



March
2016

UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

2016-17 Budget Preparation

Dear School Community Member,

The Board of Education and administration are hard at work on the District's 2016-17 school district budget. The Board has charged us with developing a budget that meets the needs of our K-12 students, with very little increase from last year. By trimming back spending in non-instructional areas, we are doing our best to accomplish this task.

In addition, our tax levy limit is only 1.1736%; which means that we cannot increase last year's levy amount by more than 1.1736%. In fact, the Board has asked that we keep the levy increase below that level; while at the same time enriching our K-12 program. This can be accomplished through the planned expenditure of debt service funds; however, the Board is still considering several program enhancements and spending plans for next year and no final decisions have been made on our 2016-17 spending plan.

Please consider joining us at one of our upcoming Board meetings and budget workshops. We conducted our first Board of Education Budget Workshop on Tuesday, March 1 and we are scheduled to hold a second workshop on March 15. There are also two Board meetings on April 5 and 19. After much discussion and consideration, the Board will adopt a 2016-17 budget during one of the two April meetings. The adopted budget will then be presented to the public at the District's Tuesday, May 3 Public Budget Hearing; followed by the 2016-17 Budget Vote and Board Member Election on Tuesday, May 17, from 12:00 to 9:00 p.m. Thank you for your continued support and involvement in the New York Mills Union Free School District.

Sincerely,

Kathy Houghton, Superintendent of Schools



Let us set the scene: the year is 1962 and Baltimore is full energy, music and a lot of big hair! The local dance troupe is looking to fill a spot on a dance show and times are about to change as a not so typical television personality is about to break the stereotypes of TV. The New York Mills drama club is ready to bring Baltimore to our stage in this year's drama club production of *Hairspray*! This fast paced musical is full of real life issues and modern day concerns regarding integration, discrimination and every stereotype you can imagine.

Hairspray will showcase the talents of our very own stars of New York Mills including Jordyn Keeck-Beach as Tracy, Shawn Essafi as Edna (Tracy's mother), Alexis Orr as Amber, Evan Hall as Link, Janlynn McCoy as Velma, Alex Hubley as Seaweed, McKenzie Keator as Penny and Alexandria Thomas as Motormouth.

This year's cast has been working very hard since December to transform our stage and bring you vivacious dancing with a modern musical flair. You are cordially invited to come and enjoy an evening of entertainment as the drama club presents *Hairspray* on March 18 and 19 at 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium. The cost of the show is \$9 for adults and \$7 for students and seniors.

A senior performance will be offered on March 17 at 4 p.m. The cost of the show alone is \$7. If you would like to enjoy a pasta dinner after the show the cost of a delicious spaghetti dinner and the show will be \$8.

All tickets are available by calling the high school office at 768-3378, by visiting the high school or, of course, they are available at the door each performance night.

The drama club looks forward to bringing the community this colorfully contagious musical directed by Teresa Zielinski-Lovecchio. Choreography by Juliana Muirhead, with assistance from Kaitlyn Kulawy and the orchestra directed by Steve Shrey.



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

November 2015



Elizabeth McAllister
Grade 11



Chloe Cattadoris
Grade 10



Abbey Copperwheat
Grade 9



Alexis Gyore
Grade 8



Sophia Lin
Grade 7

December 2015



Claudia Spost
Grade 11



Arabella Baker
Grade 10



Sarah Sharpe
Grade 9



Kiley Lyons
Grade 8



Dominique Galante
Grade 7

January 2016



Rachel Siegel
Grade 11



Shayla Schmelcher
Grade 10



Karilynn Tramacera
Grade 9



Holly Simon
Grade 8



Sydney Maciol
Grade 7

NOVEMBER Kids of Character Awards

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

Grade 3 – Heidi Cilbrith and Zachary Matyjas

Grade 4 – Lucas Komnick and Victoria Odarchuk

Grade 5 – Hailey Cornish and Jaydon Dietz

Grade 6 – Danil Donchuk and Kara Osika

DECEMBER Kids of Character Awards

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

Grade 3 – Sean Clifford and Emma Countryman

Grade 4 – Jayla Jordan and Krishna Patel

Grade 5 – Allison Herrman and Mason Palmer

Grade 6 – Logan Copperwheat and Connor McCarthy



Optimist Student of the Month

Courtney Tramacera has been named the New York Mills Optimists Youth of the Month for November. Courtney is the daughter of Anthony and Renee Tramacera of New York Mills and a member of the New York Mills Class of 2016.

Courtney is a high honor roll student who has been named Student of the Month every year in high school. She was inducted into the National Junior Honor Society in 8th grade and National Honor Society in 11th grade. As a junior, Courtney was nominated for and received the School Board Institute Achievement Award and was honored with an award from Sage Colleges.

Courtney has been an active part of the New York Mills High School community. She was a member of the JV Field Hockey team in 9th grade and since 10th grade has played on the Varsity team, which qualified for sectionals last year. A flute player, Courtney has played in our concert, spirit and jazz bands. In addition, Courtney has been a reliable, trustworthy tutor for our younger students. Because of Courtney's unwavering dedication to this program, she was honored as Tutor of the Year at the National Honor Society banquet last spring.

Optimist Student of the Month

The Optimist Club of New York Mills has named Andrew Albert as Youth of the Month for December. Andrew is the son of Dr. and Mrs. Waleed Albert of New York Mills and is a member of the New York Mills Class of 2016.

Andrew is a High Honor Roll Student who was selected as Student of the Month each high school year. In 8th grade Andrew was inducted into the Junior National Honor Society and last year, as a junior, he was inducted into our chapter of the National Honor Society, for which he now serves as Treasurer. In the spring Andrew was also honored with awards from Rochester Institute of Technology and the University of Rochester.

Andrew has participated in a wide array of activities both within and outside of our school community. A 3-year member of our Varsity Football team, he led the team as captain this past fall. He has been a member of our Track and Field team for three years and plans to participate again this spring. In addition, Andrew ran for Cross Country last year. Andrew represented our school in the Healthcare Olympiad in 10th grade and that same year volunteered countless hours as a Spanish tutor for one of our underclassmen. At the start of this past summer, Andrew participated in the prestigious Boys' State, sponsored by the American Legion,

Outside of school, Courtney is very active in judo, for which she has competed in tournaments and won medals. In fact, she now volunteers at the dojo, an honor given only to higher ranking belts. Courtney is working toward her black belt.

This past summer, Courtney had an internship in the Mohawk Valley Health System audiology department through the Regional Program for Excellence. Courtney plans to pursue a career in audiology and is considering applying to Elmira College, Nazareth College, SUNY Cortland, SUNY New Paltz and The College of Saint Rose. While we will miss Courtney, we are excited about the bright future that lies ahead of her.



Courtney Tramacera

December

during which he was elected by the other participants as Mayor of his assigned city. Andrew was also an active participant in his church youth group. Finally, Andrew is a first degree black belt in Taekwondo, for which he also worked as an assistant instructor at his dojang.

Andrew plans to pursue a medical degree specializing in neurosurgery. Over the summer, he participated in an internship through the Regional Program for Excellence with a local neurologist. Andrew plans to apply to several 4-year colleges including SUNY Binghamton, Geneseo and Buffalo, Colgate University, Syracuse University and the University of Rochester. We are proud of what Andrew has accomplished and all that he is certain to accomplish and wish him well in his future endeavors.



Andrew Albert

JANUARY Kids of Character Awards

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

Grade 3 – Keegan Bach and Julianna Dreidel

Grade 4 – Frank Calhoun and Ryan Lamb

Grade 5 – Thomas Malinowski and Kamryn Williams

Grade 6 – Ariellah Bova and Samantha Paparella

FEBRUARY Kids of Character Awards

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

Grade 3 – Alexa Grande and Valentino Rizzo

Grade 4 – Lauren Kulpa and Hailey Mahardy

Grade 5 – Jayla Bennett and Cindy Wu

Grade 6 – Noah Diskin and Joseph Odarchuk



Focus District Designation

On January 26, the District received notification of our preliminary accountability status as a Focus District due to the performance of our Students with Disabilities subgroup on the New York State English Language Arts assessment. Because we had a very high test refusal rate for the 2015 tests, there were not sufficient scores available for us to show AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) in the areas of participation or performance. The state therefore used test results from 2014 in order to have enough scores to develop a valid performance rating for the District. Unfortunately, we still did not make AYP. After receiving the preliminary designation of Focus District, we appealed this status with NYSED due to the extenuating circumstances of our extremely high number of test refusals. Unfortunately, that appeal was unsuccessful and on February 25, notification arrived that New York Mills is officially a Focus District. This designation will continue at least through the 2016-17 school year, and may continue pending our students' participation and performance on the 2016 New York State assessments. A Focus District Forum was held for parents on March 9 and materials from the presentation are available on our website under "Focus District Forum" at www.newyorkmills.org.

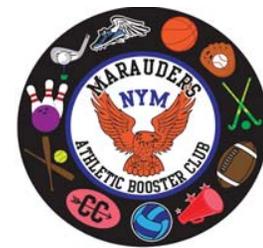
New Administrative Structure for the School District

At their March 1 meeting, the Board of Education officially changed the configuration of their administration by abolishing the positions of 11-month Elementary Principal and 12-month Jr.-Sr. HS Principal; and created two 12-month positions: Executive Principal and K-12 Principal. Our current principals were immediately approved to these positions at the same meeting. Beginning July 1, Mr. Michael Spost will serve as Executive Principal and Dr. Rene' Wilson will serve as K-12 Principal. This change in administrative structure will provide additional continuity to our students by giving them access to two full-time principals for assistance and guidance throughout their K-12 educational experience at New York Mills. This plan will also support the District in our efforts to better align our local K-12 curriculum, instruction and testing program with New York State standards, curriculum and assessments. For additional information about our new administrative structure, please visit the District website at www.newyorkmills.org and click on "Administrative Reconfiguration."

Marauders Athletic Booster Club

We would like to congratulate 11th grader, Christina Malenowski, for being selected as the winner for the new Club logo. Great job, Christina!

The club is busy planning the 2nd Annual Golf Outing for August 2016. We are looking for volunteers to assist in the planning of the event. If you are interested, please send an email to athleticboosters@newyorkmills.org or call Mrs. Denise Crist at 723-1753.



Blackhawk Helicopters Land at NYM

New York Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters were operating in the Utica area on Sunday, March 13 in support of a United States Army Reserve training exercise.

Four UH-60 helicopters, flown by the 142nd Aviation Regiment, which is based at the Albany International Airport in Latham, landed on the grounds of the New York Mills Union Free School around 10 a.m., followed by air insertion operations at the New York State Preparedness Training Center in Oriskany.

The helicopters conducted training with members of the Army Reserve's Company B, 403rd Civil Affairs Battalion, based in Utica.

The District was honored to assist with this important drill.



NYM Students Win Optimist Club Essay Contest

Eleventh graders Katelyn Diviccaro and Christina Malinowski, recently won the Optimist Club's essay contest based on a theme of "Lead by Example: Reality or Fiction."

Katelyn, (pictured right) was awarded first place for the honor and Christina (pictured left), placed second. Both received medals from the NYM Optimists. In addition, the essay will be sent to the New York-New England District level to be judged along with winners from other Optimist Clubs in the district. College scholarships of \$2,500 are available for top winners at the district level.

Many thanks to English teacher Mrs. Hartmann for encouraging the students participation in the contest.



Congratulations!



We would like to wish Diane Brady a happy retirement!

Athletic Leadership Conference



Claudia Spost, John Mitchell, Kenny Egan and Michaela Marrero attend the first annual Center State Conference Athletic Leadership Conference at The Otesaga in Cooperstown, New York.

VFW Voice of Democracy Competition

Yorkville Post 6001 selected Shawn Essafi and Christina Malinowski as the first and second place winners, respectively, of the Voice of Democracy Audio Essay Contest. Commander Tom Stoio, joined by Mike and Natalie Spellman of VFW post 7393, presented certificates and a monetary award to the winners on March 4. Students in grades 9-12 were invited to compete by writing and recording a broadcast script on this year's theme: "My Vision for America."

Shawn is a member of the Class of 2016 and is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Mustapha Essafi of Yorkville. Christina is a member of the Class of 2017 and is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Malinowski, also from Yorkville.



19th Annual Science Fair

This February, we celebrated our 19th annual New York Mills Elementary Science Fair. The science fair is an amazing event for students in kindergarten through sixth grades supporting our school science curriculum by promotion activities that engage students in scientific research and inquiry. This year's science fair was made possible by the hard work and tremendous volunteer efforts of our parents, families, teachers and community members.

All of the students did a wonderful job. Some of the projects included, how to create a Battery From a Potato, All about Geysers, How Wind Affects Objects, Rainbow flowers, Circuits and Bulbs, Crystals, The Bearded Dragon, Hamsters, At What Temperature Does Chocolate Melt?, Taste Perception, Disgusting Science, Meteors, Canals System and Locks, Dancing Raisins, Volcanoes and The Sundial.

Congratulations to all of our participants for their outstanding work. Events such as these strengthen the bridges between home, school and community, and allow families to work closely with their children to honor their curiosity and expand their learning through practical, hands on exploration. Science projects take advantage of a child's natural curiosity, stimulate the imagination and encourage independent critical thinking. Students become aware of the interdisciplinary nature of science as they apply not only reading and writing skills, but also mathematics and art to communicate their research findings. This is one event that supports our efforts to instill a love for learning in our students, inquisitiveness, and an enthusiasm for science.



Elementary Principal, Dr. René Wilson, listens as first grader Andrew Tallman explains the effects of Carbonation on raisins with his project "Dancing Raisins."

Fourth Grade Students Discover Project-Based Learning

Project based learning is a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working collaboratively to solve open-ended problems. Students learn both thinking strategies and content knowledge. The basis of such learning is that it lies in the authenticity of real-life application of research and skills. Students in Mrs. Schmidt's fourth grade class were presented with the task of building the tallest and strongest structure using marshmallows and spaghetti. Students worked to develop their own blue prints and then presented them to the group. They articulated their strategy and rationale behind the design and then the group had to choose the best strategy to solve their problem and create their structure. This allowed for an exchange of debate, questioning and consensus building. These kinds of lessons incorporate learning and doing and help cultivate drive, passion and creativity amongst our students.



Girls' Basketball

The Lady Marauders posted a 13-7 record in the regular season and were 3-3 in the league. The team was enthusiastic, hardworking and great fun to watch. The teams season was highlighted by a tremendous post-season with eventually led to being crowned as Section III Champs. This was the first Sectional Championship for the girls since the 2005-06 seasons. It was only the 5th time ever the Lady Marauders have had that honor. This was a very special group of young student athletes. Senior Cassidy Albright joined the 1,000 point club and moved to the third overall spot for all Lady Marauders in scoring behind Samantha Szkotak and Candy Montrose (Cassidy's mother). The Lady Marauders had a terrific group of kids, including eight seniors who will be greatly missed. The seniors included Amanda Fitzgerald, Abbey Fitzgerald, Megan Crist, Jenna Topa, Cassidy Albright, Shana Lavier, Makenzie Stevens, and Caitlyn Mackay. Thank you seniors; you have done so much for the program. The final students to fill out the Lady Marauders roster included Junior, Michaela Marrero; Sophomore, Madison Cudhea; and Freshman Abbey Copperwheat. Thank you girls for such a memorable season.



Boys' Basketball

The Boys' Varsity Basketball team finished the season 20-4. It was the team's 4th straight season with 20 wins.

In league play, they finished with a record of 10-2 and finished in 2nd place in CSC Division IV.

The team was led by four Seniors: Griffin Baur, Ben Kehrli, Terrance Nichols and Mike Copperwheat.

All four seniors had career best seasons in many statistical categories. Terry Nichols became the 13th boys' player in school history to surpass the 1,000 point mark in a game against Waterville. He also set a new mark for points in a game with 53 against Old Forge. He finished his high school career with 1,355 points good for all time 3rd best. He was named CSC Division IV MVP and named to the Section III Class D All Tournament Team.



Griffin Baur made 1st team All Star for CSC and was also named to the Section III Class D All Tournament Team.

Ben Kehrli was named Honorable Mention to the CSC All Star Team.

The team finished the season with an appearance in the Section III Finals; their 8th straight time, and had many memorable moments throughout the year.

Volleyball

As the season opener of the Varsity Volleyball season started off against the Section II champs Herkimer, you could see right away that the girls were there to play. Although our 3-9 division record doesn't even come close to showing the improvement and dedication all seven girls put forth. Each and every game, the girls became better and learned to work with each other efficiently. One of their biggest contests was almost beating Westmoreland at their home court, with Westmoreland then placing second in the league! As the season came to an end and the girls fought through injuries and issues with limited numbers, they never stopped fighting for a win. In the last game, Claudia Spost had a huge game with 16 kills and Haley Simon, our setter had over 18 assists. Every game in the second half of the season was very close. With our only senior Brianna Fuccillo leaving us; we have a lot of hopes for the upcoming year.





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Visit us on the Web

<http://www.newyorkmills.org>

Update on Capital Project

The Board of Education and administration are anxiously awaiting state education approval of our voter approved Capital Project. HUNT EAS, our architects, are in communication with the State Education Department and assured us we will get approval soon. The District and the architects are ready to move forward and bid the project and begin construction this summer.



Death Investigation of Kimberly Simon

September 18, 2015 marked the 30th anniversary of the brutal murder of 16 year old Marcy resident Kimberly Simon. At the time of her disappearance and death, Kim had been attending Whitesboro High School, and was walking on Mohawk St. from her home in Marcy to meet her friend in Whitesboro. Kim never arrived at her friend's location and the next day she was found murdered.

The case is still being actively investigated by the Oneida County District Attorney's office and, it is believed, that there is information out there that can assist in solving the case. If anyone has any information, or knows anyone who may have information concerning the circumstances of Kim's death, people involved, or anything possibly related to the case, please contact Investigator David Matrulli at the Oneida County District Attorney's office at 315-798-5575 or email dmatrulli@ocgov.net. Please help solve this horrible crime, and bring closure for the Simon family. All calls and emails will be kept confidential if desired.