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Your Public Schools Niagara Falls, NY

Empire State Advantage Gold Level Awardee

Community Newsletter



April 2017

Volume 2 Issue 8

Spike in a barrel; Arts Festival to be held in May

Elementary Summer Extended Learning Program Monday, July 10th through Thursday, August 10th 2017 **What is the Extended Learning Program?**

A summer program that provides instruction in Language Arts and Math during the first half of the day and supervised recreational activities during the second half of the day.

Who is eligible to attend the program?

All District students who will be exiting Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades in June of 2017.

Where will the program be held?

Students will attend at one of the following sites: Harry F. Abate Elementary School, Cataract Elementary School, Niagara Street Elementary School, Kalfas Magnet School

When will the program take place?

The program will start on Monday, July 10th, and end on Thursday, August 10, 2017. Sessions will be held on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of each week.

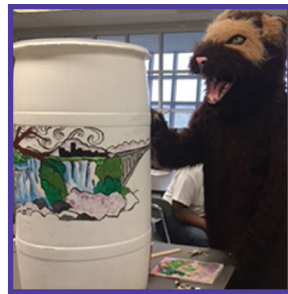
Is busing provided?

Yes, school-to-school busing will be offered to all students attending the full-day program.

Will the children receive lunch?

Yes, lunch and a healthy snack will be included at no cost.

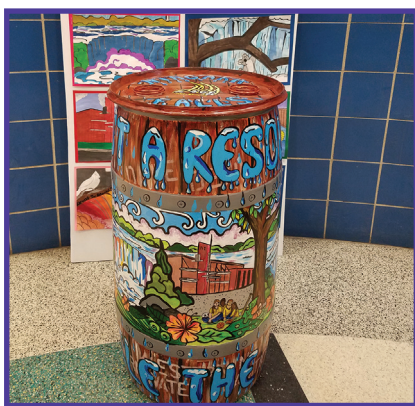
Official applications will be distributed closer to the start of the program.



The Arts community in our schools is vibrant. Each month, there are new reasons to celebrate the Arts, from teachers being named as community heroes to art projects in support of healthy eating, to Art students participating in the reclamation of areas downtown. But before now, we had never seen Spike the Wolverine depicted in a barrel going over the Falls. Michele O'Connor's class has addressed that omission as they took part in the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning's art contest. The contest is themed "Harvest a Resource, Recycle the Rain!"

This creative design recognizes Niagara Falls as a major water resource, incorporates the world-renowned landscape of the area, and represents the unique architecture of the school building. Spike the Wolverine helped with the painting and is shown taking a trip over the Falls in a barrel.

See more of our talented students' artists' work in May 4, when the District Arts & Music Departments will host their first Arts Festival for the community at Niagara Falls High School. The date will be forthcoming.



CHANGES TO SCHOOL CALENDAR, DUE TO ASSESSMENT SCORING Prep Schools

Monday, April 3 will now be a full day of school for students.

Students will report for a half day of school on

Wednesday, April 5

Monday, May 8 will now be a full day of school for students.

Students will report for a half day of school on

Monday, May 15.

Elementary Schools

Monday, April 3 will now be a full day of school for elementary students.

Elementary students DO NOT need to report to school on

Wednesday, April 5

Monday, May 8 will now be a full day of school for elementary students.

Elementary students DO NOT need to report to school on

Monday, May 15.

2017-2017
Board of Education
Learning For All...Whatever It Takes
www.nfschools.net

Mark Laurrie
Superintendent
286-4253 (w)

Vincent "Jimmy" Cancemi
President
284-2688 (w)

Robert Restaino
Vice-President
285-8185 (h)

Ron Barstys
299-8233 (c)

Earl Bass
471-9775 (c)

Kevin Dobbs
282-5152 (h)

Art Jocoy Jr.
283-9329 (h)

Anthony Paretto
283-0372 (h)

Russell Petrozzi
297-8663 (h)

Nick Vilardo
283-3206 (h)

Board of Education Meetings

The Niagara Falls Board of Education meets the fourth Thursday of each month with presentations to the Board at 5:30pm and a regular meeting including a public comment session at 7:00pm. Agenda Review sessions are held on the second Thursday at 5:30pm. Board meetings are held in Central Administration Offices.

THE PUBLIC IS WELCOME.

From the Superintendent



Mark Laurrie

As I did at the 10-week mark, I want to take this time at the 20-week mark of the academic year to report to the Board, staff, District families, and the community generally on our progress.

The new primary grade report cards are in use and a parent handbook provided to help parents fully understand the tool.

Abate Teachers have conducted workshops for grade parents on Math curriculum. Abate's "HOWL Nights" - "Help Our Wolves Learn" feature teachers offering materials and instruction to parents regarding Math strategies they are currently using in class and will be using in preparation for the NYS Math exam.

Hyde Park: 1st Math and Movement Family Fun Night

At Cataract, several teachers hosted students from CEC, who read stories and participated in classroom activities. This is a partnership that is ongoing.

One of the upcoming opportunities we look forward to as a District is welcoming the refugees who will be joining our community.

I have increased the hiring of minority individuals for professional and para-professional jobs, and remain committed to increasing our numbers of staff and faculty members of color. We continue to actively recruit with respect to this goal.

The Extended Day Program is up and running at all schools. This program provides socialization as well as academic support to students.

Maple Avenue School was named a WNY STEM School on the Move 2016 at the Engaged Level by Western New York STEM. Niagara Falls High School was recognized as a school On the Move – Accomplished Level

Youth City Council moderator Lynne Neveu, and I are conducting a survey in anticipation of change in the NFCSD curriculum on Sex Education and for expansion of outside services allowed in our schools to help prevent teen pregnancy and STDs.

The District implemented Sources of Strength at NFHS, a strength-based comprehensive wellness program that focuses on suicide prevention, but impacts other issues such as substance abuse and violence.

A tremendous amount of professional development has taken place, and some opportunities have been offered on Saturdays. I am pleased to say these were well-attended.

In order to protect the investment made in District buildings, the following work was completed:

- The second NFHS cleaning blitz was held in January
- Lead Testing continues at all buildings; results are properly shared and posted.
- Planning for the playground at 79th Street School is ongoing

- New Dectron unit will be installed at Cataract
- According to NYSED, District fiscal stress is so low 6.7% we are classified as no designation.
- CEC Brandie Brown earned funding for novels through donorschoose.org
- New scoreboard is in place in natatorium

Work continues constantly on grant applications to provide students and families with extended opportunities to receive additional academic and recreational programming in schools. Schools continue fundraising to provide experiences for students which the District cannot pay, by law.

Planning for the 2017-2018 budget is ongoing. I am committed to expanding funding PK3.

We have begun recognizing infants at NFMMC, MSM, welcoming families to the District with and encouraging parents to read to children right away; each family receives a Welcome to the World information packet and a Spike the Wolverine bib. In coming months, a CD of lullabies performed by our NFHS choir and a story book featuring Spike will be added to the packet.

- Plans being made for Storyhour with the Superintendent at the library
- A successful MLK celebration was held; guest speaker presented to grade 8 and NFHS students.
- Students participated in City Hall "upcycling" event
- Participated in Gaskill Turkey Trot
- Successful Literacy, Math, & Tech Fair was held.

• Bi-weekly Superintendent's Reports are taped at the OSC-TV.

- Appeared on LCTV; WJLL.
- Have formed a Student Advisory Committee; first meeting in November

• Explore LaSalle night held in January

• Michael Lewis, Lynne Tompkins, Ed Maynard, and Joe Bellonte who represented the District at the annual New York State School Boards Association Convention and Expo in Buffalo

The District prides itself on providing the best technology we can to students and staff.

- Three Tech Nights for Parents were held.

As we begin the next 10 weeks of the academic year, there are more objectives to achieve, among them:

- Create a Leadership Academy for Instructional and Non-Instructional Individuals, includes Associates
- Revisit the Bring Your Own Device Policy
- Continue to grow the Restorative Justice Program, currently at Abate and NFHS

I believe I have the support of staff in achieving these objectives, and continue to eagerly solicit suggestions from staff, the community, and especially youth—students and alumni—in order to make our District the very best in Western New York. I thank the Board for its support and faith in my abilities to achieve these ends. With the best efforts of all involved, I am confident for our future success.

From the Board



Nick Vilardo

The Governor has made public statements about his proposed \$1 billion for education in the State budget, and that may sound very impressive--until you analyze that

number. NYS has several hundred school districts, so it breaks down to about \$1.4 million each, but of course some districts get more and some less than that amount, and those amounts can vary greatly.

It is also true that graduation rates vary greatly among those districts, principally because of differences in community wealth. Increased money alone cannot raise graduation rates, but for many communities, without increased money, the challenge to increase graduation rates is all but impossible. Here is a look at why that is.

In poorer communities, many students are far more likely to arrive at school less well-prepared, with greater challenges emotionally, physically, and psychologically, and are more likely to attend school less. The need is therefore greater for services like remedial education, extended day learning programs, and pre-kindergarten offered to younger children. Many children are not read to daily in pre-school years, and arrive not having been taught age-appropriate social skills, the alphabet, colors, or numbers. Teachers have to make up those gaps when the students arrive, hence the need for the programs mentioned above. As child-

ren age, gaps can become greater; without intervention, a kindergarten student who is a little behind can become a grade five student who is woefully behind, and so it goes.

Providing the extra intervention requires more teachers, more programs, and therefore, more money. Teachers, like everyone else, deserved to be paid for their work. Programs cost money. What is spent in the classroom is a hedge against what could be spent over a lifetime if a student is not well educated; thus, schools are an investment for us all.

The NYS School Boards Association called for the State to double the Governor's billion, in order to more adequately fund schools. In a district like ours, which is heavily dependent on State funding, we live and die based on the final numbers. As of this writing, we are hoping the legislature increases the funds for our District in 2017-2018.

At the local level, we can do two things to protect public schools: let your elected representatives at the State level know you support fully-funded public education; and vote on the proposed District budget May 16.

In these times, every voice--and every vote--counts. Please make a note on your calendar today so you plan to vote next month. You can keep up with all the budget news in this newsletter, by visiting www.nfschools.net, and by watching The Superintendent's Report on our educational access channel, the OSC.

NOTICE

ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT ELECTION/BUDGET VOTE

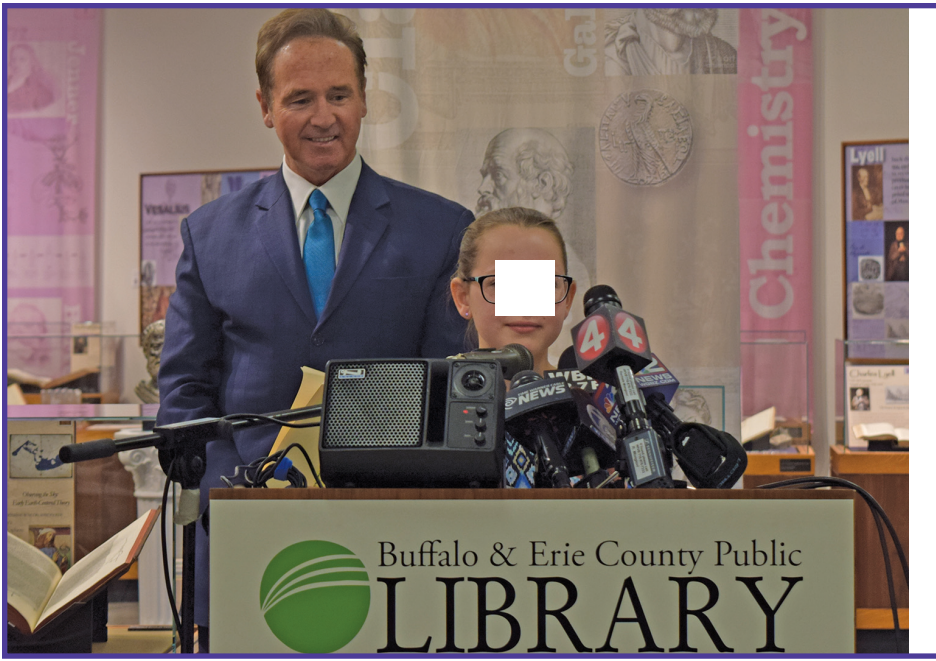
The annual school election/budget vote of the Niagara Falls City School District will be held on **Tuesday, May 16, 2017**, to adopt the annual budget and for the election of a Board member.

There is one seat open on the Board of Education. The Candidate receiving the highest number of votes cast will serve a full five (5) year term beginning July 1, 2017. Board membership is an unpaid position.

Petitions for nominating a candidate for the office of Member of the Board of Education in the City School District of Niagara Falls, New York, will be available Wednesday, March 1st in the District Clerk's office (9:00 am - 4:00 pm) at the Central Office Administration Building, 630 - 66th Street, Niagara Falls, New York.

Petitions must be filed with the Clerk of the Board of Education on or before Wednesday, April 26, 2017 by 5 p.m. The petition must be signed by at least 100 qualified voters of the City of Niagara Falls.

Media alert: Elise Glahe speaks



Miss Elise Glahe, grade 6 at Abate School, addressed a press conference at the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, following a trip to NASA's Kennedy Space Center to witness the mission patch she designed blast up to the International Space Station during a launch. The SpaceX Dragon lifted-off from NASA's Kennedy Space Center at Cape Canaveral, Florida on Sunday, February 19, 2017. She was among approximately 200 students, teachers and parents from across the U.S. participating in the viewing with organized by the National Center for Earth and Space Science Education, WNY STEM's national partner in this project. Students viewed the launch from the Kennedy Athletic, Recreation & Social (KARS) Park. She is pictured above with Congressman Brian Higgins.



Students at Cataract Elementary School welcomed veteran Niagara Gazette photographer Jim Neiss who stopped by to capture Valentine's Day images.

Recognition



Marc Daul (not pictured), Laura Lasher and Monica Petrishin (below), and Joyce Wiepert (left) were recognized as outstanding employees at the February 23 Board of Education meeting.



Calling parents of Seniors, others



Each year, teachers and staff, supported by parents and community volunteers, host the Post Prom Party at Niagara Falls High School. The basic idea is that, in the hours after the Senior prom, Seniors and their dates return to NFHS and remain there until several hours later.

The bounce houses, mechanical bulls, free food and drink, magicians, fortune tellers, basketball court, Velcro walls, and all the other activities which have been offered for entertainment in the past have proved very popular with Seniors and have kept them off roads and away from unwholesome activities.

Many communities have suffered tragic losses of teens around prom and graduation time, as excitement has given way to poor decision making. Drunk or reckless driving has cost lifelong heart-ache. In other cases, inappropriate intimacy has resulted in curtailed opportunities, and life-changing ramifications. The Post Prom Party aims to avoid all those things, and to provide a popular, safe alternative, so teens can have fun and parents can enjoy prom night worry-free.

Although it is a noble goal, State Education Law prohibits the use of tax dollars to fund such an undertaking. That is why the community is key to successfully hosting the Post Prom Party, which typically costs around \$25,000.

The prom and post prom party take place June 16, 2017.

Here are three ways you can help:

**Parents of Seniors:
Buy your ad!!
The book below has
become a tradition!**

Do you own a business? Donations of cash are appreciated! So are donations of items that can be used for door prizes (gift certificates, items for dorm rooms, technological merchandise, car washes, and the like). Also needed are donations of food to be served that evening: pizza, subs, fruit, smoothies, snacks, coffee -- nothing goes to waste at Post Prom. These are teens; they are capable of consuming copious amounts quite effortlessly.

Are you an individual? Monetary donations are greatly appreciated; make checks out to NFHS Student Council and mail them to Richard Slaiman, c/o NFHS, 4455 Porter Road, 14305. Also needed are volunteers to work the event (yes, 11:30 p.m. or so until the wee hours of the morning). Volunteers help serve food, provide supervision, and keep the atmosphere fun.

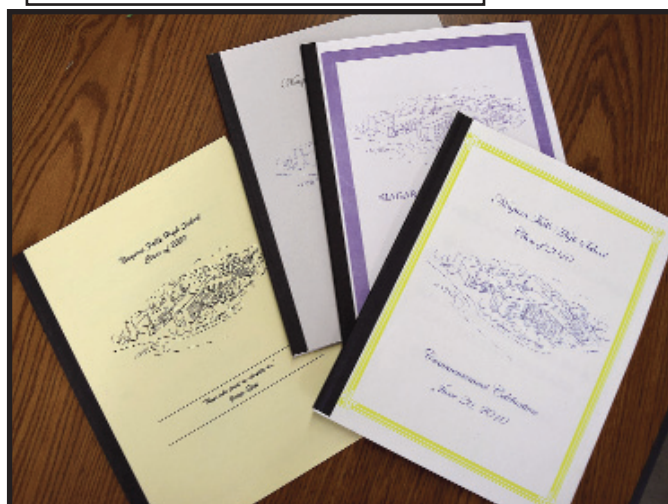
Are you a parent or teacher? Each year, the District publishes a commemorative graduation book, which is distributed on graduation day, June 24. It contains ads from proud parents and teachers congratulating specific graduates. Prices range from \$25 to \$100 per ad in the 8.5 x 11 book. Typical ads contain text or text and photographs. Often, an image of the graduate is presented with a baby picture of the young man or woman. Sometimes people have written poems. Frequently college, work, or plans to join the military are included in the ads.

Ads can be submitted ready to print, or our Public Relations Director can design the ad for you at no additional cost. Again, checks would be made out to NFHS Student Council, c/o Judie Glaser, NFCSD, 630 66th Street, 14304.

Here are the price points:

- Full page: \$100
- Half page: \$75
- Quarter page: \$50
- Eighth page: \$25

The deadline for ads is May 17.



Planning Meetings for the Post Prom Party will take place
Wednesday, 1st
Wednesday, 15th
Wednesday, 29th.

All meetings

are at 6 PM and will be held in the red/green cafeteria at NFHS. Please join us!

Community Education Spring 2017

CEC ADMINISTRATION

Dorothy L. Brundidge
School Administrator

Main Office

Julia Destino, Secretary

Debbie Mort, Office Support Clerk

The Niagara Falls City School District is committed to life-long learning and through the Community Education Center offers programs for people of all ages. Our course list contains opportunities for participation in activities that promote physical fitness, the use of technology and other special interests during the Spring Term of 2017. Please note that we are interested in expanding the number of future course offerings and invite community experts who are willing to share their expertise to contact the Community Education Center. Registration begins on April 10, 2017. If you have any questions, or would like more information about a specific program, please call us at 716-286-0771.

DAILY PROGRAMS O/N BOCES

**There are no fees for these programs

**ADULT BASIC EDUCATION/HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY

This course is designed for the adult learner interested in completing their High School Equivalency diploma. It is also recommended for anyone who has been away from school for a long period of time or for those who feel they need prior preparation for the TASC (Test Assessing Secondary Completion) Exam. The course reviews the basics of Writing, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science and Reading. Applications are available at the Community Education Center. The course and TASC exam are free of charge. New York State has selected a new high school equivalency test called the TASC™ to replace the GED® as the primary pathway to a NYS High School Equivalency Diploma.

Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. or 12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Stephanie Bevacqua Call for information: 716-286-0768

Tuesday & Thursday 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Erica Kopp Call for information: 716-278-8154

**ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE FOR THE FOREIGN BORN

Developed for the adult learner to read and speak the English Language.

Monday through Thursday

Intermediate 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Beginner 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Sarah Wright Call for information: 716-286-0772

****NATIONAL EXTERNAL DIPLOMA PROGRAM (NEDP)** This is a non-instructional program that incorporates a variety of assessment techniques, which are designed for the adult learner who has acquired academic skills through life experiences. The techniques include home projects, performance assessments, interviewing and documentation review. NEDP provides competent adults with the opportunity to earn a regular, High School diploma. Qualifications: 21 years and older.

Stephanie Bevacqua or Joan Caldwell Call for information: 716-286-0768

CERTIFIED NURSING ASSISTANT PROGRAM

The program consists of ten weeks of instructional classes held at the Niagara Falls City School District Community Education Center. You will receive a New York State certification upon successful completion of the program. Cost to be determined.

Qualifications: 21 years and older with no high school diploma

Terry Josker Call for information: 716-731-4176 ext. 4445

HHA – Home Health Aide

A one-month program (4-5 weeks) of 105 clinical hours (75 hours theory class and 30 hours clinical) with a final exam. Students become trained and certified health-care worker who provides assistance to a patient in the home with personal care (as hygiene and exercise) and light household duties (as meal preparation) and who monitors a patient's condition.

Tanya Moore

Call for information: 716-278-8599

Terry Josker

Call for information: 716-731-4176 ext. 4445

FITNESS ACTIVITIES

TOTAL BODY WORKOUT

Fitness program targeting upper and lower body, abs, legs and buttocks – plus cardiovascular workout (bring hand weights). Class meets two times per week.

Susana Nicholas CEC Gym Mon & Wed 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. \$30.00

SWIMNASTICS

Have fun getting fit with stretching, toning, water exercise in the pool. This program is suitable for those with or without swimming background. Experience increased flexibility, stomach, and cardiovascular benefits. (Limit 12) Class meets once per week.

Susana Nicholas	CEC Pool	Mon 10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.	\$15.00
Susana Nicholas	CEC Pool	Mon 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.	\$15.00
Susana Nicholas	CEC Pool	Mon 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	\$15.00
Susana Nicholas	CEC Pool	Tues 9:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m.	\$15.00
Susana Nicholas	CEC Pool	Tues 10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.	\$15.00
Susana Nicholas	CEC Pool	Wed 11:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.	\$15.00
Susana Nicholas	CEC Pool	Wed 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	\$15.00
Susana Nicholas	CEC Pool	Thurs 10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.	\$15.00
Susana Nicholas	CEC Pool	Thurs 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.	\$15.00

Community Education Spring 2017

WATERWALKING

Exercise your entire body with added benefit of water resistance. One-half hour equals two hours of street walking. (Limit 10) Class meets once per week.

Susana Nicholas	CEC Pool	Mon 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.	\$15.00
Susana Nicholas	CEC Pool	Wed 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.	\$15.00

CHAIR EXERCISES FOR SENIORS

A total body workout including strength & toning for abs, legs and arms, all done while sitting. Improves balance and mobility. The program uses elastic bands, balls or you may bring your weights. Class meets once per week.

Susana Nicholas	CEC Gym	Wed 10:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m.	\$15.00
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REGISTRATION

The Spring Term begins on April 24, 2017. Classes are held for 5 consecutive weeks unless otherwise noted.

Registration by mail is preferred and will only be accepted with a postmark PRIOR to the start of classes on April 24, 2017. **There will be no registration on the first day of class.** Please make checks or money orders payable to: Niagara Falls City School District

NO CASH WILL BE ACCEPTED & there is a \$30.00 charge for returned checks

Please forward registration and payment to:

Niagara Falls Community Education Center
ATTN: Julia Destino
6040 Lindbergh Avenue
Niagara Falls, New York 14304

You may register in person starting on April 10, 2017 in the Community Education Center Main Office from 11:00 am – 2:00 pm. Class size is limited.

FEES: As a self-sustaining division of the Niagara Falls City School District, all costs for instructors and staff are covered by course fees. Fees must be paid at time of registration. Residents of the City of Niagara Falls who are 65 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER may receive a \$5 discount (Chair exercise class is excluded from discount). Please refer to the course listing for the fees required.

CLASS CANCELLATIONS: Classes may be canceled or rescheduled if enrollment is low or if an instructor becomes unavailable. If classes are canceled due to weather conditions, the community will be notified by local television and radio stations.

REFUNDS:

Refunds will be issued only in the following circumstances:

- A. If a course is canceled – total refund.
- B. If you withdraw one week prior to the start of class – refund, less \$3.
- C. If you withdraw during the first or second week of class – refund, less \$6.
- D. No refunds will be issued after the second week of class.
- E. To receive a refund you must notify the Community Education Center Office of your intent to withdraw from the class.

Please Remember:

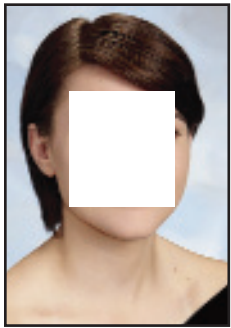
Register starting April 10, 2017
There will be no registration on first day of class, April 24, 2017
Make checks and/or money orders payable to: Niagara Falls City School District
If you have questions, please call 286-0771



NFHS intern reflects on time at NFP

The following article is re-printed with permission of Niagara Frontier Publications and the Grand Island Dispatch.

Niagara Falls High School senior Isabella Casilio works on a story for the Island Dispatch.



Isabella Casilio

By Isabella Casilio
Niagara Falls High School is home to a business internship class that benefits many seniors and juniors. I am one of many

seniors at NFHS who are in the internship class. The passion for writing has been with me for years, and it has been my dream since middle school to be some type of writer. When hearing about the class, I jumped at the opportunity to learn more about a field I enjoy and to gain hands-on experience before college.

The business class creates an opportunity for students to gain experience in their future careers before making any commitments to colleges specifically for that career field. Students in this business class intern for various careers, including hospitality, dentistry, business, theater arts and law enforcement. My career field that I have chosen is journalism, and after choosing this career path my business teacher connected me with Niagara Frontier Publications based on Grand Island. The company has had numerous interns before me.

NFP has been a big part of my life for the past four months. I often look forward to going there after school several times a week. The people who work there also make the experience helpful, but at the same time enjoyable. The editors of the papers you likely read (especially if you're reading this) are Joshua Maloni, Larry Austin, Lauren Zaepfel and Terry Duffy. They have taught me more about journalism and writing than I could ever learn on my own or at school. I have been able to write my own articles, which have been published in numerous papers, conduct interviews and edit articles that the editors gave to me.

I couldn't have asked for more of a pleasant environment to intern in; the NFP staff has been nothing but kind and helpful, never getting angry or aggravated when I had a question to ask. This has me leaving NFP each day feeling positive and encouraged. I was always told by all the editors that I was free to write about anything that interested me. I wrote about a performance at my school. This made me see that being a journalist didn't have to be a dream anymore. I have been able to open up and discover what I am good at and comfortable with, all while being around big-hearted individuals who made me feel comfortable enough to act like myself while teaching me how a journalist works and what to expect if I wanted to follow through with this career after college.

When I first started at NFP, Terry (The Sentinel editor) told me that I would be editing articles and reformatting them, maybe even getting to interview someone for a story. I was nervous; I am often uncomfortable while talking to new people who I have not met before, so this was a new, semi-scary adventure that I was getting myself into. But let me say each day I sat at my desk with new assignments I felt less and less nervous with the editors encouraging me. I did eventually get to call and conduct an interview, and it was not as scary as my imagination pictured it to be.

Sometimes I would edit press releases for days, but it never made me feel bored, because I was able to learn more about the proper way of editing while getting to read about events that occurred locally. This internship has made me a better writer and more confident when it comes to journalism skills.

As I near my last few days at NFP, I would like to say a huge "Thank you" to the editors. Thank you, Josh, for always being understanding and helping me see my errors in the articles that I wrote, all while having humor to make me feel better if I thought I did everything wrong. Thank you, Terry, for giving me a chance with this internship that I will remember for the rest of my life as one of the reasons I continued to enjoy writing. Thank you, Larry, for constantly making me laugh by saying and showing me things that would always make me enjoy coming to NFP. Lastly, thank you, Lauren, for connecting with me by showing me that it's possible to make it in journalism as a female surrounded by males (it was highly motivating), and also brightening my time at NFP with your lighthearted personality.

This time I have spent at NFP would not have been possible without the amazing internship program that NFHS has created, so I'd also like to thank Mr. Colangelo, the teacher who is in charge of the program.

I would add that if anyone knows any students at NFHS, encourage them to join this class/program. The experiences that I have had at NFP have been nothing short of eventful and exciting, and I know I will miss going to NFP and interacting with everyone when my internship comes to an end. This has shown me a real environment in a career I intend on going into, and has been the first step in my journalism career.

I will always be grateful for it.

Cornell Co-op Extension

April is National Garden Month!

By Jennifer Tynan, *Creating Healthy Schools and Communities Cornell Cooperative Extension of Niagara County*

Schools can benefit from a garden in many ways. Not only does gardening provide the benefits of physical activity and promotion of healthy eating, but also a connection to the natural world. Gardens provide beauty and offer an opportunity for the school community to work towards a common goal. The hands-on aspect of gardening fosters a sense of pride and empowerment, helping children work together as a team and improve their social skills. Gardeners develop a sense of pride and connection to the school environment and the natural world. They can provide a springboard for learning and an opportunity for cross-curricular activities around a common theme.

Last year Creating Healthy Schools supported a garden initiative at Niagara Street School. The first step was getting a group of stakeholders, parents, teachers, custodial staff and administrators together to plan a theme, objective, and timeline for the garden. The CHSC Team facilitated planting seeds with third graders in the STEM lab during the month of April and students observed the growth and development in journals.

In May the 6th graders assembled the garden beds and prepared the soil for planting. At the beginning of June we transplanted the seedlings into the garden. Our theme was a Salsa/Pizza Garden with heirloom tomatoes, basil, oregano, peppers, lemon balm, chives, strawberries and marigolds. Students voted on a name for the gar-

den. The winner was, The Four Seasons Garden at Niagara Street. We celebrated the hard work with healthy Smoothies provided by Creating Healthy Schools.

The school staff, lead by Mr. Forgione, and Parent Becky Hedgepath gave the garden TLC and plenty of water during the summer. It flourished despite the drought conditions. Students harvested produce in September and we enjoyed salsa, herb samples and lemon balm tea at Open House. In October, the 6th graders helped prepare the garden for the next season and the cycle was complete!

Here is a basic salsa recipe that is healthy and delicious:

Fresh Tomato Salsa

1 cup tomatoes (finely chopped or 1/2 can, about 8 ounces, low-sodium diced tomatoes)

1/4 cup onion (finely chopped)

2 tablespoons lime or lemon juice

1 teaspoon garlic (finely chopped)

1/2 teaspoon vegetable oil

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/8 tablespoon fresh parsley or cilantro (chopped, optional)

1 tablespoon cayenne pepper or jalapeño chilies (chopped, optional)

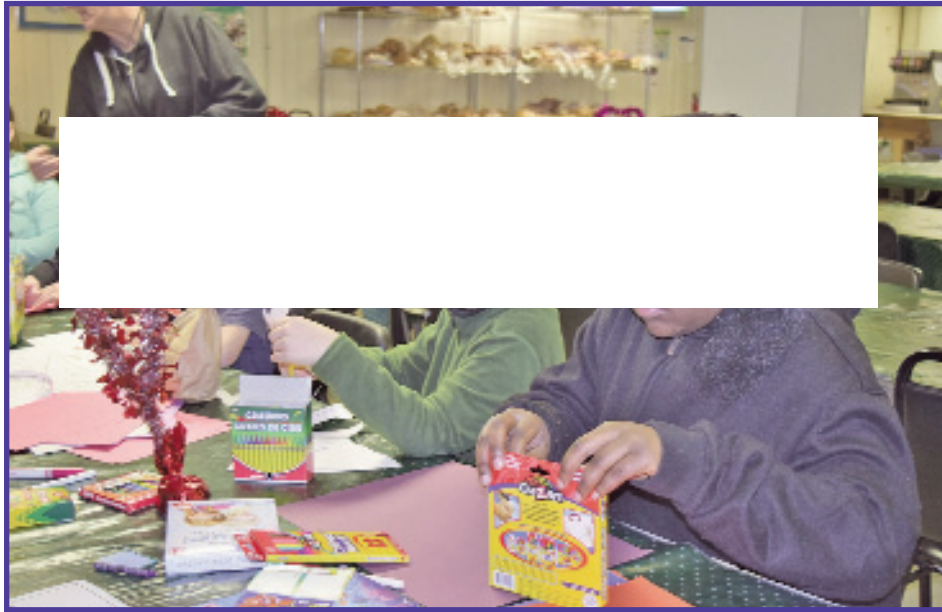
Directions

1. In a medium-size bowl, combine tomato, onion and lime juice (or lemon juice). Mix well.
2. Add garlic, vegetable oil, and salt to bowl. If using parsley, cilantro, cayenne pepper, or jalapeño chilies, add them too. Mix well.
2. Cover bowl and refrigerate for 15 minutes. Serve cold.



Reading time at 79th Street School, in Joan Pawlokovich's class.

Maple Avenue School



Community Missions
Students of the Month at Maple recently got an opportunity to visit Community Missions, where they were put to work and educated on what the Mission does, its history, and the realities of day to day life for some neighbors who may be having a hard time. They received a tour of the facility and shared a meal before returning to school.

Safety Corner

Don't TEXT and DRIVE

Individuals who drive while sending or reading text messages are 23 times more likely to be involved in a car crash than other drivers. A crash typically happens within an average of three seconds after a driver is distracted.

Facts About Texting & Driving

- The United States Department of Transportation notes that cell phones are involved in 1.6 million auto crashes each year that cause a half million injuries and take **6,000 lives**.
- According to FocusDriven®, up to 80 percent of all crashes involve some form of driver distraction.
- During any point of the day, 11 percent of drivers are talking on their cell phones, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
- A study from the University of Utah indicated that the reaction time of a teen driver using a cell phone is the same as that of a 70-year-old driver who is not using a cell phone.**
- According to the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, texting while driving is six times more likely to cause an auto crash than driving when intoxicated.
- The Virginia Tech Transportation Institute installed cameras on dashboards inside truck cabs. From the video footage, on average it took five seconds with their eyes off the road when driver's experienced distractions. **The distance covered in five seconds of driving at 55 mph is equivalent to the length of a football field.**

Sources: AAA, United States Department of Transportation, University of Utah, FocusDriven® Nationwide Insurance study, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute

HJ Kalfas School



Stem Activity
Lynn Pasek's students learned what it is like to be engineers, as they worked together on teams to help solve a problem following the engineering design process. Students were asked to explore the properties of several materials in order to design a mat that meets the following criteria: 1. soaks up water, 2. doesn't let water leak through and 3. doesn't slide on carpet. Once they designed their mats, they tested them against the criteria and discussed ways to make them better. All of this was done so that a little boy could bring his wet dog into the house!

Below, students worked as teams of environmental engineers to try and find the most efficient way to clean an oil spill.



Looking Ahead

- May 2 - 5
Grades 3-8 NYS Math Assessment
- May 4
Public Hearing on Budget
- May 15
Elementary, Prep No School
BOE Review Session 5:30 p.m.
- May 16
School District Budget Vote
Noon to 9 p.m.
- May 17
Statutory Meeting 8 p.m.
- May 24
Grades 4 & 8
Science Performance Assess.
through June 2;
NFHS Band Concert
- May 29
Memorial Day No School

For the past three years, the Niagara Falls Teachers Local 801 Union has collected gloves, scarves, hats, and coats for the Capitol Cleaners Coats for Kids Campaign.

During 2017, NFT members and students collected 769 items, for a three-year total of 1,836 items. While gloves, hats and scarves stayed at the schools for students that needed them, all coats were donated to Capitol Cleaners to be distributed to children and families in the Niagara Falls community.



Kudos!

Students received mid-winter hugs

Recently, 1155 students in the District received a mid-winter hug, courtesy of The Teachers Desk, Feed the Children, and First Niagara Foundation. These have very generously donated a "Hide and Hug Olaf" gift set to EACH Pre-K 3, Pre-K 4, and Kindergarten student in the District, as well as the elementary Life Skills classes at Abate and Cataract. They are calling this project "A Mid-Winter Hug From Olaf."

Including in the gift set were a book and a stuffed Olaf toy, and a coloring page of Olaf for each child to complete as a thank you to the donors. The gift is valued at \$31,000.

"We are very grateful to have these items to share with our primary grade students," said Judie Glaser, Public Relations Director for the District.

"Certainly, we could all use a mid-winter hug."

Abate Students of the Month

- Amilia Stephens
- Ta'Niyah Pryor
- Celeste Rosa
- Michael Ausiello
- Tremir Camm
- Aiden Staniszewski
- Nashayla Scarfone-Dykes
- Ja'Cara Bennett-Jones
- Day'Neana Brantley
- Payton Kerstetter
- Laeson West
- Massiah Respress
- Alissyona Ligammare
- Adrian Ayala
- Izabella Huff
- Luke Cassel
- Dante Cleveland
- Jennifer Matias
- Kalia Castillo
- Benjamin Wichhart
- Alexis Ezell
- Ciara Cordova
- Tristian White

Bald For Bucks

Members of the 79th Street School community went Bald For Bucks to show support for cancer patients and raise funds. Among the participants were brother and sister Isabella and Devin Greenawalt. DJ Anthony from WKSE and the Buffalo Bandits attended.



Your Public Schools is written by Judie Glaser jglaser@nfschools.net

April 2017

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
BOE Board of Education CES Cataract Elementary GPS Gaskill Prep LPS LaSalle Prep NSS Niagara Street PAC Performing Arts Center at NFHS TLC Meeting Teaching, Learning, Consulting	HFA - Abate School CES - Cataract Elem. HJK - Kalfas School GJM - Mann School NSS - Niagara St. GPS - Gaskill Prep LPS - LaSalle Prep CEC - Comm. Ed. PAC -Performing Arts Center at NFHS	SCD -Superintendent's Conference Day UPK- Universal Pre-Kindergarten DPC- District Parent Committee				1
2	3	4	5 Prep Schools Half Day Staff Dev. Elementary School No School SCD Elementary Swim Championship Meet 4 p.m.	6 BOE Review Session 5:30 p.m. Special Meeting 7 p.m. Hyde Park Parent Grp. Mtg. 6 p.m.	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Spring Break!						
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Spring Break!						
23	24 Classes Resume GPS PEG Meeting 6:30 p.m.	25 BOE Special Meeting 7 p.m DPC Meeting Central Office 5:30 p.m. Choral Festival at NFHS 9:30-12:00	26 NFHS UNYTS Blood Drive	27 Indian Education Public Hearing 7 p.m. Abate School Room 119	28	29
30						