



What's Right with Spackenkill! December 15, 2017

A tradition of
excellence with a
vision for tomorrow

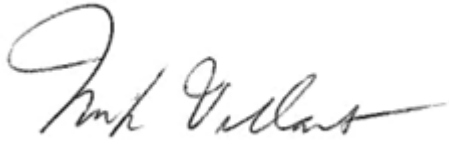
Dear Spackenkill Community,

So Dr. Villanti, what did you enjoy this week at Spackenkill? The weeks before the holidays often feel like a blur, as we prepare for hosting family, traveling, shopping, or cooking. This week I hit the pause button when I attended two middle school concerts. Listening to the music and watching the proud performances of our students and teachers allowed me to soak in all the positive energy of the holidays for what seemed like the first time. Thank you Music Department!

Officer Hamel will be working through January 11th. The District would like to thank him for his service and also welcome Officer Kilfoyle. Chris, you will be greatly missed. There were many other inspiring activities this week. You may not be able to tell from the photos, but there was a great turnout of senior citizens to the Todd breakfast. Congratulations championship athletes! I'm glad that you are featured with your teammates. None of us accomplish very much without the support of others. And I appreciate Mary Forsell for the Spotlight on Alumni. Ka Dooley and her family must be very proud of what she has accomplished. It's also great to think that some of our young violinists from the music concerts might stand on stage one day and perform before a national audience, as with our alumni appearing on *Jimmy Fallon!*

I'm personally very grateful to all the groups who have collected food or gifts for families in need. When I think of what we want to see in our graduates, somewhere at the top of the list has to be the word *altruism*. These giving activities reinforce that value. Have a great weekend even if it means last-minute shopping.

Sincerely,



Mark Villanti, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools

SRO Retiring After 12 Years

School Resource Officer Chris Hamel has announced his retirement after 28 years of public service with the Town of Poughkeepsie Police Department, including 12 years as Spackenkill SRO. His last official day as a police officer will be January 10, 2018.

"During my time at Spackenkill, I have had the greatest educational opportunity of a lifetime working with the administration, faculty, staff, and, most of all, the students," Officer Hamel wrote in an email to staff. "Thank you for the memories, the opportunities, and the friendships."

Police Officer Corey Kilfoyle, who is a certified SRO, has been assigned to the district. Officer Hamel is helping him make the transition. We wish Officer Hamel all the best as we welcome Office Kilfoyle!



Officer Hamel with (from left) SHS Principal Steve Malkischer, School Business Administrator Michele Moloney, and Board President Tom Keith



Officer Hamel (right) with new Spackenkill SRO Corey Kilfoyle

Update Your Contact Preferences

On Thursday, December 14, Spackenkill Schools had a 2-hour delay. We hope you received communication regarding the 2-hour delay via phone, email, and/or text.

If you did not receive any communication, please verify your contact information either on the Parent Portal, or by checking with your child's school.

If you would like to further customize your contact information so you are only contacted on a particular phone or email address, please sign up for a SchoolMessenger account.

[Click here for more information on SchoolMessenger.](#)

Senior Citizens Breakfast Draws a Crowd

At the Senior Citizens Breakfast on December 1, presented by Todd Student Government Organization, every seat was full as the guests enjoyed a homemade breakfast. Students entertained the crowd with jokes, dancing, and musical performances. Thank you to adviser Mrs. Vazquez and the entire SGO!



Student Government serves breakfast.



Students entertain the group.

Top Athletes Recognized

The Poughkeepsie Journal announced its 2017 lineup of All-Stars. Liz Schwoerer has been named Field Hockey Goalkeeper of the Year. Caitlin Speranza is on the First Team of Soccer All-Stars. In addition, Anilee Sher has been

*named Volleyball Player of the Year!
Congratulations to these deserving seniors!*



Liz Schwoerer with field hockey teammates



Caitlin Speranza with soccer teammates



*Anilee Sher (seated in front row, third from left)
with volleyball team members*

Alumni Corner

Spotlight on Kate Dooley

Spackenkill alumnus Dr. Kate Dooley, class of 2002, is a senior member of the LIGO team (short for Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory) that recently announced that for the first time scientists have been able to detect

gravitational waves and light from two neutron stars colliding 130 billion light years away.



Pictured from left to right: Kathy Prisco, Amy Matts, Kate Dooley, and Roberto Romani in April 2016, when the scientist visited Spackenkill. When Dr. Dooley was a student at Spackenkill High School, Mrs. Prisco and Mrs. Matts were her science teachers, while Mr. Romani was her art teacher, as well as an adviser to her Odyssey of the Mind club. In April 2016, Dr. Dooley paid a special visit to Spackenkill and presented "Gravitational Waves: Listening to Black Holes Collide" just after the team's first big announcement that they had detected gravitational waves for the first time, proving Einstein's theory of relativity. Dr. Dooley is currently a professor of physics at the University of Mississippi.

To commemorate the recent discovery, the following students from Amy Matts's AP Physics Class put together questions for Dr. Dooley, herself a former student of Mrs. Matts: Isaiah Mercer, India Adolfsson, Jeremy Webster, Corrado Mazzerelli, Saqib Ajmain, Samuel Chen, Andrew Wu, Yan Lam Ko, Karthik Dusi, John Conti, Maria Barefoot, Sahshe Gerard, and Jessica Cohen.

Q&A WITH KATE DOOLEY

HOW DID SPACKENKILL MAKE YOU INTO WHO YOU ARE TODAY?

I really have to give a huge amount of credit to all of the excellent teachers I had and who continue to have such a huge influence on the path that I've picked, from elementary school all the way to high school. The teachers were such an inspiration for their own hard work and demonstrating dedication to their jobs--simply their enthusiasm for the particular subjects they were teaching and the way that they would pay attention to us as individual students. That's something that I strive to now give back, being a teacher myself.

IF YOU WEREN'T STUDYING ASTRONOMY, NOW WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING TODAY?

As a kid, I always thought I would want to be a medical doctor. I spent some time in HS following around a couple of my friends' parents and decided I didn't want to have to talk with so many different people all day long. It turns out my job now involves a lot of that, too, but I've also changed. I've become much more comfortable socially and with who I am, so if I had to make a change, I think I could imagine going back to the idea of being a physician. I like inspiring and helping people.

WHEN DID YOU FIRST DISCOVER YOUR LOVE FOR PHYSICS?

That would have been in junior year of high school when I took physics. I didn't really know what it was beforehand. I was always somebody who liked math and science so it was a natural fit in that sense. What really made me excited, especially getting into Mrs. Matts's AP Physics class senior year, is that all of a sudden there was an application for all of this math we had learned and were

learning, for example in Mrs. Pupko's AP Calculus class. The idea that I could use all the math I'd been learning to explain how the world works blew me away. It was fun to discover the connections between subjects.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE FROM THE INTERVIEW WITH DR. DOOLEY](#)

Alumni Musicians Play on National Television

Spackenkill alumni Joanna Mattrey and Amanda Bailey just performed on the "Jimmy Fallon Show" as part of the band for SZA. They both play violin and also perform regularly with Chance the Rapper (you may have seen them on "SNL" as well). Orchestra teacher Kim Valentine brought their television appearances to our attention, as Amanda was once her student. [Click on this link to their performance this week and enjoy!](#)

FAIHR Focuses on Venezuela

In recognition of International Human Rights Day, FAIHR (Spackenkill's human rights club) sponsored a talk on the Venezuelan Crisis on December 14. Mr. Martin Charwat, an expert on Latin American affairs and the former president of the Mid-Hudson Valley chapter of the World Affairs Council, led the talk. A large turnout of students and staff watched an introductory video about Latin America and its history of political revolutions. Mr. Charwat then presented a profile of Venezuela, noting that the country is about six times larger than Georgia and roughly twice the size of California, with a high literacy rate and mostly urban population. Despite Venezuela having the highest reserves of oil of any country in the world, there is an economic crisis in the country, with long lines for food and medicine. Students and staff asked many questions after the presentation. Thank you to Mr. Charwat—whose son and daughter are Spackenkill alumni—for presenting the talk and FAIHR

Co-advisers Jim Daley and Andrew Mosca for making it possible. [Learn more about the Mid-Hudson Chapter of the World Affairs Council by clicking here.](#)



Martin Charwat discusses the economic crisis in Venezuela.



Students and staff watch a short film on Latin America.

HS Student Government Stocks Food Pantry



The students of the Spackenkill HS Student Government recently completed their annual canned food drive under the direction of adviser Joann Klein. They collected over 500 items and donated the goods to the food pantry at Dutchess Outreach on Friday, December 8th. Mia Eng Kohn, Lynore Shaffer, and Marcella Breglia are shown above organizing the collected food.

Music Class Is a Blast at Nassau

Kody Andreas's music classes at Nassau are fast-paced and fun! In these photos, students from Ms. Fyffe's first grade developed their musical skills by practicing a steady beat to a song from *Moana*, learned about the difference between singing piano (soft) and forte (loud), decoded tonal patterns using solfège (singing) syllables and hand signs, accompanied a song they learned ("Snail, Snail") on the xylophone, and even outwitted the trolls from *Peer Gynt* as they rescued treasure from The Hall of the Mountain King by expressing the song of the same name through movement — all in 40 minutes! We are fortunate to have this new teacher with to inspire students.



Singing with their teacher



Moving to Peer Gynt



Guessing which note combinations a student is going to choose--no peeking!



Accompanying "Snail, Snail" on the xylophone

Pure Genius!



Back in the November 17 issue of this newsletter, we showed students in Mrs. Joy's makerspace at Todd in the process of replicating a computer pattern using hundreds of Rubik's cubes to generate the face of Albert Einstein. One month later, the project is done and displayed proudly in Mrs. Joy's classroom.

Middle School Concerts Spread Holiday Cheer

This week, Todd Middle School musical talent took the stage at Spackenkill High School's Woolley Auditorium.



Mrs. Franca conducts the orchestra.



Seventh and eighth grade chorus sings out.



Mrs. Burgess conducts sixth grade band.



Mrs. Berube leads sixth grade chorus.

Todd Students Harvest and Prepare Meal

Students in Mrs. Rogers's and Ms. Ott's classes enjoyed a special treat in the Todd Dining Hall kitchen on Thursday. Using basil they grew themselves, the students partnered with

Lisa French, Director of Food and Nutrition Services, to follow a recipe for pesto sauce. Everyone was offered a taste of the pesto on crispy bread and agreed it was delicious! Mrs. French led the students in a discussion of different ways to prepare and use basil, perhaps with other herbs or spinach and with various kinds of oils. Today, they used the pesto in a garbanzo bean salad, which they shared with the entire Todd community.



Mrs. French hands out pesto on bread.



Students enjoy samples.

Craft Time!



Students in Mrs. Strapec's second grade enjoyed warming up with a fun winter craft this week. Thank you to the parent helpers who came into help the students with this enjoyable activity.

Thinking of Others



Kindergarten classes at Nassau recently donated shoeboxes filled with care items to a shelter in the Town of Poughkeepsie operated by Hudson River Housing (HRH). The shelter is always filled at this time of year and can take in approximately 60 guests. Receiving these boxes is a special treat for the guests, many of whom do not have any personal items to call their own. It is also encouraging for them to know that others are thinking about them during the holiday season. Many thanks for Principal Ferrarone, Ms. Drummond, generous families, and parent volunteer Sarah Seifert, who coordinated the donations.

To learn more about HRH's services, visit www.hudsonriverhousing.org.

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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.

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

Please submit story ideas to mary.forsell@sufsdny.org

Issues of the newsletter are available on the [Spackenkill website:](http://www.spackenkillschools.org/district_newsletter_archive)
www.spackenkillschools.org/district_newsletter_archive

