

GOOD NEWS



SYRACUSE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Henninger Students Teach Health Awareness through New After School Club



“Sickle cell disease affects millions of people in the world.”

Henninger senior **Daylisia Castro-Felder** stood at the front of a classroom, walking through a slideshow of truths and myths of the disease.

About two dozen fellow students sat at desks, listening intently and asking questions.

“What is sickle cell disease?” one of them asks.

Veronica Polhamous stepped in, taking a dry erase marker and approaching the whiteboard.

“This is what a normal cell looks like,” she explained, drawing an oval. “This is what sickle cell looks like – more of a crescent shape. Because of its shape, it’s more difficult for it to

move through the bloodstream, which is what can cause people pain.”

This isn’t a health or science class – it’s an optional after school meeting of the Henninger HOSA (Health Occupations Students of

America) Club. Some of the students packing the classroom are participants in the school’s healthcare CTE pathways; others are simply interested in learning about the health topics that will be discussed.

New this year, Henninger’s HOSA was founded by a group of students studying in their school’s Health Professions CTE programs. HOSA is a nationally recognized group that

aims to help empower future health professionals to become leaders in the health community. Through monthly topic prompts, student members are encouraged to research different health issues and educate their community about them. They’re also encouraged to lead community service projects to help raise awareness.

“We started HOSA to help our community and to bring healthcare awareness to our school and our community,” Veronica, who serves as HOSA Treasurer, explained. “For example, we had a guest speaker who talked about diabetes and what he goes through daily to manage that. It helps us as a school community learn to have more empathy for others. We’ve learned so much through our CTE program and we want to spread that knowledge among the whole school!”

“HOSA is a great way to make healthcare education accessible to our whole school,” group President, senior **David Nguyen**, shared. “I’m hoping to help nurture peoples’ passions and encourage those who may be on the fence about entering the healthcare field.”



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A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Families,

This is always a fun time of year... our students are celebrating the midway point in the school year, along with Black History Month and Women's History Month. Our Class of 2024 is also beginning to prepare for graduation season! In this newsletter, you'll see our first spotlight celebrating this year's soon-to-be #SCSDGraduates. If you know of a graduating senior who should be spotlighted, be sure to let us know (email goodnews@scsd.us)!

Of course, we're also happy to celebrate the everyday successes happening throughout our district. Ed Smith students advanced in a regional spelling bee, a PSLA at Fowler student was recognized at a statewide military competition, ITC students participated in a national Shakespeare competition, and more. Delaware students have been improving their literacy through an after school book club, HW Smith students have been developing their STEM skills through a STEM Explorers partnership, and Henninger students have been leading community health awareness through their new HOSA Club.

Our students and staff are doing great things, and we are so proud. We have begun spotlighting the everyday learning in our classrooms – from math to ELA to special course offerings, our staff are working hard to engage our students, and it shows in our students' daily progress. We look forward to seeing the success our community continues to achieve as we move through the school year!

Sincerely,



IMPORTANT DATES

March 2024

- 19 First Day of Spring
- 19 Superintendent's Parent Council Meeting
- 25 BOE Work Session
- 27 BOE Work Session
- 27 Elementary and Middle School Marking Period 3 Ends
- 28 High School Marking Period 3 Ends
- 29 Staff Holiday/No School for Students**

April 2024

- 8 Spring Modified Athletics Begin
- 9 High School Report Card Distribution
- 10 BOE Meeting
- 10 No School for Students**
- 11-17 NYS ELA Assessment Grades 3 - 8
- 12 BOE Audit Committee
- 15 Elementary & Middle School Report Card Distribution
- 17 BOE Work Session
- 22-26 Spring Break**
- 29 BOE Meeting
- 29 Contingency Weather Day
- 30 Superintendent's Parent Council Meeting

Student & Staff Spotlights

Ed Smith Students Qualify for Regional Spelling Bee

Nearly thirty Ed Smith students in grades four through eight recently participated in the building qualifier of the Scripps National Spelling Bee. After a fierce competition, the top four spellers moving onto the Regional Bee are Sixth Grader **Everett Fonger**; Fifth Graders **Rowan Burt** and **Saruar Aitbayeva**; and fourth grader **Samiha Shifa**. The spell off between the top two spellers, Saruar and Samiha, lasted nearly ten rounds

with both spellers correctly spelling words that would have even tripped the adults in the audience! We are so proud of all the spellers who participated in the competition and we wish the champions best of luck as they compete at Regionals!



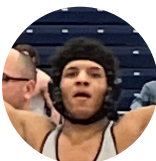
High School Students Selected for All-State Choral Festival



We love to celebrate our talented **#SCSDArts** students!

Congratulations to Henninger High School students **Ebuela Esube** and **Jason McAuley**, and Corcoran High School student **Jacelyn Pena** - they were selected for the Zone 4 Junior High Area All-State Choral Festival this winter in Mexico, NY!

ITC Student Heads to State Wrestling Championships



This February, ITC sophomore **Ryan Brown** won a Section 3 Wrestling Championship

in the 170 pound weight class, qualifying for the State Championship in Albany in late February!

Celebrating Our Seniors: Congratulations, Class of 2024!

It's that time of year again: time to start celebrating our soon-to-be **#SCSDGraduates!**



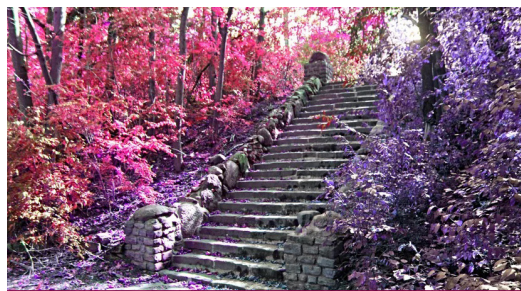
Henninger High School senior **Anish Waglay** – who is also a participant in

the Le Moyne College Upward Bound program – has matched with Denison University through the QuestBridge National College Match Program and has received a full four-year scholarship! Anish is hoping to major in finance and pursue a pre-med track. He ultimately wants to work in healthcare to positively impact the wellbeing of individuals and communities.



Shout Out A Student!

If you know a SCSD Class of 2024 senior that would like to be featured, please email us: goodnews@scsd.us with their name, high school, and plans after graduation!



*** Pictured is winning artwork submitted by Alayna Wood.*

SCSD Students Recognized in Scholastic Art Competition

We're proud of our talented **#SCSDArts** students – including those from Corcoran, Henninger, and Nottingham who were recognized in this year's CNY Scholastic Art Awards! Congratulations to **Corcoran** scholars **Aislin Nowak** and **Aria Shortell**; **Henninger** scholars **Amy Pham**, **Hager Alamarie**, **Sa He Da Bee**, **Joselynn Van Hoose**, **Isabella Stewart**, **Emmanuel Atari**, and **Alayna Wood**; and **Nottingham** scholars **Mia Romano**, **Md Islam**, **Savanna Sanchez**, **Selaci Butoto** (aka Selaci The Artist), **Summer Slater**, **Silvia Cosgrove**, and **Kathlyn Schofield-Broadbent**.

Corcoran Athlete Earns National Track & Field Record

Corcoran senior **Tawakal Omar** ran a sectional record-breaking time in the 55-meter hurdles and at the same time turned in a U.S. top 10 performance in hurdles at a recent competition!



SCSD Student & Alumnus Recognized at National Level for Boxing Talents

One SCSD student athlete – and one SCSD alumnus – are representing at a national level! **Frazer** 7th grader **Da'vonne Beckwith** recently won his first national boxing championship, making him the reigning National Silver Gloves Champion at the 154lb junior middleweight weight class. Ten time National Champion (and 2022 **PSLA** graduate) **Amir "Cashman" Anderson** also became the first boxer in Syracuse's prestigious boxing history to win the Olympic trials, doing so at the 176lb weight contest!



Ed Smith Students Support United Way of CNY through Annual Fundraisers

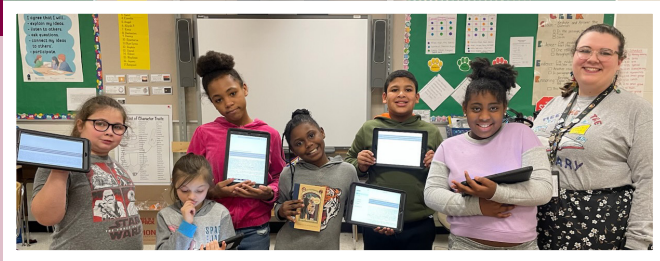
We're so proud of the ways that **#SCSDGivesBack!** Each year, **Ed Smith Pre-K-8 School** students host fundraisers to benefit the United Way of Central New York. This year, through the school's Penny Wars competition, **Ms. Moon** and **Mr. Stewart's 4th grade class** raised the most of any class in the building - collecting \$205 out of a total of \$1,080 raised! The class was celebrated with an ice cream sundae party to recognize their efforts.



PK - 8th Grade News

Delaware After School Book Club Promotes New Literacy Options

A group of about a dozen third, fourth and fifth graders is huddled on a carpet, watching a movie trailer for *Charlotte's Web*.



Thanks to their school's new After School Book Club, the **Delaware** students now enjoy the chance to discuss books, watch videos based on books, and even listen to audiobooks!

"I am excited to get more students into reading!" Delaware Library Media Specialist **Cait Shanley** shared. "It's been nice to work with the older students who aren't able to fit library classes in their schedules. Our book club focuses on

encouraging the usage of nontraditional reading formats, such as audiobooks, eBooks, graphic novels, and manga! I think that every form of reading is incredible, and it is so important that we expose students at a young age to every possible form of reading so that they are able to discover which is most comfortable for them."

The club began the year voting for which book they'd like to read as a group – first selecting a graphic novel called *Nimona* by ND Stevenson. While they listened to the audiobook play, they followed along with the novel in print as well, enlarged on the classroom's screen.

Students have since read *The Bag Beginning*, the first book of the Series of Unfortunate Events; as well as *Dairy of a Wimpy Kid*. When they choose to listen to audiobooks, students are invited to use assigned iPads and headphones to listen while they do puzzles, color, paint ceramic figures, or even crochet!

"Reading makes me happy," fifth grader **Ahmya Dawson** shared. "It helps me understand what life might be like for other people. I like reading because I like to try to figure out what's going to happen. I usually read *Junie B. Jones*, *Grumpy Cat*, or *Captain Underpants*. I hadn't listened to audiobooks before, but it's been wonderful to get to hear someone reading to me! It feels like I'm actually inside the book, instead of outside it."

HW Smith Students Become 'STEM Explorers' at SRC

Every Friday, 7th grade **HW Smith** students have special visitors in their science class: Syracuse University students who help lead them in hands-on STEM activities.

Through the STEM Explorers program – formerly Engineering Ambassadors – through the Mary Ann Shaw Center and in partnership with SRC and the SU College of Engineering and Computer Science, college students build relationships with the middle school students and serve as co-teachers while facilitating science learning.

And this year, for the first time, the middle school students were invited to take a field trip to visit SRC. There, they met their STEM Explorers mentors

and engaged in activities like a STEM escape room, STEM Family Feud, tower building challenges, and more. They also had the opportunity to take part in a panel discussion with SRC staff.

"We got to have a fun experience trying new things," HW Smith 7th grader **Ma'Kayla Daniels** said. "It was interesting to me to meet someone who didn't have a dream of becoming an architect but who is now successfully doing it. It made me feel motivated about my future and where I might end up!"

Science teacher **Tiffany Kwiek** said her students were privileged to be the first group of SCSD students to visit SRC with the STEM Explorers group – adding that the impact of the trip reached far beyond a one-day field trip experience.

"My students gained a better understanding of what it means to be an

engineer, learned how engineers solve problems, and explored how important engineering work can be for our society," Ms. Kwiek explained. "The STEM Explorers program is great because it allows my students to meet college students that are closer to their age, and they can relate to them. The college students have goals for their future, and my students can see themselves also having the goal of going to college and becoming an engineer."



Syracuse Police Foster Positive Relationships through Casual Classroom Chats



“What’s all your gear for?

Do you all like donuts?

How old do you have to be in order to be a police officer?”

”

Fifth graders at **Salem Hyde** had plenty of questions for the Syracuse Police Department officers standing in front of them. The officers, ranging from detectives, K-9 officers, patrol officers, and more, were there on a mission: to connect with students and help them feel comfortable engaging with the police.

The Syracuse Police Department, thanks to funding from New York State, partnered this year with the Office of Community Engagement to arrange for off-duty officers to visit with all SCSD 5th graders. The officers read a book, ‘The Police and Me’ by Derrick Dotson, to students – and then left each student with their own copy of the book to keep. Then, they engaged in question/

answer sessions and games with the students.

“It’s all about building relationships with children at a younger age,” Sergeant Brad Giarrusso explained. “We want the kids to feel comfortable with police so they’ll come to us for help. The kids often seem shy when they first meet us, but after we do the reading and play games, they start to open up and really come out of their shell. They’re learning that every profession can have a few people in it that give it a bad reputation, but our goal in the SPD is always to be fair. This is the first step in building trust and helping the kids develop a positive perception of a police officer.”

High School News Shakespeare Competition Helps ITC Students Prepare for Their Future

“Now might I do it pat, now he is a-praying, and now I’ll do ‘t.”

ITC junior **Caleb Bateman** recites his monologue – part of Act 3, Scene 3 of Shakespeare’s Hamlet.

“It was a hard choice because of my limited knowledge of Shakespeare,” Caleb explained. “I really liked the story of this scene... how Hamlet is so conflicted about killing his uncle. There’s just so much chaos! He’s holding it in and has the power to end it all... but he chooses not to. That has to take so much self-control.”

Thanks to the English-Speaking Union’s National Shakespeare Competition, a group of ITC students performed in front of professional actors who served as judges. Each student performed a monologue they had selected, memorized, and rehearsed. Caleb, the top scoring performer in his school, qualified to participate in the regional competition at Syracuse Stage this March. There, competing against students



from 20-30 other high schools statewide, he’ll work to again take first – which would place him en route to New York City, where he’d compete in the nationals, fighting for the opportunity to travel to England and perform at the famed Globe Theatre.

ITC Music and Drama Teacher **Victoria King** said that ultimately, the benefits of students’ participation extend far beyond acting – noting that past Shakespeare Competition participants have gone on to become lifelong friends – or even college roommates! Congratulations to all of the students who took advantage of the opportunity to participate in this unique competition – **Caleb** (1st place), **Briella Corless** (2nd place), **Ella Bosco** (3rd place), **Emily Rain**, **Steven Ndikuriyo**, and **Na’Jah Sumner!**

PSLA Students Shine at Skills USA Competition



Career and Technical Education (CTE) students from **PSLA at Fowler** recently had the chance to

show their career readiness skills at the Skills USA regional competition.

The competition aims to celebrate the skilled trades, empowering students to become skilled professionals, career-ready leaders, and responsible community members. In early February, 14 PSLA students visited SUNY Morrisville to compete in the regional competition, and two students earned

top scores! Congratulations to **Aliyah Murphy** and her model, **Le’annah Murphy**, who came in second place in Nail Care; and **Natalia Thomas**, who came in third place in First Aid and CPR. We’re proud of their instructors, **Theresa Calabrese** and **Brandi Schaefer** – and Skills USA advisors Ms. Calabrese, Ms. Schaefer, and **Joseph Smith**, for supporting these students as they develop their trade skills!

PSLA at Fowler Student Named Miss Military Star New York



PSLA at Fowler junior **Janaya Smith** has recently earned the title Miss Military Star New York!

Miss Military Star queens use their year of reign to volunteer helping veterans and service members, along with charity work for military-oriented organizations. After doing Color Guard for the pageant last year, Janaya, who also serves as the Cadet Petty Officer 1st Class in the school's Navy National Defense Cadet Corps (NNDCC) program, was invited to participate in an interview with judges, as well as a patriotic wear and evening wear competition. She was judged on personality, presentation, and confidence – ultimately being named the New York State winner!

"It means a lot to me," Janaya shared. "I was so happy they saw my potential and chose me to represent. I already do a lot in my NNDCC program when it comes to community service and helping out veterans in need. Being Miss Military Star New York will just allow me to do even more!"

Janaya ultimately hopes to enter the military – she has ambitions of joining the Army to become part of the infantry. She will next compete in the Miss Military Star national competition in Pennsylvania in July!

SCSD Learning:

Take A Peek Inside Our Classrooms!

We're proud of the #SCSDLearning happening within our classrooms each and every day! Take a look at just a few examples of the engaging lessons our students are engaging in this school year.



Promising Futures Leadership Academy English Class

"It's shocking that people are treated like this," PFLA junior **Jacob Salomone** shared. "It still goes on today. I see it everywhere."

11th graders in **Erin Clarke's** English class have been studying Systemic Racism and Society's Role, reading the novel 'All American Boys' by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely – as well as examining related poetry, videos, and informational texts. Students discussed how characters' experiences influence the perspective of the reader, how racial oppression influences identity formation for an individual, society's responsibility to acknowledge racial inequity, and more.

"I feel excited to see how others react to the topic of discrimination," Jacob shared. "It feels like we can really talk about what's going on and ultimately, we can do something to help stop it. Projects like this are hands-on, and that's what this school is about. It's not just working, working, working or listening, listening, listening. We're participating!"



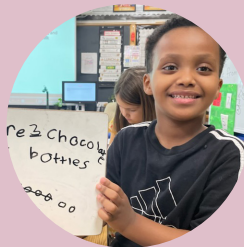
Frazer 2nd Grade Math

"What do you notice about your ones?" **Frazer** 2nd grade teacher **Marcey Fasulo** asked her class, as she pointed to a math chart displayed on a board in front of the room.

Hands shot up as the class collectively shouted, "You have to bundle them!"

In 2nd grade math, students are learning place value up to 1,000. They are also understanding place value language and properties of operations to add and subtract. Through this unit in Ms. Fasulo and co-teacher Melissa Buonvecchio's class, students learned to regroup ones and tens by using manipulatives to help them become familiar with these concepts, which they will eventually expand upon as they continue on through the year and through their schooling.

Salem Hyde 1st Grade Math



"Who solved the problem the same way that she did?"

A few hands shot up.

Students in **Daniela Klamm's** first grade classroom at **Salem Hyde** have been learning about solving word problems in math – using different strategies, like "count on" and "take from 10." Each student has the freedom to decide which strategy they would use to solve a problem, and then they take turns explaining their process to the rest of the class.

"I did a 5 group drawing, because that's my favorite strategy," 1st grader **Khloe Wanamaker** explained. "It's fun because I know how to use more than one strategy to solve a problem, and that makes learning new things easier!"

ITC Writing & Environment



A group of seniors in the SUNY-ESF Writing and the Environment course are in the midst of their Environmental Racism unit. From the Midland Sewer

Treatment Facility, I-81, Onondaga Lake, and more, students have each selected an issue impacting Syracuse and are researching to begin their formal research paper on the issue's environmental impact.

The students are **ITC** seniors, gathered in a classroom in their high school. Upon completing the course, students earn three college credits; and, thanks to support from Say Yes to Education, the class is provided free of charge to students!

Cody Stazzone is interested in pursuing zoology or geology. He plans to attend OCC next year and then hopes to transfer to ESF or Cornell to complete his studies.

"This class has really helped prepare me," Cody shared. "It has helped me get better at writing my thoughts and has allowed me to learn about environmental issues in our area."

SCSD Celebrates BLACK HISTORY!



Black History Month is a time to honor the contributions and legacy of African Americans across U.S. history and society—from activists and civil rights pioneers such as Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Marcus Garvey, Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X and Rosa Parks to leaders in industry, politics, science, culture and more.

Our schools celebrated Black History Month with a number of events and activities.

From career day events and daily trivia to presentations and performances and more, we are proud that many of these activities extend past February and are part of our students' learning throughout the school year.



Alumni Spotlight: Breana Nieves Vergara



SCSD Schools Attended: Nottingham '16

College and Major(s): Ithaca College, majored in Sociology with minors in Education Studies and Latinx Studies

Career Path: I am currently the Assistant Director of

Multicultural Affairs at Syracuse University.

The coolest thing about my job is... Working with students of color and connecting them to all of the amazing things both Syracuse University and the City of Syracuse has to offer.

I'm proud to be a SCSD graduate because... SCSD creates students who care about their community, give back, and become leaders; I can credit my tenacity, resourcefulness, and drive to SCSD.

One piece of advice I'd give to SCSD students is... My advice to SCSD students is to take advantage of all of the amazing opportunities that SCSD has to offer; take at least one college-level courses like OCC, SUPA, AP, etc! Explore your interests through clubs, sports, or other extracurricular activities - use your time in SCSD to build community. Utilize your resources, and do not be afraid to ask for help or support; seeking help is a sign of strength!



Calling All SCSD Alumni!

Did you graduate from a SCSD high school? We'd love to hear from you! Email us at goodnews@scsd.us - with your name, high school, graduation year, and what you're up to now. We'll follow up with you and would love to consider spotlighting you on our social media channels or even in an upcoming newsletter. #SCSDPride



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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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>> Share your questions, comments or concerns 24/7 using the Let's Talk tool at www.syracusecityschools.com



What does Say Yes mean to you?

For me, Say Yes means going after every opportunity available. As a first-generation college student, saying yes is the one thing that has allowed me to achieve my goals and has opened many doors for me. I wouldn't be able to be where I am without this.

What advice would you give high school students who are considering seeking a college degree through Say Yes?

Everyone at Say Yes wants to see you succeed, so don't be scared to reach out and speak to staff. Always remember that you don't have to go through college alone, and Say Yes is a great place to start when seeking for help.

Read Giselle's full spotlight at sayyessyracuse.org.

Learn more and sign up for the Say Yes newsletter at SayYesSyracuse.org

My Say Yes Story:

Giselle Ozelek

Institute of Technology at Syracuse Central, Class of 2023

What college are you going to & what is your major(s)/minor(s)?

I am currently attending Syracuse University where I am double majoring in Policy Studies and Spanish Language, Literature and Culture.

What do you like most about college?

I like interacting with different professors and staff while at college. Everyone here is very welcoming and willing to offer support in other areas outside of academics, like career advising and resume building.