

in

south
colonie
central
schools

focus

Preparing World Class Citizens

December, 2008

South Colonie alumni return as role models to students

Colonie Central High School graduates encourage today's students to achieve in life

Two Colonie Central High School alumni, who went on to strikingly different yet successful careers, returned to South Colonie Schools this fall as role models for today's students.

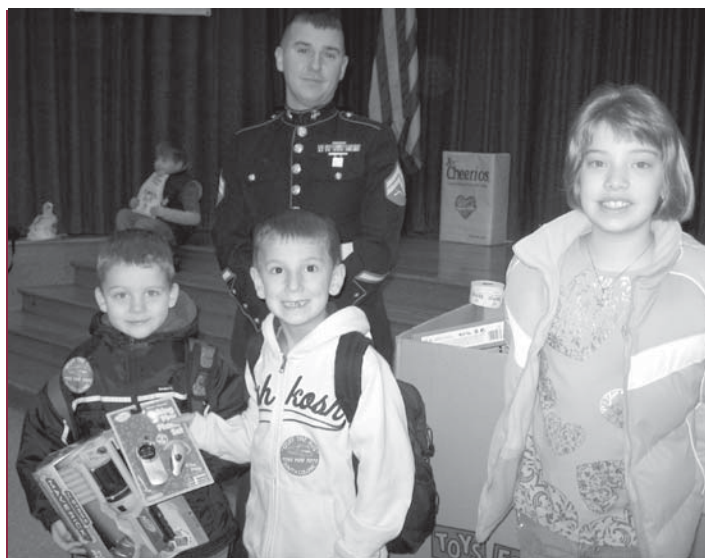
World-class cellist Kenneth Olsen was back in the Capital District to perform at the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall in November and paid a visit to his alma mater.

A 1999 CCHS graduate, Olsen, 27, held special assemblies for music students at the high school, and Lisha Kill and Sand Creek Middle Schools, showing off his talents, answering questions and encouraging students to go after their dreams in life.

Weeks later, Sand Creek Middle School received a visit from Rich Duma, CCHS Class of 1991, who spoke to students about his career in the United States Air Force.

What makes Duma's career unique is that he serves as a crew member on Air Force One as well as other presidential aircraft. Rich joined the Air Force in 1993 and has primarily worked as a tech sergeant prior to joining the Air Force One crew. His presentation focused on the details of his

Continued on page 4 ... alumni

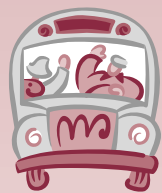


Students at Forest Park Elementary School help Stuff the Bus with Toys for Tots as part of the district's annual collection campaign to help the U.S. Marine Corps give to needy children around the holidays. Every school and office participated in the campaign during November and December.

District Stuff the Bus campaign helps needy children for holidays

South Colonie's second annual Stuff The Bus with Toys for Tots campaign was an overwhelming success again this holiday season.

Throughout November and December, the district's yellow buses were set up outside shopping malls, at area businesses and at the schools for students, families and shoppers to drop off new toys to help needy children. Toys For Tots, sponsored by the Marine Corps since 1947, annually provides some 60,000 Capital District children with toys for the holidays. Thank you to everyone for helping out!



Words Inspire Lisha Kill art students pg 2

Budget calendar .. pg 3

Students comparing communities pg 4



Peaceful Bus pg 5

Students give back to community pg 5

Sand Creek boys'/girls' nights out boosts self-esteem pg 6



Words inspire Lisha Kill art students to create with their hands

Inspiration was the driving force behind a unique art project at Lisha Kill Middle School this fall that had sixth graders thinking with their heads every bit as much as creating with their hands.

These students were hard at work creating sculptures inspired by the work of Robert Indiana, who uses words and numbers in his designs. His artwork looks like road signs you might see along the highway. Sometimes they tell you about the roads he's traveled and what's happened to him along the way. Sometimes they show what he enjoys, like poetry.

The assignment, from Lisha Kill Art teacher Betsy Ryan, was for her students to choose a word that inspires them and others. The word had to be one that would make another think how they could use the meaning of that word in their life when they saw it. Some of the words the students chose were: Peace, Dream, Believe, Courage, Loyalty, Hope, Wisdom, Respect, Joy, If, Humor, Hero, Seek and Pride.

Student Alicia Ortiz chose "Strive" because, "When people see "Strive," I want them to feel successful," she said. "Strive is a pretty strong word; it can encourage people to do things they never thought of doing."

Katie Hutton chose "Giggle" for her creation because it makes her feel good. "When people see our word in the school hallway I want them to look at it, feel cheerful and look at life in a positive way. I want them to giggle when they need to."

"Teamwork" is the word Ryan used to describe the experience. "The students did an amazing job working together to create a sculpture that is thought provoking and, hopefully, inspiring."



Words like "Strive," "Peace," "Hope" and "Believe" inspired Lisha Kill Middle School students in a recent art sculpture project.



World-class cellist Kenneth Olsen, (right) and Rich Duma (above), both successful Colonie Central High School graduates, return to South Colonie as role models to today's students.



... alumni

Continued from page 1

job and making good choices while in school.

Olsen is currently with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (a Top 5 Orchestra) as Assistant Principal Cello since 2005. After graduating from CCHS, Olsen attended the Cleveland Institute of Music and is a winner of the Institute's prestigious Concerto Competition. Other awards received by the cellist include first prize in the Nakamichi Cello Competition at the Aspen Music Festival and second prize at the 2002 Holland-America Music Society competition.

Olsen is a founding member of the East Coast Chamber Orchestra (ECCO), a group of talented young musicians from orchestras and ensembles all over the country.

2009-2010 District Budget Development

If you are a parent, a senior citizen or just a concerned resident, the South Colonie Board of Education wants you to get involved in your schools.

The school board invites you to participate in the annual budget development process and be a part of the planning for the 2009-2010 school year. It's easy ... just attend one or all of our budget workshops and let your voice be heard. A schedule is listed on the right, with all meetings leading up to the annual School Budget Vote on May 19th. At these meetings, you will be treated to an informative presentation on various budget topics and have an opportunity to comment and ask questions.

So spread the word and help make the budget development process a real community affair!

All meetings are held at the South Colonie District Office with the exception of the Special Open Budget Discussions/Q & A sessions and the May 5 public hearing.

2009-10 Budget Calendar

| DATE/TIME | TOPIC |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Tuesday, January 13 7:00 p.m. | Transportation, Operations and Maintenance, and Secured Youth Detention Facility |
| Tuesday, January 20 7:30 p.m. | Regular Board Meeting |
| Tuesday, February 10 7:30 p.m. | Regular Board Meeting including the following budget presentations: <i>Support Services</i> — Board of Education and Central Office expenses, BOCES, Public Information/Printing/Postage, Legal Expenses, Fringe Benefits, Insurance, Debt Service, Interfund Transfers, Continuing Education, and Interscholastic Athletics |
| Thursday, February 12 7:00 p.m. | Special Budget Meeting — Open discussion with Q & A Session Veeder Elementary School Cafetorium |
| Tuesday, March 3 7:30 p.m. | Regular Board Meeting <i>Topics</i> — Special Ed and Pupil Personnel Services |
| Thursday, March 5 7:00 p.m. | Special Budget Meeting — Open discussion with Q & A Session Shaker Road Elementary New Library |
| Tuesday, March 10 7:00 p.m. | <i>Instructional Program</i> Enrollment Projections, Instructional Staffing, Support Staffing, Textbooks, Curriculum Development, Staff Development, Library & Media Technology, Building Budgets, Summer School, Central Avenue Learning Center (CALC) and Information Technology |
| Tuesday, March 17 7:30 p.m. | Regular Board Meeting (1st draft of the Budget) |
| Tuesday, March 24 7:00 p.m. | Budget Meeting/Work Session/Budget Adjustments |
| Tuesday, March 31 7:30 p.m. | Regular Board Meeting Budget Review — Second budget draft presented |
| Monday, April 20 | Last day to file petition for School Board member |
| Tuesday, April 21 7:30 p.m. | Regular Board Meeting — Budget Adoption |
| Tuesday, May 5 7:00 p.m. | Public Hearing on recommended Budget – Saddlewood Elementary School Cafetorium Regular Board Meeting — 7:30 p.m. Copies of Budget materials also available in schools |
| Tuesday, May 19 | District Budget Vote & School Board Elections 11:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. Voting at all five district elementary schools ONLY |

Volunteers needed at the polls, call 869-3576, ext. 2443

Saddlewood students compare communities with visit to Troy

Second graders from Saddlewood Elementary School paid a visit to the City of Troy this fall to experience urban lifestyles as part of their social studies unit called Comparing Communities.

Comparing Communities is a way for the children in teachers Elaine Miller, Lauren Fetsko, Lisa Corcoran and Pegeen Jensen's classes to learn and actually see the differences between rural, urban and suburban lifestyles.

The students walked along the sidewalks of Troy and were able to "feel" what it is like to walk wherever you go instead of always rely on a car to get you from place to place as many people do living in the suburbs.

During their walk they witnessed or toured the Rensselaer County Courthouse, Hart Memorial Library, Troy Savings Bank and Music Hall and the Troy Art Center. Along the way, they discussed how the lifestyle of Colonie, a suburban community, differed from the urban setting of Troy.

The students were also able to visit one of the historic brownstone homes. While inside, the children were amazed by the 14-foot ceilings, unique window designs, stained glass, period furnishings, detailed floor patterns, and a new kitchen inside an old home and more. The hosts and tour guides were, Lynn Kopka, president of the Washington Park Association, and Peter Lucas, a retired art teacher and Troy resident.

Shaker Road School celebrates reading

Shaker Road Elementary School wrapped up its annual PARP (Parents as Reading Partners) program this fall with a dance and movie night. The PARP program set a school-wide goal of 110,000 minutes of reading by the 286 students in the school. They exceeded that goal and finished with a grand total of more than 118,000 minutes.

The students and their families enjoyed a dance to celebrate the success of the PARP program where students of all ages helped Principal William Dollard learn the proper steps for the Macarena and the Cha-Cha. After the dance, the crowd moved from the gym to the cafetorium for a movie night where all enjoyed a screening of Kung-Fu Panda. Dozens of prizes were also awarded.



Saddlewood Elementary School students tour the streets of Troy, looking over the unique brownstone buildings as part of their Comparing Communities unit on urban lifestyles.

CCHS students perform at All-State Music Festival

Eight students from Colonie Central High School were selected to participate in the Area All-State Music Festival at Saratoga Springs High School in November.



The music festival, sponsored by the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA), affords exceptional high school musicians the opportunity to perform alongside other high school students from an area spanning a 50-mile radius around Albany. The students were chosen because of their high scores on an adjudicated NYSSMA musical solo last spring.

Performing in the orchestra were Rebecca Swartz (violin), Katlyn Ira (viola), David Phillips (viola), and Rachele Prawdzyk (cello); Performing in the band were Lindsay Ralbovsky (flute) and Keth Nieckarz (trombone); Anthony Rotondaro (tenor) performed with the chorus; Justin Pestuglicci (drum set) performed with the jazz band.

This is the first time in recent memory that South Colonie was represented with at least one student in each of the four performing groups.

Peaceful Bus rides into Roessleville Elementary School

Roessleville Elementary has instituted a new Peaceful Bus program this year, aimed at creating a safe and positive environment on the ride to and from school each day. The Peaceful Bus, modeled after a program developed by Lynnwood Elementary Principal, Jim Dillon, kicked off at Roessleville in November.

The program is designed to:

- Decrease inappropriate behaviors on the bus;
- Create a climate of respect and cooperation to and from school;
- Change the social dynamics on the bus by building strong relationships among students and bus drivers.

The program is unique in how it engages young people in problem solving and positive decision making. To get the program on the road, students in higher grades were paired with students in lower grades to discuss what a peaceful bus “looks like” and “sounds like.” During their meetings, they talked about bus problems they’ve encountered and proposed solutions. They also participated in relationship building activities with their bus drivers. The program will continue to run throughout the school year.



Saddlewood PTA Sponsors 'No TV Week'

The annual Make-a-Plate event was just one of several activities sponsored by the Saddlewood Elementary School PTA as part of “No TV Week” in November. During “No TV Week,” families pledge to spend time together reading and having fun instead of watching TV and playing video games.

South Colonie kids give back to community



Veeder community bakes for Ronald McDonald House

Third graders at Veeder Elementary School had a lesson in giving this holiday season when they baked hundreds of chocolate chip cookies and made cards for the Ronald McDonald House and Stanford Heights Fire Department. Thanks to the many parents who volunteered their time to help with this community service project.



Students Join PTAs in helping soldiers

Students from Forest Park Elementary (top photo) and Veeder Elementary (bottom photo) and their school PTAs volunteered at Colonie Center this fall to collect food and personal care products for the Blue Star Moms. These products helped fill Freedom Boxes for those serving in the military. They also colored pictures and wrote cards and words of encouragement for soldiers serving overseas.



Exercise and healthy cooking were among the activities at Sand Creek Boys' and Girls' Nights Out this fall.



'Nights out' at Sand Creek offer tips on healthy lifestyle choices

Program boosts self-esteem, self-image and school camaraderie

Sand Creek Middle School seventh and eighth graders were busy this fall discovering how much fun and educational a night out can be.

Sand Creek sponsored separate Girls' and Boys' Nights Out. These program evolved from a desire to introduce a healthier lifestyle to the middle school students, while boosting self-esteem, confidence and self-image and school camaraderie. The evenings gave a glimpse into some positive habits used to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Throughout the evening, the girls had the opportunity to try yoga, learn some core conditioning moves, experiment with new hair trends and create a healthy, delicious snack.

On their evening, the young men had the opportunity to try out weight training, play basketball, learn how to D.J. and participate in a variety of team building games. Thank you to our sponsors who made these evenings so successful for our young people.

Jonathan Buhner
Superintendent of Schools

Tim Backus
Assistant Superintendent for Instruction

Beverly Miller
Assistant Superintendent/
Management Services

David Seaver
Director of Human Resources

Board of Education
James (Tim) Ryan, President
Brian Casey, Vice President
Robert Domenici
Rick Dunn
Vernon Fonda
Paul Gordon
Shelle Jaquish
Neil Johanning
Leonard Motto

In Focus Editor: John K. Noetzel

SOUTH COLONIE

102 Loralee Drive • Albany
• New York • 12205



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Albany, New York
Permit #135