

# GOOD NEWS



## SYRACUSE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

### Syracuse Literacy Zones Help Guide Adult Learners to Success

In the Syracuse City School District, success isn't limited just to school-aged students. Thanks to the Syracuse Literacy Zones, adults are also offered the supports and resources to help them succeed – free of charge. This year alone, close to 300 area adults are taking advantage of Literacy Zone classes and services, and more than 4,500 students have completed classes since the program began!

Literacy Zone Welcome Centers are located within four school sites in different quadrants of the city: **Grant Middle School (North Zone)**, **STEAM at Dr. King Elementary (South Zone)**, **Dr. Weeks Elementary (East Zone)** and **PSLA at Fowler (West Zone)**. No appointment is needed to stop by the welcome centers, and a case manager is on hand at these sites to provide assistance.

The Literacy Zones began in Syracuse in 2009, gradually expanding to now

reach the community at 21 different sites. Their main focus: to remove the barriers adults may be facing to continue or complete their education.

Stop by a Literacy Zone Welcome Center, and a case manager will help address any issues you may be facing and work with you to come up with a plan for moving forward.

"Case managers work very closely with our Adult Education teachers and the students in our classes,"

Literacy Zones Program Facilitator Pat Deacon explained. "They perform intake processes and pretesting to help determine the best fit for people. They are also a referral source for about every agency in Onondaga County, in terms of health, housing, finance, job readiness, social services, childcare, immigration issues and more. They have become experts in knowing who can best help our students resolve barriers to education!"

Christine Leonard is a parent, whose seven children all attend or have attended SCSD schools. For about seven years, Ms. Leonard slowly worked her way through math, reading and writing courses in an effort to earn her High School Equivalency (HSE) Diploma by passing the TASC exam (formerly the GED).

"I was hoping to get my HSE because I have my heart set on being a Teaching Assistant," Ms. Leonard explained. "The classes helped me a lot. I had never written an essay before I got here... but I learned about them and am now able to write one. I learned algebra and geometry. I've had good teachers. Earning my HSE will mean a lot – it's a big step forward and will allow me to become a TA. Because of the classes, things are different for me. I can help my kids with their math now if they come home and they're confused."

>> To learn more about the Syracuse Literacy Zones and how they can assist you, visit [syracusecityschools.com/literacyzones](http://syracusecityschools.com/literacyzones).



“

Earning my HSE will mean a lot – it's a big step forward and will allow me to become a TA. Because of the classes, things are different for me. I can help my kids with their math now if they come home and they're confused." —Christine Leonard, Parent

**STAY CONNECTED  
STAY INVOLVED**



[syracusecityschools.com](http://syracusecityschools.com)

#### MAILING ADDRESS

1025 Erie Boulevard West  
Syracuse, NY 13204

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725 Harrison Street  
Syracuse, NY 13210



## A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Parents & Families,

I hope you had a wonderful holiday season and a Happy New Year! With the new year comes much to look forward to in the Syracuse City School District, and much to be proud of as we reflect back.

Our students are becoming college and career ready, and we look forward to sharing news of their plans for the future as Graduation 2020 approaches. In this newsletter, you will read about PSLA at Fowler CTE students engaging in a hands-on search and rescue simulation, a Corcoran student who has been named a National Merit Scholarship semifinalist, and a Nottingham student who led a community service project to benefit his high school.

You'll also read about how students are creating a culture of caring by utilizing Food Sharing Tables within their school cafeterias, which provide extra food to those who may need it. I hope you'll be inspired learning about the Roberts students who attended a Youth Government Conference in Albany, as well as how a Brilliant Young Minds book club is helping inspire Van Duyn students to succeed in school and beyond.

Of course, in the Syracuse City School District, our programs reach far beyond school-aged children. I hope you'll take a few minutes to read about the Literacy Zone and how it is helping Syracuse adults achieve success as well.

As we begin the new year, I look forward to continued partnership with you. Please don't hesitate to reach out if we can assist you or your child in achieving success!

Sincerely,

## IMPORTANT DATES

### January 2020

- 15 P-TECH Info Night, Henninger
- 16 P-TECH Info Night, PSLA
- 17 Elementary and Middle School Marking Period 2 Ends
- 20 **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Observance (H)— No School**
- 21-24 Regents Exams
- 21 Superintendent's Parent Council Meeting
- 22-23 CTE Expo, PSLA
- 24 High School Marking Period 2 Ends
- 27 BOE Work Session
- 31 High School Report Card Distribution

### February 2020

- 4 Elementary and Middle School Report Card Distribution
- 8 All City Instrumental Festival Concert — 2:00 PM, Henninger High School
- 8 ACT Test
- 12 BOE Meeting
- 17 **President's Day (H)**
- 17-21 **Winter Recess— No School**
- 24 BOE Work Session
- 25 Superintendent's Parent Council Meeting
- 26 BOE Work Session

Grant took home a variety of accolades - and one group took home the gold in the area of math and public speaking!

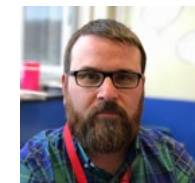
### Corcoran VEX Robotics Students Recognized

Two teams of VEX Robotics students from **Corcoran High School** recently competed at the Chittenango Robotics Competition. Both teams competed against 36 teams from across Upstate NY, and they both won an award! Team 5221C (**Thomas La, Aphone Paing, Connor Shanahan, Sam Livingston and Max Ginglod**) won the Judges Award, and Team 5221B (**Kayla Nguyen, Carlos Roque, Dakota Smith, Jesse Gallipeau and Joshua Williams, Jr.**) won first place, also winning the Robot skills event, which qualified them for the New York State Championship!



### Nottingham Teacher Recognized as National Exemplary Educator

**Nottingham** technology teacher **Bryan English** has received the highest honor given to Project Lead the Way (PLTW) teachers: he has been recognized as a PLTW Outstanding Teacher! Project Lead the Way empowers students to develop skills in computer science, engineering and biomedical science. Mr. English was selected as one of 60 out of hundreds of nominated educators nationwide for his focus on empowering students to thrive in this evolving world.



### Henninger Journalism Students Recognized with State Awards

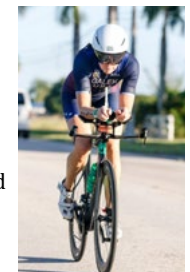
Congratulations to the **Henninger** journalism class and advisor **Jodi Rowe** - the group won four New York State Gold awards at the recent Empire State School Press Association (ESSPA) Conference at Syracuse University!

The Henninger newspaper won gold for best all-around printed publication award for the second year in a row, and several students were recognized individually for articles. Congratulations to the journalism team: **Rafael Abreu-Rentas, Amina Amin, Zafeer Azad, Eric Burns, Simone Campbell, Ahmed Ghanem, Amaya Mason, Jada Rivera, Eloge Sernode, Rocco Tedd and Michael Woolman-Web.**



### SCSD Leader Recognized at National Bike Championship

Congratulations to SCSD Personalized Learning Coach and SyraFuse leader **Kimberly Galek**, who recently placed third in her age group at the Long Course Aqua Bike National Championship!



# P-TECH

Pathways in Technology Early College High School

## Career Coaches Provide Real-World Advice for P-TECH Students

Through the P-TECH program, SCSD students can earn:

- High school diploma**
- Associate's degree at no cost in 5-6 years**
- Workplace learning experience**

Thanks to a growing Career Coaches model, students in the program are also able to take part in regularly planned project-based activities with local business professionals working in their areas of interest. Projects range from students conducting informational interviews of their Career Coaches, design challenges where they work alongside the business professionals to complete a challenge, and more.

Today, we have more than 250 business professionals that participate as Career Coaches with our 27 CTE programs in all SCSD high schools throughout the school year!

"It's really about a vision - helping students create a vision for themselves for their future in the business field

they have chosen," **Nick Lisi, SCSD Business and Higher Education Liaison for CTE**, said. "We want students to hear from people in the field and become comfortable working with them. We tell students in 9th grade that with the Career Coaches, they're ultimately starting a long job interview. These are the same people that they could be going back to in order to apply for a job!"



Beyond the classroom experience, Career Coach partnerships have also led to internship and job opportunities. One partner recently provided paid internships for students to apply for over the summer, and others have offered students job shadows and even full-time jobs!

## Student & Staff Recognitions

### Nottingham Students Named Winners of Photography Contest

Congratulations to **Nottingham** students **Sydney Jackson** and **Clara Neville**, whose photographs were chosen out of 146 entries as finalists in the Bousquet Holstein Law Firm's 11th Annual Photography Contest at the Everson Museum of Art! Sydney's piece, The Acid Queen, was a first place winner and her photograph will be featured on this year's Bousquet Holstein holiday card that is mailed to 6,500 homes across New York State. Clara's work, Even White People, received 5th place and her piece Strike for Life was selected as a finalist.



### SCSD Students Recognized at NSBE

Students and staff from the SCSD National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) recently enjoyed a weekend of competing and learning. NSBE is an academic STEM-based program that helps scholars turn classroom learning into practical, hands-on experience. Our middle and high school students work each Saturday morning at **Nottingham High School** preparing for the rigorous competitions that happen throughout the year. In late November, the students attended the regional competition in Niagara Falls, NY. Our scholars representing **ITC, PSLA at Fowler, Corcoran, Nottingham, Clary, Frazer, ELMS and**





## Roberts Students Attend NYS Youth and Government Conference

Two dozen middle school students from Roberts were recently invited to attend the YMCA New York State Youth and Government Conference in Albany. The three-day conference allowed students to participate directly in a simulation of the State's democratic process, along with about 300 students from across New York State!



Acting as Senators and Assembly Members, students were able to author their own bills and present them in front of committees before facing the student-comprised Assembly. The students' bill topics included a proposal to reduce SUNY tuition by 32% (which passed), a proposal to build greenhouses in urban schools with solar panels (which passed), a proposal to eliminate Regents exams as a graduation requirement and a proposal to build tiny houses for the homeless around Central New York.

"I've never been to Albany, and I love arguing for what I believe in," eighth grade student **Sophie Ranieri** explained of her decision to apply for the trip. Sophie's group wrote a bill to lower SUNY tuition. "We chose this topic because it seemed like it would be good for New York, and it passed... by a lot! It felt amazing that everyone agreed with our ideas. I didn't know much about politics before I went, but it opened my eyes to how the government works."

"This experience really showed me how to make a bill and how to sell it. In order for a bill to pass, you need to be able to explain it really well, which I didn't do originally. I learned so much about the State Capitol and the legislative process!"

Roberts Vice Principal **Kevin Murphy** attended the conference with the students and noted that students had to learn to work together to research and write the bills, and they also learned Robert's Rules of Order and how to improve their public speaking skills. But more than that, he said it was a great experience to help students gain civic readiness skills that they will carry with them in the years to come.

## Delaware Students Enjoy Bilingual Café

Students in the bilingual program at **Delaware** enjoyed a special treat to help them develop their dual language skills: they were invited to dine at a bilingual 'restaurant' in their classroom, Café de Jardin de Ninos!

"We were very excited to have a hands-on lesson with our little ones," **Natalia Lott**, a Spanish as a New Language teacher, explained. "This unit talked about family and food, and [fellow teacher] Kelly and I decided

to have a hands-on activity where the students can try foods, share as a family and learn words in English and Spanish. This is how the idea of having a little restaurant came to life!"

Students were able to order from a bilingual menu – ordering from a selection of pizza, fish, rice and salad. They were reminded to use proper manners as they ordered and thanked their servers.

"Overall, the children did well," English as a New Language teacher **Kelly**

**Durantini** added. "They ordered from the menus, using the sentence frames we had given them. We also heard the students having relevant conversations with classmates, working on their speaking and listening skills. Having these real-world



experiences helps students make connections to what they're learning."

## Van Duyn Boys Learn to Love Reading with Brilliant Young Minds

"What just happened here?" 100 Black Men Founder **Jerome Walker** asked a group of fourth grade boys reading around a table together in a **Van Duyn** classroom.

Hands shoot up around the table.

The boys are reading "Harbor Me" by Jacqueline



Woodson, with each boy taking turns reading sections and 'Brother Jerome,' as they call him, interjecting with questions.

For the second year, fourth and fifth grade boys at Van Duyn engage weekly in the group, coined Brilliant Young Minds Book Club. Books are provided through funding from 100 Black Men.

"It's different to read in a group instead of by ourselves," fourth grade student **Davier Singletary** said. "It helps us learn words we don't know, and it makes me excited to read!"

Once a month, the boys are treated to a pizza party; and at the end of the year, they enjoy a celebration for completing the program. Along the way, they read two books – "chapter books – with no pictures," one student explains – and discuss the themes as they go.

Mr. Walker said the ultimate goal of the book club is to help instill a love of reading, while also creating a community where the boys can discuss things that may be on their minds.

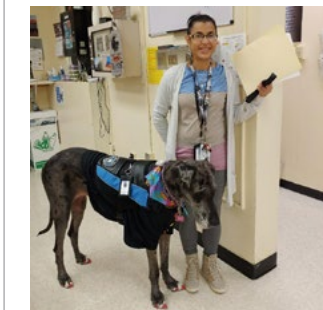
"Reading does have an effect on dropout rates, incarceration rates, and crime," Mr. Walker said. "In grades 3-5, reading on level is so important. I aim to give the students a sense of loving literature and also tying in cultural education. I want to make a difference."

## Lincoln Middle School is Home to SCSD's First Service Dog

Several SCSD schools have partnered with community organizations to bring therapy dogs in for occasional visits with students. But at **Lincoln Middle School**, students now benefit from an animal's presence every day.

Khaleese's first day of school was November 1st. She isn't a therapy dog, but a specially trained service dog. She works alongside sixth grade Special Education teacher **Rose Figueroa** to assist with a medical condition.

When Khaleese first came to school, staff hosted grade level assemblies to introduce students to her, as well as to the concept of a service dog – what a service dog does, what training is required for them, and guidelines for what to do and not do when they see the dog in school.



"The kids are getting used to having her here," Ms. Figueroa said. "Their behavior has changed, too. They don't slam doors anymore. They are quieter – especially when Khaleese is sleeping. They like to work near her."

"It's been calming for that class," **Principal White** noted. "Kids will ask if they

can read to Khaleese or sit near her. It's been a really good thing for our school."

To learn more about service dogs, how they are trained or how to engage with them, please visit [guidedog.org](http://guidedog.org).

## STEM at Blodgett Students Become Career Ready at SRC, Inc.

**Syracuse STEM at Blodgett** students are becoming #SCSDCareerReady, thanks to special field trips! One group of students recently visited SRC, Inc. where they received a tour, enjoyed a panel discussion with current employees and engaged with a robotics exhibit. Another group - of young ladies - was invited to interact with a panel of women from SRC, take a tour of one of their labs and take part in some hands-on science learning. Thank you to our friends at SRC for bringing learning to life for these scholars!



## Sharing Tables Help Create Culture of Giving Back

During their lunch periods, students across the SCSD now have the opportunity to leave unopened, uneaten food that they don't want – or to pick up a little extra food – as needed.

Thanks to Sharing Tables now available in most SCSD school cafeterias, the initiative is increasing food consumption, reducing food insecurity and decreasing food waste. But it's also creating a culture of caring, giving students the opportunity to anonymously give their surplus items to friends or classmates who may be in need.







# High School News

## PSLA Students Gain Real Experience During Search & Rescue Field Trip

Students in Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways at **PSLA at Fowler** had the opportunity to put their classroom learning to the test during a real life search and rescue scenario at Springside Farm in Fabius.

EMT, Fire Rescue, Forensic Science, Geospatial Technology and Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) students worked together to engage in a training exercise, each tasked with their own roles in finding and rescuing a ‘victim’ hurt somewhere on the farm property. Geospatial students geocached and helped provide directions to the drone operators, who guided the first responders through a corn maze to find the victim.

“It was cool, because it shows how all the CTE programs can work together and how important our individual roles are in real life,” Geospatial Technology senior **Shakira Santos** said.



## Corcoran Senior Named National Merit Scholarship Semifinalist

One of 16,000 nationwide; one of 971 in New York State; one of five in the Syracuse area; the only one in the Syracuse City School District.

As a semifinalist in the National Merit Scholarship Competition, **Corcoran** senior **Connor Shanahan** has earned quite the list of accolades.

When taking the PSAT his sophomore year, Connor discovered that had he been a junior, his score would

have qualified him in the National Merit Scholarship Program. He did some research and learned more about the program, a competition where about 7,600 national finalists receive more than \$31 million in college scholarships. Then, he studied.



Junior year, he took the PSAT again, and this September, he learned his efforts had paid off: he was named a semifinalist!

“I’m really pleased with myself,” Connor – now a senior – said. “It’s 12 years of hard work in school paying off! I think a lot of great things happen in the Syracuse City School District that aren’t reported on the news like they would be if they happened in other districts. I’m proud that I can be an example of something great happening in the City.”

Connor is looking at his options for college next year and said he is undecided on major and school but plans to pursue a career in the STEM field.

## High School Students Build Dialogue Facilitation Skills in Seeds of Peace Training

Syracuse Seeds of Peace are high school students who work to develop relationships between members of their school communities. Twenty-one Syracuse Seeds representing all five SCSD high schools spent a recent Saturday engaged in dialogue facilitator training with visiting Seeds of Peace U.S. Program Director Andrew Koskinen and U.S./U.K. Program Manager Eliza O’Neil. The visitors led enthusiastic students through activities, simulations, and dialogue to help them develop skills in facilitating discussions across lines of difference and on difficult topics.

“The Seeds of Peace facilitator training was an amazing experience,” **Nottingham** Seed **Anisa Salahou** said. “I was able to connect with other Syracuse Seeds who went to camp with me and as well as new members. It was very interesting to see the inside and outs of facilitating, especially being a two year camper and going through the dialogue intensive program. I hope to use what I learned to better my community and seeds program at my school!”

For more information about Seeds of Peace, students are encouraged to talk to their high school counselor or reach out to Syracuse Seeds of Peace Coordinator Kofi Addai at [kaddai@ifwcny.org](mailto:kaddai@ifwcny.org).



## Nottingham Student Makes School Improvement His Eagle Scout Project

**Nottingham** senior **Lucian de Nevers** was brainstorming what he could do for his Eagle Scout project. The project is an opportunity to display leadership and provide a service to the community.

Himself a soccer player, he reached out to his coach to see what the school’s needs might be. His coach suggested that the school’s lower field, the JV field, could use some more seating.

After negotiating with the SCSD Facilities Department, Lucian was able to arrange for new, ADA-compliant bleachers to be ordered for the field. He also took on an active physical role, weeding the area around the existing bleachers and then sanding and painting them. He partnered with a Nottingham art student to paint ‘Nottingham Bulldogs’ across the seats.

“It’s amazing,” Lucian said of seeing the project coming to completion. “There were lots of difficult times throughout this



## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

### Student Spotlight

Jayia Holbdy

### Grade & School

3<sup>rd</sup> at LeMoyne

### Favorite class

Math – it’s fun and I like doing a lot of work because I like numbers!

### Favorite thing about your school

Art – we get to paint and draw a lot. I enjoy it because I want to be an artist when I grow up.

### Hobbies outside of school

I like to play outside on the swings in my backyard, and I like to color.

### Coollest thing learned in school

That reading is fun and you get smarter when you do it. I like Dr. Seuss books because they rhyme.

### Advice for other students

Listen to your teachers. Be responsible and take care of your stuff. Treat other people with kindness and respect.



*Jayia was nominated by Teaching Assistant Ms. Hobbs, who said “Jayia is an outstanding student, a hard worker, helpful and a great friend. I had Jayia in after school for two years and I’ve watched her growth. Jayia has been through a lot to only be in 3rd grade, but if you didn’t take the time to speak to her you’d never know because she carries herself with such strength. I am honored to nominate such a fantastic young lady!”*

process, but knowing that this worked out for the betterment of Nottingham is just awesome... especially since other students were able to help.”

## Henninger CTE Students Become Career Ready

11th and 12th grade Health Professions and Clinical Laboratory Technician students from **Henninger** are currently taking an Anatomy and Physiology course at Onondaga Community College. They recently enjoyed a special visit from representatives with Apple Education, who gave them the chance to try out some cool new medical related software and augmented reality apps on iPads!



## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

### Alumni Spotlight

Gary Williams

### SCSD Schools Attended

Dr. Weeks, Lincoln, Henninger (’02)

### College and Major(s)

Anne Arundel CC (Liberal Arts); Le Moyne College (Political Science); Long Island University (MPA - Master of Public Administration); Cornell University (Executive Master of Healthcare Administration)

### Career Path

I am currently the Director of Healthcare Quality at Molina Healthcare. My career pathway: I took a Healthcare Administration internship with the Greater New York Hospital Association and then served as the Senior Clinical Transformation Consultant for United Healthcare.

### The coolest thing about my job is...

the ability to impact the lives of members via healthcare interventions including breast cancer screenings, pop-up events and more.

### The most valuable thing I learned in school is...

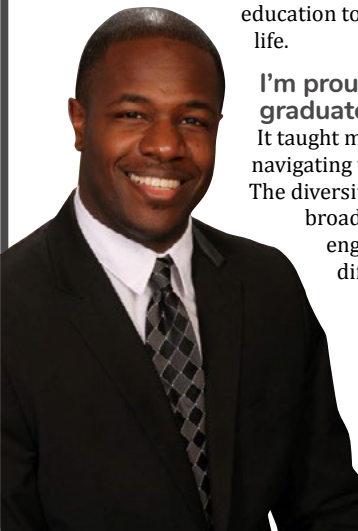
Perseverance: the ability to work through tough periods, with the end in mind. The power of education to determine where you go in life.

### I’m proud to be a SCSD graduate because...

It taught me a great deal about navigating within different environments. The diversity of the student body broadened my competency to engage with individuals from different backgrounds.

### One piece of advice I’d give to SCSD students is...

See beyond your current environment. There is a big world out there to explore; don’t be afraid to go out and try new things.





## MISSION

To build, support and sustain school communities that provide all students with a high-quality education that prepares them to graduate as responsible, active citizens ready for success in college and careers and prepared to compete in a global economy.

## VISION

To prepare and inspire all of our students to innovate locally and contribute globally.

## BOARD OF EDUCATION

Katie Sojewicz, *President*

Mark D. Muhammad, Ed.D., *Vice President*

Tamica Barnett

Pat Body

David Cecile

Derrick Dorsey

Dan Romeo

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Monique Wright-Williams, *Chief of Staff*

## NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Syracuse City School District hereby advises students, parents, employees and the general public that it is committed to providing equal access to all categories of employment, programs and educational opportunities, including career and technical education opportunities, regardless of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, Native American ancestry/ethnicity, creed or religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, age, gender identity or expression, disability or any other legally protected category under federal, state or local law.

Inquiries regarding the District's non-discrimination policies should be directed to:

Civil Rights Compliance Officer  
Syracuse City School District  
725 Harrison Street • Syracuse, NY 13210  
(315) 435-4131  
Email: [CivilRightsCompliance@scsd.us](mailto:CivilRightsCompliance@scsd.us)



>> Share your questions, comments or concerns 24/7 using the Let's Talk tool at [www.syracusecityschools.com](http://www.syracusecityschools.com)

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## Nominate an Outstanding SCSD Educator

Do you know a teacher, administrator, or support staff who demonstrates a willingness to go "above and beyond" and who provides support to students in an exceptional manner? We encourage you to nominate that individual! The SCSD Educational Foundation presents Educator of the Year Awards annually to staff who have been nominated by their peers, parents, and even students for consideration. To be eligible, candidates must be a full-time District employee.



**SUBMIT A NOMINATION!**

**Deadline: February 7**  
[scsdfoundation.com/events/  
recognition-breakfast/  
educator-of-the-year](http://scsdfoundation.com/events/recognition-breakfast/educator-of-the-year)