Dear Spackenkill Community,

Happy holidays to everyone! This time of year is both wonderful and hectic, as we balance shopping, cooking, and the many family and community festivities around the holiday. As you review this newsletter, you will see many excited faces in celebration of the holidays, but if you visited each school today (as I did), you would have observed an orderly and productive school day. Thank you, administrators, teachers, support staff, and our students, for striking a balance between learning and celebration.

The first group of photos depicts our Leo Club preparing holiday offerings for families in need. Many people do not realize that more than 25 percent of our families at Spackenkill qualify for economic assistance and struggle sometimes to meet their financial obligations. So the efforts across the district and the community to help others are extremely worthwhile. We are so proud of the high school Leo Club that supports our school community.

Just a reminder that school reopens on Monday, January 6th. On behalf of the District Office and Board of Education, we are grateful to be part of Spackenkill and wish you a enjoyable family break!

My best,

Mark Villanti, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Leo Club Makes Holidays Bright

It's a Leo Club tradition to "adopt" local families and help with their holiday needs. The club set up Giving Trees in all the schools and asked for new items (specified by diamonds on the trees, pictured at left) and gifts of cash or gift cards to grocery and department stores. The Adopt a Family program is designed to provide new basic necessities for growing children, from socks to PJs, as well as fun gifts. Parents are also included in the gifting. On Wednesday of this week, high school students went shopping for families, while others sorted the donations (right). The Town of Poughkeepsie PBA works with the club to distribute to adopted families. Thank you to Adam Hammond, School Counselor and Leo Club Advisor, for always making sure that this program succeeds.

Virtual Visits

In 6th Grade Social Studies classes, students used Google Goggles to visit faraway places. They are amazed by the sights of the Nile River Valley, the Great Pyramid of Giza, and the Great Sphinx.

Spartan Singer

Nassau 2nd grader Jovie Devitt sang the "National Anthem" before the Varsity Boys Basketball Game on Thursday night. She was a big hit!
Last week, the High School Winter Concert featured an amazing array of talent. Concert Band, String Ensemble, Spackapella, Chamber Orchestra, C'orus, Jazz Band, and Concert Choir all performed lively musical selections. Kudos to musical directors Victor Catanzaro, Holden Malorana, and Marissa Kaczynski for great performances.

Click here to view the High School Winter Concert Program.

Above: Some highlights of the evening. In the bottom photo, Chamber Orchestra plays "Thriller," accompanied by dancers.

On Monday, students performed an In-School Concert at Nassau. Led by Kody Andreas, the second grade sang an African song, followed by Concert Band and Gold Strings, under the direction of Pennie Burgess and Kim Valentine, respectively. The students reprised holiday songs for Christmas and Hanukkah that they performed at Hagan's In-School Concert. The Fourth and Fifth Grade Choristers treated students and staff to some playful holiday songs.

That evening, Elementary Concert #2 featured Silver Strings, Concert Band, Gold Strings, and the Hagan 4th and 5th Grade Choristers. Everyone enjoyed the sounds of the season.

Click here to view the Elementary Concert #2 Winter Program.
Top: Moments from Elementary Concert #2. Bottom: Scenes from the Nassau In-School Concert. The audience was very appreciative.

The Gift of Music

Mrs. Kaczynski's and Mrs. Franca's orchestra students and Mr. Catanzaro's band students serenaded students and staff with holiday music in their school lobbies this morning. It was a wonderful way to celebrate the last day of school before the holiday break.

Above: Todd orchestra students playing in the lobby on December 20th.

Above: Mr. Catanzaro conducting band students this morning in the Todd lobby.
For the Love of Poetry

On Monday, December 16, the high school English department and Library Media Specialist Ms. Joy held the annual Poetry Out Loud competition. Nineteen students in grades 9 to 12 performed poetry. The students all did a wonderful job bringing life to such poems as "And Soul" by Eavan Boland and "After the Winter" by Claude McKay. Sophomore Carlie Sjogren took first place, sophomore Amanda Moore came in second, third place went to senior Vi Tuong (Diana) To, and fourth place to sophomore Alexandra Sharp. The first and second place winners will go on to compete in the Poetry Out Loud regionals on January 29 at 6 pm at SUNY New Paltz. Best of luck! To learn more, visit www.poetryoutloud.org.

On December 12, Mrs. Lombardi’s and Mrs. Cunningham’s classes made gingerbread men. When they went to check on them in the cafeteria kitchen, they discovered that the gingerbread men had somehow gotten loose! They went on a hunt, reading clues scattered around the school, including in Principal Weisel’s office, which finally led them right back to their classrooms to enjoy the still-warm gingerbread cookies. They also had the option of decorating them. Thank you to the parents who brought in dough and decorating supplies and to the cafeteria staff who helped bake the cookies.
Crafting, Feasting, and Sharing at Nassau

Nassau had a busy week of holiday activities. On Wednesday, Mrs. Lombardo's and Mrs. West's kindergarten classes had fun decorating gingerbread houses. The next day, first graders presented their personal holiday traditions to family and friends, and there were plenty of celebrations in the other classrooms, too.

Above: Scenes from kindergarten gingerbread decorating. Spotted helping out: recently retired Hagan teacher Dave Murray!
12 Days of Kindness

Mrs. Strapec's class has been focusing on kindness since September. During the month of December, the students were encouraged to do at least 12 kind things and they called it "The 12 Days of Kindness Challenge". Most students did more than 12 things! Mrs. Strapec and her class wish everyone a lovely holiday season and a Happy New Year!

Holiday Hoopla at SHS

Student Government Organization encouraged Spackenkill HS to spread some cheer this season with daily theme days like Ugly Sweater Day and White-Out Thursday. It was a very festive week!
Above: SHS faculty and staff pose for a portrait on Flannel Day.

Have a Wonderful Break!

Above: It's a tradition for Todd faculty and staff to gather in the lobby to carol for students as they start their winter recess. What a great singalong!

Click here to hear the carols.
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@suhsdny.org