

Rocky Point Soaring

E-News Edition

Spring 2024

This is the official e-newsletter for the Rocky Point Union Free School District.



EAGLE PRIDE

March Madness: Eagles vs. Wizards!

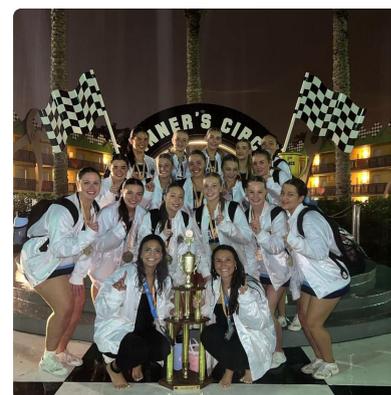
The Rocky Point School District community was out in full force for the Harlem Wizards game against our very own Rocky Point administrators and staff members on March 8. The funny and

famed slams and tricks of the Wizards wowed the spectators, who also witnessed teamwork and sportsmanship from their teachers and principals. The event, sponsored by the Rocky Point Athletic Booster Club, raised money to help support the district's athletic teams.



Three Cheers!

The varsity cheer team did it again! The team and coaches Samantha Ferrara and Jessica Fleischer won a national championship at the Universal Cheer Association National High School Cheerleading Championships. Coach Ferrara was a seventh grader on the Rocky Point varsity team when they won their third national title in 2014 under the tutelage of Coach Anna Spallina. She is in an elite group of cheer coaches who have won a national championship as both a cheerleader and a coach.



Winning team members are Ariana Amato, Kaylee Gallino, Abby Rae Hughes, Samantha Morelli, Sophia Musraca, Caiden Palank, Alexis Polaski, Ella Reisinger, Reese Rogers, Alison Rubinetti, Callie Russell, Edie Sternkopf, Adrianna Tavolaro, Ella Velazquez, Avery Ward and Scarlett Ward.

“This team continually displays tremendous effort and sets high standards for winning,” Athletic Director Jonathon Rufa said. “The girls began the year knowing that a national championship was possible for Rocky Point and they continued to gain confidence, power and focus throughout the season to achieve one of their championship goals.”

To continue the celebration, the team was also honored at the March 14 Brookhaven Town Council meeting.

Students Attend Human Rights Institute

Members of the Rocky Point High School Human Rights Club traveled to Iona University to attend the annual Human Rights Institute hosted by the Human Rights and Holocaust Education Center on March 14.



Each school year, Rocky Point High School is invited to attend and participate in the Human Rights Institute as a way to connect students from 29 New York State high schools to discuss both local and global human rights issues impacting our world and collaborate to create action plans to promote change. This year's Institute also featured the portable exhibit "13 Drivers' Licenses" which tells the individual stories of 13 Jewish citizens who were persecuted during the Nazi regime in Lichtenfels, Germany.

Seniors Simone Carmody, Sofia Haviland and Parker Matzen and junior Abby Culley presented a workshop on the "Digital Divide" which discussed the various geographic, financial, political and social barriers that restrict and limit access to technology and information and therefore cause human rights violations globally. The students were accompanied on the trip by Human Rights Club Adviser Rachel Hludzinski and Nancy Pina.

As part of their action plan, the Human Rights Club will organize and host a computer/internet skills workshop for senior citizens during the 2024-2025 school year to improve accessibility in the Rocky Point community.

Virtual Enterprise Victors!

Rocky Point High School's Virtual Enterprise class, Correcx, attended the annual Virtual Enterprise LI Business Plan Competition and Trade Show this winter. They were accompanied by business teacher Dorothy Burns.



Correcx was one of more than 100 firms that make up the Virtual Enterprise community. Students were able to set up a trade booth to sell their products to other Virtual Enterprise firms. For the Business Plan Competition, the student teams were given 10 minutes to present their business plan to a panel of judges, followed by a brief Q&A session. Judges commented on the team's presentation skills, business concept and professionalism.

Great job to student attendees Jack Amalfitano, Andrew Aschettino, Trevor Barrett, Max Blasko, Christopher Conforti, Julieanna D'Amato, Caleb Duddleston, Aidan Flynn, Kevin Hernandez, Sean Irizarry, Dylan Korf, Paige Krilovitch, Erin Lynch, Tyler Maggio, Samantha Manning, Jared Mauceri, Jake Mayola, Matthew Murphy, Jamie Nunberg, Caiden Palank, Connor Seplavy, Avery Ward and Sydney Woods.

Success on Stage!

Rocky Point High School presented "The Addams Family" on March 1 and 2. A total of 115 students involved in the musical included actors, assistant directors, pit orchestra musicians, choreographers, tech/sound/lighting crew, set painters, backstage crew, stage managers, and hair and makeup design crew, who all contributed to putting together an amazing set of performances on the stage.

"The Addams Family" was a comical feast that embraced the wackiness in every family. It featured an original story that is every father's nightmare: Wednesday Addams, the ultimate princess of darkness, has grown up and fallen in love with a sweet, smart young man from a respectable family, a man her parents have never met. If that wasn't upsetting enough, Wednesday confides in

her father and begs him not to tell her mother. Now, Gomez Addams must do something he has never done before – keep a secret from his beloved wife, Morticia. Everything changed for the whole family on the fateful night they hosted a dinner for Wednesday’s “normal” boyfriend and his parents.



RPHS Celebrates ‘P.S. I Love You Day’

Rocky Point High School students and staff wore purple on Feb. 9 – P.S. I Love You Day – to symbolize spreading kindness, stand up against bullying, promote mental health awareness and share this year’s theme, “Love is meant to be given.”



Numerous activities were planned, with the overarching goal of everyone feeling loved and valued. Student clubs decorated lockers with Post-it notes containing motivational quotes, peer-to-peer presentations were conducted in health classes, a photo booth was available to share the love in the library and vocal performances by chorus members were held in the main lobby. Thanks to the PTA, which graciously donated balloon towers and P.S. I Love You bracelets that were gifted to the students.

“Our hope for our students is that they hear positive messages that make them feel special, appreciated and remind them that they are never alone,” Principal James Moeller said.



Senior Showcases Artwork at University Exhibit

Rocky Point High School senior Katelyn Fish was honored with a Juror’s Award for her artwork that was displayed at the LIU Post campus in Brookville. The exhibit, Advanced Vision 19 Exhibition, offered a glimpse into the innovative artwork created by students in upper-level art courses.

Katelyn works under the tutelage of high school Advanced Placement art teacher Seth Meier. Her acrylic paint piece, “Betty,” depicts her grandmother’s battle with Alzheimer’s disease.

“My work brings attention to Alzheimer’s disease and what it does to a human being,” Katelyn said. “When creating this piece, “Betty” has a confused stare and many missing spots on her face that represent the stages of Alzheimer’s disease, with this piece representing memory loss. I created this piece with the common medium of acrylic paint. I chose this medium to get in-depth details of

her face to represent memory, love and self-awareness all lost through time suffering with Alzheimer's disease."

Lauded for Leadership

Rocky Point High School seniors Sean Logue and Sarah May were each selected as a New York State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance Suffolk County Zone Physical Education award recipient. They were honored at the annual dinner on Feb. 28, along with high school students selected throughout Suffolk County. Sean and Sarah were chosen by their physical education teachers for exemplifying outstanding physical performance, scholastic ability and leadership qualities.



Honored for Exceptional Performance

Rocky Point High School student Danielle Reda earned the title Employee of the Month in her CTE program at the Eastern Long Island Academy of Applied Technology's Gary D. Bixhorn Technical Center. Danielle, a senior, is a student in the Animal Science program.

The title Employee of the Month was established to recognize those students whom their instructors would want to hire, who show professionalism and have the desire to be trained. Being selected as the Employee of the Month is an honor, and these

students are role models among their peers.

Math Is Major on Pi Day!

Rock breaks scissors, scissors cut paper, paper wraps rock: A simple concept with fun results for Rocky Point Middle School students who celebrated a dual March Madness and Pi Day. Student volunteers were first challenged to recite the most digits of pi that they could memorize to math teacher Ryan Stern during their lunch period. Sixth grader Giavanna Cavaliere, seventh grader Jiselle Sinclair and eighth grader Gwendolyn Graham each won for their grade. Then, each advisory had their own bracket for a rock, paper, scissors tournament, resulting in a winner representing their advisory in a 64-team bracket. The entire school population then commenced to the high school auditorium for the championship rounds.



The statistics of winning combined with chance and strategy was studied by the students, and the contest was ultimately won by eighth grader Chris Greene. Chris, along with Giavanna, Jiselle and Gwendolyn, got to pie favorite teachers with an apple, blueberry, cherry or strawberry pie topped with cream!

Students Share a Love of Reading

Rocky Point Middle School students continue to strengthen connections with one another and had a recent opportunity to do just that. Sixth graders shared some favorite stories with FJC first



graders. The students walked over to the elementary school with teachers Elizabeth Mancini and Rebecca Pagnotta.

These were the second group of students selected to visit based on letters that they wrote, stating reasons why they should get to read to the first graders, including working hard in school, being role models and making up any missed classwork.

World Language Day Fair

Rocky Point Middle School sixth grade students were introduced to the district's language offerings during a World Language Day Fair on Feb. 1. Student volunteers from both the Middle School and Rocky Point High School set up games, quizzes and crafts as they shared what the elective classes are like. The Middle School library was set up with stations that engaged the sixth graders with American Sign Language, French and Spanish courses. Sixth graders may take electives next year in one of these three courses.



ASL students taught basic finger signing and name spelling to an eager group of younger students. Students in French courses attracted sixth graders with a soundtrack from the popular "Ratatouille" animated film and a matching game featuring French artists, landmarks and other topics from French culture. Students in the Spanish classes could complete a fun craft making maracas from plastic spoons, rice and colored tape. Students shared how the classes teach the acquisition of beginning listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in these world languages.

ENL/LOTE department chairperson James Williams and teachers were on hand for questions and guidance but the event was purely student-driven. It was another example of student-centered learning, bringing students together and fostering ownership of their education.



Students Learn to the Beat of 'Stayin' Alive'

Rocky Point Middle School students in John Mauceri's class learned some life lessons from Gary Paulsen's story, "Hatchet." In the story, the pilot suffers a heart attack, and Mr. Mauceri jumped into action to relate that to real-life situations.

Mr. Mauceri enlisted the help of school nurse Raffaella Nash, who is certified in CPR, and shared with the students how to administer CPR. School speech therapist Mrs. Egan was there to help out as well. The soundtrack was fun too: they listened to the Bee Gees' "Stayin' Alive" to help with the CPR compressions! The students also learned what to do if there was an emergency in their home or at school.

Councilwoman Visits

Brookhaven Town Councilwoman Jane Bonner visited Lauren Verderosa's class at Rocky Point Middle School on March 8. Students learned many of the highlights of Mrs. Bonner's service in helping local Rocky Point residents solve problems locally and navigate through the levels of government agencies from town, county, state and federal. She shared several local initiatives she has spearheaded or taken part in, including educational,



environmental and revitalization projects that help to make her council district of Rocky Point and surrounding communities a great place to live.

Joy and Community Spirit

JAE's 5th Grade Student Council and the 5th Grade Select Chorus High Notes provided a musical morning for the Rocky Point community by hosting the annual Senior Citizen St. Patrick's Day Breakfast.

According to Student Council adviser Jean Costa, the students showcased their leadership skills by planning and organizing the event. The students greeted guests, handed out programs, helped guests to their tables, took food orders and helped serve breakfast.

The High Notes students, under the direction of Craig Knapp, performed 15 Irish music selections, including "An Irish Lullaby," "Danny Boy," "Molly Malone" and "There Must Be A Rainbow." JAE band director Cailyn Monastero and orchestra director David Ventura performed several songs during the breaks, and Jeana Prentice, Mr. Knapp's student teacher, served as guest conductor.

Mr. Knapp emceed the event and shared the many months of preparations by the students that went into the successful morning. He applauded each student for their dedication and hard work and thanked district officials, families and community members for their continued support of the Rocky Point School District music program.



Personal Narrative Essays Written With Love

When JAE fourth grade teacher Theresa O'Brien tasked her students with an assignment, they put their thinking caps on and got right to work. The personal narrative essays that each of them wrote were based on a person who made a difference in each of their lives.

From Brielle Crane's mom who gave her child courage to ski, stating, "You can do anything," to Christopher Lambert's dad who has taught him to use positive thinking when he experiences sadness, the students shared their sentiments about those who have affected or influenced their lives. Favorite coaches, cousins, grandparents, siblings and others were featured, and copies of the final projects hang proudly in the hallway for all to view.



"We had to really think hard about what to write and how to describe the person," student Adam Koenig said. Adam shared a story about his papa who taught him the patience and persistence of fishing and his encouraging, positive, adventurous and enthusiastic ways.

Students Bring Movement & Play Into Learning



JAE students are learning to engage their whole body in technology classes with an active floor projector, an interactive and collaborative technology that projects the selected activity on the floor. Students step and/or move to navigate and play. Teacher Laurie Berretta set up a lesson on homophones with fourth graders. Played similarly to a memory game, the students would step on a square and memorize where a match would be. They also played a bike race game where they worked in small teams, building camaraderie, encouraging one another and strategizing

movements. There are various subjects, themes and learning games all designed to bring movement and play into learning. The projector is a fun and physically active way to stimulate the neurons that store information, supporting the idea that movement supports memory and growth.

Lessons on Native American Groups

JAE fifth graders showed off some research, creative and social skills when they hosted a Native American showcase. Teachers Mark Yashowitz, Mara Lopez and Brittany Reh tasked each of the students with creating a slideshow, diorama and maps of what they learned about the Aztecs, Incas and other Native American groups to present to school administrators, family members and classmates.



The gymnasium was filled with visitors who were pleased to listen to students who were well-versed in the work they did. They even created some games, highlighted advancements in transportation, language and communication skills, and commerce of their groups.

According to Mr. Yashowitz, the idea was a great way to synthesize the lessons into a coherent whole – a successful way for the students to take ownership of their learning.



First-Place Honors

Fifth graders Taylor Bruce and Kenley Sontag won first place in the Long Island Stock Market Game in the Elementary Division. The JAE students worked as a team and competed against numerous teams from schools across Long Island. Their efforts helped them to build a fundamental understanding of investing along with real-

world skills and practice in math, English language arts, economics, social studies and other subjects.

Taylor and Kenley enjoyed the learning process and researched some favorite companies, including Dairy Queen, Macy's, Meta, Sephora, Ulta and Wendy's. Each team starts with \$100,000 to invest in the Stock Market Game. Taylor and Kenley finished with an investment portfolio of \$124,030.16. The team's biggest investment holding was Macy's.

Planting Positivity!

FJC second grade students in Julianne Warren and Erin DeMarco's class were tasked with thinking of things that make them happy, their greatest skills, their ideas of the best places in the world, someone they are grateful for and more for a colorful project. Together, they created festive paper flowers that highlight some of their favorite items.



Book Madness!

FJC teachers continue to encourage students to strengthen their skills and love of reading. Second graders are celebrating the month of March by participating in a gradewide book competition. In a March Madness-style bracket, students listen to two read-alouds a day and then vote for their favorite. Each day, the winning book is revealed until there will be only one left standing.

The winning books to date are displayed on a large bulletin board in the hallway fashioned with brackets as books compete for the championship title. They include “I’m Not Scared, You’re Scared” by Seth Meyers, and Drew Daywalt’s “The Day the Crayons Quit” and “The Legend of Rock Paper Scissors.”

Students vote on their favorite books in the brackets, which are then posted on the bulletin board. Thanks to our second grade teachers as they continue to help develop reading as a daily routine and ritual for their students.

Kindness Rocks Project

First graders in Jennifer Meschi’s class at FJC learned how something as simple as a rock can cultivate connections with one another. The class participated in the Kindness Rocks Project, first by reading “Kindness Rocks” by Sonica Ellis and then creating a list of words or messages they could write on their rocks that could put a smile on someone’s face.



They then discussed what a blueprint is and traced their rock onto the paper. They each created a design and wrote their message. Lastly, they used their blueprint to paint their rock and used a Sharpie to write their message. The students then took their rocks home and were asked to place them near their mailbox or somewhere in their community for someone to find.



Impressionism Is Impressive

Learning about art and celebrated artists promotes critical thinking skills, enhances creativity, improves language and reading skills and allows students to use their imaginations. That is the mindset behind a recent art lesson for FJC students with teacher Joelle Battelli.

To celebrate all the beauty of spring, Ms. Battelli worked with Amanda Miller's first grade class on a Monet-inspired water lily art project. The students drew lily pads on large green construction paper in organic shapes. They then created the water lilies with pieces of colored tissue paper that they scrunched up with their hands and shaped into 3-D pieces of original art, perfectly capturing the famous French artist's work in a memorable and colorful project.

Library Lessons

FJC's library is a place for curiosity and wonder. Students are encouraged to read to develop skills that incorporate literary appreciation, research, technology and library use. Students visit the library once a week and are welcomed by library media specialist Sarina Sicurella to check out books from the extensive and exciting collection. They enter and show respect and responsibility, and are ready to learn! Recent lessons for second graders in Michele Zimmer's class included biographies of noted contributors to society, and fun elements of fairytales.



Channels of Communication - Stay Connected With Us!

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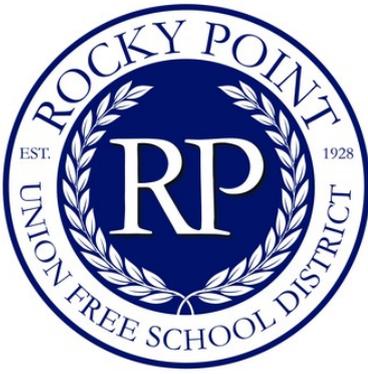
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Rocky Point Union Free School District

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Our School News

