



Tusker Nation

SOMERS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWS
FOR SCSD FAMILIES



The members of the Class of 2023 completed their journey through Somers schools on Wednesday, June 21, 2023. [Click here to watch a beautiful tribute video](#) commemorating the graduates' years in Somers, made by Nicholas Maurantonio. Somers is proud of you all - congratulations! ☐

☐ Seen Around Somers ☐



Students celebrated Flag Day on June 14. Primrose kicked off the day with the entire school reciting the Pledge of Allegiance together in the large gym and singing "You're a Grand Old Flag." For the first time since 2019, Primrose was able to host some local veterans at the ceremony and show them around their classrooms.



High school fashion students showcased their stunning pieces on the SHS runway. Take a look at the collections designed and created by our talented student designers here: <https://vimeo.com/833523506/3d1cea520d>



Nothing beats a sunny Field Day! Our elementary school students loved being outside to participate in tug-of-war, running races, and playing on motor scooters. Yummy ice pops capped off the day.

Thank you to the many volunteers who made these end-of-year celebrations special for the students.

IB Diploma Journey "Life Changing"



Jared Googel started his Theory Of Knowledge class presentation by naming three objects: Major League Baseball prospects, the explorer David Thompson, and a MacBook. The class, a key part of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme, asks students to pick any three objects or individuals and explain why they relate to a chosen

topic.

To weave a correlation between his three, disparate objects - seemingly a stretch - Google explained the role experts play in influencing our consumption of knowledge. Whether it was a baseball analyst's knowledge of top prospects, an adventurer's understanding of longitude, or a friend's familiarity with laptop technology, Google explained how and why humans turn to those they consider experts for key insight.

[Click here to watch a video of three IB Diploma candidates explaining how this program has made a difference in their lives.](#)

Second Grader Gives Super Assist



Above: Primrose student and softball player Isabella shares ideas for the new Tuskers softball field. Below: rendering for the new field.

When Superintendent Dr. Raymond Blanch paid students a visit during the Expert Fair last spring, he met one first grader, Isabella, who had a remarkably deep understanding of softball.

"I was impressed with Isabella's passion for softball," Dr. Blanch said. "She was knowledgeable about the game and ways in which a player can improve. She was so excited to hear about the plans for an updated Tuskers softball field."



Dr. Blanch promised that he would show Isabella renderings of the new field at Primrose — the home of the Somers varsity — before it was built. He followed through this spring, visiting her second-grade classroom for a special glimpse.

"He came to our classroom, opened up his computer, and showed me the plans," Isabella said.

The changes, which were part of a \$7-million capital project to improve athletic facilities included in this year's district budget, called for the playing surface to be reoriented and synthetic turf and new dugouts to be installed.

"He asked me if I had any suggestions," Isabella said. "I told him that I thought it would look nice if Somers Softball was painted on the dugout. He said, 'Wow, that sounds good!'"

Dr. Blanch accepted Isabella's advice and plans to implement it in the final phase. Construction is expected to begin as soon as the district receives approval from the New York State Education Department — perhaps as early as this fall.

"It meant a lot to me that he came to see me," said Isabella, who was both nervous and excited by her big opportunity. "Not everyone gets to meet the Superintendent."

Although she has yet to play on the current field, Isabella plans to change that once the new project is completed. She will make sure her softball coach (her dad) gives her team a chance to play at Primrose.

“I’m going to force my dad to at least have a practice here,” she said. “I feel like I am a part of it.”

Book Inspires Effort for Sudan



Sixth grade English Language Arts students sell "water drops" after reading about the water shortage in South Sudan.

One dollar at a time, funds were raised, and water droplets were affixed to the cafeteria wall. By the time the project was complete, students in Dawn Stanczuk’s sixth-grade ELA class had \$300 in donations.

They were a little shocked — but pleasantly so.

“What made this so good was that it was so successful,” said Angelo Mastrantoni, one of the students involved. “I was surprised how much people would donate and how much they cared.”

The project, which students completed last month, was inspired by the book “A Long Walk to Water,” a novel based on the true story of Salva Dut that chronicles the difficult water conditions in South Sudan, Africa. Dut later became the founder of the non-profit organization Water for South Sudan, which helps provide South Sudanese citizens with access to clean, safe water.

“It inspired us to want to help the world,” Julia Markolovic said. “As people, we can always do something to help.”

About a dozen students signed up to work on the fundraising project during their WIN period. They created posters to spread the word.

Students and teachers who donated \$1 or more had their names written on water droplets that were taped to the cafeteria wall. Raffle tickets were sold and three buckets of blue-colored candy served as the prizes.

The project coincided with a social studies lesson on conserving water. Students had to carry a cup of water from one table to another without spilling, thus simulating the difficulty the Sudanese people face when finding and transporting water over a long distance.

“A lot of water was spilled,” Caitlin Boyle said. “It showed us how much water they can lose on their journey.”

Students said the project taught them to think more consistently about conservation.

“Reading the book, I felt bad for the people in South Sudan,” Valentina DeSantis said. “We use a lot of water and we are wasting it. We should all try to use less water.”

The students also said they hope the fundraiser can continue in the future. They were floored by the response, especially considering how quickly the idea came together and the narrow window they had to spread the word about it.

“It was fun to see how much it grew this year,” Olivia Girolamo said. “So many people wanted to help.”

Added Max Grodio: “Hopefully next year it will be even more successful.”

SIS Math Olympiad Team Top Ranked



Members of the SIS Math Olympiad Team rank in the top 10% in the worldwide competition.

When it comes to math, yes, Noah Samuel likes to learn, but he also likes to compete. His eyes lit up when asked about the 2022-23 Mathematical Olympiads competition.

The fifth grader’s skills and his competitive instincts were challenged throughout the school year when Samuel and almost two dozen fellow students at SIS proved they were ready.

The school’s Math Olympiad Team learned this month that it ranked in the Top 10% worldwide in the competition, a pool consisting of 3,918 teams and approximately 100,000 students. Teams hailed from all 50 states, as well as 30 countries.

“You have to use different strategies to learn how to solve problems,” said Samuel, who finished in first place among all SIS students. “There are different ways to solve problems more carefully and sometimes the simple choice is the right one.”

Samuel would know. He was awarded a gold pin because his score ranked in the top 2% of all participants. Classmate Jonathan Lantz, who placed second at SIS, also received a gold pin for ranking among the top 2%.

Nicholas Sullivan, Robert Vance, Tessa Sullivan, Mitchell Riley, Rocco Zurica and Dean Klatsky were all awarded silver pins for placing in the top 10% of the competition.

“It was great to see that we had so many high-scoring people,” a proud Samuel said.

The competition requires students to solve a handful of problems each month and gives them just 30 minutes to do so. Their teacher, Mrs. Sharon King, then submits the results to MOEMS (Mathematical Olympiads for Elementary and Middle Schools), which records the data and compares students and teams to others around the world.

During the months-long competition, Samuel answered 24 of the 25 questions correctly. He said it was a vast improvement over last year.

There were 23 SIS students in grades three through five who served as members of this year’s Math Olympiad Team. They worked on different strategies and perfected their math vocabulary to better solve problems.

“As an educator, my foremost goal is to create an environment that fosters creativity, analytical thinking, collaboration, and a growth mindset,” King said.

Collaboration is an important aspect of the team’s approach. During their practice, students are presented with a problem, attempt to solve it, then meet in groups to compare and contrast their strategies.

It pushes them out of their comfort zone and forces them to think about math creatively.

“It’s about more than just learning math,” King said. “They are learning lifelong skills.”

Senior Send Off Seminars



Students from the Car Club at the high school teach seniors how to change a tire during a Senior Send Off Seminar.

Along with studying for AP exams, there were other things on Jake Gannon’s mind. He had devised, planned, and even named the first-ever Senior Send-Off Seminars as part of a peer leadership project. Now, with major academic challenges occupying his mind space, he also had to ensure a school-wide event would operate smoothly.

“It was not easy,” Gannon said. “It took a lot, definitely. But making sure everything and everyone was set and taking care of some last-minute changes, everything was worth it in the end.”

Gannon’s brainchild came to fruition on May 31 at Somers High School. Senior students had their choice of seven different seminars on a variety of subjects, from learning more about investments to cooking to automotive care.

Some of the seminars were taught by teachers, others were taught or co-taught by students. They were well-attended, with as many as 50-plus students on hand for one.

Gannon spent his time buzzing around, helping the event run with few hiccups.

“I wanted to see this all the way through,” he said.

Gannon had worked on the event since late winter. His teacher, Doug Packard set the goals for Peer Leadership Projects: they needed to be repeatable in future years and leave a positive mark on the district.

“I was playing around with a few ideas,” Gannon said. “I asked some joking questions, like why doesn’t the high school teach me this?”

That idea resulted in the notion of seminars. He talked through the plan with Principal Mark Bayer. Through the advice and assistance of teachers Brenda O’Shea and Elizabeth O’Shea, Gannon organized processes where students and teachers would volunteer to help.

Timothy Lee volunteered to teach self-defense. Michael Aquilino co-taught a seminar on investment. Around the school, students used their deep knowledge of unique topics to inform their peers.

“Every single class I went into, there were kids with smiles on their faces,” Gannon said.

Although he will soon move on to new challenges, Gannon hopes the event will continue in the future — meeting one of the key criteria initially set forth by his teacher. After the work he did, the framework is certainly in place.

“With the administration on board, I’m sure there will be another student like me who wants to do something like this in the future,” he said.

The PTA Corner

The SIS Parent Teacher Association has been given the “Best of the Best” award from WEPR (Westchester East Putnam Region PTA). Co-Presidents of the 2022-23 SIS PTA, Brian Schnapper and Jessica Frey (right), presented the plaque to Principal Linda Belger. The award will hang in the SIS main office. An honor well deserved!



The National PTA has a long-standing commitment to arts education. The Reflections program provides opportunities for recognition and access to the arts, which boosts student confidence and success in the arts and in life. The Somers PTA is committed to this mission. **Please watch the video of all the submissions from Somers.**

Congratulations to Gigi Vincentz who won an Award of Merit in the New York State PTA Reflections competition for her stunning portrait of the Native American Chief, Curley. This year's theme was "Show Your Voice." Congratulations, Gigi!

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