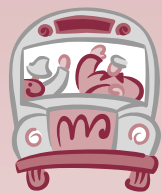


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focus

Preparing World Class Citizens

March/April 2009

Celebrating our cultural diversity

South Colonie expands its borders for National Foreign Language Week in March

South Colonie expanded its borders worldwide in March as the district immersed itself in a week-long celebration of its cultural diversity.

The schools took on an international flavor March 2-6 as high school and middle school students stamped their passports for National Foreign Language Week. A variety of educational and cultural activities were planned that spanned from the Foreign Language classrooms to the school cafeteria.

"It was a great way to not only promote Foreign Language education in our district but to recognize the cultural diversity and variety of nationalities that represent our student population," said Nora Callender, South Colonie Foreign Language Supervisor.

According to South Colonie's Learning Standards, each student is expected to graduate with the ability to use a second language and with an "understanding, respect and acceptance of people of difference races, cultural heritages and national origins."

Foreign Language study begins in the district as early as fifth grade. By high school, many students are taking college-level



Veeder shows a 'Touch of Class'

Students at Veeder Elementary School celebrated school spirit in style with a Touch of Class Day. The children were dressed to the nines and were treated to the jazz musician group from Colonie Central High School.

CCHS Tech Department earns restoration award

Staff and students honored for preservation work on the historic USS SLATER naval ship

The Colonie Central High School Technology Department has been honored by the Historic Naval Ships Association (HNSA) for its work in restoring the naval ship USS SLATER.

CCHS students and staff were presented with the 2008 Russell Booth Award at the Board of Education meeting in March for outstanding achievement in restoration. HNSA is an international organization that promotes the preservation and the exhibition of historic naval vessels.

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... Foreign Language

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courses in such languages as French, Spanish, Italian and Japanese.

As part of the National Foreign Language Week observance, the district debuted a new logo (*shown on the right*) carrying a universal message of "Peace" written in six languages — Spanish, French, Italian, Japanese, Arabic and Urdu. The logo, featuring two hands embracing a globe, appeared on special T-shirts worn by students and staff throughout the week (*see photo below*).

Even the Food Services team at the high school and middle schools went global. The multi-language peace logo appeared on their cafeteria aprons while they served up a special international menu.

Monday was Spanish Day featuring Chicken Fajitas, Mexican Corn and Churros for dessert. Tuesday was Chinese Day, Wednesday French Day, Thursday German Day and Italian Day rounded out the week on Friday.

Students got an early start on the cultural celebration in February as they designed colorful posters promoting National Foreign Language Week. The posters are on display in their schools. Throughout the week, the morning announcements featured trivia questions in a variety of different languages as well as special cultural activities in the Foreign Language classrooms.

Sand Creek Middle School expanded its cultural celebration to the end of the month with a school-wide assembly featuring the African drumming and dance group, Marafanyi Percussion. Last fall, the school conducted a service learning project collecting school and medical supplies for the children and families of Guinea, the country where the drummers reside.

The school also hosted special guests during the month to expand on international culture. In teacher Lynne Ogrens' classes, for example, student Colleen Barber and her Irish grandmother taught Irish dancing, while student Manny Stiitts taught Japanese words. Tenneson Cheeran served Nan and told about India, while Tara Illyadis and Alex Melas served Baklava and taught the class about Greece. Maritza Alvarez's father gave salsa dancing lessons, and Kendra Barbero brought in Mexican food that her father had prepared.

South Colonie has a long history of cultural exchanges with both students and teachers from other countries. For years, Colonie Central High School has been a participant in the People to People exchange program with students and teachers traveling to, then hosting their counterparts from Japan, Russia, France, Germany, Italy, Greece and more (*see story on page 3*).

Last winter, through the Fulbright Exchange Program, the district also hosted two traveling teachers from Uruguay, South America. The teachers shared their experiences, lifestyle and culture with South Colonie Spanish students as they researched ways to improve the schools in their country.



"It was a great way to not only promote Foreign Language education in our district but to recognize the cultural diversity and variety of nationalities that represent our district."

Nora Callender
District Foreign Language Supervisor



Lisha Kill Middle School students and staff in Brooke Brady's six grade class celebrate National Foreign Language Week with their special logo T-shirts.

French exchange student shares culture at CCHS

As part of the National Foreign Language Week in March, Colonie Central High School's Rotary Club exchange student from France visited with the school's French classes to share his culture.

Pierre Maleval is from the Paris area and is enrolled as a senior at CCHS for the academic year. He arrived last summer and will return to France in August. When he returns home, Pierre hopes to attend business school in Paris.

Pierre was happy to share information about his country and language. He noted that most people are not aware that French is spoken by 250 million people on five continents and is the second most used language of the internet. French companies employ 600,000 workers throughout the U.S. American companies well established in France include IBM, Microsoft, Dow Chemical, Coca-Cola, and AT&T among others.

In French schools students typically start their day around 8 a.m. and finish between 5 and 6 p.m. with an hour for lunch. They have a core curriculum that is followed throughout France with far fewer electives than in the United States.

He said that the pressure is on the students to study hard because they must pass rigorous final exams each year. Pierre said that he thoroughly enjoys the variety of courses offered at CCHS because students can investigate areas that interest them.

Pierre has combined his love of history with an interest in travel. In France he commuted to a boarding school in the Loire Valley and was able to visit the many castles there. He has traveled throughout Europe, but his favorite country is the United States.



Rotary Club French exchange student, Pierre Maleval, discusses his homeland with Colonie Central High School French classes.



CCHS Key Club Helps Humane Society

Students from the Colonie Central High School Key Club sort bottles and cans for the Mohawk Hudson Humane Society and later helped Price Chopper officials present a check for \$7,000 to the animal shelter.

Regional Food Bank honors Veeder for food collections

School awarded for holding longest running food drive in the area

The Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York honored Veeder Elementary School this year for its long history of food drives to help the area needy.

Principal Kathleen Gottschalk and teacher and longtime food drive organizer, Barbara Ripps, were presented an award honoring the Veeder school community for hosting the "longest running food drive" at the Food Banks' 2008 A-CAN-demy Awards Breakfast. The theme of the breakfast was "celebrating food drives and community spirit." Veeder Elementary has held its annual food drive for more than 15 years.

"Hunger is a serious problem, and its effects are pervasive and severe," Food Bank representatives say. "But hunger relief is often full of joy and warm surprises. New friends are made, and the entire community is enriched when people come together for a common cause."

During 2008, more than 200 food and fund drives were held locally with more than 47,000 pounds of food and \$7,000 in financial donations going to the Food Bank.



CCHS Technology students recreate two depth charge storage racks for the USS SLATER historic naval ship.

About the award:

The Russell Booth Award is given annually by the Historic Naval Ships Association (HNSA). There are 175 ships in HNSA, in 12 nations all across the world. Every year, each ship in HNSA nominates people/organizations for these awards. The Booth Award is awarded to a "nonmember" (an individual or organization that is NOT a Historic Naval Ship or employee/volunteer of such) that has made "outstanding achievement" for a period of about one year. This award is truly international and professional in scope, and may be the first time the South Colonie District has been so recognized.



CCHS Technology students and their instructor, Chris Hanley (second from right) receive the Russell Booth Award for their restoration work at a South Colonie Board of Education meeting in March.

... USS SLATER

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For many years now, the Technology Department has made a major contribution to the ongoing restoration of the USS SLATER – housed at the Port of Albany – helping make this ship one of the most authentically restored WWII vessels in existence today

According to CCHS Technology teacher, Barry Witte, this is a classic community-school partnership in which students apply what they have learned in class to help out a local nonprofit. The Slater buys the necessary materials such as steel, and the students "go to work" for a "client" just as they will when they enter the work force.

These students are enrolled in the Introduction to Engineering Design and Principles of Engineering classes, part of the Project Lead the Way curriculum. Teacher Chris Hanley and some of his students work with the metal fabrication aspects, which are part of the Auto Chassis course, and Jeff Wright and a few of his students worked on graphic imagery. Most of the work is done at the high school, but students also venture onto the ship itself to apply their skills.

One project in particular was the driving force for the USS SLATER to nominate the school for the Russell Booth Award – the recreation of two depth charge storage racks. The ship was originally built with eight of these racks, but four were removed by a previous owner.

The goal of the organization owning the USS SLATER is to return the ship as close as possible to its WWII configuration. Starting four years ago, Colonie Tech students went to the ship and created a computerized solid model of one of the remaining racks.

Every part of the rack, over 300 in all, was created by computer and then assembled in the computer's virtual world to exact dimensions. This computer model was then used at the school to cut and preassemble steel that the SLATER purchased. Students got involved in reading the plans, fabricating the pieces and welding them into assemblies that were later brought to the ship for final assembly.

No one knew it at the time, but these two racks were essential for the USS SLATER to be chosen as the set for a full length movie now being planned. If it were not for these racks supplied by Colonie's Tech Department, it would have been unlikely that the SLATER would have been chosen as the American ship in the movie "Last Operations Under the Orion," to be released in the Japanese market later this year. The USS SLATER begins its 12th season as an Albany venue dedicated to educating the public about a particular time in America's history. The ship is the only one remaining afloat in the world in historically accurate configuration. The USS SLATER is open free to the public April through November and is located just south of the Dunn Memorial Bridge in Downtown Albany. For more information, call 518-431-1943 or visit the website at www.uss Slater.org.

Compassion spurs mural design at Lisha Kill School

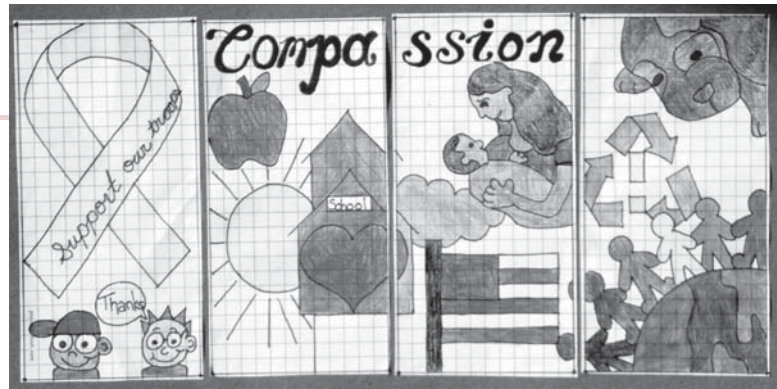
As part of its efforts to promote character education at Lisha Kill Middle School, the school's Action Committee (A/C) decided in December to create a tile mural to be displayed on a wall inside the school. Compassion was chosen as the mural's theme.

The committee asked each student, staff member, administrator, community member, etc., to contribute to the mural by designing their own individual tiles, each of which would be a mere piece of one big picture in the end. The final product was to visually represent what Compassion means to the Lisha Kill's school community.

To prepare students for this massive project, the A/C led mini-lessons during lunch periods discussing Compassion: asking them to identify Compassion in their lives and brainstorm ways to make it more prevalent from that moment forward. The culminating activity of the week was to sketch out how Compassion looked to them in their minds. All the drawings were evaluated by the committee and seventh grader, Jackie Malecki's drawing was chosen for the mural's final design.

Led by art teacher Christina Norris, mural construction began in late February, with the school dedicating a week to the project. During the first part of the week, students stayed in their homerooms late, planning and then designing their contributions to this project.

Wednesday was a teaching day. Students and staff engaged in activities and games, watched short videos and read stories — all about Compassion — and what we could all do to make this a more compassionate world. They then sketched drafts of how they wanted their tiles to look. The directions were to depict what Compassion looks like or what it means to them. Some students used quotes while others sketched images; some did both.



Seventh grader, Jackie Malecki's drawing has been chosen as the final design for Lisha Kill Middle School's tile mural on Compassion.

Thursday was tile day. Students began the process by sketching their pictures or quotes onto a 4 X 4 tile donated by Best Tile of Colonie, owned by Brian Ford. Then, using one color assigned to their homerooms, they outlined, shaded and colored their designs with crayon and colored pencil. Finally, they used watercolor paints to shade the whole tile, leaving them with a monochromatic piece: from far away, the tile appears to be one color, but the closer one comes up to it, the easier it is to see the actual design popping out.

One panel of the mural will be unveiled April 30th during this year's Look at Lisha Kill event. Families and other community members will be encouraged to complete a tile of their own that night. The finished mural is scheduled for unveiling in the fall.

Forest Park Walking Club

Students in grades 1-4 at Forest Park Elementary School were invited to join a walking club this year called Walking to Peak Performance. Students stay fits by walking for 30 minutes first thing on Monday and Wednesday mornings.

"This is a great opportunity to exercise before school," said Debra Varsames, who runs this program and is the health education teacher at Forest Park and Roessleville schools. "Research has shown that when children exercise they do better focusing and concentrating on their school work. Our goal is to improve fitness and have fun using the names of different Adirondack trails as inspiration."



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More honors for Colonie High students



CCHS earns top prizes at bridge design event

Students from Colonie Central High School's Project Lead the Way Engineering program again earned first, second, and third place prizes for their balsa bridge designs at the American Society of Civil Engineers' Student Bridge Design Contest.

Junior Mike Froeschle placed first with a balsa bridge weighing less than 3 ounces, yet holding 280 pounds of load or 1,800 times more than its own weight. Junior Jeff Smith placed second and senior Chris Michels placed third. Additionally, Mike Froeschle's bridge earned top honors for highest overall capacity regardless of weight. Seniors Andrew Christian placed fifth and Christopher John placed ninth from among more than 100 entrants from numerous Capital District high schools.



CCHS places first at HVCC Viking Challenge

Students from Colonie Central High School won the Viking Challenge in Trivial Pursuit at Hudson Valley Community College in March, defeating 12 other teams for the top prize.

The challenge is comprised of teams of students from area high schools that compete against one another in an academic setting, with areas of questioning including history, people and places, and sports to name a few.

This year's team included seniors Joe Tassarotti (captain), Mitch Coirin, Chris Futia, and Greg Novak. With a first place victory came a plaque, a mini-laptop computer, scientific calculators, and \$500 scholarships for team members that will become matriculated, full-time students at HVCC in the fall of 2009.