



The Highlander Press

Inside this issue:

Superintendent's Message	1
Curriculum News	2
AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award	2
Clubs at Apshawa	3
Marshall Hill NJ School of Character	3
NJSBGA Scholarship	4
HR Update	4
Special Services	5
Better Together Teams	6
Experiment	6
Marshall Hill PreK	7
Tech Update ClassLink	8
Vex Robotics Competition	9
Macopin Kindness Certified	10
Maple Road Kindness Challenge	10
WMHS PALS	11
WMHS NJ School of Character	11
Student Art at Library	11
Together Teams	12
Park Ranger Visit	12
UGL Scooter Football	13
Constitution Convention	13

(Continued on page 14)

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE



Welcome to the second issue of our newsletter, *The Highlander Press*. A great deal has happened since our last issue was published, and we can't wait to share it all with you. In this issue you will find articles from all of our schools and departments, important dates, special programs, information about working with our community partners, and much more.

During the February Board of Education meeting, the Administrative Cabinet and I reported on the status of the **District's Strategic Plan Action Plan**, which is accessible on the District website. In this issue you will also find information celebrating our connections with community partners. These opportunities are so important for our students as they learn and grow. Another feature this month is a focus on Character and Kindness. Our schools are fully engaged in activities that meet Strategic Plan: Goal 4. We are thankful for all of the support our schools receive through partnership and collaboration with our community as we strive to attain our vision, mission and goals. I hope you enjoy this issue of The Highlander Press!

Our Mission Statement:

The West Milford Township School District recognizes that each student is an individual with unique educational needs.

The District is committed to challenging and helping each student maximize his or her personal potential to promote academic excellence, good character, and physical fitness in a safe, supportive learning environment, as well as providing a positive school climate based upon mutual respect and responsibility.

The District further recognizes the need to support and develop a professional, dedicated, accountable staff that will partner with parents to foster the emotional, intellectual, social, and physical maturity of each student, and to encourage a lifelong love of learning and discovery.



Curriculum News: Celebrating Literacy; West Milford Township Public Schools “Read Across West Milford” Week by Daniel Novak

As March approaches, the West Milford Public School district gears up for an exciting celebration of literacy and the joy of reading with its inaugural "Read Across West Milford" event. Scheduled for the week of March 4th, this celebration promises a vibrant array of activities aimed at fostering a love for reading among students of all ages.

One of the highlights of "Read Across West Milford" is the participation of guest readers from the greater educational community. Throughout the week, classrooms will welcome special guests ranging from Board of Education Trustees, community leaders such as our Mayor and Chief of Police, and even our township Children’s Librarian, who will share their favorite stories and engage students in the magic of reading. This unique opportunity not only exposes students to a diverse range of literary voices but also emphasizes the importance of community involvement in education.

In addition to guest readers, "Read Across West Milford" will feature visits from renowned authors, adding an extra layer of excitement to the festivities. These author visits provide students with the chance to interact directly with the creative minds behind their beloved books, offering insights into the writing process and inspiring budding writers with tales of imagination and storytelling.

Furthermore, the celebration will extend beyond the confines of individual classrooms, with a special treat planned for elementary students in grades 3-5. Students will have the opportunity to preview the High School Musical “Footloose” at the High School, offering a glimpse into the world of theater and bringing literature to life in a dynamic and engaging way. This immersive experience not only enriches students' understanding of storytelling but also ignites their imagination and creativity.

As the West Milford Public School district prepares to embark on this literary journey, students, educators, and community members alike eagerly anticipate the adventures that await during "Read Across West Milford" week. Together, they celebrate the transformative power of reading and the profound impact it has on shaping young minds and enriching lives.

West Milford High School Receives AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award by Dr. Bryan Belser

West Milford High School was awarded the **AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award**. The award acknowledges the high school’s work in improving gender representation in Computer Science, specifically in our AP Computer Science A course. West Milford is one of only 225 schools recognized in the nation for this course. According to the AP Central webpage, “Schools receiving the AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award have achieved either 50% or higher female exam taker representation in one or both AP computer science courses, or a percentage of female computer science exam takers that meets or exceeds that of the school’s female population.” Congratulations to all those who make this opportunity possible for our students.

Did you know?

- ◆ ***Kindergarten Registration is still open. Please be sure to register your child who will be five (5) years old on or before October 1, 2024. Use this link to access Pre-registration materials, or by visiting our District website.***

Clubs at Apshawa School by Dr. Dana Swarts

Apshawa has run several PTA-sponsored clubs this school year! Teachers have developed clubs: Board Games (to build social skills and problem-solving), Student Council (building leadership and community awareness), Character Club (fostering a student-driven approach to our Core Values and character education, and STEM Club (building our young science minds). We are looking forward to offering Garden Club, Yoga Club, TREPS, and Insect Club this spring. We see new friendships, great ideas, and out of the box thinking through these wonderful clubs!



Marshall Hill School a New Jersey School of Character

by Patrick O'Donnell



Marshall Hill School is proud to announce that it recently earned status as a State School of Character by character.org. This designation was given to 87 schools across the nation and Marshall Hill is excited to be one of them! The application process was extensive and we had to document all of the things that we do on a daily basis that make us a school of character. From our therapy dog program, our school-wide Zones of Regulations implementation, our Veterans Day ceremony, to our Student Council Ambassadors, these initiatives and embedded components of our school culture have helped us achieve this distinction. Our next step is to apply for designation as a National School of Character. This is an achievement for the entire school community and we are thankful to everyone who has played a part in making this possible.



School Bus Safety - Know what the lights mean!



TRANSPORTATION

BUS DRILLS

We will hold our second round of bus evacuation drills in April 2023!

NJSBGA Scholarship Opportunity

by Douglas Glenn

Each year the New Jersey School Buildings and Grounds Association gives out scholarships of \$1000 to high school students entering college the following year. The Association has done this for the past twenty years and last year gave out over \$20,000 in scholarships. Scholarships are given out on a Chapter level and the State level. For more information and access to the application, please visit the link below.

<https://njsbga.org/state-scholarship-program/>



New Jersey
School Buildings
&
Grounds Association



Human Resources Update

The West Milford Township Public Schools have the following positions available. Please apply on [Applitrack](#) found on the District website under Employment Opportunities:

- ◆ Science Teacher – High School
- ◆ Technology Education Teacher – High School
- ◆ Special Education Math Teacher (ERI) – Highlander Academy/Prep
- ◆ Replacement Special Education Teachers 1 ELA, 1 Social Studies - Highlander Academy/Prep
- ◆ 0.5 Nurse – Highlander Academy /Prep
- ◆ Nurse - Elementary
- ◆ Door Attendant - WMHS
- ◆ Special Class Aides
- ◆ Cafeteria Aides

WE'RE HIRING... SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

BASIC REQUIREMENTS:

- NJ Driver's License
- Excellent Driving Record
- U.S. Citizen or Legal Resident in accordance with State and Federal regulations
- CDL Training Available

Apply Online at:
WWW.WMTPS.ORG
or CALL (973) 697-0777



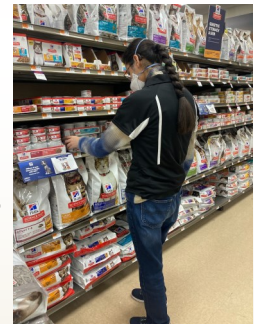
A Message from Special Services by Dr. Derek Ressa



Greetings! The West Milford Township Department of Special Services is proud to share a number of updates as it relates to the exceptional students, staff, programs, and services that makes us proud about everything Highlanders! Thank you for your ongoing support, and we hope you enjoy it!

Transition Program Holiday Cookie Exchange

The students in the 18-21 Transition Program attended a Holiday Cookie Exchange with Jefferson, Roxbury, and Boonton Township Public Schools in December! They had the opportunity to socialize and share delicious homemade cookies with their peers! The holiday Rotary party was a great success! The Elves (students in the 18-21 program) helped to prepare the ornament crafts that were made by Mrs. Monego's class, supplied and arranged the table centerpieces, helped the younger students with the crafts and assisted Santa with the gifts. This month our students are planning another Valentine's Day social with other districts in the area. They will prepare side dishes and desserts from the Cove kitchen. The Cove has been busy with the New Coffee and Tea Bistro and creating Nutritious snacks. Ms. Lauren Bladek and Ms. Stephanie Sass who are the Registered Dieticians at the Shoprite have been educating our students in person and virtually about the importance of healthy eating and staying hydrated. With all of the holiday splurging... the class has been burning calories at Yoga and Martial Arts classes along with supervised work outs at our own West Milford High School Wellness/Fitness Room. Many students have earned their belts at Karate with Sensei Matt! Congrats! Some of the students have been working at Walgreens, Hug A Mug, Home Field Advantage, Holiday Inn Express, Petco, JoAnn's Fabrics, Mike's Feed Farm, Maple Road Pre-School disability classes, and at our own cafeteria and Giving Closet at the High School. The students continue to have virtual and in-person socials with other district's 18-21 students. We are looking forward to the warmer



weather and our visit to the Hawthorne 18-21 program's student-run Bear Cave Cafe for a delicious lunch!



Better Together Teams in Pre-K at Maple Road School



Maple Road School celebrates the first Friday of every month as part of our character education initiative. Our theme this year is “Better Together” as we welcomed many students from neighboring schools to Maple Road. On these Fridays, the students work in school-wide “Together Teams.” These teams are designed to bring students of different ages and abilities together to focus on a particular character trait while learning and having fun in an inclusive environment. Pre-school does its own version of Together Teams while the primary grades meet. Miss Nicole’s and Miss Jonelle’s full day CLIMB students join Miss Beth and Miss Jenn’s half day Inclusion and Developmental classes for “Fun Friday” centers. The students play together in different centers stationed throughout the classroom providing lots of opportunities to work on things like sharing, problem solving, and coping skills. First Fridays are something



Chemical Reaction Experiment

Submitted by Lisa Lubarsky

Chemistry Lab students engaged in an experiment involving blowing up a balloon with a chemical reaction!



Marshall Hill Preschoolers Work With Therapy Dogs!

Marshall Hill Preschoolers excitedly participate in the Therapy Dog visits as part of our SEL curriculum. Charlie, Tucker, Oreo, and Brownie assist the preschoolers to develop skills such as waiting their turn, following directions, self-regulation, caring for others, and building their sense of class and school community. Therapy dogs assist students in relieving anxiety and fostering feelings of well-being. Each month the children enjoy meeting a different breed of dog and experiencing their different textures, appearances, sizes, and colors. These dogs truly bring joy and smiles to every one of our preschoolers and staff!



Highlander Academy's New Take on Frankenstein

by Regan Mackesy



In a twist that would send shivers down Victor Frankenstein's spine, the English 11 students in Mrs. Mackesy's class at Highlander Academy have embarked on a spud-tacular experiment: Frankenta-to Babies! Yes, you read that right. Armed with a dash of creativity and a heap of potatoes, these students are channeling their inner mad scientists to bring forth life. Drawing inspiration from Mary Shelley's timeless novel Frankenstein, they're cultivating their own creations and meticulously recording their adventures along the way. Picture this: tiny potato limbs sprouting from monstrous spuds, each one lovingly tended to like a doting parent. From journal entries chronicling the emotional rollercoaster of raising a Frankenta Baby to capturing Instagram-worthy snapshots of their Frankenta-to's escapades, these students are fully immersed in the spud-tastic world of literary experimentation. So, if you happen to catch sight of a group of students carefully cradling their potato progeny through the hallways, fear not! It's just another day in the life of our mad scientists-in-training!



Connecting Education Seamlessly: Unlocking the Power of Classlink at West Milford Township Public Schools

by Robert Winston

There is a valuable tool that is transforming the way West Milford students access digital educational resources - Classlink! As we continue to strive for excellence in education, Classlink has emerged as a key player in streamlining and enhancing the learning experience for our students.



What is Classlink?

Classlink is a robust, cloud-based platform that serves as a one-stop solution for accessing digital resources and educational applications. It simplifies the login process for students, providing them with a seamless and secure environment to explore and engage with various learning tools.

The Benefits of Classlink:

Simplified Access: No more juggling multiple usernames and passwords! Classlink provides a single sign-on (SSO) experience, allowing students to access all their digital resources with just one set of credentials. This not only saves time but also reduces the frustration associated with remembering multiple login details.

Efficient Organization: Classlink acts as a centralized hub, organizing all educational apps and resources in one place. This means that students and teachers can easily navigate through a curated list of tools, ensuring that valuable instructional time is spent on learning rather than searching for resources.

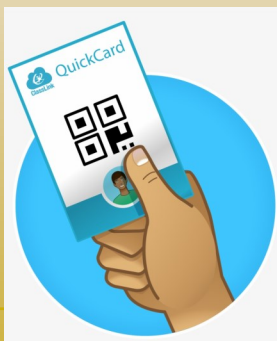
Enhanced Collaboration: The platform fosters collaboration among students and educators by providing a unified space for sharing and accessing educational materials. Whether it's assignments, documents, or collaborative projects, Classlink makes it easy for everyone to stay on the same page.

Anywhere, Anytime Learning: Classlink is accessible from any device with an internet connection. This flexibility empowers students to continue their learning journey beyond the classroom, promoting a culture of continuous learning and exploration.

Customizable Experience: Classlink allows for customization, enabling each student to tailor their learning environment based on individual preferences. This personalized approach contributes to a more engaging and effective educational experience.

As we continue this exciting journey with Classlink, we are witnessing the positive impact it has had on our students' educational experiences. Together, we can embrace the future of education and empower our children to thrive in an increasingly digital world.

Classlink QuikCards: Unlocking Learning Adventures for Young Explorers by Robert Winston



Introducing Classlink QuikCards – the magic key to a world of educational wonders for our youngest learners at West Milford Township Public Schools! Designed with simplicity in mind, QuikCards are here to make digital exploration a breeze for our little adventurers in grades K - 5.

(Continued on page 9)

Classlink QuikCards (continued from page 8)

What are Classlink QuikCards?

Classlink QuikCards are colorful, easy-to-use cards that act as a passport to a world of educational resources. Specifically tailored for our younger students, these cards eliminate the need for remembering complicated usernames and passwords, offering a straightforward solution to access the digital tools they need.

How Do QuikCards Simplify Access?

Visual Recognition: Each QuikCard features vibrant images and icons, making it easy for even our youngest learners to recognize and connect with their favorite educational apps.

One-Tap Access: No more typing or struggling with keyboards! QuikCards enable students to access their personalized learning environment with a simple tap, fostering independence and confidence.

Parental Peace of Mind: QuikCards provide a secure and controlled access point to digital resources, giving parents peace of mind that their child's online experiences are both safe and educational.

“Classlink QuikCards are colorful, easy-to-use cards that act as a passport to a world of educational resources.”

Empowering Little Learners:

By introducing Classlink QuikCards in grades K - 5, we have empowered West Milford's youngest learners to embark on exciting educational journeys independently. QuikCards not only simplify the access process but also create a positive and engaging digital environment, setting the stage for a love of learning that will last a lifetime.

Here's to unlocking the wonders of education with Classlink QuikCards – where every tap opens a world of possibilities for our youngest explorers!

WMHS School Team Participates in Vex Robotics Competition

by Dr. Bryan Belser

The annual Vex Robotics competition was held this year at Sparta High School on January 14th, 2024. The Vex Competition is run on both a national and world stage. In head-to-head matches, two Alliances composed of two teams each, compete in matches consisting of a 15-

second Autonomous Period followed by a one minute and forty-five second Driver Controlled Period. The object of the game is to attain a higher score than the opposing Alliance by scoring tri-balls in goals and by elevating the robot up a pole at the end of the match. This year the West Milford High School robotics team valiantly competed, with our team

beating nineteen schools, and winning multiple rounds during the competition. The team was joined at the competition by high school robotics teacher Ms. Karen Flaherty.



Macopin Middle School Recognized for Kindness by Dr. Gregory Matlosz

Macopin School was recognized as a Kindness Certified School for 2024 through the Great Kindness Challenge. Through Macopin's ongoing character education and character development programs, individual staff/student contributions, and the community's involvement in bringing in projects to benefit our students, Macopin was certified!

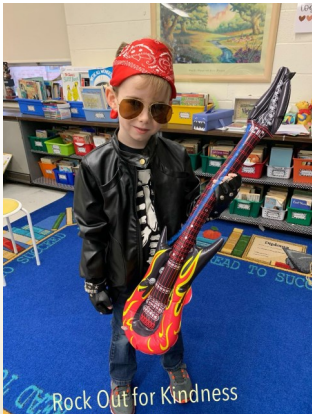


"Messages of Kindness!"

Maple Road School and the Great Kindness Challenge! by Bill Kane

During the Week of January 22, Maple Road School participated in the Great Kindness Challenge. The Maple Road School Student Council planned various kindness activities and themes throughout the week. Maple Road recognized different daily kindness themes each day, including:

- **Team Kindness!** - Wear your favorite jersey or West Milford gear.
- **Work it Out with Kindness!** - Wear your favorite workout gear.
- **Cuddle up with Kindness!** - Wear pajamas and bring your favorite stuffed animal.
- **Rock out for Kindness!** - Dress like a rock star.
- **Shine Bright with Kindness!** - Wear neon or brightly colored clothes.



Teachers and students implemented kindness-themed activities in their classrooms, such as working with cross-grade level buddies to read books or create a kindness craft. Maple Road School also partnered with the Passaic County branch of the New Jersey Statewide Student Support Services (NJ4S) to host a **Neurodiversity and Kindness Assembly** for our students. The assembly promoted messages of diversity, inclusion, and kindness. At the end of the week, Maple Road School was recognized as a "Kindness Certified School" by the Great Kindness Challenge organization.



WMHS PALS Visit Macopin Middle School Advisors: Melissa Welch & Geri Taylor

On Tuesday, January 30, the **WMHS PALS (Peers As Leaders)** visited Macopin Middle School, engaging with eighth-graders during their lunch period. The PALS provided insightful discussions on various topics, including the diverse array of courses, clubs/activities, and sports available at West Milford High School. This informative session aimed to guide and prepare the students for their upcoming transition to high school, offering a glimpse into the exciting opportunities that await them in their academic and extracurricular pursuits.



West Milford High School Named NJ School of Character by Matthew Strianse

West Milford High School has been named a **2024 State School of Character** by Character.org. There were over 228 applications from schools and districts that work tirelessly to create a culture of character. Our State School of Character designation is valid for five years and West Milford High School is eligible to be considered for National School of Character designation during that time. Congratulations to the WMHS community for attaining this State level designation.



West Milford Visual Arts and Our Community Partners by Sharon West

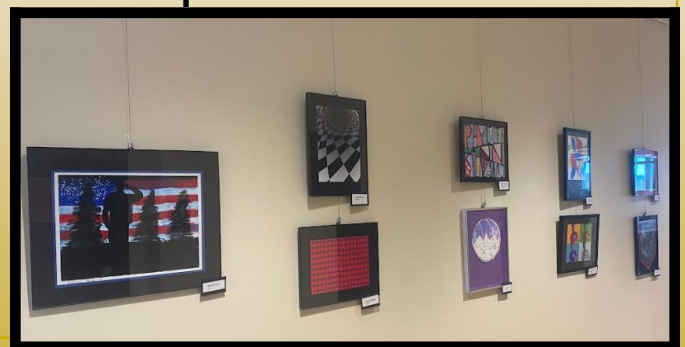
Macopin Art students participated in the 2023-2024 Lions Club Peace Poster Contest. Macopin Winners were Ava Trahan for 1st place and Ella Biesiada for Runner Up. Congratulations to all!

West Milford Art students K-12 have been invited to display their work in the West Milford Township Library during the months of February and March, 2024 for Youth Art Month. Be sure to stop by to check out a book and some outstanding student creations!



Youth Art Month

Youth Art Month



Maple Road School's Together Teams by Bill Kane



On the first Friday of each month, Maple Road School gathers in our cross-grade level Together Teams to celebrate our monthly character traits and reinforce our school's character theme for this school year, "Better Together." In February, our Together Teams recognized the character trait, "Empathy." The entire school gathered and sat with their Together Teams in the All Purpose Room to kick off the event. Mrs. Brooke, a Maple Road



School Special Class Aide and Certified Yoga Instructor, led our whole school in an Empathy Meditation. Mrs. Graney, 5th Grade Teacher and a member of our First Friday Committee, read the book, "Strictly No Elephants," and talked to the students about how to be "empathetic elephants." Next, our Together Teams transitioned to separate classrooms to work on three Empathy Stations: Empathy Story Dice Game, Emotions Pic-tionary, and an Empathy Craft. Along with promoting our monthly character traits, our Together Teams foster cross-grade level student connections and offer leadership opportunities for our older students in helping their younger Together Teammates. We are...Better Together!!!

Go Mustangs!!



Park Ranger Visits Paradise Knoll School

by Jennifer Miller



Park Ranger, Tim Minor, with the Passaic County Parks and Recreation Department, came into our 5th grade science classrooms with Mr. Leslie to help students understand and apply the difference between a food chain and food web. Students were able to grasp this concept and gain an understanding through predator and prey activity and by constructing a food web. By the end of the lesson, students understood that all energy starts with the sun and why animals on the second and third tier need to eat a lot more to stay alive. Once students understood that activity they discussed what an ecosystem was and the different types of ecosystems we have on Earth. Then each group received different animals (first level, second level, Apex predators/consumers), plants, decomposers, etc. for their ecosystems. Students were asked to build a quick food web showing their understanding of the transfer of energy or The Pyramid of Life. By the end of the lesson, each group shared with their classmates how each ecosystem works and survives.



Superb Scooter Football at Upper Greenwood Lake School by Lyla McLaud

Scooter Football is a fun after school club. It involves two awesome things: scooters and football. The basics of Scooter Football are: It's regular football played on scooters. Three people on each team are set in the middle on yellow scooters, which are defense or offense. They try to protect their quarterbacks from being tagged. As the quarterback throws to one of the open players, the players have to get into the end zone before they get tagged. After they get a touchdown, they have to throw an extra point to get seven points for their team.

Mr. Brophy and Mrs. Yuhás are the coaches of Scooter Football. Mr. Brophy started Scooter Football at UGL fourteen years ago. The idea was originally brought here by Mr. Novak when he was principal at UGL. Mr. Brophy states, "When we implemented Scooter Football here at UGL, it took off right away because it allowed students to practice our Code of Conduct and it brought our whole UGL community together."



Scooter Football has many benefits for the students who participate. Jace Trahan, 5th grader, plays on the Mighty Ducks team this year. Jace says, "Scooter Football helps build teamwork. You learn to not argue about what position you're put on because all team members have an equally important job. You learn what people can do and see where they are and work with that." Isaiá Barrera, 4th grader, who is on the Big Macs team, is playing Scooter Football for the first time this year. Isaiá says, "I play Scooter Football to have fun and practice blocking and footwork. Scooter Football has improved my tackle football game. I've made new friends by being on a team." Scooter Football is an exciting sport to play after school. If your team does really well, you get to go to the high school and the top two teams get to play one last, big game. It's called the Scooter Bowl! We hope that everyone will come out on March 7th at the West Milford High School to watch and cheer for our teams. The Scooter Bowl will surely be a super event! This reporter is on the Rubber Duckies team this year and I'm excited to see who wins.



UGL PRESENTS
February 1st - February 29th
Winning Class(s) will have a pizza party at the conclusion of the contest.

CATEGORY 1
Time on Task-30+ Minutes

CATEGORY 2
Total Lessons Completed

CATEGORY 3
Highest Percentage of Lessons Passed

Macopin Constitution Convention

by Dr. Gregory Matlosz



Macopin School returned to the 18th century for its annual Constitution Convention! Students debated and recreated the United States Constitution by assuming the form of several historical figures like Ben Franklin.

Character Education at Apshawa

by Dr. Dana Swarts

Apshawa continues to build its Character Education through many facets of the school day. Our Character Club allows students to take their work with Core Values and “teach” them in each classroom monthly. We celebrate our students who are awarded Character Recognition each month at our Character Assembly. So far this year we have celebrated Kindness, Gratitude, and Giving. Our teachers reinforce all the Core Values and highlight the monthly themes to help build strong character values K-5.



WMHS National Mathematics Honor Society: Mu Alpha Theta

by Dr. Bryan Belser

The West Milford High School chapter of Mu Alpha Theta has inducted 4 seniors and 6 juniors for the 2023/2024 school year. Our officers for the 2023/2024 school year are President: Colin Menier and Vice President: Colin Iwaszczuk. Mu Alpha Theta currently has a total membership of 26 seniors and 6 juniors.

This national organization recognizes high school and 2-year college students who enjoy and excel in mathematics. Mu Alpha Theta provides opportunities for students to participate in math-related events, interact with their peers from across the country, and to be eligible for special awards, scholarships and grants.

WMHS Social Emotional Learning Course

Submitted by Matt Strianse

WMHS Social Emotional Learning Course invited Lauren Bladek, Registered Dietician from the West Milford ShopRite, to visit. Ms. Bladek discussed self-care and the benefits of good nutrition with our students.



More Inside This Issue:

Apshawa Character Ed	14
Mu Alpha Theta	14
SEL Learning at WMHS	14
Physics at WMHS	15
Lions Partner with Schools	15
Snowmen Go Missing at Paradise Knoll	16
Macopin Citizens of the Month	16
Humanities	17
Guidance	18
World Languages	19
Business Office Update	20
Veterans Presentation	20
Women's Equity	21
Child Development	21
More at Macopin	21

(continued on page 22)

Students Explore Collisions at High Speed

by Dr. Bryan Belser



Former West Milford student Kyle Gilroy (class of 2007) returned to West Milford High School on January 23rd to assist Physics teacher Mr. Rose with a lesson on projectile velocity in his classes throughout the day. Kyle brought a high-end camera able to capture the impact of a 1-inch steel ball into a ham and a water bottle at ~100 m/s. Physics students in mainly 11th and 12th grade applied their knowledge of the law of inertia while viewing the impact in real time as well as a slowed down recording. The AP physics class used details of the impact to relate to energy conversion. The impact of the steel ball into a water bottle helped further launch a discussion on cavitation which can relate to submarines and underwater detection of sound.



West Milford Lions Partner With Our Schools

Submitted by The West Milford Lions Club

One of our main service projects is free eye screening for children ages pre-K to 1st Grade. It began in 2007 in the daycares, preschools, and public elementary schools in West Milford. Today, this important service project has expanded to 36 schools and daycares in 16 towns. The children are screened by Club members using a state-of-the-art camera for possible eye disorders that include Amblyopia, Myopia, Anisometropia, Strabismus, Astigmatism, Gaze, and more. Detections are referred to a nearby ophthalmologist for evaluation and follow-up testing. In 2023, the West Milford Lions Club screened over 1,200 children, of which 10% had detections.

Each year, our Club offers scholarships for graduating seniors at West Milford High School. Scholarship applications are available through the WMHS Guidance Department, and the award winners are presented at the Senior Awards Night.

The West Milford Lions Club has been sponsoring the Lions International Peace Poster Contest at Macopin Middle School for more than 30 years. This special and heartwarming project gives students (ages 11-13) the opportunity to express their visions of peace and inspire the world through art and creativity. In 2003, Macopin art student Rebecca Young was among the top 24 winners in the world, out of more than 300,000 entries! Our local Club awards a 1st Place winner and Runner-up winner with prizes and recognition each year, and the 1st Place winner moves on to NJ Lions District 16-N judging. The District winner goes on to State judging and the State winner is submitted to Lions International judging. Other West



Milford Lions Club programs, support, and participating community events include; Eyeglass Recycling, Annual Coat Drive, Adult Literacy Program, charities for the blind and visually impaired, Special Olympics, local food pantries and service organizations, JDRF fundraising, WMHS Trunk-or-Treat, and more.

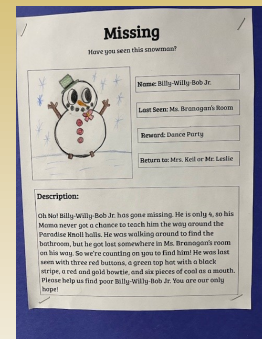


Snowmen Go Missing at Paradise Knoll by Jennifer Miller



As a fun school-wide activity during the month of January, 5th grade students worked in groups to design very similar looking snowmen. They then created a "MISSING" poster to match the description of one of their snowmen. The snowmen then went "missing" in each of

our Paradise Knoll classrooms. In each classroom, the students had to find all of the snowmen hiding in their classroom and then the teacher read the description to their class. Students had to determine which snowman was the actual missing snowman! A few students, or the class, then had to stop by one of the 5th grade classrooms to see if they selected the correct snowman. If the classrooms selected the correct one, they would then receive the reward chosen by each group of students. The rewards consisted of reading a book, completing a "Blooket" game together, having a dance party, or helping out with a class project. Everyone had so much fun searching for the missing snowmen!



Macopin Citizens of the Month by Dr. Greg Matlosz

Macopin Middle School honors November Citizens of the Month: Jayden Brix, Ruby Cardona, Sean Comune, Mckenna Harvey, Taylor Keegan, Jordyn Maria, Vanessa Matlosz, Alexis Nemeth, Amber O'Connor, Andrew Quinones, Ben Racano and December Citizens of the Month: Kaz Sek, Travis Blondin, Kaylyn Jones, Ava Martin

Congratulations to our students!



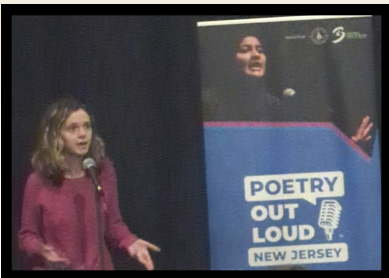
Humanities

by Sharon West

ENGLISH

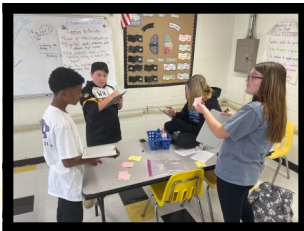
The **2023 Literary Arts Magazine "Black and Gold: the Highland Review"** won a **Second Place national award** in the **American Scholastic Press Association** contest! This award is from the Spring 2023 edition and includes graduates from 2023 as well as current student, **Stephanie McManus**.

The **High School and Macopin English Departments** met virtually on November 14th with **Dr. Brian Becker, Director of the Writing Program Institute at Rutgers University**, to discuss Rutgers recent updates to their required expository writing course with a new emphasis on **"independent, student-centered and student-generated inquiry."** Our teachers engaged in thoughtful discussion and posed insightful questions with an eye on providing the highest quality writing instruction to our students.



Abigail Wallace represented West Milford High School on **February 9, 2024 at the Poetry Out Loud Spoken Word Contest at Passaic county Community College Wanaque Campus**. POL is a free national program sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and Poetry Foundation which encourages high school students across the country to learn about great works of classical and contemporary poetry through memorization and recitation. **Mrs. Petrosillo** and **Mrs. LoRe** advise the **Poetry Out Loud Club** which enables students to compete at this level.

Character Education Class is a new course adopted by 6th and 7th grade Macopin students. Students are learning how to create a culture and community that fosters courage, kindness, and empathy. Here, seventh grade students are participating in the *Walk In Someone Else's Shoes Game* to practice and strengthen their empathy muscles!



West Milford Empty Bowls 2024, an international project to fight hunger developed in 1990 by an Art teacher in Michigan, will be taking place on **Wednesday, March 27th at West Milford Township High School**, from **5 pm- 7:30 pm**. For the first time, the Art and Culinary Departments will host the event during our **All District Arts Festival**, making it a true celebration of the Arts. Sculpture students, faculty and staff, along with the National Art Honor Society, Art Club and many art students, make bowls and run the event including set up, ticket sales, serve soup, drinks, bread, bowl selection and education. Culinary students make the soup, and run the kitchen during the event. **Proceeds will benefit the West Milford Food Pantry.**



West Milford Guidance & School Counseling Submitted by Karen Johnson

Our new **Steps** sessions were provided to parents and students in grades 9, 11 & 12 in September. Grade 9 parents were provided with an orientation to all things WMHS (**First Steps**) with the goal of supporting student success and involvement as a Highlander. Our grade 11 program, **Next Steps**, provided a kick off to post secondary planning, exploration and preparation. Our Grade 12 meeting focused on those **Final Steps** that will lead to a successful transition to post secondary pathways.

Financial Aid Night for families preparing for post secondary education was presented in October and a **FAFSA Workshop** took place in January.

We are very grateful to Nick Capodice, Director of Financial Aid at St. Elizabeth University, who joined us as a representative from the NJ Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA). HESAA provides FREE presentations in schools around the state regarding financial aid for post-high school education. Nick guided us through a lot of information at our Financial Aid Night, and joined us again to assist our Senior families in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid in January. There have been many glitches and a lot of confusion with the new FAFSA, and this was a great opportunity to complete the FAFSA with assistance.

Also in January, we met with parents of our rising grade 9 families to provide a **Scheduling Orientation** for the high school. We are currently meeting with individuals to review and discuss course requests for 2024-25 to ensure students are on the right track and preparing themselves to meet future goals.

On-Site Decision Day!

On December 7, WMHS hosted 28 colleges for an on site admissions event. On-Site Decision Day gives our students the chance to participate in face to face interviews with college admissions professionals while earning early acceptances. 88 WMHS seniors participated, many meeting with admissions counselors from multiple schools. Our students earned a total of 238 acceptances at the event! Though not all colleges could give scholarships that day, the offers continue to come in. The total amount of scholarship money offered to our students via this event thus far is well over \$200,000.



Be sure to check out our bi-weekly newsletter that is emailed to all WMHS families and shared via Twitter (@wmguidance). It shares important information for all grade levels. [WMHS GUIDANCE NEWSLETTER 02/02/24](#)



District Testing 9-12

In January, the Seal of Biliteracy Test was offered to all students who are heritage speakers of a second language, as well as to upper level world language students; student participation is voluntary. The State of New Jersey recognizes as biliterate all grade 12 students who pass approved tests with a score of 5 or higher on a 10 point scale. This year we are recognizing 11 certifications for seniors who have proven themselves to be bilingual or trilingual. Three of the certificates will be awarded to non-heritage speakers who gained their skills through their world language class.

Emin Allakhverdiev, Russian; Chloe Brijbag, Italian; Miguel Heredia, Italian; Leah Mora, Italian; Sasikan Patsawatho, Thai; Joel Garzon, Spanish; Jeff Gutierrez, Spanish; Miguel Heredia, Spanish; Sara Melendez-Hernandez, Spanish; Leah Mora, Spanish; Tiffany Vargas, Spanish.

World Languages Holiday Exchange

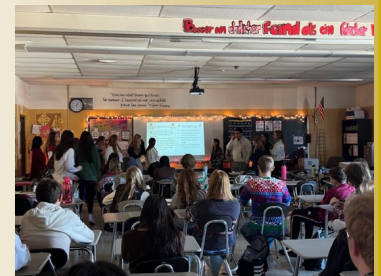
By Karen Johnson



On December 21, the World Language teachers hosted their annual **Holiday Exchange**, providing students with a multicultural experience. Prior to the event, students worked in groups to research information about holiday celebrations, customs and traditions connected to the countries where their world language is spoken. Language classes gathered together each period of the day for the exchange. From level 1 to AP, students presented the cultural information, pictures and target language expressions to all gathered, and many shared a holiday song.



At Macopin, Mrs. Paulino's Spanish students shared some holiday cheer in December. The students created beautiful winter trees which were given to The Chelsea where they decorated patients' rooms.



Updates from the Business Office

by Bill Scholts



I would like to take this opportunity to extend a thank you to Mr. Chris Kelly, our former Supervisor of Buildings & Grounds, who retired from the District at the end of December. Mr. Kelly was instrumental in implementing many improvements to the District's buildings and athletic fields during his tenure, including the Districtwide ESIP program. Succeeding Mr. Kelly, is Mr. Douglas Glenn, who started in the District at the beginning of February. Mr.

Glenn comes to West Milford with an impressive resume and has hit the ground running on many projects throughout the District in his first few weeks of employment.

Our audit firm, Wielkocz & Company LLC, recently completed our audit for the year ending June 30, 2023, and it was a very successful audit. I would like to thank everyone who had a part in the audit. Although the audit primarily takes place at the Board Office, the audit of the District is wide-ranging and requires input, information and cooperation from many different departments throughout the District. Thank you to everyone for your assistance and we look forward to another successful audit at the end of the current school year!

Lastly, I am happy to share the District applied for Stabilization Aid in the fall and Dr. Furnari was recently notified that we were awarded an amount of \$405,996 for the FY24 school year. This funding will go a long way in offsetting some of the State Aid reductions that the District faced this year.

West Milford Veterans Present Awards

by Dr. Lydia Furnari

During the February 20th Board of Education meeting, the West Milford Veterans of Foreign Wars made several presentations to students and to a staff member. Commander Rudy Haas and his colleagues announced winners of the Patriot's Penn Essay contest, whose essays were based on the prompt: "*How are you inspired by America?*" Macopin Middle School 8th grade students Uriel Biran, (3rd place), Natasha Blauvelt (2nd place) and Marco Petrosillo (1st place) were recognized and congratulated by all present. Marco read his essay to the Board and public in attendance.

12th grade student Jilena Hass, was presented her award for her participation in the Voices of Democracy Essay content. This year's prompt was "*What are the greatest attributes of Democracy?*" Students being recognized received a certificate, VFW pens and a monetary award.

Finally, the VFW team presented their VFW Teacher of the Year award to Krista Provost for her years of support in engaging with a collaboration between the VFW and the school district, and for "promoting citizenship education in the classroom and school."



MACOPIN

November 30, 2023—Macopin Middle School makes a Hoodies for Homeless donation

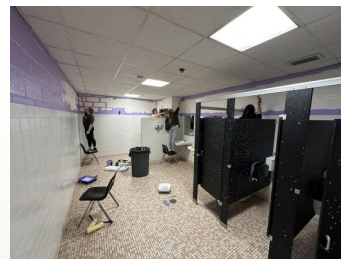
WMHS Child Development Program Brings Smiles!

Preschoolers made elephant toothpaste for jungle week in Science. Preschoolers celebrated Valentine's Day. Child Development made developmental toys for children.



Women's Equity and Empowerment at West Milford High School

Over winter break, the WMWEE (Women's Equality and Empowerment) club as well as AP US History students came in and painted the 4 female bathrooms. The students raised funds for the paint and received donations of supplies. While this was the first stage, the students are now working with Art Honors Society to paint murals and inspirational quotes on the wall. The students are also collaborating with the Green Team and Beautification Club to install hooks on the doors, holders for their phones, and menstruation product boxes in every stall for easy access.



History in the Making

By Dr. Gregory Matlosz

History in the making. Macopin School's Scooter Football program is here. Coach Benz, taking his experience from Marshall Hill School, introduced the program to students and is looking to grow the program for years to come.



More Inside This Issue

Performing Arts	22
Color Guard	24
Grade 5 Bands Visit	24
Culinary & Cakes	24
Athletics	25
Night To Shine	29
District Calendar & Upcoming Events	26
Parent & Community Organizations	30
Board Notes	30
District Calendar	30
Contact Us!	30

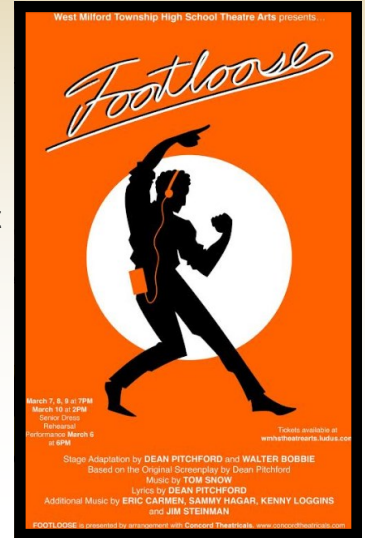
Performing Arts

by Sharon West

West Milford High School Theater will be presenting Footloose! March 7-9 @ 7pm & Sunday, March 10th @ 2pm.

When Ren and his mother move from Chicago to a small farming town, he is prepared for the inevitable adjustment period at his new high school. But he's not prepared for the rigorous local edicts, including a ban on dancing instituted by the local preacher, who is determined to exercise control over the town's youth.

When the reverend's rebellious daughter sets her sights on Ren, her rough-neck boyfriend tries to sabotage Ren's reputation, with many of the locals eager to believe the worst about the new kid. The heartfelt story that emerges pins a father longing for the son he lost against a young man aching for the father who walked out on him. **Tickets can be purchased at <https://wmhstheatrearts.ludus.com/>** We hope to see you there!



West Milford TV Science students presented the **Fall Recognition Assembly** to the entire student body during two assemblies on December 21st, 2023. Students enjoyed a group viewing of the 50-minute student-produced show which featured highlights from the Fall Athletic Season framed within an impressive homage to the 80's high school experience. View it [here](#).

North Jersey Area Band December 9, 2023 and January 13th, 2024. 8th Grade Musicians included: Skylar Dempsey, Emma Dan Philip Stinziano, David Van Tassel. 7th Grade Musicians included: Mage Roush. 3 of the 5 placed High. David VanTassel earned 1st chair Trombone, Philip Stinziano earned the 2nd highest score in percussion, Skylar Dempsey earned 4th chair Flute. Congratulations also to our five Macopin musicians for their outstanding performance at the **North Jersey Area Band Concert at Mount Olive High School on January 13th, 2024.** Their dedication through auditions, rehearsals, and additional repertoire preparation shines through. A big round of applause for their hard work and representation of Macopin with pride and talent. Pictured here, left to right: Mage, Emma, Skylar, David and Philip.

Please join us for our **Annual All District Arts Festival on March 27, 2024, from 6-10PM at West Milford High School.** Performances by the **Band, Chorus, Color Guard, and Theater Arts students**, as well as displays by **K-12 Arts and Technology Education students** will be showcased! The **Empty Bowls** fundraising event will be included this year hosted by **West Milford Art and Culinary Students!** Hope to see you there!

Performing Arts (continued)

Macopin Band and Choral students, led by Miss McPartland, Mrs. Kaczor, Mr. Gramata and Mr. Paccione performed **live on the air for iHeartRadio 102.3 WSUS** on **December 21, 2023**. They sang and played a few holiday favorites for a far-reaching radio audience, with approximately 20 minutes of air time. Festive ugly sweaters, Santa hats and reindeer antlers, unseen by the audience, are pictured here.



Congratulations to all of **Mrs. Burn's Theater Arts students** who competed at the **Speech and Theater Association New Jersey State Governor's Award Theater Competition** on **Saturday, January 6, 2024** at **Montclair State University**.

Students not only competed in multiple acting and singing categories but attended workshops provided by Montclair Department of Theatre and Dance which included stage combat, improvisation, a MT Jazz dance class, Bachelor of Fine Arts audition techniques, lighting design, technical theater and Shakespeare. Kaitlyn Campbell made Finals with her Dramatic Monologue (top 12 in the state), Abigail Wallace and Anna Youngren made Finals in Improvisational Pairs (top 10 in the state) and Bozhena Plotytsya placed 6th in the state with her Comedy Monologue. All students are enrolled in the Theatre Arts Classes at WMHS.



West Milford High School Choral students, led by Mr. Dwight Weaver, performed in the **North Jersey Educators Winter Choral Festival** at **Mt. Lakes High School**, on **November 28**. This is one of several new opportunities to expand their reach with performances this year.



A large number of **High School Band Students** earned positions in New Jersey honor bands this winter. Winning positions in the **North Jersey Area Band** were Anna Koenemund, Sarah Humble, John Paolazzi, Chris Huber, Shayla McPhee, Noelle Treloar, Colin Quirk, Johnson Limos, Nikole Garcia, Matt Evans, Chris O'Mahoney, and Jacob Janis.

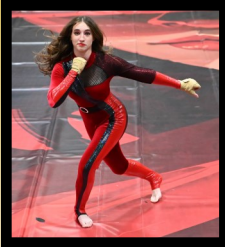
The next round of auditions were for the **All Region Band**, and Colin Quirk, Shayla McPhee, Noelle Treloar, and Chris O'Mahoney all earned places in the band. Colin Quirk and Shayla McPhee also earned places in the **All Region Orchestra**.

The final and most difficult level of auditions was for the **All State Band** and **All State Orchestra**, with Shayla McPhee earning positions in both ensembles, placing her firmly among the best student musicians in the entire state! Congratulations to all of these fine high school musicians!

North Jersey Junior Region Choir, February 10th



WMHS's Highlander Indoor Color Guard



Congratulations to the members of the **Highlander Indoor Color Guard** on their big win at the Hillsborough competition. The WM guard is the highest scoring Scholastic A team in the Mid-Atlantic-Indoor Network circuit so far this season. Excellent job by all students, staff and crew for making this season a huge success.



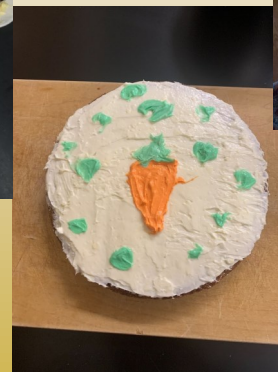
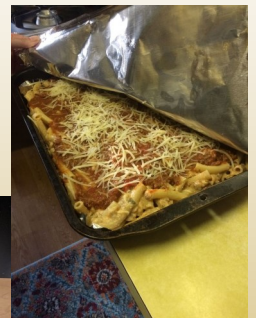
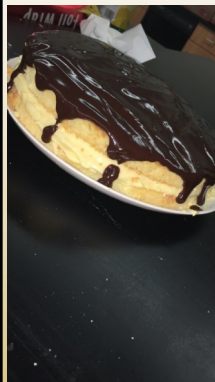
Grade 5 Bands Visit Macopin

Grade 5 Band classes from each elementary school came to Macopin in January for Macopin's music demo. They had the opportunity to see the chorus and our band perform. Grade 5 band students will have the opportunity to join Macopin's grade 6 band program next school year. We are looking forward to continuing growing this great program.



WMHS Culinary & Cakes

In January and February our Culinary classes were in our cakes unit and now we have moved on to starches.



WEST MILFORD ARTS PRESENTS
THE 2024 ALL DISTRICT ARTS FESTIVAL

PERFORMANCES

- BAND PERFORMANCES
- CHORAL PERFORMANCES
- K-12 ART SHOW

6-10 PM
MARCH 27, 2024

"DREAM IN ART"

TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION SHOWCASE
COLOR GUARD
THEATRE ARTS PERFORMANCES

EMPTY BOWLS FUNDRAISING EVENT
HOSTED BY WMHS ARTS - CULINARY STUDENTS

WMHS Athletics Department

by Joe Trentacosta



Colin Menier West Milford HS Wrestling
100 Wins



West Milford Lady Highlander Basketball
Team



Ben Marchetto West Milford HS Wrestling
100 Wins



Indoor Track & Field State Group Meet qualifiers Noah Traverso, Julian Pierre, Colby Scott, Tyler Meier, Chloe Brijbag (Sectional Champion), Madison Freideman, and Ciara Clinton.



West Milford Lady Highlander Basketball
Team



Passaic County Champions
Ciara Clinton - 3200 meter Run
Tyler Meier - High Jump
Noah Traverso - Triple Jump





School Record Breaker Noah Traverso in 200 Dash and the Triple Jump



West Milford Highlander Boys Basketball Team



West Milford - Pequannock - Pompton Lakes Ice Hockey Seniors!



West Milford Bowling Team



Fencing Team



Senior Basketball Night - 2/8/24
Melissa Tessman and Allison Oesterle



Lakeland West Milford Swim Team

West Milford High School Cheerleading

On February 7, 2024, West Milford High School hosted the first ever Passaic County Cheerleading Championship. This was the first time that cheerleading was recognized by Passaic County with a championship competition. There were 11 schools from Passaic County that attended the competition including West Milford, Lakeland, Clifton, Wayne Valley, Wayne Hills, DePaul, Kennedy, Manchester, PCTI, Hawthorne, and Paterson Charter School for Science and Technology. Teams competed head to head and the top 4 scores of the night received Passaic County honors. First place was Lakeland, second place was Wayne Valley, third place was Clifton and West Milford came in fourth place! This was an incredible night for cheerleading in Passaic County. During the competition, all seniors from the teams were recognized. The winner of the competition received the traveling trophy for Passaic County Cheerleading and it is named in honor of JoAnne Poppe, who was an icon in North Jersey and New Jersey Cheerleading for many years.



Ski Racing

Congratulations to Emil Osman for placing 1st in the Men's Varsity Race!!! Placing in the top 20 were Lucas White, Brody Scully and Emma McCook!!!



Athletics Continued

Pickle Ball

Congratulations to sophomores, Nick Bogнар and Jacob Price, from Mrs. Cullen's class on winning the Period #6 Pickleball Tournament during marking period #2! Nick and Jacob will be heading on a field trip in March to play pickleball versus the West Milford Senior Citizens at the WM Recreation Center!

Mrs. Gwinnett's period 1 winners: Cole Czerepak & Evan Melucci (Sophomores)

Mr. Pevny's period 2 winners: Kevin Docwra & Matthew Montena (Sophomores)

Mr. Dougherty's period 3 winners: Tyler Meier & Cole Stillman (Juniors)

Mr. Pevny's period 4 winners: Kyle Gloria & Daxton Keller (Juniors)

Mr. Pevny's period 5 winners: Nicholas Brandao & Christian Martinez (Juniors)

Mr. Dougherty's period 7 winners: Dylan Orofino & Vinny D'Andrea (Juniors)

Mrs. Potzer's period 8 winners: Dominic Lenoir & Jacob Miller (Sophomores)



Unified Basketball

State Championship Tournament 2/17 at Union City High School



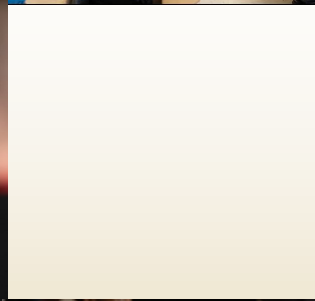
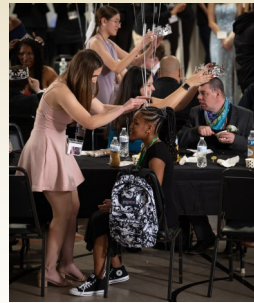
Unified Bowling

State Championship Match 2/27 at Bowlero North Brunswick



Night To Shine Celebration

Many of West Milford teachers, aides, alumni, and students celebrated at the Night to Shine Prom on Friday 2/9/2024. Here are some memorable moments.



Parent Organization Information

- Apshawa PTA meeting, March 21st @ 7:00pm
- Maple Road PTO meeting, March 13th @ 7:00pm
- Marshall Hill PTA meeting, March 19th @ 7:00pm
- Paradise Knoll PTA meeting, March 21st @ 7:00pm
- Upper Greenwood Lake PTA meeting, March 21st @ 6:00pm
- Macopin PTO meeting, February 29th @ 7:00pm
- WMHS PTSO meeting, TBD
- SEPAC meeting, March 13th @ 7:00pm

Visit Your School's Website and the District Calendar for Updates and Information

Read Across West Milford

Family Literacy Nights

Family Math Nights

Book Fairs

Special School Programs

Board of Education Meetings

And many more events!

www.wmtps.org

Highlander Education Foundation Supporting Our Schools



The Highlander Education Foundation , a non-profit organization has formed to support the West Milford Township Public Schools through a variety of fundraising events, sponsorships and committee work, focused on advocating for our schools and our students. HEF, has been meeting regularly to engage the community in discussions and has published its first newsletter called ***Highlander Highlight***, where alumni and staff are featured. The organization attended back-to-school nights and events to inform the school community about their work. The District is looking forward to a long and continuing partnership with the Highlander Education Foundation.

<https://www.highlandereducationfoundation.org/>



District Calendar 2023-2024

March 2024—April 2024

March 18—Professional Development Day, Early Dismissal

March 29—Good Friday, District Closed

April 1, 2024—Easter Monday, District Closed

April 22 to April 26—Spring Break, District Closed



*Look for
our next issue in
April 2024!*

Board Notes

The West Milford Township Public Schools Board of Education is engaged in a search for the next Superintendent of Schools. Please visit our website for the most up-to-date information about our search.

[Superintendent Search 2023-24](#)

Board of Education

- Claire Lockwood, President
- Tara Racano, Vice President
- William Cytowicz
- Teresa Dwyer
- Miranda Jurgensen
- Peter Lippe
- Stephanie Marquard
- Kate Romeo
- Lynda Van Dyk

[*Contact Us!*]

WEST MILFORD TOWNSHIP

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

46 Highlander Drive

West Milford, NJ 07480

Phone: (973) 697-1700

We're on the web! www.wmtps.org