

JUNE & JULY 2021

# GOOD NEWS



SYRACUSE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Congratulations, Class of 2021!



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## A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Families,

I am so proud of our students, families and staff for your perseverance through this challenging school year. The COVID-19 pandemic forced all of us to adjust all aspects of our lives, including what education looked like. I appreciate your patience and support as we navigated the challenges of remote and hybrid learning together, and I look forward to welcoming students back for what we hope will be more of a traditional school year next year!

In this newsletter, you will read about so many of our Class of 2021 #SCSDSeniors. This group of hardworking students was celebrated at awards ceremonies and of course at their graduation ceremonies. We look forward to seeing what great things this group of students will achieve as they continue on to their next steps, whether that be college, career or the military.

You will also read about the many ways our students are becoming civic ready – from Frazer students recognized for their volunteerism to ITC and Nottingham students recognized for their MBK Fellows projects and more. Several of our staff members were recognized for their educational leadership, and of course, our students of all ages were recognized for their leadership as well! An Ed Smith student created mental health care packages for her classmates throughout the district; Roberts students showcased their STEM skills in a statewide presentation; and Corcoran, Henninger and Nottingham students participated in the Syracuse Youth Advisory Council where they have contributed to a positive change in the City of Syracuse.

We have so much to be proud of – first and foremost, our wonderful students and how hard they have worked this year! Enjoy a safe and healthy summer.

Sincerely,

## IMPORTANT DATES

### August 2021

- 12 Last Day of Summer School
- 20 Summer Graduation
- 23 Board of Education Work Session
- 25 Board of Education Work Session

### September 2021

- 6 Labor Day- No School
- 8 First Day of School
- 8 Board of Education Meeting
- 10 Board of Education Audit Session
- 22 Board of Education Work Session
- 27 Board of Education Work Session

## New Transportation Tool For Parents: Stopfinder

With Stopfinder, know in real-time where your child's bus is and have the most accurate information about your child's bus schedule in the palm of your hand. For details on how to download the app and get started, please visit [scsd.us/transportation](https://scsd.us/transportation).



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# Student & Staff Spotlights

## SCSD Seniors Receive Section 3 Scholar Athlete Scholarships

Several SCSD athletes were recognized with NYSPHSAA Section 3 Scholar Athlete Awards to recognize their outstanding academic achievement and athletic performance. In addition, Henninger Valedictorian and scholar athlete Toryana Jackson was also selected as a 2021 Coca Cola Scholarship valued at \$150. We are proud of all of our hardworking student athletes! (Not pictured: [Mario Jadel Melendez](#) Henninger – Cross Country, Indoor Track, Wrestling, Outdoor Track)



**Maggie Boyle**  
Corcoran – Lacrosse,  
Soccer



**Jaylen Brantley**  
PSLA – Football,  
Basketball, Track



**Madeline Braun**  
PSLA – Swimming



**Toryana Jackson**  
Henninger – Cross Country,  
Indoor Track, Outdoor Track



**Devin Murphy-Stanley**  
Nottingham – Volleyball  
and Tennis



**Raquan Pride**  
ITC – Football, Indoor  
Track, Outdoor Track



**Molly Scott**  
Nottingham – Cross  
Country and Track



**Tiana Vo**  
ITC – Volleyball

## Frazer Students Recognized for Volunteerism

Frazer eighth graders **Onjoli Montreal** and **Jesse Smith** were recently recognized for their academic achievements and volunteerism in a Lambda Kappa Mu award ceremony.

## ITC Students, Staff Recognized at CNY High School Film Festival

Several ITC students were recognized at the annual CNY High School Film Festival this year. Media seniors **Aniya Gamble**



and **Destiny Salas** won the "Heidelberger Award" for most outstanding filmmakers in CNY high schools for 2021, making it the third year in a row that ITC students received the award!

Other award winners included **Ari Acevedo** (2nd Place - Animation), **Aniya Gamble** (2nd Place - COVID Category), **Destiny Salas** (2nd Place Short Documentary), **Annabel Hughes** (3rd Place - Animation), **Anthony Ponto** (3rd Place - Sports Edit) and **Aniya Gamble** and **Destiny Salas** (3rd Place - Original Film Sci-Fi/Fantasy). In addition, ITC Media teacher **Jeff Newell** won the "Ban-Gana" award for most outstanding contribution to the festival, having inspired a diverse group of students to get involved.

## PSLA American Sign Language Teacher Receives National Recognition

PSLA at Fowler American Sign Language (ASL) teacher **Brenda Buckley** has recently been awarded a Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL) Mead Leadership Fellowship. As a Mead Fellow, she will develop her project proposal, centered around teaching students world language in a high poverty setting and focusing on how poverty can



affect the brain and language learning. She hopes to create mini podcasts to provide to other educators, helping students engage with lessons and develop a growth mindset.

## Four Students Named MBK Fellows

Four SCSD students were inducted as MBK Fellows at this year's virtual My Brother's Keeper symposium. As Fellows, the students are invited to participate in program activities including mentoring, book studies, college visits, college essay writing, leadership training, service projects and more. Congratulations to **Malcolm Starling** and **Anthony Southammavong** (PSLA at Fowler), **Stephon Adams Jr.** (ITC) and **Syinih Clark** (Nottingham).

## Staff Named 'Exceptional Women of CNY'

Congratulations to **Joyce Suslovic** and **Octavia Pierce Wilcox**, who were both recognized by Assemblywoman Pamela Hunter as Exceptional Women of Central New York! Both were recognized for their commitment in the field of education and their decades of service to the students of the SCSD.



## Staff Article on Culturally Responsive Education Published

Congratulations to **Syracuse STEM at Blodgett** Spanish teacher **Ingrid Parades** and ITC Spanish teacher **Diana Clark Perez** – their article 'Culturally Responsive Sustaining Education in the World Language Classroom' was published in the Spring 2021 issue of Language Association Journal, a peer reviewed academic journal.

## P-TECH Alumni Graduate from OCC

Congratulations to this group of former ITC P-TECH students who, on May 15th, took part in the OCC graduation ceremony, having earned their AAS degrees! Pictured from left to right: **Travius Berkley** (Mechanical Technology), **Miguel Perez** (Mechanical Technology), **Christopher**



**Sheridan** (Electrical Technology), **Kamal Tayeh** (Mechanical Technology), **Antonio Sustache** (Electrical Technology), **Anita Khamtan** (Mechanical Technology), **Victoria Kingsley** (Electrical Technology), **Eliza Velazquez** (Electrical Technology); and not pictured, **Abdulrahman Hasan** (Mechanical Technology).

## Alumnus Receives Army Medal

Nottingham graduate and West Point Cadet **Has'Zahn Grimes** ('19) has been awarded an Army Commendation Medal for receiving the Brigade Soldier of the Quarter award. Has'Zahn is currently a "Yuk" (sophomore) at West Point. This award is the highest honor for professionalism, technical, and tactical knowledge.

## Nottingham Students Receive Outstanding Feedback at NYSSMA

Three Nottingham students received outstanding feedback at the New York State School Music Association's solo festival this spring. Senior **James Arnold** scored a 100 on his performance of "Santa Fe" from Newsies; sophomore **Nadine Arnold** scored a 99 on "Les Berceaux" by Gabriel Faure and sophomore **Christine Mazuryk** scored a 99 on "Se Tu M'ami" by Alessandro Parisotti. Nadine and Christine are both eligible to participate in New York's State-wide music ensembles for next school year: a huge honor!



## Van Duyn Principal Named 'NYS Elementary Principal of the Year'

Congratulations to **Van Duyn Principal Eva Williams**, who has been selected as the 2021 New York State Elementary Principal of the Year by the School Administrators Association of New York State (SAANYS). This award is given annually to a member of SAANYS who is clearly committed to excellence, has programs designed to meet the academic and social needs of all students, and has firm ties to parents and the community.



# 2021

## Valedictorians & Salutatorians

"SCSD offers so many opportunities, but it's up to you to look for them. Push yourself and stay curious."

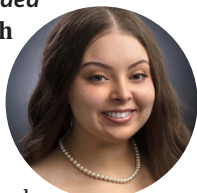
— Ngoc-Lynn Huynh, Henninger Salutatorian

### Corcoran High School

#### **VALEDICTORIAN** Madison Reynolds

*Yale University, Undecided*

**Best part of your high school career:** My teachers. All of my teachers in one way or another helped me reach this point. They created a supportive and comfortable environment where I was able to learn and use my voice.



#### **SALUTATORIAN** Andrew Serrao

*Syracuse University, Undecided*

**Advice for current SCSD students:** Enjoy your time and make yourself uncomfortable. Some of the best experiences I have had in high school are because I pushed myself out of my comfort zone.



### Henninger High School

#### **VALEDICTORIAN** Toryana Jackson

*Wellesley College, English*

**What is something major you hope to achieve in life?** I hope to make a positive influence on the world by becoming a Journalist and advocating for issues related to justice and equity.



#### **SALUTATORIAN** Ngoc-Lynn Huynh

*Yale University, Chemical Engineering*

**Best thing you've learned over the course of your time in the SCSD:** The beauty of diversity. I've attended SCSD schools all my life and didn't realize the privilege I had of being surrounded by all different cultures until I was older. There's always something new to learn, both in and out of school.



### Nottingham High School

#### **VALEDICTORIAN** Aidan McManus

*Oberlin College, Undecided*

**Best thing you've learned over the course of your time in the SCSD:** The best thing I've learned over the course of my time in the SCSD is the value of understanding things from different perspectives.



#### **SALUTATORIAN** Hao Nguyen

*Columbia University, Architecture and Sustainable Development*

**Proudest moment in high school:** Seeing my parents' faces after being accepted to 22 colleges. Being an immigrant themselves and seeing their hopes and dreams for their child come to life brought extreme happiness to me.



### Institute of Technology at Syracuse Central

#### **VALEDICTORIAN** Michael Vu

*Cornell University, Biochemistry (Pre-Med)*

**Proudest moment in high school:** Getting accepted by Cornell University. Cornell has always been my dream

school and to see that my hard work paying off made me feel nothing but excitement and relief.



#### **SALUTATORIAN** Quyen Pham

*Syracuse University, Biochemistry (Pre-Med)*

**Best part of your high school career:** Being able to meet new friends and people that helped me continue to grow and mature. I believe the people I surrounded myself with allowed me to make the best choices and support me through high school.



### PSLA at Fowler

#### **VALEDICTORIAN** Kyla Mayberry

*College of Saint Rose, Communications*

**Best thing you've learned over the course of your time in the SCSD:** I have learned so much through my time in the district, but the most important lesson I learned is that if you need help, all you have to do is ask.



#### **SALUTATORIAN** Rhianna O'Neal

*American Medical Response, EMT*

**What is something major you hope to achieve in life?** I hope to add diversity to the groups of first responders with whom I work in the future. I also hope to speak out against injustices in that realm as well, such as police brutality. I want to change how people see the world.





# High School News

## PSLA Student Selected to Play for US National Amputee Soccer Team

Musabwa Nzirimwo started playing soccer in Africa in 2014. In 2015, he came to America, where he joined the Tillie's Touch recreational league as well as the JV team at PSLA at Fowler.

"I like that it requires teamwork, and it keeps me motivated," Musa explained. "Soccer has taught me how to work as part of a team and how to deal with the ups and downs of life."

Musa knows a thing or two about life's challenges: he is an amputee, having lost a leg at seven years old when a bomb blew up in front of him in Congo, where he is from. Wearing a prosthetic, he has continued his passion for soccer. It hasn't been easy, he noted, explaining that he had to learn to walk and run all over again.

But his efforts have paid off: he was recently selected to play for the US National Amputee Soccer Team!

"Musa truly has a gift as a soccer player," Tillie's Touch Coach Dale Johnson said. "His determination is just incredible. I really believe this is just a sneak peek... Musa is going to be successful in whatever he decides to do in life because of his grit, determination and hard work."



Photo Credit: Rhonda Hawes at Shutter Up

## Students Participate on Syracuse Youth Advisory Council

Several SCSD students had the opportunity to participate in the 2021 Syracuse Youth Advisory Council, an advisory group established by the Syracuse Common Council and facilitated by the SCSD Social Studies Department. Through their virtual meetings, the students identified community issues, learned about public policy and created projects focusing on community improvement, development and support.

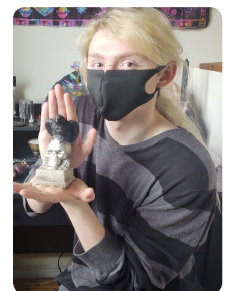
**Helena Giner (Nottingham)** and **Brian Huyn (Henninger)** created an accessible comprehensive directory for families and people with disabilities, providing essential contact information for regional services. **Chadani Timisina (Corcoran)**, **Yasmine Kanaan (Nottingham)** and **Martine Dosa (Nottingham)** focused on supporting the efforts of local organization RISE (Refugee and Immigrants Self Empowerment center), and their services to refugee students in the Syracuse City School District.

The students presented their final projects to the Syracuse Common Council in May, receiving generous support for their projects, which will both receive funding.

## Nottingham Student Work Shown at Playwright Festival

For **Nottingham** senior **Tyler Dale**, the third time really is a charm: the third year he entered a script into the Syracuse Stage Young Playwright Contest, his work was selected and he was named a finalist!

His work, called "Concerning the Rabbits," was shown during the first night of the virtual Young Playwrights Festival in late May – one of eight 10-minute plays that were performed virtually for digital audiences, highlighting the work of Tyler and other high school playwrights across Central New York.



Pictured (left to right) are the SYAC 2021 members Helena Giner, Yasmine Kanaan, Sergianni Jennings, Chadani Timisina, and Martine Dosa with Syracuse Common Council president Helen Hudson, Councilor-at-Large Ronnie White, Jr., Councilor Chol Majok, Councilor Joseph Carni, Councilor-at-Large Rita Paniagua, and Mayor Benjamin Walsh

## Corcoran Students Learn Business Firsthand from Cougars Alumni

Corcoran students in Mr. Schroth's Business Math class had an opportunity to learn about their curriculum firsthand, thanks to a virtual visit from Corcoran alumni – and now successful business owners – Bianca Jones and Cordell Grant.

Bianca, a 2008 Corcoran graduate and Cordell, a 2009 Corcoran graduate, are co-owners of BOSSMADE, an apparel company that they started in 2015. They took the time to join the Business Math class for their final unit, entrepreneurship, to talk about their journeys from the Home of the Cougars to business owners.

During the discussion, students asked their predecessors about the challenges



of starting their own business, how they got the business up and running financially, how they came up with their business plan and logo, how they built the business to success, the company's future, how they stay motivated and more.

Mr. Schroth said the experience was invaluable for his students, as it helped bring what they have been learning to life.

"Hearing about these concepts from a former Corcoran Cougar and someone that has followed a path to graduation like all this year's soon-to-be alumni not only makes the idea of becoming a business owner more appealing, but it also makes it a true reality for them," Mr. Schroth explained.

Junior Emani Smith, who hopes to start her own business one day, said she was inspired to continue pursuing her dreams – but she also learned about the importance of perseverance.

"I learned that business is not a piece of cake," she explained. "It takes time, dedication, and hard work. There are pros and cons to starting your own business. I feel like the information and advice I was given will really assist me in the future."

## PK-8<sup>th</sup> Grade News

### LeMoyne/ Montessori Students to Welcome School's First Therapy Dog

Thanks to a grant from the SCSD Educational Foundation, the 2021-22 school year will bring at least one new member to the LeMoyne Elementary community: a therapy dog!

ENL teacher Michaela Clark came up with the idea several years ago and has been working to help the pieces come together.



"The idea driving this project is that students must have their social and emotional needs met before we can expect them to not just succeed but to excel," Ms. Clark explained. "Our team will utilize this program to assist students who have social, emotional, or communication goals that are impeding their success."

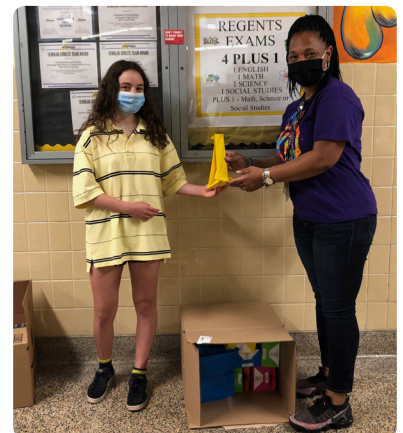
To prepare for the full-time therapy dog's arrival next school year, students have been researching the different types of working dogs and creating presentations to share with the school community about the project.

"We learned that therapy dogs can help people believe in themselves," first grade student Sheysa Valdivia said. "They can make us feel safe and warm at school."

### Ed Smith Student Donates Mental Health Care Packages

Thanks to the kindness of Ed Smith 7th grader Ruby Gozan-Keck, 200 students at Ed Smith, Lincoln and Henninger received mental health care packages.

As part of her Tikkun Olam (healing or repairing the world) project before her bat mitzvah, she chose to lead a project focusing on mental health in kids and teens. She interviewed Dr. Althea Henry, the psychologist at Lincoln Middle School, seeking advice for youngsters who are struggling or feeling alone, especially during COVID-19. Based on what she learned, she created a website to raise awareness and share resources where youngsters can seek help. Then, she created 200 'fidget bags,' a small gift for students who may be struggling. The bags each included stress balls and other small tokens, as well as an individualized note of encouragement. She delivered them to Ed Smith, Lincoln and Henninger to be distributed as needed.





## Delaware Students Represent SCSD at PALS Announcement

Five **Delaware Primary** students were invited to City Hall to join Mayor Walsh and Jimmy Oliver, Director of Community Engagement, for an announcement about the creation of the Police Athletic League (PALS). The students were recognized during the ceremony and were then invited into City Hall to visit Mayor Walsh's office, ask him questions and learn what it is like to be Mayor of Syracuse.



## STEAM at Dr. King Students Inspired by Child Activists

Third grade students at **STEAM at Dr. King** recently learned about child activists, as part of an ELA lesson.

Students researched the child activist that made the biggest impact on them and then made posters highlighting the activist's impact.



"This was a phenomenal experience for the students," teacher **Cynthia Pace** explained. "A lot of the child activists we learned about were discovering their interests and that civic ability when they were 9 and 10 years old. Our kids are in third grade – they are that age and they have learned that they can make a difference. They learned that doing something large is possible when you are working for a cause."

## Frazer Students Receive Donation of New Beds

Thanks to a donation from Ashley Home Store and in collaboration with PEACE Inc. Big Brothers Big Sisters, five **Frazer** students received new beds to help them get the rest they need to focus in school! The Ashley Furniture "Hope to Dream Project" provides twin mattresses, steel risers,

comforters, pillows, sheets and more to children in need. Thanks to PEACE Inc. Big Brothers Big Sisters making the connection with Frazer, five students received brand new beds and bedding.

## Seymour Students Experience College Life at Annual SU 'Shadow Day'

Fifth grade students from **Seymour** became #SCSDCollegeReady during the school's annual 'Shadow Day' at Syracuse University – held virtually this year. Students enjoyed a virtual tour of the SU campus, receiving a welcome message from Vice Chancellor Haynie, a presentation from an admissions counselor and discussion with current college students.



## Students Showcase Their NASA STEM Products and STEM Challenges

### What's the best design for a parachute to land a spacecraft on Mars?

Three fifth graders from **Roberts – Aubrey Haggerty, Essence Fry and Avery Sauer** – have some ideas. Through the U.S. Department of Education's Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) Grant Program, and in collaboration with NASA scientists and engineers, the students chose to answer this question by using the engineering design process.

As part of their 'Mission to Mars' challenge, their objective was to create a drag device. Because spacecrafts travel at extremely high speeds, they need some sort of drag device to slow them down to prevent them from crashing into the planet and becoming damaged. The students were tasked with working within the limits



because I don't have a lot of patience, but this really helped me get better at being patient. I also learned to speak up instead of just using my voice quietly!"

(or constraints) of mass and weight to successfully accomplish their mission. At the end of their research, they were selected as one of just two groups in the state to present their findings virtually!

"I like space and robots and building stuff, so I wanted to do something like this," Avery said. "It took us a while – we had to research and experiment and figure out what materials would be best for us to use. We had to get the perfect sizing for both the parachute and the strings. I got annoyed a lot



## 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.

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Tamica Barnett, *Vice President*

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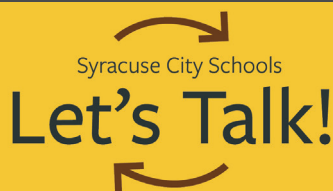
Monique Wright-Williams, *Chief of Staff*

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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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**Never miss an important update from the District or your child's school.**

### Calls & Texts

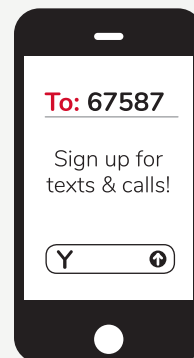
Text **Y** to **67587** in order to receive important voice messages and texts.

### Emails

Sign up to receive regular emails with announcements, good news and more from the District. Visit [syracusecityschools.com/signup](http://syracusecityschools.com/signup) and submit your email address to get started.

### SchoolTool

Update your child's phone number, address and emergency contact information annually and as needed. Visit [syracusecityschools.com](http://syracusecityschools.com) and click on **SchoolTool Parent Portal** to access.



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