



What's Right with Spackenkill!

Spackenkill Union Free School District

A tradition of excellence with a vision for tomorrow

February 24, 2017

Dear Spackenkill Community,

History is again being made at Spackenkill, beginning with our Merit Scholar Finalists, the highest number since 1987 and the most of any high school in our region. And of course a big congratulations to the Boys Basketball Team on their come-from-behind victory last night. I saw the video—what an exciting game! Hats off again to the LEO Club for supporting the PTSA Scholarship and our Youth Against Racism, Gay Straight Alliance, and Student Government Organization for promoting acts of kindness. Well done! Every day I learn something new about Spackenkill, like students exploring mini makerspaces and our partnerships with Marist athletics and our local dental society. I continue to be impressed and overwhelmed with your good works.

Keep it up!

Sincerely,

Mark Villanti, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

National Merit Scholars Make History

We are proud to announce that **Vincent Li, Nathan Liang, Isabel Long, Leah Mozeshtam, Anubhav Shankar,** and **Robert Waxman** have been named Finalists in the 2017 Competition for the National Merit Scholarship Awards. They are among the 16,000 Semifinalists named in September 2016 who met the National Merit Scholarship Program requirements to advance to finalist standing. Spackenkill High School has not had this many finalists in the Merit Scholarship competition since 1987!

The National Merit Scholarship Program is an academic competition for recognition and scholarships that began in 1955. High school students enter the program by taking the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®) and by meeting published program entry and participation requirements. There are approximately 855 finalists in all of New York State. The finalists are



Above left: Pictured from left to right are Assistant Principal Dr. Patricia Tripken; **Robert Waxman; Nathan Liang; Vincent Li; Isabel Long;** Guidance Counselor Rebecca Chaoussoglou-Rotter, **Leah Mozeshtam,** and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mark Villanti. Above right: Superintendent Mark Villanti with finalist **Anubhav Shankar.**



in the running for corporate, National Merit, and college-sponsored scholarships that will be awarded this spring and summer. Congratulations to the students and their parents: Joyce Zhang Li and Wenjie Li, Juiling Lu and Shurong Liang, Margaret Ronsheim and John Long, Anna and David Mozeshtam, Puja and Shailendra Shankar, and Wendy and Stuart Waxman.

PTSA MEETING TO DISCUSS CAPITAL PROJECT

PTSA President Nichole McSpedon would like to remind the community that there will be a meeting on Thursday, **March 2 at 7 pm in the Spackenkill High School Library.** For those of you who missed the last Board meeting on February 21, which included a discussion of the High School facilities and track and field, this is a follow-up opportunity to meet with our Facilities Director, Dave Downes, and School Business Manager, Michele Moloney, to discuss the scope of the project and offer your commentary.

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Boys Basketball Team Wins League Trophy



Above: The Spackenkill Boys Basketball Team captured the Mid-Hudson Athletic League (MHAL) Championship on February 23, defeating New Paltz 55-54. It was the first basketball league championship for the Spartans since 1999. Congratulations to the players and coaches! [CLICK HERE FOR TWITTER LINK](#)

LEO Club Supports PTSA Scholarship Mailing



LEO Club members held an envelope stuffing party on February 16 for the annual PTSA Dollars for Seniors Scholarship mailing, *above*. They stuffed over 3,000 envelopes for a community mailing that residents should begin receiving in their mailboxes in early March. Thank you Adam Hammond, LEO Club Advisor, and Erin Ruppert, Dollars for Seniors Chairperson, for organizing the event and making it go so smoothly.

HS Clubs Practice Random Acts of Kindness



Above: Student Government members served free hot chocolate to students. Pictured (left to right) are **Corrado Mazzarelli**, SGO President **Caitlin Speranza** and **Mya Tucker-Cesar**. Above right: Affirmations on student lockers send a positive message.

Student Government Organization (SGO), LEO Club, Youth Against Racism (YAR) and the Gay Straight Alliance clubs collaborated to plan activities for Random Acts of Kindness week, February 13-16, at Spackenkill High School. The clubs made special announcements and placed posters throughout the school to promote kindness activities during the week. On Tuesday, Valentine's Day, all staff were treated to candy roses made

by the SGO students, SGO also taped positive affirmations to student lockers. LEO Club organized music to play between periods. Drama Club sponsored Singing Valentines, so some lucky individuals were serenaded by students. On Wednesday YAR distributed black and white ribbons to remind students to stand up against racism. On Thursday, SGO hosted a free hot chocolate station in the cafeteria for any student who posted a positive affirmation or compliment on the wall about friends, family, and staff. Thank you to Joann Klein and Kim Sottile, SGO Co-Advisors, for helping to make it happen!

District Installs Eco-Friendly Water Fountains



Above: Water fountain at Hagan displays the number of plastic bottles eliminated through use of the new water dispensing system.

At the beginning of the 2016-17 school year, the district installed fountains in all four schools that dispense filtered water. Students and staff refill their water bottles from the fountains rather than using disposable plastic. At last count, the water fountains have saved over 40,000 bottles district-wide! Here's the breakdown:

- 2,459 at Nassau Elementary School
- 14,245 at Hagan Elementary School
- 10,018 at Todd Middle School
- 16,212 at the two High School fountains

Todd Students Explore Hands-on Learning

A unique project at Todd spearheaded by teacher Elyse Joy and librarian Ms. Cunningham has resulted in “makerspaces” popping up in the library and in Mrs. Joy’s classroom. Students come on their lunch hours to explore different media. Pixel art experimentations and studies in polymers, pixel art, herpetology, conchology, and botany are all in the mix—not to mention Rubik’s cubes.

“We are trying to generate interest by creating mini makerspaces throughout the school,” said Mrs. Joy.



Students work with polymers (top) and pixel art (bottom).



Left: Todd Student Government recognizes Black History Month with a bulletin board in the lobby.

Happy Tooth Returns to Nassau

On Friday, February 24, The Dutchess County Dental Society Players presented a skit about the importance of good toothbrushing habits to the students of Nassau Elementary School. Characters in the skit included Happy Tooth, the Tooth Fairy, and Dr. Feel Good, who carried a giant toothbrush and talked about daily dental routines.



Clockwise from top left: Happy Tooth greets the audience. Dr. Feel Good talks about the importance of brushing. Teaching assistant Debbie Burr, monitor Michele Brenner, School Social Worker Tracie Phillips, and teacher Colleen Drummond lead students in a song about good brushing habits. The narrator talks about healthy foods.

Marist Athletes Model Important Life Skills



The Marist Mentor Program (formerly Project Mobile) enables fourth and fifth grade boys to learn the importance of practicing effective study habits while also participating in sports. Run by Physical Education teacher Tim Molon, the program takes place after school. The Marist Football Team sends four to five athletes per session; five sessions will be held throughout the spring. “The athletes help them with their homework and then we do a group activity,” said Mr. Molon. “They also talk to the kids about balancing academics and sports, positive role models, and what it takes to become a Division 1 athlete.” Thank you to Marist College for sending athletes for this wonderful program. Stay tuned for a story on the girls’ program!



Mission:

Inspired by a tradition of excellence and a spirit of continuous improvement, the Spackenkill School District will provide all of our students with the academic and social skills necessary to pursue their goals and become responsible citizens in an interdependent global community.

Please email newsletter submissions and ideas to Mary Forsell at mary.forsell@sufsdny.org

Issues of the newsletter are available on the Spackenkill website:

www.spackenkillschools.org/district_newsletter_archive

Vision:

All Spackenkill graduates will be lifelong learners who are inspired to pursue their dreams and contribute to the global society.