

Please see flyer(s) that might be of interest:

[Guardian Coat Drive](#)

Immigrant Families Support Group [\(English Version\)](#) [\(Spanish Version\)](#)

[Screenagers](#)

[Grace Pumpkin Parade](#)



*What's Right with Spackenkill!*

September 27, 2019



*A tradition of excellence  
with a vision for tomorrow*

Dear Spackenkill Community:

I'm writing to inform the public that the Spackenkill Union Free School District has filed litigation against the New York State Education Department (NYSED). Those of you who have attended Board meetings know that the Superintendent has said several times that he has been conferring with NYSED officials about receiving promised building aid, not for our current capital project but for the high school project that goes back to 2009. Please read the "Statement Regarding Legal Action" posted on the district website ([spackenkillschools.org](http://spackenkillschools.org)).

Board members and the Superintendent have lobbied in Albany. We have met with our elected officials and have even gone so far as to talk to the Governor's office. On the advice of our attorneys, due to the pending litigation, we can't expand on that too much here, but wanted to let you know that we have exhausted every possibility to take care of this problem. Our last resort is to file litigation.

This is a complex issue. We expect many in our community to have questions and comments, and the Board wants to hear them. Please send those questions directly to us at [spackboe@sufsdny.org](mailto:spackboe@sufsdny.org). We will keep the community informed by posting our responses to frequently asked questions on our website.

This takeback that NYSED is implementing will go away if the Governor signs a bill that Senators Serino/Harckham and Assemblywoman Barrett have sponsored this past year. If the Governor signs the bill by December 31st, this problem will be resolved. If not, we have planned for this possibility, so it will have minimal short-term effect on this year's budget.

[Please contact the Governor's office using a letter template for either email or U.S. mail on our website.](#) Let the Governor know that this exorbitant penalty is unfair to our students and community and would affect our ability to maintain the high standards for which Spackenkill is known. The loss of state aid would impact our academic, athletic, and artistic programs, as well as the safety and security of our students and staff.

***We need to have our voices heard. The Spackenkill community must speak up! The louder the voice, the more attention it gets—and we want the Governor's attention. We urge the community, staff, and students to continually contact the Governor as many times as possible (even daily) until this critical issue is resolved. Please take action ASAP, whether by email, mail, or phone (518-474-8390). We're committed to resolving this issue, and as your elected representatives, we urgently need your help.***

Sincerely,



Thomas Keith, Jr.  
Board President

Dear Spackenkill Community,

There are inflection points in history. Today we sit at an inflection point in the history of our district. As we pursue litigation against the NYS Education Department, I am reminded of President Lincoln's words to the 166th Regiment of Ohio at a low point in the Civil War: "The Nation is worth fighting for, to secure such an inestimable jewel."

As your superintendent, I will continue fighting for our district against the draconian policy makers in Albany and we must prevail. Please read the district Statement Regarding Legal Action below. Feel free to ask questions to remain informed and join us in this effort by writing a letter to Governor Cuomo. Thank you.

My best,



Mark Villanti, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

**STATEMENT REGARDING LEGAL ACTION  
FROM SPACKENKILL UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT**

The Spackenkill Union Free School District learned at the end of the 2018-2019 school year, through official correspondence from the NYS Education Department (SED), that SED has decided to take back millions of dollars in state building aid already provided to the District based on an alleged failure to file paperwork on-time in 2013. The Board of Education is steadfast in its belief that the proper paperwork was timely filed and that this penalty is the result of poor communication and poor recordkeeping on the part of SED. If no action is taken to rectify this situation, the approximately \$5.5 million penalty will be assessed over a ten-year period, costing Spackenkill taxpayers several hundred thousand dollars in tax increases annually.

The District has been working with Senator Sue Serino and Assemblywoman Didi Barrett to resolve this matter through legislation. Near the end of the legislative session, the Senate and Assembly each unanimously passed an amnesty bill which would eliminate the District's penalty (S.1239/A.4069). To date, the Governor has not signed the bill. If the bill is signed by Governor Cuomo, as similar bills have been for Hendrick Hudson, North Syracuse, Newburgh, and Chester school districts, this matter will be resolved. Unfortunately, it is not clear what the Governor's intentions are, and the District's time to bring litigation to challenge SED's improper decision will expire at the end of the month.

Faced with this uncertainty, the Board of Education believes that it must protect the financial interests of the District. It authorized the Superintendent to file a lawsuit against the Commissioner of Education to contest SED's unfair decision. We have engaged the firm of Whiteman Osterman & Hanna LLP from Albany, NY as special counsel to represent us in this matter and, as of today, the firm filed the lawsuit. Although we are awaiting the action of the Governor and remain hopeful that he will intervene by signing the amnesty bill as he has done around the State, we take our fiduciary duties to the taxpayers of the District very seriously and could not risk losing our chance to seek a judicial remedy of SED's unfair and flawed decision.

We urge members of the Spackenkill community to write the Governor and urge him to sign our bill. Spackenkill should be treated equitably, like the districts cited above.

Please urge the Governor to sign bill S.1239/A.4069.

Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor  
State Capitol  
Albany, NY 12224  
(518) 474-8390

**Take Action!**



[Please click here to send an email or a letter to Governor Cuomo regarding signing Bill S.1239/A.4069.](#)

**SHS Senior Competes Internationally**



SHS senior Mason Moskowitz competed this summer in the 15th European Maccabi Games in Budapest, Hungary. The Olympic-style games, which celebrate athletes of the Jewish faith, drew competitors from around the world. Mason competed in fencing, both individually and on an American team, earning a bronze in the junior individual event and gold and a bronze in team events. He competed against fencers from Poland, Sweden, Great Britain, Ukraine, and Germany. Mason is a two-time Academic All-American Award winner with USA Fencing and received its prestigious Spirit of Sport Award for dedication and commitment to the local fencing community. At Spackenkill, Mason is a member of LEO Club and Yearbook Club. He is also a bass player in String Ensemble and Jazz Band. We asked Mason about how his fencing career developed and where it's going.

**When did your interest in fencing begin? What do you love about it, as opposed to other sports?**

I first started fencing when I was 10 when I had a fencing birthday party at the Phoenix

Center. The thing I love about fencing is that it's so unique and I love the physical yet mental usage in the sport.

**How did you qualify for the Games?**

I qualified for the games after first signing up and then being selected based on my prior fencing results and rating.

**At the Games, how many teammates did you have?**

The American delegation sent about 300 people and about 23 fencers. I am keeping in touch with fencers from the group and we meet up at regional and national tournaments a lot, so we get to talk then.

**How did you train for the Games?**

My training involves fencing for 15 to 20 hours a week with the addition of going to the gym and running on a regular basis.

**Now that you're a senior, are there any academic majors you're leaning toward for the future?**

I am looking at majors in the medical field, like nursing. I am also interested in engineering.

**Can you comment on how your academic preparation at Spackenkill has prepared you for success at the Games?**

I really appreciate the teaching staff's support with my achievements and helping me balance my schedule.

**What's your future in fencing?**

I plan to fence in college. I am looking at Brandeis, Cleveland State, NJIT, Wayne State, NYU. I hope to be a part of future Maccabi Games.

For more information, go to <https://www.maccabiusa.com/event/2019-european-maccabi-games/>



Above, clockwise from top left: Mason (far right) with teammates, posing with the Junior Men's Sabre, displaying gold and bronze medals, in full fencing gear.

### ***Young Artists Selected for State-wide Exhibit***

Artwork by Elsa Poolman (grade 1) and Bella Yao (grade 5) will be on display at the New York State School Boards Association Conference (NYSSBA) in Rochester on October 24th and 25th. The exhibit, to take place at the Riverside Convention Center, is cosponsored by NYSSBA and the New York State Art Teachers Association (NYSATA). There will be a special viewing for student artists, their families, and art teachers on the evening of the 25th. Congratulations to Elsa and Bella as well as to art teacher Sharon Ciccone, who is also the NYSATA President!



Above left: Artwork by Elsa Poolman.



Above right: Artwork by Bella Yao.



Above left: Elsa Poolman. Above right: Bella Yao.

### Student Achieves Eagle Scout Rank



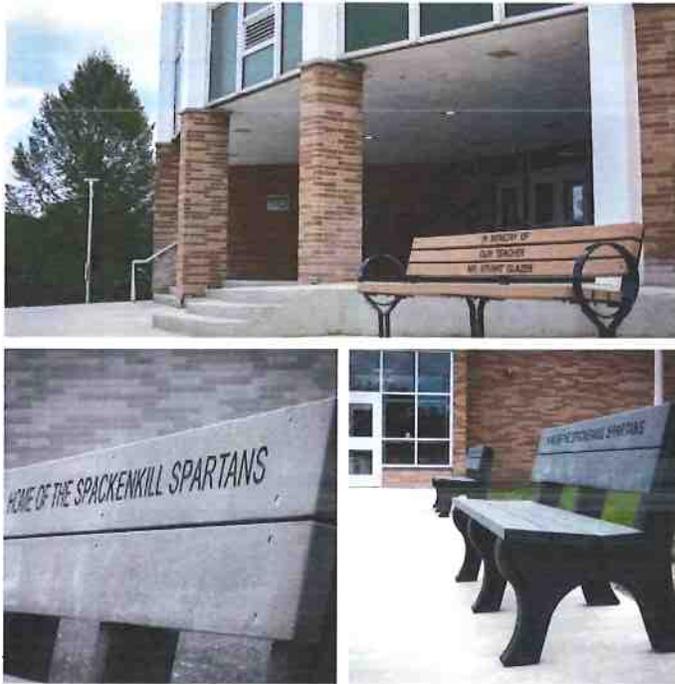
Sophomore Dustin Burgess recently earned the rank of Eagle Scout from Pleasant Valley Troop 33. His Eagle project was done at the Salt Point Fire House, where he built a fence, laid two concrete pads, and assembled benches to put on the concrete. Congratulations, Dustin!

### New Benches Donated to HS

Anyone who voted this week at the high school would have noticed that there are beautiful new benches outside. "Student Government Organization [SGO] paid for two of the benches but really as gifts from classes of 2009 and 2013," explains school social worker Joann Klein (currently at Nassau and Todd). Both Ms. Klein and guidance counselor Kathleen DeFrest were advisers for the SHS classes of 2009 and 2013.

There is also a new bench near the high school entrance, courtesy of the class of 2015, whose advisers were Kristin Oakley and Despi Stathidis (now retired). Mr. Glazer was a Todd Middle School social studies teacher for more than 30 years. His dedication to Spackenkill made him a force that shaped the district over decades. His leadership and service extended beyond the classroom, as evidenced by years as an active and reserve officer in the United States Marine Corps, his presidency of the Spackenkill Teachers Association, his mentoring of students as well as new teachers, and his efforts guiding Todd's Odyssey of the Mind team to a world championship. Even in retirement, Mr. Glazer came back to speak with students about his military service during Veterans Day programs.

Thank you to facilities director Dave Downes for doing such a nice job installing the benches.



### *Flu Guide for Parents*

Please visit the following links to learn more about the flu

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/family/flu-guide-for-parents-2018.pdf> (English)

[https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/spanish/flu\\_guide\\_parents\\_flyer\\_sp.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/spanish/flu_guide_parents_flyer_sp.pdf) (Spanish)

### *Clinic Planned*

**Flu PREVENTION**  
THINGS YOU CAN DO TO AVOID CATCHING AND SPREADING THE FLU  
Source: CDC.GOV

**Get Vaccinated**  
144.2 million flu vaccines were delivered in 2013.

**Wash your Hands**  
Critical for disease control recommendations. For at least 20 secs.

**Sanitize**  
all commonly used objects and surfaces.

**Catch your Coughs**  
in a tissue or sleeve.

**Spackenkill School District**  
in conjunction with  
**Rite Aid Pharmacy**  
will be offering a flu vaccine clinic for  
children ages 5 and up  
and  
adults  
On

**Thursday, October 3, 2019**  
**5:00pm to 7:00pm**  
in the  
**High School Health Office**

**Contact**  
Elizabeth Giancaspro RN  
Spackenkill High School School Nurse  
845-463-2043  
[elizabeth.giancaspro@sufsdny.org](mailto:elizabeth.giancaspro@sufsdny.org)

To schedule an appointment so that we have enough vaccines.  
Most insurances are accepted.

### Todd Offers Many Clubs & Activities

Student clubs held lunchtime signups at Todd this week. Environmental Club, Drama Club, Peer Mediation, Chess Club, and Art Club are just a few examples of clubs seeking new members. New this year is a crochet initiative of Mrs. Brenner and Mrs. Vila. Students will learn how to make a simple scarf for themselves. After they learn the basics, they will be encouraged to make scarves for those in need in the community. Students seemed eager to take advantage of the many opportunities!



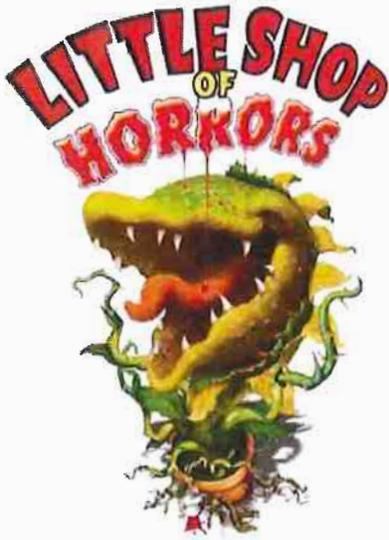
## Theater Day

Last Saturday, September 21st, Theater Day took place at Beacon High School. The free all-day event was co-hosted by Spack Onstage, Beacon Players, and Beacon Performing Arts Center. Students from middle school on up enjoyed performance and technical workshops. Spackenkill Superintendent Dr. Mark Villanti provided opening remarks.



## Spack Onstage Presents...

Mark your calendar for Spack Onstage's production of *Little Shop of Horrors* on November 8th, 9th and 10th! *Little Shop of Horrors* is a horror/comedy rock musical with music by Alan Menken and lyrics and a book by Howard Ashman. The story follows a hapless florist shop worker who raises a plant that feeds on human blood and flesh. The musical is based on the low-budget 1960s black comedy film *The Little Shop of Horrors*. The music, composed by Menken in the style of early 1960s rock and roll, doo-wop, and early Motown, includes several well-known tunes, including the title song, "Skid Row (Downtown)," "Somewhere That's Green," and "Suddenly, Seymour." Stay tuned for ticket information!!!



15 Croft Road, Poughkeepsie, NY

(845) 463-7800

**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](mailto:mary.forsell@sufsdny.org)

