

SOUTH ORANGETOWN Central School District

UPDATE

VOL. 1 • NO. 2



MESSAGE from the Superintendent

Dear Community Members,

The school year is in full swing and I'm pleased to share some of the many ways our students are taking charge of their education.

Students are empowered to master their learning when teachers implement lessons that feature choice. When students connect with material that is meaningful to them, they dive deeper into those subjects and retain content better.

Beyond academics, we are committed to helping students grow as compassionate, confident and self-motivated people. Our children must be able to develop creative solutions to important questions, work collaboratively and communicate effectively. William O. Schaefer Elementary School students learn-to-play and play-to-learn together on a new playground that is accessible for all. Cottage Lane Elementary School and South Orangetown Middle School students are empowered to behave responsibly through a variety of co-curricular and extracurricular community service activities. Year after year, Tappan Zee High School students are a shining example of service learning – the premier example being annual accolades earned from the New York Blood Center for their blood drives.



The Class of 1967 returned to Tappan Zee High School as part of its 50th reunion weekend in October.

Great things are happening here. Please join us at one of our many athletic events or holiday concerts. Dates are posted at www.socsd.org. For our students, families, and especially our alumni, this school district is the hearth of our community and represents what it means to be home. Thank you for your continued support and best wishes for a joyous holiday season.

Robert Pritchard
Robert R. Pritchard, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Schools Focus on Engagement That Leads to Student Success



DID YOU KNOW? Fourth-graders plant and maintain the Cottage Lane Elementary School garden throughout each school year. Cleanup and bulb planting is done in the fall, followed by winter container gardening, spring seedling planting and early summer harvesting. Their work aligns with the fourth-grade science curriculum and includes observation of, and discussion about, animal and plant life in the garden. Thanks to **SOCES PTA** for the soil and to **Ms. Sabina Tyler** and all our parent volunteers for their help!

Students achieve to their fullest potential when they are motivated to learn. South Orangetown administrators and teachers are working to create engaging educational experiences and environments that help our students thrive.

Three ways SOCSD is investing in engagement:

- **Promoting problem-based learning:** Research shows that students learn best from a “felt need,” by figuring out what they need to solve a relevant, real world problem. Starting in kindergarten, our students are learning to manage their projects by choosing from resources, setting goals and evaluating their own progress.
- **Emphasizing student choice:** Students seek challenges, explore interests and develop passions through a wide array of enrichment activities and, at the secondary level, elective and accelerated courses. Our instrumental music program begins in third grade, leads to performance ensembles and opportunities to participate in the New York State School Music Association evaluation process. Intramural athletics were added to modified, junior varsity and varsity teams this year.
- **Creating innovative learning spaces:** Exciting, hands-on learning doesn't only happen in the classroom. Students also use computer labs and makerspaces outfitted with state-of-the-art technology, as well as school gardens and library media centers. *Coming soon: Outdoor classrooms at both elementary schools!*



TZHS Robotics Seeks Mentors, Sponsors

Tappan Zee High School launched its new FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) team, South Orangetown BOTZ, in September. FIRST



engages students in mentor-based robotics programs that build real-world engineering, project management, collaboration and leadership skills.

The 2018 FRC season kicks off January 6 with the announcement of competition criteria. Teams have six weeks to build a robot that can perform challenge tasks at regional qualifying events. Regional winners advance to compete at the FIRST Championship against teams from all over the world.

In the meantime, BOTZ members are busy with pre-season training, which includes designing a team logo and website, developing a budget and fundraising plan, and working in functional teams to learn how to build and program an industrial-size robot. They've also reached out to veteran teams in Pascack Valley and Ossining, who report that success depends on strong community support.

Two **BIG** ways local residents and businesses can get involved:

■ **Be a Mentor:** BOTZ needs volunteers with technical expertise in the areas of mechanical, electrical and software engineering. Hours are flexible: BOTZ currently meets after school on Mondays and Fridays. As the season draws near, work sessions will become more frequent and will include evenings and weekends.

■ **Be a Team Sponsor:** The team is reaching out to prospective individual and corporate sponsors to raise funds to cover the \$20,000 team budget, which includes equipment, technology and registration fees.

Ready to learn more? Email the BOTZ team at sobotz6911@gmail.com.

Keep up with the team's progress at: <http://blogs.socsd.org/botz>

We Achieve

■ TZHS seniors **Gary Hu, Riya Gandhi, Jake Laddis, Kaylee Liang, Nicole Malpeli and Sarah Pan** (pictured, right) were named Commended Students in the 2018 National Merit Scholarship Program.



■ Five TZHS musicians, all juniors, were recognized by the New York State School Music Association as All-State eligible for the 2017 New York All-State Music Festival in Rochester. **Cassandra Bartels** (soprano) will perform with the Mixed Chorus. **Estelle Lee** (oboe) and **Yena Shin** (piccolo) were chosen as Band alternates; **Kevin Huang** (violin) and **Palak Oza** (viola) were chosen as Orchestra alternates.

■ Nineteen TZHS sophomores and seniors were honored with Rockland Community College 2017 Hispanic Heritage Awards. They are: **Anna Acosta, Gabrielle Arroyo, Marc Barbosa, Nicholas Cabrera, Dylan Constable, Liana DeLaRosa, Yovana Godinez, Tatiana Guzman, Zuleyma Magana-Sanabria, Luis Mazariego, Anjali Molina, Samantha Morales, Sophia Morales, Julia Oquendo, Samantha Rivera, Sarah Rivera, Yansi Rodriguez, Daniel Suarez and Christopher Torres.**



■ 2017 Hispanic Heritage Awards were also earned by 22 South Orangetown Middle School eighth-graders (most pictured at left): **Christopher A., Mia A., Edward A., Sean A., Endy C., Madison C., Maya C., Ariana C., Steve D., Alanis D., Luis F., Diana L., Max M., Alivia M., April M., Kaily M., Dayna M., Jessica M., Kaitlyn P., Monica R., Maia S. and Karen T.**

■ TZHS senior **John Gonzaryk** was South Orangetown Rotary Club Student of the Month for October.

■ SOMS eighth-grader **Kacey P.** was Rockland Sons of Italy Lodge 2176 Student of the Month for October.

■ All fall sports teams qualified for post-season play. **Boys Varsity Soccer** (pictured, right) are the League Champs and **Boys JV Soccer** are the County Champs.



■ Individual athletic accomplishments: Girls Varsity Cross Country's **Alexandra Thomas** was the Individual League Champion and qualified, with **Tori Fears**, to compete at States; **Ciaran Shalvey** was a *Lohud Sports* Boys Soccer Player of the Week; Girls Varsity Volleyball captain **Madison Kousoulas** was a Rockland *Journal News* Scholar-Athlete; **Tara Harris** was selected for the All Section 1 Girls Soccer Team; and, **Marisa Medina** placed 1st in 3 events in the Girls Swimming League Championship.

■ SOMS Principal **Dr. Karen Tesik** graduated with a doctoral degree (Ed.D.) in Executive Leadership, with a focus on Social Justice, from St. John Fisher College in August. Her research was on 21st century teaching, leading and learning.

Community FORUM

SOCSD Families Talk About Substance Use

Thursday, November 30 | 7:30pm | Tappan Zee High School Cafeteria

Join South Orangetown Central School District Superintendent Dr. Robert Pritchard for a panel discussion and Q&A regarding the substance use crisis affecting our children and how our community can work together to develop solutions. Panelists are experts in the fields of treatment, prevention and law enforcement. Families will have an opportunity to speak with local mental health and substance use treatment providers. This event is co-sponsored by the Family Resource Center, South Orangetown PTAs and SOCASA.

SOCSD SNAPSHOTS

Throughout the fall, our schools have been focused on strengthening ongoing efforts to support a **positive, inclusive and welcoming school culture for all** families, students and staff. Character education is just one part of the equation. Here are some of the other things we are doing:



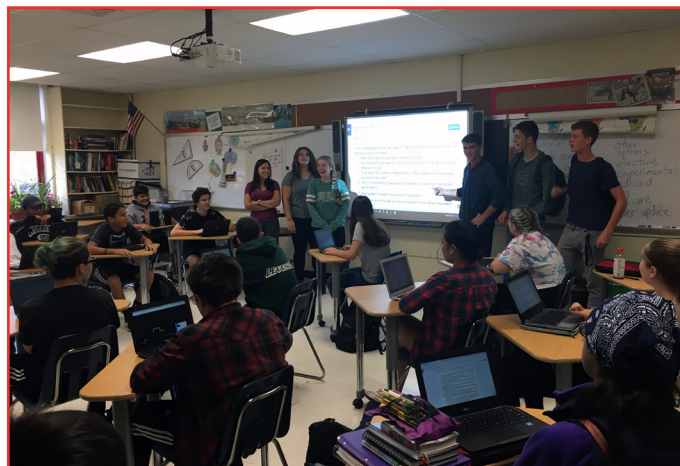
William O. Schaefer Elementary School students and pirates (including Principal Mrs. Nora Polansky and Assistant Principal Mrs. Sheila Beglin) celebrated the opening of their Pirate Ship Playground on November 1. The new, ADA-compliant playground is accessible for all students and features a poured surface and ramps, as well as sail shades for sun protection.



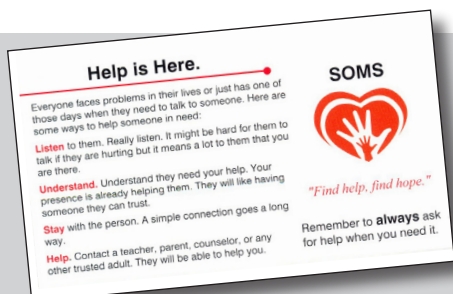
On the World Day of Bullying Prevention, Cottage Lane Elementary School Student Advisory Council members held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the school's new Buddy Bench. The bench, donated by the Jimmy Hauburger Memorial Foundation, serves to foster friendship and is the second Buddy Bench on the school playground. Details about how to use the Buddy Bench are posted under "Student Resources" on the For Students page of the CLE website.



South Orangetown Middle School has partnered with the New York Jets and Stomp Out Bullying's Upstander of the Week program, which aims to reduce and prevent bullying nationwide. Each week of the football season, SOMS recognizes a student who speaks up and steps in to help others. The first 10 Upstanders of the school year are: Christopher A., Cristian L., Luke T., Liam B., Alex P., Elis R., Kendall S., Michael M., Daniel C. and Tessa R.



Last year, Tappan Zee High School students identified four core values to be fostered at school: kindness, respect, responsibility and empathy. During the summer, senior Peer Leaders developed a mentoring program for incoming freshmen that embedded these values. In September, Peer Leaders visited all freshman English classes to begin establishing relationships. Peer Leaders also greet students at the entrance in the morning, hand out personalized "You Rock!" cards and perform random acts of kindness at school.

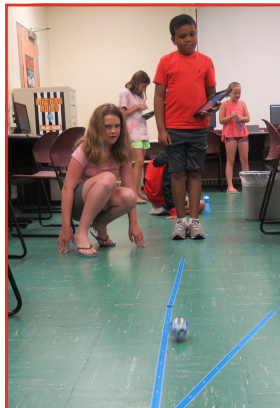


The **HELP CARD**, a tool to decrease the stigma of asking for help, was rolled out for students districtwide on October 17.

Information about how to use the Help Card, along with a list of building staff students can turn to, is posted under "Student Resources" on the For Students page of each school website.

Picture THIS

Nearly 300 SOCS D elementary and middle school students spent seven days exploring, creating and investigating at our second annual **Summer STEAM Camp** this past July. View the video at <https://youtu.be/bkK2vPYyD5k>.



In September, Nyack Hospital hosted a reception for Cottage Lane Elementary School students whose artwork was on display.

Climate Change Art On Tour

Climate change artwork created by Ms. Kottie Christie-Blick's science students at Cottage Lane Elementary School last year is being exhibited across the tri-state area. Ms. Christie-Blick's homeroom and Ms. Kathleen Early's fifth-graders created posters with compelling messages about climate change as part of their study of how the Earth's biosphere, atmosphere, hydrosphere, and geosphere impact each other.

"My homeroom students then wrote persuasive letters to the institutions of their choice asking if they'd be interested in displaying the posters," Ms. Christie-Blick explains. "We received an overwhelming response. The posters are now 'on tour' and booked well into 2018."

TOUR SCHEDULE

- **Palisades Free Library:** November 9 - December 8, 2017
- **Old Tappan Library:** December 8 - January 9, 2018
- **Orangeburg Library:** January 9 - February 9, 2018
- **South Orangetown Middle School:** February 13 - March 20, 2018

Join Us: Winter Concerts

South Orangetown Central School District's Music Department is busy preparing student musicians for winter concerts at South Orangetown Middle School and Tappan Zee High School. Families and community members are invited to attend these free performances!

SOMS Winter Concert I

Tuesday
December 5 @ 7pm
SOMS Auditorium

SOMS Winter Concert II

Wednesday
December 6 @ 7pm
SOMS Auditorium

TZHS Winter Concert

Wednesday
December 20 @ 7pm
TZHS Auditorium

❄️ Get Ready for Winter! ❄️

Notifications for closings, delays and early dismissals are sent to staff and families via SchoolMessenger phone and email messages, posted on the District homepage and announced by local media outlets.

Please be sure that your children's schools have up-to-date emergency contact phone numbers and email information on file. Families are also encouraged to have a child care plan in place in the event that school is delayed, canceled or dismissed early.



**SOUTH ORANGETOWN
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