

## Three teachers become nationally certified

Three of our very own teachers received their National Board Certification this year.

Christine Charboneau, Marie Blatchley, and Tara Valachovic carry this impressive mark of distinction as they work with our Willsboro students.

This certification is viewed as the gold standard for any teacher. The founding mission of the National Board is to advance the quality of teaching and learning.

“It’s a very challenging process, but it’s very rewarding all at the same time,” Charboneau said. “It’s the most valuable professional development I have done because you have to take such a careful look at what’s going on in your classroom and not be afraid to make changes and be a critic of yourself.”

Charboneau teaches 7th, 8th and 11th grade English, and Journalism/Yearbook class, a 7th and 8th grade extra support English class and Sophomore Seminar.

Blatchley teaches French, and Valachovic teaches 5th grade elementary students.

The foundation for National Board Certification stems from five propositions:

- Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
- Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
- Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring students learning.
- Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
- Teachers are members of learning communities.

Certifications last 5 years before renewal is needed. Blatchley and Valachovic renewed their certifications, while Charboneau got her first certification in 7-12 ELA, although she possessed prior certifications in social studies and ELA 5-9.

“It’s like having the title of doctor, and when it’s about to expire, it’s not like you want to lose that,” Valachovic said. “I take a lot of pride in having this certification because it signifies that I am always trying to be the best teacher I can be for my students.”

The National Board says the initial certification process usually requires 200 hours to complete, while the renewal is estimated to take about 40. Valachovic laughed when she said that it probably takes longer than that for each process but admitted the work is rewarding.

Blatchley agreed with Valachovic’s sentiment.

“Knowing what went into the work for the initial certification, I was reluctant to do it again,” Blatchley said. “But I wanted to prove to myself that I still meet the national standards and am considered highly effective in my profession.”

The work that factors into receiving certification is broken down into four components:

- Content Knowledge
- Differentiation in Instruction
- Teaching Practice and Learning Environment
- Effective and Reflective Practitioner

These components are completed by computer-based assessments as well as portfolios that are in written and video format.



Christine Charboneau



Marie Blatchley



Tara Valachovic

# Students enjoy free, healthy meals

At Willsboro Central School, all students can enjoy free and nutritious breakfast and lunches that promote and enhance their educational experience.

Every school day, our cafeteria team of Jill Magurk, Travis King and Cheryl Vanderpool is working hard for our students as they prepare and serve food.

“It’s really great to know we are providing these students healthy and nutritious meals every day,” Vanderpool said. “I know we all really enjoy working together here. We have a lot of laughs, and it’s great to connect with the kids from day to day.”

So what exactly makes

these high-quality meals unique?

Everything is made from scratch, and most food items stem from local locations.

“Through our cafeteria program, we are maximizing our students’ health and wellness and providing more support from an educational standpoint,” Superintendent of Schools Justin Gardner said.

“Our food costs have remained constant except for normal annual increases due to inflation, while our increased participation has actually led to a more financially sustainable cafeteria program within our district.”

It’s become less and less



Three students smile with the healthy lunches. Everything they eat is made from scratch.



Our cafeteria team helps provide quality meals for students. All food comes from local locations.

unusual to see students try a food they have never had before, which is a benefit of the cafeteria program — promoting open mindedness with food selection.

“It’s great when you can see a student see something like a beet and ask, ‘What’s that? I want to try that,’” District Business Manager Allison Sucharzewski said. “When students are having the best services offered to them, that’s what it’s all about. It’s so rewarding to see the kids be excited about what they are eating.”

So as the school year rolls on, the healthy food selections will as well.

WCS is committed to fostering an environment that maximizes student success, and the cafeteria has become an integral component of this mindset and process.

“We encourage as many of our students as possible to try out the food served in our cafeterias,” Gardner said. “The talent of our staff combined with the nutritional meal options available is the perfect match for our children and our school.”

## FREE LUNCH FORM



Don’t forget to complete the free lunch form here! We rely on this information to assure we receive proper grant funding and can continue to provide free, healthy and nutritious meals for our students every day. Scan the QR code here to complete this form.

# Farewell to Willsboro alumna, counselor

When you walk around Willsboro Central School, it might be hard to find someone who has spent more time working with students than Darcey Hurlburt.

Hurlburt has served as the WCS Student Support Counselor since 1991, but her roots as a Warrior extend much longer than that.

“Most of my life has been spent at Willsboro, and I could not think of a better place to spend so much time,” she said.

As a 1979 WCS alumna, Hurlburt takes extra pride in working for Willsboro students and the school through The Prevention Team — a non-profit organization based in Ticonderoga serving Essex County residents, communities and schools.

Hurlburt has decided to call it a career this June and head into the sunset of retirement.

“I have absolutely loved my job. I love working with the kids, the families and the staff,” she said. “There have been a lot of different staff over the years because I work with different kids each year, so it’s nice to connect with so many different people within the district.”

When she first started working at Willsboro, Hurlburt typically spent a day or two per week within the school. Now she is stationed at WCS four days a week, working to promote healthy social environments and healthy life choices for all Willsboro students.

“Ultimately, I work as part of a substance abuse prevention program,” Hurlburt said. “The idea is to give students skills and strategies to help handle situations they are dealing with in the moment but also give them the life skills to prevent substance abuse and focus on good physical, mental and emotional health.”



Darcey Hurlburt has been a Warrior for most of her life. She graduated from WCS in 1979, and returned as a counselor in 1991.

Her commitment to WCS and its students goes beyond working with The Prevention Team.

Hurlburt and Charmaine Flynn established Willsboro’s Backpack Program, which helps various students and their families by assisting with weekly food allotments and other necessities.

Hurlburt also started a Student Support Fund that receives donations consistently as well as a free School Store that provides clothing and other school supplies to students in need.

“Children have been at the heart of most of what I’ve accomplished in my life,” Hurlburt said. “It feels good just to reflect and think about the possibility that I may have had an influence on and made a difference for someone that I’ve crossed paths with over the years.”

As she reflected on her 44 years

with WCS, plenty of other memories came to mind.

Hurlburt was the founding member of the Willsboro PTO and was on the committee coordinated by CVES to organize the first county-wide spelling bee event.

She also helped direct several Senior plays. And as if she was not already busy enough, she served as a class advisor, a score keeper for girls basketball, and a prop master for many school plays.

All these memories will last a lifetime for Hurlburt, and as retirement lurks around the corner, she’s still looking to make new memories and leave a lasting impact.

“I really still want to make a difference between now and June,” Hurlburt said. “I am here and love this place.”

# Saying goodbye to longtime teacher

For Charmaine Flynn, retirement is right around the corner, but what her future entails is still up in the air.

She's looking forward to having some more free time, but her heart will always be in Willsboro Central School and never too far away.

"There will definitely be more time spent gardening, hanging out with my family and spending time outdoors," Flynn said. "The nice thing is I am looking forward to having a bit more of a relaxed schedule. That will be a welcomed change, but I still plan on being around here at Willsboro from time to time subbing."

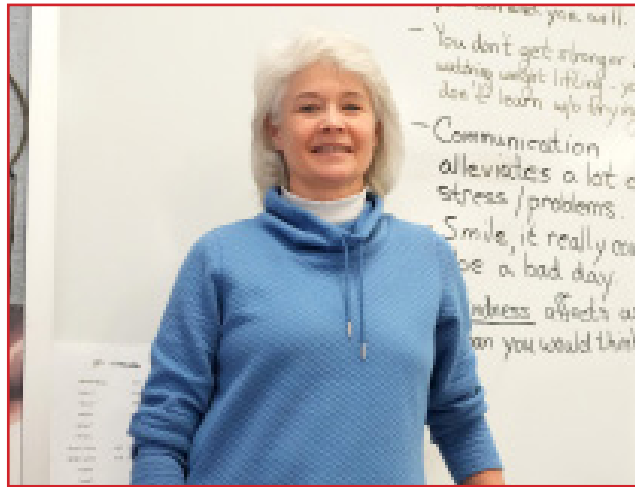
Flynn has been teaching for 37 years, and 16 of those years have been with WCS. She teaches algebra to 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th graders as well as a special education class.

Connecting with all her students and working together with other teachers and faculty members are just a few of the things Flynn said that she will miss the most about coming to school each day.

"The camaraderie with the teachers and faculty here at the school is what I really enjoy," she said. "It's just a huge support system here. Teaching is not easy, but with all the support we have from fellow teachers right to the highest point of administration, it's fantastic. And of course, I love working with the kids. That's why we all do what we do here."

Seeing so many students succeed and move on to have successful careers and lives has made a lasting impression on Flynn.

She said there are too many different amazing stories to recall about her students that have spent time in her classroom at Willsboro, but one aspect she always applies to teaching was easy to recall and share.



Charmaine Flynn has been teaching at Willsboro Central School for the past 16 years.

"From the first year I started student teaching to now, I treat my students as if they are my kids," Flynn said. "That's how I go about teaching them and taking care of them. A good education is not just a teacher standing in front of kids trying to show them how to solve a math problem. It's more than that. It's about showing care and compassion for the kids every day."

And with how tight knit WCS is within its school and the surrounding community,

this mindset fits perfectly.

"We are a small school, but the community atmosphere is fantastic," Flynn said. "The community is here for the students, and the teachers are here for the students. Because we are so small, you can get more personalized with the students to give them a great education and experience when they are here with us. It's not just a school here. It's a family."

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"Working through the process made me want to be a better teacher," Valachovic said. "It was a triggering event for me in the sense of realizing where I thought I was and where I want to actually be as an educator."

Just as teachers say to students how there is always opportunity to learn, this certification process reflects that statement back onto teachers.

"I have been teaching for almost 30 years, and there is always more to learn," Charboneau said. "You don't truly grow unless you know what your shortcomings are. That's

the way I view the certification. It makes you be your own worst critic, but I can have something positive come from it in this case."

And there's plenty of positivity to go around for all three teachers as they continue to do what they enjoy most — spending time with students in their classrooms and being the best educators they can be.

"It's pretty neat for the three of us now to know we all went through the same process and were in the trenches together for the certification," Blatchley said. "It's that unspoken bond we have now, and it's great to be part of the Willsboro teaching community."