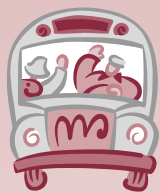


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# focus

Preparing World Class Citizens

February/March 2010

## South Colonie to unveil newly redesigned web site in March

**More information & news at [www.southcolonieschools.org](http://www.southcolonieschools.org)**

[www.southcolonieschools.org](http://www.southcolonieschools.org) has taken on a new life. The South Colonie Central School District web site, first launched back in 2001, has been completely redesigned and ready for relaunch in early March.

Technology has certainly changed in nine years and the district is ready to take full advantage of everything it has to offer. At the turn of the century, for example, 5 percent of the world was using the Internet. Today, that number has grown to 30 percent. What will the next 10 years bring as today's "digital natives" graduate and enter the work force?

When web sites were first designed, much like South Colonie's, they were put together by "technical minds" and seen as a technical tool. Today, web sites have become a news and information tool. Every business, school district and organization has one, and when people are seeking information, they most often turn to web sites today.

"Your web site, in effect, is your frontline employee," said John Noetzel, South Colonie Communications Coordinator and webmaster. "It today's 'techno' world, the web is the face of your school district and



Shaker Road Elementary School students kick off the district and Village of Colonie's "basic needs" drive for the victims of Haiti. Helping collect the goods (L-R in rear) are Board of Education member David Kiehle, Board President Brian Casey and Village Mayor Frank Leak.

## District partners with Village of Colonie to aid victims of Haiti

The South Colonie Central School District partnered with the Village of Colonie in February to assist the people of Haiti in their earthquake recovery efforts.

The district and village teamed with Lorenzo Hodges of Jezreel International, a humanitarian aid organization. Jezreel International agreed to ship and delivery, at their cost, any items that South Colonie and the village collected. Jezreel International is directly connected to Gleaning for the World, a large aid organization, which has staff and support structures on the ground in Haiti.

As a partner in the relief effort, the district asked its school communities to embark upon a two-week "basic needs" drive from

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*Continued on page 3 ... new web site*

## ... Haiti help

*Continued from page 1*

February 10-24. Each school had a drop box set up for students, parents and staff to drop off items. Drop boxes were also located at the Colonie Village Hall, Colonie Village Senior Citizens Center and the Village Family Recreation Center.

This initiative was critical to the people of Haiti and, in turn, helped South Colonie students connect with an area of the world that is desperately in need of help.

Helping to kick off the drive at Shaker Road Elementary School were Superintendent Jonathan Buhner, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction Tim Backus, Board of Education President Brian Casey, board member David Kiehle and Village of Colonie Mayor Frank Leak.

Surrounded by a room full of fourth graders all bearing donations for the drive, Casey told the children how proud he was of the youngsters and their families to want to help people "who you will never meet."

"Imagine being in your home and one minute everything is great and two minutes later the only thing you have are the clothes on your back," Casey said. "Your food is gone, your toys are gone and maybe you even lost a loved one like a brother or a sister. That would be horrible, wouldn't it?"

That's why he and others started the drive to begin with, he added. "Even though we live thousands of miles away, that's what community is all about."

As part of their Character Education studies, South Colonie children learn the true meaning of words like Friendship, Responsibility, Partnership, Cooperation, Kindness and Compassion. "All of those things fit into what we are doing today," Casey said.

"We're so lucky to have a home, aren't we?" Mayor Leak told the students. "Think about what it would feel like to have nothing. I am so proud to see you all here wanting to help. We are going to have a boat load of items to send to Haiti, I can see that."

Superintendent Buhner told the students that he

## CCHS Scholar Athletes

Seven Colonie Central High School fall varsity interscholastic athletic teams earned Scholar Athlete Team Awards for achieving a team Grade Point Average of 90% or higher.

Teams honored were Football, Golf, Girls Tennis, Boys and Girls Cross Country and Boys and Girls Volleyball.

## Senior wins Good Citizens Award

Colonie Central High School senior, Elizabeth McDermott, was presented with the local Daughters of the American Revolution Good Citizens Award during a ceremony this year at the Pruyn House in Latham. Through coordination with CCHS Social Studies teacher, Lindsey Henner, Elizabeth submitted an essay that was judged to win the award.



Elizabeth McDermott

was talking to a doctor recently who spoke of children "who are your same age" that were being treated for injuries suffered in the Haitian earthquake.

"It's a very difficult, very sad situation but it's great that friends like you from across the world want to help out," Buhner said. "If everyone did just a little, together we could do a lot."

### Some of the items donated to the drive were:

**Personal Care Items:** tooth brushes, tooth paste, deodorant, soap, shampoo, hand sanitizer, disposable razors. **First Aid Items:** bandages, emergency kits, medical kits, antibiotic skin cream, vitamins. **Baby Care Products:** diapers, wipes, formula, baby soap, shampoo. **Food Supplies:** rice, powdered milk, canned vegetables, canned beans, canned fruit.

### Only part of the story ...

The basic needs drive was only one district initiative to help the people of Haiti. Throughout January and February, many schools held individual collections and sent monetary donations to the drive.

Forest Park Elementary School, for example, raised about \$1,300 from a collection from the student body and staff for The Clinton-Bush Haiti Fund and Roessleville Elementary School held a "Hats on For Haiti" day. Students purchased coupons permitting them to wear a hat during the school day.

The staff and students at Veeder Elementary School also collected almost \$1,800 to purchase nearly two ShelterBoxes for Haitian relief. The cost of a box is \$1,000. Other schools also joined in the collection effort learning important lessons on what it means to give back.



Sand Creek Middle School teacher James Brown (top row with arrow) meets President Obama as he receives his Excellence in Teacher Award at the White House.

## Brown receives teaching award at the White House

Sand Creek Middle School teacher, James Brown, visited the White House in January and received his President's Award for Excellence in teaching from President Obama.

Brown was one of more than 100 science, math, and engineering teachers and mentors named recipients of the award back in July. He traveled to Washington, D.C., for the presentation ceremony.

The Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring, is awarded each year to individuals or organizations, recognizes the crucial role that mentoring plays in the academic and personal development of students studying science or engineering and who belong to minorities that are under represented in those fields. By offering their time, encouragement and expertise to these students, mentors help ensure that the next generation of scientists and engineers will better reflect the diversity of the United States.

## Dunkin' Donuts Hero

Sand Creek Middle School math teacher Michael Nichter was chosen as winner of a joint initiative between Dunkin' Donuts and Siena Athletics to recognize teachers who work daily to "Keep America Running."

Nichter was honored with the "Keep America Running Hometown Hero" award at halftime of the Saints' home game at the Times Union Center on February 5. Nichter was presented with the prize of free coffee for a year, courtesy of Dunkin' Donuts, during the special recognition ceremony held on Siena Athletics' "Teacher Night." Nichter was nominated by Sand Creek Middle School Principal David Perry. In the nomination, Perry described Nichter as "an educator who is energetic, funny and demonstrates the highest commitment to student improvement in all areas."

## new web site

*Continued from page 1*

the public's first impression of you."

The district Information Technology Department has been working for about a year with the Capital Region BOCES Communications Service to create a new web site that is visually modern and user friendly while keeping the district's longstanding traditions in place.

"We wanted to keep what our users liked from the first site and address what needed improvement," Noetzel said.

Because the site was redesigned and content inputted by BOCES through an existing contract, the work was done at no extra cost to the district, saving thousands of dollars. The district also relied on BOCES to produce a site that meets today's industry standards for use by viewers with disabilities and by those using multiple web browsers like Internet Explorer, Firefox and Safari. The site also meets the major characteristics today's users say they want in a web site, that it is: useful and responds to their needs, easy to navigate, has quality content and is updated frequently with new information.



### So what's so new about the site?

The first thing viewers will notice after logging on is a large, full-color revolving photo slide show featuring South Colonie students in action. The slide show will change periodically to feature various programs and events like art shows, competitions and graduation. A second, special photo gallery feature will enable views to click through other slide shows featuring various classroom and school activities.

Entire new sections have also been added to the web site including extensive Human Resources pages, staff resources, school safety, parent resources, academics, food services, the arts, energy management, district departments, special education and more. These pages include helpful pdf forms and publications available for download as well as links to other supporting outside web sites.

Other features include student art galleries, event calendars, email hyperlinks to district staff, an A-Z quick reference guide and easy-to-navigate scroll bars on the pages. Future features will include video news and teacher-created classroom pages.

## Students participate in MathCOUNTS event

Sixteen South Colonie students participated in the national MathCOUNTS competition at the GE Global Research Center in Niskayuna in January.

Eight Lisha Kill students and eight Sand Creek students competed in the event that is sponsored annually through a joint effort of the National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE) and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM).

More than 100 middle school students representing some 20 local schools took part in the event that is intended to identify the top middle school math talent in the nation. Students in grades 6-8 are eligible to participate. Top finishers from each local competition have the opportunity to move on to state finals, with hopes of possibly advancing to the regional and national finals.

Although Lisha Kill and Sand Creek finished in 11th and 13th place respectively, there was a great deal to be proud of before the competition even began. The 16 South Colonie 'Mathletes' at the competition is the largest number of students the district has even had in the 20-plus years that we have participated in MathCOUNTS. Hopefully, this level of participation marks an indication of things to come and will continue over the years.

Gregory Bearup was the South Colonie team coach. Jackie Frank and Andrea Bourgeois are the Math Club advisors at Lisha Kill. Both teachers are to be commended for their efforts to help their students prepare and for showing their support by attending the competition.

Lisha Kill student participants were Rachel Tenney, Ryan Daley, Liam Rowland, Tristen Jarvis, Meaghan Podlaski, Alex Luizzi, Yohary Fabian and Jacob Pickett. Sand Creek student participants were Letian Zhang, Jack Blanchard, Corey Hendrick, Noah Burke, Julia Bonney, Brandon Ng, Kara Snyder and Ericka Crankshaw.

Additional information regarding MathCOUNTS can be found at [www.mathcounts.org](http://www.mathcounts.org)



## Yoga gives Forest Park kids inner power to stand up to bullies

Forest Park Elementary School students learned to stand strong against bullying at their recent Olweus assembly. Guest speaker Lynne Ogren, Spanish teacher at Sand Creek Middle School and yoga instructor, taught the students a few simple poses and breathing exercises. These moves help children realize their own inner power to stand up to bullying. Students also learned calming exercises to help with self-control.

## Transportation requests

South Colonie residents who want transportation for their children to non-public schools during the 2010-11 school year must file written requests with the district by **April 1**. Written requests must be made every year. Request forms, which are available at the Transportation Department, 2 Winston Place, Albany, are required for all actual and anticipatory (students on waiting lists) non-public school enrollments.



## Roessleville Elementary Hosts First Annual Math Night

Roessleville Elementary School hosted its first annual Math Night in January. Families traveled through 13 stations where a variety math games and challenging activities awaited them. Upon completing each station, the students received a stamp on their "Math Ports." More than 100 families participated. It was a fun and educational evening for all.

# Sand Creek & Saddlewood collect Pennies for Peace

## More than \$1,800 donated by the two schools

Students at Sand Creek Middle School and Saddlewood Elementary School took on a service learning project this year to help the Pennies for Peace program. Saddlewood collected more than \$1,000 and Sand Creek over \$800 toward the drive.

The Pennies for Peace campaign, [www.penniesforpeace.org](http://www.penniesforpeace.org), is a program of Central Asia Institute (CAI), founded by Greg Mortenson, author of the No. 1 *New York Times* best seller, *Three Cups of Tea*. CAI is a nonprofit organization that promotes and provides community-based education and literacy programs, especially for girls, in remote mountain regions of Central Asia. Founded in 1996, CAI has built, to date, nearly 100 schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan, which serve more than 28,000 students, 14,000 of whom are girls.

How can a penny bring peace? It doesn't buy much in Colonie, but in the villages of Pakistan and Afghanistan, it can buy a pencil, start an education, and transform a life. In a region where terrorist organizations recruit uneducated, illiterate children, that pencil can empower a child to read, write, and learn. With the money Sand Creek and Saddlewood collected, CAI can pay several teachers' salaries for one year, and provide school and health supplies to the school's community.

## Learning the value of helping others

Another goal of the Pennies for Peace program is to encourage South Colonie students, who are ultimately our future leaders, to learn the value of service learning by collecting pennies for global peace. Students had an opportunity to study the cultures of Afghanistan and Pakistan, along with reading the books [Three Cups of Tea](#) and [Listen to the Wind](#).

Sand Creek students donated pennies in homerooms and at lunch, while Capital Communications Credit Union offered the use of its change counting machine through their Youth Outreach Program. With more than 80,000 pennies, this saved an incredible amount of time and effort.

As part of Saddlewood's studies, the children, throughout the month of January, learned about the Character Education word "Tolerance" as they collected pennies for the drive. The goal was to collect \$500 but they more than doubled that effort netting \$1,034.11 in about three weeks.

"The students really were 'into' the program and definitely learned how powerful they and their pennies were," explained Anne MackNair, coordinator of the Saddlewood drive. "At our first morning program after the kickoff, we were stunned that students had donated \$406! We were all extremely proud. Our subsequent two weeks revealed amounts of \$342 and \$286.11. We were all overwhelmed by the cumulative total of \$1,034.11. Students were cheering! How totally awesome!"



Saddlewood Elementary students collected more than \$1,000 for Pennies for Peace in three weeks.



Atif Abdul-Majeed, (pictured above with Sand Creek Middle School students) is a Fulbright scholar from Pakistan currently studying at RPI. He visited Sand Creek to share information about Pakistan, and the importance of the Pennies for Peace campaign to the northern regions of his country. He was very touched by the school's interest in his country and the generosity of the students and staff. We all learned how to say "hello" in his native language, Urdu, which is "Asalam O Alikum," which means "Peace be with you."

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Assistant Superintendent for Instruction

**Beverly Miller**  
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**David Seaver**  
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## CCHS on list of Energy Star Schools

Colonie Central High School has been added to the list of South Colonie schools earning the prestigious Energy Star label from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Seven South Colonie schools, overall, have earned this prestigious label over the years, which signifies that these buildings operate more energy efficiently than 75 percent of the schools in the United States. They include Roessleville, Saddlewood, Shaker Road and Veeder Elementary Schools, Sand Creek and Lisha Kill Middle Schools, and now Colonie Central High School.

The Energy Star designation is one more mark of success for the district's multi-year energy conservation initiative. Since 2001, South Colonie has exceeded its energy savings projections and avoided more than \$2.5 million in energy expenses.



## Highest finish ever for high school Science Olympiad Team

Colonie High Central High School scored its best finish ever in this year's Science Olympiad held at the College of Saint Rose in February.

In just its third year of competing the team finished 11th out of 22 area teams in the regional event. Science Olympiad is a nationwide competition of high school students competing in science themed events that includes written exams, hands-on labs, and pre-built projects in the areas of Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Technology.

South Colonie students also won a bronze medal (third place) for the trajectory (catapult) event [built by Eric Altman and Will Kellogg] and finished in the top 10 in most of the other 24 events.

Team coaches are Jessica Mazzone and Michelle Schrader. Team members are seniors Tyler Degener, Mike Froeschle, Darius Cheung, Derek Tsui, and Tim Hausler; juniors Eric Altman, Chris Desmond, Lin Cao and Liam Pickett; and sophomores Emily Finlan, Ann Vachaparambil, Diana Hart, Catie Miller, and Will Kellogg.