your calendars for Student Council's Annual Breakfast with Santa on Saturday, December 12. The student council members have already been in contact with the North Pole and are planning on making this year's holiday celebration that much merrier. Breakfast with Santa will be hosted from 9:00-11:00 a.m. in our school's cafeteria. There will be delicious pancakes, French toast stixs, and sausage to eat, along with lots of fun to satisfy all. The elves will be waiting to serve you and we can't wait to spread holiday cheer! Children ages 12 and under are \$5.00, while a large breakfast is \$9.00. Presale tickets will be sold at future NYM school events. Feel free to contact Ms. Viel to order your breakfast tickets ahead of time at [aviel@newyorkmills.org](mailto:aviel@newyorkmills.org)

## Mama Mia! What a Gift!

An anonymous member of our community donated 20 tickets for students to see the musical *Mama Mia!* at the Stanley Theater in Utica on October 25, 2015. The tickets were a philanthropic gift to foster the love of theater for interested students. Students who had the opportunity to go raved that the show was fantastic, and shared that they loved singing all the songs!

## Welcome New Employees



Mandy Bara,  
Teacher Assistant



Jessica Powers,  
Teacher Assistant



Laura Ciaccia,  
Teacher Assistant



Ellen Diskin,  
School Monitor



Michael Boccardo,  
Bus Driver



Cyndi St. James,  
School Monitor



Mary Sroka,  
School Monitor



Bernice Edwards,  
School Monitor





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Janet Wroblecki

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Kathy Houghton, Superintendent of Schools  
Michael Spost, Secondary Principal  
René Wilson, Elementary Principal

### Visit us on the Web

<http://www.newyorkmills.org>

## PTSO News

The 38th Annual PTSO Holiday Craft Fair will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 5 and Sunday, December 6. Volunteers and bakers are still needed to help with the event. If you are interested in helping out, please go to our sign up link at <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c094da5ac29abfe3-volunteer>.

PTSO will also be having their Secret Santa Shop the morning of the Turkey Trot on Saturday, November 21, at the Craft Fair on December 5 and 6, and at Student Council's Breakfast With Santa on Saturday, December 12 beginning at 9:00 a.m.

The Scholastic Book Fair will start at the Craft Fair on December 5 and 6 and will be held the entire week Monday, December 7 – Friday, December 11. Information will be sent home with elementary students regarding the Book Fair at a later date.

## MAD Boosters Elementary Arts/Special Person's Day

October 23 was the elementary school's Art Fest/Special Person's Day sponsored by MAD Boosters. Students along with their special persons had lots of fun. The day started off with a magic show and grades 4-6 played Minute-To-Win-It with Coach Keating. Activities included paper bag trees, toilet paper roll pumpkins, book readings, songs, and caramel apples. Thank you to the MAD Boosters for a fantastic, fun-filled morning.

## Into the Woods

Our elementary Drama Club under the direction of Mrs. Goodfriend, will be presenting *Into the Woods* on Friday, November 20 at 7:00 p.m. in the auditorium. Tickets are \$5 and can be purchased at school beginning on Monday, November 16, or at the door on November 20. The students have been working very hard and everyone is invited for an enjoyable, musical performance. Hope to see you there!

