



# Raider Nation News

A publication of the Canastota Central School District

Winter 2023

## A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

As we move into the second half of the 2022-23 school year, there are many exciting things happening in our schools. The final phase of the multi-year capital project is finally coming to a close. It's hard to believe that it has been nearly two years since the initial construction began, and that it has been more than three years since the residents of Canastota approved the project in December of 2019. I'd like to thank all of our staff members as well as all of our Canastota families for their patience and understanding as we navigated through all of the inconveniences associated with a large-scale project like this. In the end, we'll have a tremendously updated facility that will provide a safer environment for our children to learn and grow. Not only do we now have what has widely been reported to be the "best home field in Section III," but we have extensive safety and security upgrades, renovated parking lots, new roofs, new bathrooms throughout the buildings, and a significant upgrade to our overall plumbing and electrical system. Again, we really appreciate your support throughout the process.

### Academic Programming

While our facilities/infrastructure and finances serve to support the foundation for our school, the heart of our work centers around the educational programming and services that we can extend to our students

and their families. This year we are continuing to implement and reinforce numerous initiatives introduced during the 2021-22 school year designed to enhance our core academic program. One such example is the continued emphasis on a K-12, vertically-aligned literacy plan, as well as a data-focused academic intervention program that will provide much-needed consistency to our overall program.

While this is occurring, new and innovative learning opportunities continue to roll out through our district-wide badging and micro-credentialing initiative. Along with the continuation of the Ambassador program, we are extremely pleased with the introduction of our Sports Management and Entertainment Marketing program, offered right here on our Canastota campus in partnership with Madison-Oneida BOCES. This is just the beginning, as next year we are planning to introduce a CTE Sports Medicine program in conjunction with MOBOCES. We've only scratched the surface of the relevant, real-world experiences that our students will be able to access right here at our school.

### Connected Community Schools

In the February 2022 Newsletter, I informed you that our school would be introducing the Connected Community Schools initiative here in Canastota. The CCS program was



*continued on page 7*



## JSHS STUDENTS START NEW CHESS CLUB

When three 7th graders asked in the fall about a space and time to play chess, high school librarian Mary Laverty said "Sure." She had a few chess sets among her games and the library was available during 10th period.

Almost immediately, other students joined the new Chess Club and, four months later, there could be anywhere from one to two dozen JSHS students contemplating a chess board.

"I've been surprised by how many students come every week – in a good way. It's so wonderful to see how organically this really took off," Laverty said. "They're all just having so much fun."

The Chess Club was the idea of 7th graders Dario Damore, Donovan McDonough and Wyatt Duffy, students who Laverty knew when she was the librarian at Roberts Street Elementary School. They were simply looking for an opportunity to practice their skills, but word spread quickly to both seasoned and new chess players around the school. The club has a drop-in-and-play format, so there is no formal membership and no one is required to attend.



"I really like to play chess but I don't really have a chance to play that much at home," Donovan said. "I was surprised at how many people come every week."

The club is largely student-directed. They come into the library when 10th period begins, pick up a game box and set up their board. Students rotate seats and opponents after each game to ensure everyone there has an opportunity to play at least one game. Both opponents and spectators can be heard talking strategy and helping other players think through their best moves. At the end of 10th period, students clean up their sets and put their boxes back on the game shelf before catching the late bus home or heading to sports practice.

"They are so respectful of the pieces and the boards and the library, and they're really very collaborative with each other," Laverty said.

If there is a student without an opponent, Laverty will play. Often, math teacher Kyle Beattie, an avid chess player, will also stop in for a game against a student or two. In addition to providing him with playing time, it provides an avenue for him to help students learn important life skills, such as critical thinking, planning, flexibility and leadership, in a fun setting. It also helps him build relationships with students.

"It is another way for faculty to connect with kids outside of the traditional classroom, without any pressure to 'perform' academically for a grade," Beattie said. "Participating in Chess Club also gives the students an opportunity to see me as not just a teacher, but a normal adult with hobbies and interests."

The club has proven so popular that Laverty has ordered more chess sets to allow more students to play at once, and she has spoken with students about the idea of a chess tournament in the future.





## SSES COMPLETES ANNUAL KINDNESS CHALLENGE

South Side Elementary held its second annual Raider Acts of Kindness initiative in December to help students put their kindness and character education work into action.

Each student received a card with room for 10 staff signatures, one for each kind act they completed.



Completed cards were submitted to the main office and students earned a completion certificate and coupon for a free ice cream.

Principal Vanessa McClowry said the idea behind the project is to encourage small, everyday gestures and instill kindness as a habit.

Students received credit for things like helping a teacher clean up, holding the door for someone, or sharing a pencil with a classmate.

"The holidays are about more than gifts, that's something we want the students to see," McClowry said.

Students said the initiative was fun and made them feel good.

"I like the feeling of helping others. It feels good to help others," second grader Addy Strong said. "My mom and dad are proud of me."

"I liked when my teachers saw me do something and signed my card," second grader Ryan Weyant said.

McClowry said the students were excited about the project and loved the positive reinforcement of being recognized for their kindness. She announced the names of students who completed at least one kindness card during a school assembly before the December break.

## DISTRICT PROGRAM WILL BUILD MATH, ELA SKILLS

Students in grades 4-8 will be joining a new grant-funded afterschool program this semester to help improve their Math and ELA knowledge in advance of state assessments this spring.

The program, Gear Up 4 Success, will be led by district teachers and feature game-based, hands-on activities to help students master critical grade-level skills.

The program will run from February 28 to April 5, Monday through Thursday from 3-4:15pm. Participating students are eligible for transportation home and receive a snack as part of the program, due to funding from the American Rescue Plan Act.

## 2ND GRADERS RAISE SALMON EGGS

Second graders are studying the life cycle of a salmon this semester. In early January, they received a donation of salmon alevins (newly spawned eggs) and will monitor them over the next few months. Once they reach the fry stage, the students will release them.

To help kick off their project, local wildlife biologist Jack Gramlich visited South Side Elementary to talk about the salmon life cycle and answer student questions.





## RSES OFFERS NEW CAREER BADGE

Students at Roberts Street Elementary School are diving into career exploration activities as part of a new Career Awareness Badge, an effort to get students thinking early about high school courses, college majors and their future career options.

Students in grades 4-6 took online Career Interest Surveys during the fall semester, answering questions about their personal interests and reading about a variety of career clusters. The survey was a joint effort of the districtwide Badging Initiative, headed by Liz Garofalo, and RSES School Counselor Rachel DiGeorge.

While all students took the survey and engaged in career discussions based on the results, the career planning work slated for the spring will focus on 6th graders, Garofalo said.

"With the 6th graders, we want to develop an actual career plan and help set them up for deeper career exploration work in 7th and 8th grade," she said. "They might change their minds along the way and that's fine, but this can help guide them in how to think about classes and career possibilities."

Sixth graders will work with CTE teacher Valerie Ray to look into careers that interest them, researching different fields and industries and developing workplace skills to help them.

RSES students already participated in a variety of badging opportunities, including those focused on character traits and civic engagement. The new Career Awareness Badge is an opportunity to help bridge elementary badging work with the work-based learning focus of the high school's badges, Garofalo said.

DiGeorge added that the career interest survey in itself had many benefits for all RSES students, not just 6th graders.

"Introducing career exploration to students at this level gives them a sense of self-awareness and they start to learn and engage in what their interests, strengths, and abilities are," she said. "It can also give students a confidence boost when they learn about their strengths – it's nice to know what they are good at."



## CRUNCH, GLAS JOIN BADGING PROGRAM AT HIGH SCHOOL



Two new community partners – Greater Lenox Ambulance Service (GLAS) and Syracuse Crunch Hockey Club - have joined the Badging Initiative to provide high school students with additional work-based learning opportunities.

Through GLAS, students interested in healthcare and emergency services can earn several stackable badges for completing the requirements of the Junior EMS program.

Through the Crunch, students interested in the sports and entertainment industry can shadow professional staff at Syracuse offices to explore careers in marketing, public relations, event planning, sales, promotions, merchandising and other related fields.

Staff from the Crunch visited the Sports Management and Entertainment Marketing class in January to help roll out the program. Students who are not enrolled in the Sports Management class, which is offered through BOCES, but have an interest in the field can participate in the Crunch experience by request.





## NHS INDUCTS 19 NEW MEMBERS

Congratulations to the 2022-23 class of the Canastota chapter of National Honor Society! They were inducted during a formal ceremony in November.



Rayonna Alexander

Alyssa Bonneau

Sophia Brushell

Juliana Dimao

Emma Eaton

Emma Farwell

Thomas Gloska

Teagan Hopkins

Natalie Jacobs

Cara Kitchen

Sydney Owens

Lily Prisco

Ava Rizzo

Laura Ryan

Emma Savicki

Audrey Stephany

Mackenzi Stevens

Harrison van Lone

Crystal Wu

## CCS OFFERS PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS, PARENTS

Connected Community Schools has sponsored a number of events and programs for students, families and community members.

In collaboration with the Parent Advisory Council, CCS hosted a community event on bullying prevention. Participants discussed plans for anti-bullying programming and events focused on promoting a positive school culture.

CCS also holds a weekly Marvelous Mondays club for RSES students. The club has a relaxed structure where students engage in team building activities, critical thinking skills and creative activities, like making worry stones, playing themed bingo, tie-dying and teamwork challenges. The group provides a safe and welcoming place for students to meet new people, create change, learn and have fun!



## SENIOR EARNS SCHOLASTIC AWARD

Canastota senior Jessica Bovair earned an Honorable Mention in the Design category of this year's CNY Scholastic Art Awards contest. Her piece, pictured here, is called "Social Toxicity."

The piece was selected from more than 4,000 submissions from students in more than 90 schools! About 1,350 of the pieces will be on display at Onondaga Community College until March 3 and then move to the Everson Museum of Art in Syracuse until April 9.



## SSSES TRIES OUT SNOWSHOEING



South Side Elementary students learned to snowshoe in physical education classes! Snowshoeing has been a PE activity at Roberts Street Elementary School in previous years but this is the first time our 2nd and 3rd graders have tried it out.



## DASA INFORMATION

The Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) is an official policy of New York State that requires all students in public schools to have the right to an education free of discrimination and harassment. Anyone who feels that they have experienced prohibited discrimination, harassment or bullying should bring this to the District's attention by telling a teacher, counselor, or school personnel.

Each school building principal is designated as a Dignity Act Coordinator (DAC). Dignity Act Coordinators are responsible for receiving, investigating, and resolving complaints of conduct directed at students by other students or by District employees that may violate the District's policy. Please visit the school district's website under the STUDENTS or PARENTS tab to download the Dignity Act Harassment Complaint Form and review incident reporting procedures.

### Dignity Act Coordinators (DAC)

- Ms. Jennifer Carnahan, Peterboro Street Elementary School Principal - 315.697.2027
- Mrs. Vanessa McClowry, South Side Elementary School Principal - 315.697.6372
- Mr. Derek Sajnog, Roberts Street Elementary School Principal - 315.697.2029
- Mr. Peter Schultz, Canastota Junior-Senior High School Principal - 315.697.2003

## RSES RESTARTS WELLNESS CLUB

Roberts Street Elementary School has restarted its popular afterschool Wellness Club after a two-year hiatus and students have already had some exciting, interactive meetings featuring music and cooking!

RSES Social Worker Dana Podkowka coordinated the Wellness Club prior to COVID, bringing in community partners and staff members to help lead discussions and activities on healthy ways to manage stress and calm emotions as well as making positive lifestyle choices. She has now teamed up with Connected Community Schools to support the effort.

This year's format will focus on grade-level activities and team-building efforts. Interested fourth graders are meeting for the first five weeks, with RSES music teacher Michael Cieply leading a session featuring Boomwhackers



and a drumming circle. Cornell Cooperative Extension representatives led a hands-on lesson in making healthy snacks, and other sessions could include art projects, yoga and animal visits.



Every five weeks, the next grade level will cycle in. Podkowka said she hopes each grade level participates twice before the school year ends.





continued from page 1

## SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

designed to allow school employees to connect much-needed services and resources from regional agencies and companies directly to our students and their families. Whether it's a need for assistance in securing health or dental care, identifying mental health services or providing for the nutritional needs of a family, CCS was designed to help fill the void in these areas. I am so pleased to report that one year later, CCS has been all that we had hoped for and more. We know that children learn best when their most basic needs are taken care of, and our partnership has offered tremendous opportunity not only for students but their families as well. If you have not already had a chance to do so, please join us to learn more about all of the terrific work CCS is involved with in Canastota at any number of the upcoming events. I know you won't be disappointed.

As you can see, we have a great deal to be excited about here at Canastota. In every way, the District is trending in a positive direction. From our greatly updated facilities, to our coordinated K-12 core instructional/intervention program, to the innovative new academic programs and partnerships in various stages of development, to the enhanced connection to the larger community through CCS, the District is making tremendous strides in every area of our operation. I look forward to providing you with updates on all of these initiatives, and I also look forward to seeing you at our upcoming school events. Go Raiders!

Sincerely,

Shawn Bissetta, Superintendent of Schools

## PRE-K & KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION INFORMATION

### Pre-K - March 1

In-person registration will be held March 1 from 4-7pm at Peterboro Street Elementary. (Snow date is March 8.) Eligible children will turn 4 years old on or before December 1.

To register a child, please bring the child's birth certificate, immunization record and proof of residency. Application packets are available at the PSES office or at [www.moboces.org](http://www.moboces.org). Call 315-361-5903 or email [mutegg@moboces.org](mailto:mutegg@moboces.org) with questions or if you are unable to attend on March 1.

### Kindergarten - March 2

In-person registration will be held on March 2 from 8am-3pm at the Canastota High School Guidance Office and from 3:30-5:30pm at Peterboro Street Elementary. (Snow date is March 6.)

#### **Appointments are required.**

Contact District Registrar Amanda Snyder at 315-697-6326 for an appointment and a registration packet. Eligible children will turn 5 years old by December 1.

Registration must be completed in person by the parent or legal guardian. Children do not need to attend. In addition to the registration packet, please bring: the child's birth certificate, immunization records, current health examination (physical)

form, and custodial adult's proof of residency. (Some cases may require additional forms, such as IEPs or custody documents, to complete the process.)

**\*\*Please note: Current Pre-K parents do not need to make an appointment for kindergarten registration.** They just need to return their blue registration folders and provide the requested documents as soon as possible.\*\*

During registration, appointments for Kindergarten Screening will be made. Screenings will be held May 8-12 at Peterboro Street Elementary.

Call the school at 315-697-2027 with questions or concerns.





WESLEY HOOD, Board President  
KATHLEEN NILES, Board Vice President  
SCOTT BLANCHARD, Board Member  
LORAN CROSBY, Board Member  
BILL HADDAD, Board Member  
DEBORAH NEW, Board Member  
MAUREEN WOOD, Board Member  
JENNA GUSTIN, Student Board Member

SHAWN BISSETTA, Superintendent  
TRACY LEONE, Business Manager

120 Roberts Street  
Canastota, NY 13032

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit #16  
Canastota, NY 13032

## POSTAL RESIDENT Canastota, NY 13032

### LEARNING WITH GAMES

K-6 teachers have been using board, card and cooperative games to help students learn key academic and social concepts. In Kindergarten, students played Go Fish to practice their letters. Both South Side and Roberts Street schools held board game reward days to help students celebrate their hard work and positive school behavior.



### 3RD GRADERS RESEARCH HABITATS, ENDANGERED SPECIES

Ms. Lambertson's 3rd graders completed an endangered species unit in science, conducting in-depth research into the endangered or extinct species of their choice. Students then had an opportunity to create a model of their animal's natural habitat using a variety of building materials.



### 6TH GRADE MEETS NASA SCIENTIST

RSES 6th graders had the opportunity to speak with an environmental scientist from NASA! Dr. Brenna Biggs met with students virtually to discuss the IMPACTS program, which is being used to gather weather data on winter storms and the formation of snow bands. Dr. Biggs shared pictures and information of snowflakes and special aircraft and radar equipment being used in the study. She also provided students with time to ask questions.

