

# Your

# RVC SCHOOLS

# Schools

*Excellence in Education*

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## TO ALL ROCKVILLE CENTRE SCHOOL DISTRICT RESIDENTS

If you believe that your school-age or preschool child may have a disability, please contact

Ms. Jeanne Love, Executive Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services at (516) 255-8928, Ms. Michele Vivona,

Director of Special Education, Secondary Programs and CPSE Chairperson at (516) 255-5666, or Dr. Orly Gadon, Director of Special Education and Districtwide CSE Chairperson at (516) 255-5929.

Newsletter of the Rockville Centre Public Schools  
Volume 43 Number 2 Winter 2022



## A BRILLIANT PERFORMANCE

South Side High School students returned to the stage for a performance of *Twelve Angry Jurors*. The first performance at the school for the 2021-2022 school year, the play lit up the stage with lights and masterful performances. Continued inside.

# STELLAR

## WATSON ENGINEERS GET TO WORK

**As part of an engineering unit with STELLAR** at Watson School, first-grade students flexed their scientific muscles to design their own playgrounds. The lesson, put together by Mrs. Patricia Montemarano and Mrs. Gina Tommolino, was intended to teach the students key concepts in productive teamwork through design and engineering.

*"Every student has different talents, every student brings different talents to the table,"* explained Mrs. Montemarano. *"It's wonderful to see students work together and capitalize on their individual talents and interests."*

*"It was enlightening to see the children work collaboratively to problem solve using their critical thinking skills"* added Mrs. Tommolino.



Left: The class shows off their completed playground.

Right: Tessa and Rebecca examine their monkey bars.



**The students worked in groups to create models** of different pieces of playground equipment. After an introduction to the engineering design process, the students created blueprints of their models. Next, they got to work using supplies such as popsicle sticks, pipe cleaners, straws, and cardboard to construct and erect miniature pieces of equipment.

*"I learned that if I worked by myself that I would be wondering: what should I do?"* said Tessa, one of the students who helped design the monkey bars. Her partner, Rebecca, added *"And I came up with an idea and Tessa liked it, so we worked together to make [the monkey bars]."*

Mrs. Montemarano and Mrs. Tommolino attended Renzulli training which is based on the Schoolwide Enrichment Model. They used principles of this methodology to design this unit and plan future projects.

The playgrounds are displayed in the school library with the hope of bringing questions and excitement from other students. Mrs. Montemarano added, *"It makes the students feel validated to see their work on display."*

### WHAT IS STELLAR?

STELLAR stands for Success, Technology, Enrichment, Library, Literacy, And Research. The program, which is based on the Schoolwide Enrichment Model developed by Dr. Joseph Renzulli, is designed to engage students in exploratory activities, collaborative building, and problem solving, and teach them to seek out expertise from members of the community. Each elementary school employs the program for learning throughout the year, giving students the opportunity to work with computers, build projects together, and more.

# SOURCES OF STRENGTH

## RVC STUDENTS FIND THEIR SOURCES OF STRENGTH

**This year, Rockville Centre Schools partnered with the Sources of Strength program.** Aided by funding from the Ryan Patrick O'Shea Foundation, the program is intended to increase social support and connectedness among students. The program aims to ensure that students have a common language and common strategies that they can use when under duress or in challenging times, and that they feel cared for and are valued members of the school community.

The program started on December 13th, heralded by a video of Ms. Jeanne Love, Executive Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services, together with Karen Burgie and Debbie Cuevas of the Special Education Partners (SEP), reading the book *Ricky, the Rock That Couldn't Roll* which stars a group of rocks helping their friend Ricky to roll down a hill.



Left: The Source Wheel stood available for spinning in the High School Lobby.



Right: Hewitt made an inclusivity wall from paper rocks.

**South Side High School made announcements** going over the eight strengths (below), leading to setting up a Source Wheel in their main lobby. Students and faculty were encouraged to spin the wheel, then write answers to prompts based on their strengths. These written answers were added to a cloth mural for everyone to see their combined strength.

Throughout the District, schools have made announcements about the program and have had students complete activities and worksheets in the classroom, as well as creating murals and projects for the hallways.

Ms. Love, in regards to the goals of the program, said, *"The hope would be that we're going to have our children participate in this program: elementary, middle, and high school...over the course of their education, they're going to develop coping strategies and a deep understanding of the positive aspects of their life, and how to turn to that when they're having difficult times."* She continued, *"...the hope would be that over time kids will develop a school culture, will develop individually...and that when students leave us when they graduate, they'll go into the world with a really strong skillset of how to handle the challenges that life brings."*

### WHAT ARE THE SOURCES OF STRENGTH?

There are eight strengths the program encourages students to engage in: Physical Health, Mental Health, Healthy Activities, Family Support, Positive Friends, Mentors, Spirituality, and Generosity. Students are encouraged to find what is giving them strength in each category, and find all of the ways that they are supported. This is intended to help students through hard times, by helping them to discover their strength. Students can even practice at home! The program recommends playing games, music, and laughing while connecting with friends and family.

# AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

## INFLUENTIAL MATH TEACHER RECOGNIZED BY STUDENTS

### South Side High School students are inducted into the Math Honor Society

**annually** after meeting three criteria: a non-weighted 90 average or 85 weighted average for three years in math; a recommendation from a math teacher; and finally, they must submit an essay about the teacher who influenced them the most in math.

This year, one teacher's name kept popping up in the essays:

**Mrs. Dorothy Gootman (right).**

Mrs. Gootman has worked in the district for over 25 years. During her tenure, she has taught STELLAR, Grades 2-4 and is currently the Math AIS Teacher for for K-5 students at Hewitt School.

*"It was such an honor,"* recounted Mrs. Gootman. *"When colleagues tell you you're doing a great job, it's wonderful, your principals, your family can tell you you're doing a great job, but when you're recognized by your students? It's something a little more special."*

**Mrs. Dorothy Gootman,  
Hewitt Math AIS Teacher**

### **Mrs. Gootman remembered the students who nominated her very well.**

*"...I could name every single one of them. I remember them. I remember them as a class, being very unified as a class, very caring about each other, very competitive as a class...and very motivated."* Out of the group of students that was honored by the Honor Society, ten were in Mrs. Gootman's 3rd Grade class at Watson School.

The advisor to the Math Honor Society Mary Coleman stated, *"I find that most often kids remember teachers - not for any content - but for how they were treated. The teachers honored are fair and caring - they help kids when they need it and always go the extra mile."*

*"First you have to make it fun,"* recounts Mrs. Gootman in regards to how she approaches her classes. *"You have to make it fun for them, you have to have fun, you have to laugh."* She later explained, *"A lot of times in math, there's more than one way to solve a problem, to look at a problem, to approach a problem. So we try to find the strategies that work for individual kids. Not every strategy works for every kid, not every kid approaches a math problem in the same way, and that's okay... ultimately, they just have to find what works for them as a math student."*

# AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

## ACHIEVEMENTS IN ATHLETICS

### SCHOLAR ATHLETES

**South High School was recognized as a Scholar-Athlete Team - School of Distinction**

for the 2020-2021 school year. To qualify for this distinction, 100% of the school's athletic teams had to meet **Scholar-Athlete Team Recognition** during the Fall, Winter, and Spring sports seasons.

The **Scholar-Athlete Teams** included:

Boys and Girls Basketball  
Boys and Girls Cross Country  
Boys and Girls Lacrosse  
Boys and Girls Soccer  
Boys and Girls Swimming and Diving  
Boys and Girls Tennis

Boys Golf  
Girls Cheerleading  
Boys Baseball  
Girls Volleyball  
Boys Wrestling  
Girls Gymnastics  
Boys Football  
Girls Softball



Above, from left to right: Emma Hospodka, Ciara Giannone, Maggie Long, Brady West, Mackenzie Creagh, Emily Iacobellis, Mia Delmond.

Mackenzie Creagh signed with the College of the Holy Cross to play Division 1 Girls Lacrosse.

Mia Delmond signed with Quinnipiac University to play Division 1 Girls Lacrosse.

Ciara Giannone signed with SUNY Albany to play Division 1 Girls Lacrosse.

Emma Hospodka signed with Duquesne University to play Division 1 Girls Soccer.

Emily Iacobellis signed with Cornell University to play Division 1 Girls Lacrosse.

Kiara Kennedy signed with Duke University for Division 1 Swimming.

Maggie Long signed with the University of Pittsburgh to play Division 1 Girls Lacrosse.

Brady West signed with Loyola University to play Division 1 Boys Lacrosse.

### LETTERS OF INTENT

**In November, South Side athletes signed their National Letters of Intent** to play Division 1 Athletics at the collegiate level.

The students signed their letters to the cheers and support of their friends and families during a special event at South Side.

Signing to play at this level is a testament to each athletes' skill, dedication, and pure personal grit. Congratulations to the athletes, and RVC looks forward to your continued success at the college level.

Below, Kiara Kennedy signs her Letter of Intent with Duke University



# AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

## ACHIEVEMENTS IN ATHLETICS

### CHAMPIONS

**The Varsity Boys Soccer Team** ended their season as **Conference Champions**.  
**Coach Patrick Corvetti** was named **Conference Coach of the Year**.



**The Varsity Girls Volleyball Team** ended their season as **Conference Champions**.  
**Coach Cheryl Scalice** was named **Conference Coach of the Year**.



South Side Athletes were celebrated on Spirit Day as they prepared for their State Tournaments.



### Cross Country Champs

**The Boys Cross Country Team** ended their season as **Division and Conference Champions**. Under the leadership of **Senior Captains Kieran Cook and Rob Casey**, the team had their *most successful season in 20 years*, completing a perfect regular season with 13 wins and 0 losses.

**The Girls Cross Country Team** achieved the *coveted triple play* by ending their season as **State Qualifying Division, Conference, and Nassau County Champions**. The team has won **back to back county championships**. Over the past year, they have held an incredible record of **52 wins and 3 losses**, making them the **top team in Nassau County**. **Coaches Christopher Webster and Nicole Tufano** are clear that there is more to this team than victory. *This team is a family*. They work together and make each other *better runners and better humans*.



### Soccer Stars

**The Varsity Girls Soccer Team** ended a successful and rewarding season as **Nassau County and Long Island Champions, and as New York State Finalists**.

The team was full of dynamic and talented players with outstanding leadership of **Captains Emma Hospodka, Cristina LiCalzi, and Emma Madden**. After winning their championships, they extended their season, **winning a hard-fought semifinal game at the New York State Championships** via penalty kicks. The team's *hard work and dedication* paid off with an amazing season.

# AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

## NYS ASSEMBLYWOMAN RECOGNIZES SADD CLUB PRESIDENT

**NYS Assemblywoman Judy Griffin visited South Side Middle School** in October to award a citation to the president of the SADD (*Students Against Destructive Decisions*) Club. **Charlotte**, the club president, led the club in encouraging students to stay drug free during **Red Ribbon Week** by organizing giveaways of bracelets, stickers, and pencils, as well as writing and giving announcements about being drug-free.

The **Red Ribbon Week Campaign** is a yearly program organized by the **National Family Partnership**, one of the nation's leaders in drug prevention and advocacy. The campaign has continued since 1988, and this year's theme was "**Drug Free Looks Like Me**". This theme served as a reminder to our youth that we are all empowered with shaping the communities around us through positivity, bravery, and strength.

The excellent work by the SADD brought a visit from the **Assemblywoman**, who was very excited to meet young **Charlotte** and commend her excellent work with the club before they took a photo together.

The SADD Club continues to support the school and lead the way in community service. Recently, they led a schoolwide service project by sponsoring a donation drive for the **Mary Brennan Inn**. The school managed to collect over **400 items** of food, baby supplies, and toiletries to help the Inn's mission in providing help for those in need in **Nassau County**.



Above Left to Right: Jennifer Monsour, Shelagh McGinn, Charlotte, Jackie Giacone, Judy Griffin

Below Left to Right: SADD Club Members Amaia, Michaela, Charlotte, Aiden, Joe.



### What is the SADD Club?

The SADD Club's mission is to empower and mobilize students and adult allies to engage in positive change through leadership and smart decision-making. This is accomplished by creating an atmosphere of student-led programs and peer-to-peer education. The SADD Club develops and shares prevention programming to encourage healthy decision-making while fostering a sense of inclusion among students and teaching students integrity through leadership.

# FALL EVENTS

## RVC SCHOOLS CELEBRATE THANKSGIVING

During the month of November, RVC Elementary Schools celebrated Thanksgiving in their own ways.



Riverside students bowl for success at the Turkey Challenge.

At Riverside, Students participated in the Turkey Challenge, an event organized with the PTA where students competed in races and obstacle courses and met their new mascot, the Riverside Raptor.

Covert held a gigantic feast with the PTA. With food provided by Ferring's Deli, the students were able to have a fantastic meal before the holiday.

Hewitt held a Turkey Trot with the Hewitt Booster Club to raise money for local families. During P.E., students walked or ran laps for thirty minutes while parents forwarded donations, raising over \$600.

First and second grade students marched through the halls of Wilson. Decked out in Thanksgiving garb and carrying "Gobble Gobble" balloons, the students were applauded by the raucous cheers of their fellow students.



Wilson first and second graders march in their annual Thanksgiving Parade.

Watson students competed in their second annual Turkey Trot. Organized with the PTA, the students got active before the holiday by traveling through the school gym over a Thanksgiving-themed obstacle course. Students swung on ropes over stuffed vegetables and crawled through tunnels, ending by taking a picture with a large inflatable turkey.

## CELEBRATING HISPANIC CULTURE

From September 15th-October 15th, classes learned about Hispanic Culture for Hispanic Heritage Month.

**As students expanded their knowledge** of the Spanish language with FLES (*Foreign Language in the Elementary School*) teachers, further lessons were taught in the schools. Watson students played music with their güiras. Riverside students danced to music from Spanish artists. At Wilson, students made announcements about different Hispanic countries.



Amalia shows off her presentation on her Peruvian and Ecuadorian heritage.

Covert students made presentations about Hispanic figures and culture.

*"Here in Rockville Centre, we have a large population of students whose families or themselves come from Spanish-speaking countries, and it's a great way for them to be able to talk about their culture,"* explained FLES Teacher Freddy Rodriguez.

Mrs. Lynn Woods from Covert added, *"The purpose of any enrichment is just that, it enriches our lives beyond the core subjects that we have every day - to learn about the people around us and the cultures and who we are because America is a melting pot of all cultures."*



# FALL EVENTS

## FALL PLAY EXTRAVAGANZA

### Twelve Angry Jurors

On November 18th, South Side High School premiered *Twelve Angry Jurors* by Reginald Rose, adapted for the stage by Sherman L. Sergel. The play, which featured a cast of 14 actors and 20 crew members, centers on a jury as they decide the fate of a 19-year old man accused of murdering his father. This timeless play explores themes of justice, prejudice, democracy, and standing up for one's ideals. The play was a major success, and parents were excited to see their children perform their timeless tale.



### South Side's Got Talent

On November 5th, South Side Middle School presented their show *South Side's Got Talent*, inspired by *America's Got Talent*. The show, which featured over 50 stars, gave chances for students to show off their singing, dancing, spoken word, and more in a spectacular variety show that delighted everyone in the audience.



## RVC SCHOOLS RAISE MONEY FOR CHARITY



**Covert's Fall FUNd Festival** was put on to raise money for the **Raymar Children's Fund**, an organization that helps provide assistance for local families within the community in need. The festival saw families chowing down on food and candy and competing in games and activities. Kids were able to get their faces painted, play silly-string tag, and join a huge dance circle.

**During the last week** of school before Christmas break, the Wilson student government voted on which organization to donate the proceeds gained from the semester's ice cream sales. They elected to support one group that supports people - **St. Jude Children's Research Hospital**; one that supports animals - the **North Shore Animal League America**; and one that would support the environment - the **Ocean Conservancy**. Each organization received a third of the proceeds as students put democracy in action.





## **Board of Education**

Rockville Centre Union Free School District  
128 Shepherd Street, Rockville Centre, NY, 11570  
516-255-8957

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