Whitesboro CSD Teams Up With American Heart Association for #QuitLying Day

On Jan. 16, the Whitesboro Central School District teamed up with the American Heart Association for the first ever #QuitLying Day, an initiative meant to demand accountability from "Big Vape," or the companies that sell popular e-cigarettes.

According to the American Heart Association, the number of teens who vape has more than doubled just in the last two years. More than one in four students report that they have used vape products.

"I think they’re marketing to our students, and the fact that they’re saying that vaping is a safe alternative to smoking when in all reality it’s really just another option for smoking," said Corinne Rothdiener, a physical education teacher at the high school, during an interview with WKTV. "It’s now marketing to kids that would never have thought about using tobacco products."

On #QuitLying Day at Whitesboro High School, each physical education class watched a video about vaping, learned more about the harmful effects it can have, and learned about the lies and the facts regarding vaping. At the end of each class, students had the opportunity to sign a letter addressed to "Big Vape."

"You say that vaping isn’t smoking, but the nicotine in one pod equals an entire pack of cigarettes," a portion of the letter reads. "You say you’re not Big Tobacco, but the tobacco giant that makes Marlboro cigarettes owns 35% of JUUL. You say you’re not marketing to teens, but your flavors say otherwise."

During health classes on #QuitLying Day, high school students learned more about the facts and the lies regarding vaping. They also watched a slideshow of the 57 people – many of them teens – who have died in the United States from vaping-related causes.

"It’s a great step in what we’re trying to do, to try and combat against nicotine and against different products that are marketed to kids our age, and bringing light to how bad it can actually be," said senior Jacob Snodgrass in an interview with WKTV.

On #QuitLying Day at the middle school, students had an extended homeroom in order to watch a video about vaping, followed by a discussion and the opportunity to ask questions. These lessons continued during physical education classes during the week of Jan. 21-24.

On several different dates throughout January, Laurie Schmidt from the American Heart Association visited each of the elementary schools within the district to talk to students about the dangers of smoking and vaping. Following the presentations, students at each school participated in an anti-vaping poster contest. It was an effective way to get students of lower grade levels engaged in the discussion and to ensure that they’re aware of the harms of vaping from an early age.

Thank you to the American Heart Association for its efforts in combating the vaping epidemic, and helping to ensure that the Whitesboro school community remains informed and aware of its harmful effects.
SUPERINTENDENT’S MESSAGE

Dear Parents, Guardians and School Community Members:

I hope this issue of our newsletter finds you well and excited about both what we’ve accomplished so far this year and what we have planned for its remainder. The past few months have been filled with tremendous energy and focus on helping those in need during the recent holiday season. We are proud of the many acts of kindness displayed by our school community. It is with that spirit and enthusiasm that we embark on the remainder of our school year.

One of our major initiatives for this year is the development of our District’s Five-Year Plan. Our goal is to develop specific goals and objectives that will guide our actions and decision making. To that end, we have formed a committee that will be responsible for developing a plan to be recommended to our Board of Education. With their approval, the plan will be implemented in September 2020. We welcome your input and invite you to submit feedback to us using the form that can be found on our website under the Five-Year Plan link. We will use this section on our website to communicate with you regarding this process. It will be updated regularly to reflect the status of this initiative.

It’s now that time of year we find ourselves deeply engaged in the financial planning for next year. Our building and departmental administrators have worked with their respective staffs to develop next year’s financial plans. Our goal is to develop a comprehensive District financial plan that balances District needs and taxpayer impact. Our school community has overwhelmingly supported us in recent years and we are hopeful that same trust and support for our District will continue well into the future.

The budget development process includes opportunities for community input at the aforementioned meetings of the Board of Education. We welcome your input and appreciate the opportunity to engage with you regarding this fundamental function of our District.

Thank you for all you do to support our school community. Together, we focus our efforts and energy in pursuit of our mission, “To inspire, cultivate, and empower all learners to maximize their potential.”

Sincerely,

Dr. Brian K. Bellair
Superintendent of Schools

Whitesboro Educators Honored at Genesis Group’s Annual Celebration of Education

Four Whitesboro Central School District educators were honored at The Genesis Group’s 14th Annual Celebration of Education, which was held at Hart’s Hill Inn in Whitesboro on Nov. 21.

The Celebration of Education is an annual event that honors educators and educational programs throughout the Mohawk Valley that positively impact students, schools and the community.

The four Whitesboro educators who were honored include Sean Ryan, an AP Biology and Living Environment teacher at Whitesboro High School, who also serves as chair of the Science Department; Tamala Smith, assistant principal at Parkway; Kate Radell, a fifth grade teacher at Hart’s Hill Elementary; and Ann Cough, a first grade teacher at Marcy Elementary.

Retired Whitesboro Central School District Superintendent of Schools David Langone was also inducted into the Education Hall of Distinction.

Congratulations to all, and thank you for your hard work and dedication to the Whitesboro Central School District!
Whitesboro Senior Reannyn Weiler Competes in Youth Olympic Games in Switzerland

Reannyn Weiler, a senior at Whitesboro High School, competed in multiple luge events at the 2020 Winter Youth Olympic Games, which were held in Lausanne and St. Moritz, Switzerland. The games kicked off with an opening ceremony in each city on Jan. 9, and the games ran from Jan. 10-22.

At the opening ceremony in St. Moritz, 17-year-old Weiler was chosen to carry the flag for Team USA.

“I was super honored to be out there holding the flag and it was a really fun time I had with my team tonight,” Weiler said in a video, which was shared by local news station WKTV on YouTube. “I was super excited and honestly honored by the fact that I was able to do it, so it was just overall really cool.”

On Jan. 18, Weiler competed in women’s doubles luge along with teammate Maya Chan of Chicago, Illinois. Their final time was 1:53.240, which was only 0.19 seconds behind the third-place duo from Latvia that won the bronze medal. Canada won the silver medal, and Germany took home the gold.

Although they didn’t win a medal, Weiler and her partner were still a part of history as this was the first women’s luge doubles event sanctioned by the International Olympic Committee. Women’s doubles luge is currently being considered as an addition to the Winter Olympics in 2022 as well. Currently, the only doubles luge event in the Winter Olympics is for men.

Weiler also competed in the luge team relay competition on Jan. 20, and her team finished in seventh place out of 11 teams. The Youth Olympic Games are for elite athletes ages 15-18, and they’re held every two years. There were 99 athletes competing for Team USA at this year’s games.

Congratulations to Reannyn Weiler on a great performance!
Mock Crime Scene Puts Forensic Science Students’ Knowledge to the Test

On Nov. 7, students in Mr. Bertrand’s Forensic Science class arrived to class to find a body on the floor, blood spattered on the wall, and a crime to solve.

The mock crime scene was designed to be like an authentic, real-life situation that students would need to solve, and students were not prepped or warned ahead of time.

The crime scene was the first part of an ongoing investigation that will last through the remainder of the school year. Students were responsible for the initial collection of evidence at the crime scene, and they will use that evidence to compare with other evidence and determine a suspect.

The crime was designed to be a solvable one, and there is a suspect that students will need to find. The suspect pool is large, though, with students and teachers all becoming possible suspects. Throughout the year, students will need to ask the right questions and eliminate the wrong suspects to determine who committed the crime.

“This year I have 10th, 11th and 12th graders, some who wanted to take the course because they are considering a career in law enforcement or crime investigation,” Mr. Bertrand said. “I hope through activities such as these – real data, real circumstances, real problem solving – that it will inspire not only them, but others into careers that they are passionate about and want to pursue.”

Mr. Bertrand said that students will also be chastised for allowing the media to walk in and take photos.

This year’s Forensic Science class will focus on the collection of evidence and the process of collecting evidence, such as fingerprinting, blood spatter, foot prints, bite marks, blood typing, glass analysis, handwriting, document analysis, crime scene bugs, and tool marks. Students will learn how to lift fingerprints, cast footprints, measure the angles of blood spatter, reconstruct the crime based on the evidence, and ultimately determine how the crime was played out.

On Nov. 22, Utica City Court Judge Ralph Eannace also visited the class to speak to students about the collection of evidence and how it can be used in court.
Boys and Girls Bowling Teams Help with Marcy Elementary’s Breakfast with Santa

The Whitesboro Boys and Girls Bowling teams decided the best way to “roll” out the holidays was to help Marcy Elementary School have breakfast with Santa.

On Dec. 7, members of both teams put their "spare" time to good use helping in the cafeteria, assisting children with their food, cleaning tables, and supervising games and crafts during the event. They even had an opportunity to visit with the Jolly Old Elf himself.

Bowlers who participated, along with Coach Darlene Hill and Coach Dave Jecko, included: Captain Kat Moen, Theresa Moen, Emily Horning, Kathryn Etter, Gabby Wilkinson, Sarah Hong, Katelyn Davis, Captain Trent Beattie, Captain TJ Davis, Chris Testa, Drake Garramone, and Konnor Smith.

This is the third consecutive year that the bowling teams have helped with Marcy’s breakfast with Santa, and the event was enjoyed by all.

High School Students Get Visit from Therapy Dogs

In an effort to promote positive mental health among students, especially during the hectic holiday season, Whitesboro High School students had the chance to relax and unwind with some furry friends in the high school library.

Throughout the day on Dec. 17, several dogs from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County Dog Therapy were in the library for students to pet and visit with during their lunch periods.

Interaction with therapy dogs has been proven to boost moods, lower blood pressure, decrease anxiety, provide comfort, promote socialization, and more. This is the second year that therapy dogs have visited the high school.

Thank you to all of the dogs and their owners who came for a visit, and thank you to the students and staff who took time out of their busy day to see them!

Coffee and Canvas Event Held

On Jan. 23, a “Coffee and Canvas” event was held at Whitesboro High School to raise funds for the Class of 2020. Sheila Nadeau, an art teacher at the high school, instructed the painting event, and Bella Cirasuolo, a student, painted the inspiration piece that participants used to model their paintings after.

A total of 16 people participated in the event. The cost to participate was $30, and all of the funds raised go toward the Class of 2020. Thank you to everyone who participated and helped make this event a success!
Parkway Students Continue Annual Tradition of Decorating Gingerbread Houses

On Dec. 20, sixth grade students at Parkway continued the school’s annual tradition of decorating gingerbread houses before the start of winter break.

Mrs. Maxwell, a social studies teacher at Parkway, says she began the project of decorating gingerbread houses with her students early on in her teaching career. Other teachers began joining in on the project, and now it’s a building-wide activity that all students and teachers participate in.

“We like to do something for our students to thank them for their hard work thus far, and just something fun to do for the holidays,” Mrs. Maxwell said.

Teachers were tasked with building the gingerbread houses the day prior, and each student was tasked with bringing in candy and other edible items to decorate the houses with. Holiday music and movies played while the students decorated, and fun was had by all!

Middle School Campus Donates More Than $1,400 to Whitestown Vets Club

Students and staff at the Middle School Campus are doing their part to help the local community in the wake of devastating floods that have once again struck the Whitesboro area.

Heavy rains on Halloween led to widespread flooding in the Whitesboro area, which impacted both homes and businesses. One local organization impacted by the floods was the Whitestown Vets Club, which is located on Whitesboro Street in Yorkville.

According to members of the Vets Club, there was four feet of water in the pavilion, and several commercial-grade appliances in the facility were ruined. These appliances are used during events such as fundraisers in the spring, summer and fall, which benefit the local community.

On December 20, students presented the commander and assistant commander of the Whitestown Vets Club with a check for $1,451.46 to help them rebuild.

Thank you to everyone who donated and helped make this possible!
Two Deerfield Elementary Classes Celebrate Thanksgiving with Annual Feast

On Nov. 21, Ms. Arcuri and Mr. Nitti’s classes at Deerfield Elementary School hosted their annual Thanksgiving feast.

Students prepared for the feast by learning about the first Thanksgiving, learning and writing about turkeys, and writing about what they were thankful for. Students also created decorative hats depicting the Pilgrims and Wampanoag who participated in the first Thanksgiving, and they made table decorations.

Students and staff reenacted the feeling of the first Thanksgiving by having everyone provide utensils and food such as chicken, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, stuffing, corn, apple pie, pumpkin pie, pumpkin crème pie, apples and pretzels. After the feast, students played with one another and watched “A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving.” Students then capped off the feast with some fun games in the gym.

Ms. Arcuri, Mr. Nitti and their staff wish to thank everyone for their participation and assistance with the feast this year, and they all look forward to it again next year!

Hart’s Hill Community Fills Kindness Bags for Hope House Residents

During the month of December, students and staff at Hart’s Hill Elementary once again made it a priority to give back to those in need in the local community.

With a goal of putting together 80 kindness bags for the women at Hope House, a soup kitchen in Utica that provides an estimated 95,000 meals per year to those in need, students were tasked with bringing in items to fill the bags. Kindergarten students were assigned toothpaste and toothbrushes, first grade was assigned hand lotion, second grade was assigned women’s gloves or mittens, third grade was assigned women’s winter scarves, fourth grade was assigned women’s winter hats, and fifth grade was assigned shampoo.

In addition to those assigned items, hand warmers, women’s socks, deodorant, snacks and hot chocolate packets were also collected.

Once all of the items had been collected, teachers brought their students to the classroom where the bags were being filled throughout the day so that everyone could participate in filling them. Younger students were paired up with older students to fill the bags, which were all donated by Hannaford.

Several classes at Hart’s Hill even opted to donate items for the kindness bags instead of doing a holiday gift exchange among the students.

Donating items and putting together kindness bags for Hope House residents has become an annual tradition at Hart’s Hill Elementary, and it reminds both students and staff the importance of giving back.

Thank you to everyone who donated items for the kindness bags, and thank you to Hannaford for your generous donation as well.
Third Grade Students in Ms. Tucci’s Class Make and Deliver Comfort Pillows for Hospice Patients

As the season of giving was in full swing, students in Ms. Tucci’s third grade class at Marcy Elementary School once again did their part to give back by creating comfort pillows for hospice patients.

All of the students in Ms. Tucci’s class were tasked with bringing in material to create a Santa sack as part of a classroom project. With the leftover material, each student learned to sew two or three comfort pillows of different sizes. Students sewed and stuffed the pillows the week of Dec. 10-13, and tags were then attached to each one that say, “Made with love.”

Pillows were also made by a fifth grade student who was so inspired by the project in previous years that she sewed her own pillows at home and brought them in to be donated.

On Dec. 17, Ms. Tucci’s class visited Hospice & Palliative Care’s Siegenthaler Center to drop off the pillows for hospice patients. Judy Tastor, children’s services coordinator for Hospice & Palliative Care, talked to the students about the services that the facility provides, and gave students the opportunity to ask any questions they might have about the end of life. She also read them a story about a bear who reaches the end of his life, and gave each of the students their own stuffed bear to take home to be their “feeling bear.”

Following story time, students then had the opportunity to visit with some of the hospice patients and sing Christmas carols.

The project teaches students the importance of the services that Hospice & Palliative Care provides, and gives them an opportunity to give back to those who are receiving end-of-life care. Ms. Tucci began doing the project with her students after her father, who was receiving comfort care at the Siegenthaler Center, passed away in 2005.

Over the years, family members and nurses of hospice patients have contacted Ms. Tucci to let her know how important the pillows were for their loved ones, and some have personally visited her class to thank the students for making them. For example, on Dec. 19, a woman named Mrs. Kogut visited Ms. Tucci’s classroom to thank the students for making the comfort pillows. Ten years ago, the same woman called Ms. Tucci to thank her for the pillows, because they helped to make her last moments with her husband more comforting. Mrs. Kogut brought in a large teddy bear and read a book to the class called “Bear Stays Up For Christmas,” and she talked to the students about how special it is that they’re taking the time to provide comfort to others.

Ms. Tucci will be retiring at the end of the 2019-2020 school year, but she hopes to continue this project in the future.

Hart’s Hill Receives YMCA’s Community Partner of the Year Award

At the YMCA of the Greater Tri-Valley’s Annual Meeting and Recognition at Dibble’s Inn on Jan. 9, Hart’s Hill Elementary School was the recipient of the New Hartford Community Partner Award.

Hart’s Hill Elementary received this award for the school’s efforts working with the YMCA in New Hartford.

Libby Blair of the YMCA of the Greater Tri-Valley said during the annual meeting that they have a program at Hart’s Hill and the school employees have been very helpful and do a great job communicating. She also said that Principal Lisa Putnam and Secretary Karen Farr “go above and beyond” to assist them.

Congratulations to the Hart’s Hill school community for receiving this award!
Deerfield Elementary Celebrates Holiday Season With Sing-Along

To kick off winter break and celebrate the holiday season, students and staff at Deerfield Elementary School gathered in the gym and participated in a sing-along on Dec. 20.

Wearing Santa hats and other festive clothing, students had fun singing holiday carols, listening to music played on the piano, and listening to a reading of “‘Twas the Night Before Christmas.” It was a fun and festive way to celebrate the upcoming holidays and give students a chance to unwind before break.

After the sing-along, students lined up in the hallways outside their classrooms for a special send-off for Ron Adams, a custodian who was transferring to Hart’s Hill Elementary. He was well liked and respected in the Deerfield school community. The students and staff were grateful for the opportunity to say their goodbyes, although it was bittersweet for them to see him go. Thank you to everyone who helped make the sing-along successful, and best of luck to Ron Adams in his new school!

Westmoreland Road Students Learn Hands-Only CPR

During the week of Nov. 18, students at Westmoreland Road Elementary School were taught skills that could be used to save someone’s life.

Students learned how to determine whether or not hands-only CPR is needed, and how to perform the life-saving measure. They practiced their compressions using a ball for several minutes, then played a game of tag involving hands-only CPR. It was both a fun and educational game to get kids practicing the skills they had just learned.

This is the third year that all students within the Whitesboro Central School District have been taught how to safely perform hands-only CPR. It’s mandated by New York State that students must be trained in CPR before they can graduate, but previously it was only taught to junior and senior students.

If you’d like to learn more about this life-saving measure, visit the American Heart Association’s website at cpr.heart.org.
Mock Trial Teaches Marcy Elementary Students About Judicial Process

Students at Marcy Elementary School are learning more about the court system and the judicial process with the help of a mock trial that was put on by Miss Sutliff’s third grade class on Dec. 18.

The trial was held to determine whether or not the defendant, Freddie Castronovo, was guilty of taking a caterpillar tank from the classroom. Nate Getman, a court attorney in the Unified Court System, helped teach Miss Sutliff’s class about the judicial process and how a criminal trial works.

Prior to the trial, an election was held to determine who would be the judge, and third grade student Dolan Coriale won the election. Sawyer Dote took on the role of defense attorney, Carter VanAuken was the prosecutor, and Nick Armstrong was the clerk. Witnesses included: Harper Pole, Nina Arcuri, Micah Wallace, Brendan Burrows, Mrs. Burdick, and Miss Sutliff. The remaining students in Miss Sutliff’s class served as jurors.

Ms. Tucci’s third grade class, Ms. Oczkowski’s second grade class, and all of the fifth grade classes at Marcy Elementary were in the audience to watch the trial, and they were able to take notes and make their own determinations on whether or not the defendant was guilty.

"The mock trial is meant to give the students a chance to see the classroom lessons about the judicial process brought to life," Mr. Getman said. "The students did an amazing job grasping important, and even difficult, concepts and presenting it to the other classes."

"The mock trial provides a way for the students to learn about the judicial system while participating in hands-on learning and acting out the trial," Miss Sutliff said. "The students truly enjoyed being able to have an active role and learned so much about government."

After hearing all of the evidence and witness testimony, the jury left the room to deliberate. When they returned, each member of the jury gave their verdict, and Freddie was found to be guilty. Students also learned that in a real criminal trial, all members of the jury have to agree unanimously before a verdict can be delivered.

Thank you to Mr. Getman for helping to teach students about the judicial process, and thank you to all of the classes who came to watch the trial!

Senior Hockey Players Continue Tradition of Giving Gifts to Westmoreland Road Elementary Class

Ahead of winter break, seniors on the Whitesboro Varsity Ice Hockey team continued the team’s annual tradition of visiting a class at Westmoreland Road Elementary to spread some holiday cheer.

Each player was assigned a student from Mrs. Schoen’s 15:1:1 Primary Class to shop for, and they went shopping on their own time to find the perfect gift and wrap it. On Dec. 18, the players had the opportunity to visit Mrs. Schoen’s classroom and hand-deliver the gifts to the students they bought them for.

The gifts included LEGO sets, baby dolls, Star Wars-themed gifts, a Spiderman mask, and more. The students were all excited to receive their gifts, and they were happy to have the company of the hockey players, who pulled up seats at the tables to help the students open and play with their gifts. It was an afternoon full of laughter and fun conversation, and everyone involved had a great time.

This is the sixth year that senior hockey players have brought gifts to Mrs. Schoen’s classroom at Westmoreland Road Elementary.
Girls Volleyball Teams Go Pink for Cancer Awareness

On Dec. 18, the Whitesboro girls JV and varsity volleyball teams hosted their annual Cancer Awareness Pink Game against VVS.

Each year, the girls volleyball teams host a home game where they wear pink T-shirts and hold a 50/50 raffle and basket raffles to raise funds that will help people affected by cancer. All of the proceeds from this season’s game will be donated to a family in the Whitesboro Central School District that is currently battling cancer or has recently battled it, according to the Volleyball Boosters.

Wearing bright pink T-shirts with a cancer ribbon and the saying “Go pink or go home,” the varsity team beat VVS with a score of 3-1. The final score of the JV game was 2-1, VVS.

A total of $400 was raised through this season’s Pink Game.

Thank you to everyone who attended the game and made a donation!

Boys Varsity Ice Hockey Team Wins Tournament in Rome

On Dec. 21, the Whitesboro Boys Varsity Ice Hockey team won the Bobby T. Ciccotti Hockey Tournament, hosted by Rome Free Academy.

The Warriors defeated New Hartford 4-3 to win the tournament. Freshman Josh Bono scored the winning goal at 2:19 in the second overtime with an assist from junior Jimmy Kraeger, giving the Warriors their first-ever Ciccotti championship.

Senior Troy Chamberlain was named the Tournament Most Valuable Player, and junior Noah Scranton and sophomore Logan Lachacz were both named to the All Tournament Team.

As of Feb. 17, Whitesboro’s record is 15-3-1 overall. The team is in second place for Section III Division II and ranked fourth in the state.

Congratulations to the Warriors on your tournament win and a great season!
High School Teachers Participate in ‘No Shave November’ to Raise Funds for Flood Victims

During the month of November, 12 teachers from Whitesboro High School participated in “No Shave November” to raise funds for local families who were impacted by flooding after heavy rains on Halloween.

Every two years, a group of teachers at the high school participates in “No Shave November” and raises funds for the American Cancer Society or a local charity. This year, however, the teachers decided that it would be best to keep the funds local and raise money for families who were affected by recent flooding.

Throughout November, the 12 teachers refrained from shaving, with some of them starting with a clean-shaven face and some continuing to grow their existing beards. They fundraised and sold popcorn during lunch periods, and by the end of the month, they had raised more than $1,000.

The teachers used the money to purchase Wal-Mart gift cards, and also saved some funds to be handed out in the form of a scholarship at the end of the school year. In total, nine families of high school students who were impacted by the floods were given gift cards of $85.

Teachers who participated in “No Shave November” included: Stephen Costanza, Mark Evans, Kirk Gerhardt, Dave Jecko, Paul Lyne, Andrew Massoud, Eric Paul, Kevin Powers, Sean Ryan, Ben Schoen, John Sparace and John Warner.

The teachers were very happy with the student and faculty support, and they’d like to thank everyone who made these donations possible.