

# Orchard Park Central School District Fall 2019 Community Report

## Quaker Corner Offers Hands-On Learning Opportunities

Members of the Orchard Park High School DECA club have been given an awesome opportunity to gain work experience without leaving the Orchard Park High School. DECA students can work at the Quaker Corner, the bookstore located in the Orchard Park High School Commons. Their time spent not only increases their learning and provides them valuable experience, but profits made from the store are used to offset the costs of DECA's competitions. Each year DECA students compete in Regionals, States and if successful, some students may continue on to the International level.

There are around 60 students in the club and volunteers work on a rotating schedule. Store manager Ashley DeNysschen coordinates the schedule to keep the bookstore open from 1:50 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. each day after school. The store sells snacks, drinks, Quaker gear and school supplies like, notebooks, pens, pencils and binders. It's a great place for students to grab supplies without running any additional errands. The student volunteers gain experience with customer service and



*DECA students Bowen Slotman, Dillon Connell and Ashley DeNysschen pose behind some of the OP swag that the Quaker Corner carries.*

merchandising. Members of the club evaluate financial statements and as a group they look over and review profit margins.

Students along with DECA advisors Kristen Casto and Jim Agnew have worked to rebrand the store since last school year. DECA members with the help of others have made many changes including:

- Working with the high school Technology Department to create a new store logo.
- The HS Custodial staff was able to paint the store.
- The Orchard Park High School PTO was able to donate display cases.
- The students worked with Orchard Park alumni Jon Corto at Buffalo Strive Vending to set up shelving and a cooler.

The OP graduate even offered advice on how to have the store arranged to increase sales which will aid the DECA students in reaching

their goal of doubling sales to continue offsetting the costs of their competitions. The rebranded store opened in time for the second semester last year, this year will be the first full year for the Quaker Corner. For a list of products the store carries visit the Orchard Park High School Virtual Backpack at [www.opschools.org](http://www.opschools.org).



*DECA members Dillon Connell and Bowen Slotman cash out their fellow students as they make purchases at the Quaker Corner.*

**Universal Pre-K  
Registration Begins  
December 1<sup>st</sup>**

*Please see page 7 for more details!*

*Get your apparel and more at the Quaker Corner bookstore!*

# Poverty Simulation at Windom

On Monday, September 23, 2019 staff at Windom Elementary participated in a Poverty Simulation given by the United Way. Heather Quigley of the United Way stated, "A Financial Hardship simulation may be a more accurate term, as more people are above the federal poverty level but living month to month." Every day, 41% of Erie County households struggle to meet a basic household budget, meaning they can't afford the necessities for survival: safe housing, healthy food, childcare, reliable transportation, and even medical services.

Last Spring Windom's Professional Development Committee opted to offer the Poverty Simulation to the staff at Windom this fall. They had offered a simulation at Windom approximately 10 years ago but the committee felt it would be valuable to do again. The goal of the simulation was to give staff members a better understanding of what some of our families, including staff members, have experienced in the past or are currently living through; the decisions that one makes when not financially stable; the stresses that are caused; the trade-offs that are made. All of this information can help staff members approach their roles a bit more empathetically and perhaps with a

bit more patience and compassion.

During the simulation the staff members were given roles to play, each participant being a member of a family experiencing financial hardship. The participants had to survive one month living in a financial hardship situation. They sought assistance through a variety of human services and other organizations to provide for their family's basic needs during the course of the four 15-minute "weeks" within the simulation. They often had to make difficult decisions when there simply was not enough money for everything that was needed. Assistant principal at Windom Elementary, Jeffrey Dolce played a married 50-something grandfather raising two young grandchildren. He was disabled and diabetic, and with limited transportation, he struggled to provide adequate childcare and supervision for his grandchildren; failed to pay all of his bills, opted to buy food and pay bills instead of purchasing medicine. According to Mr. Dolce, "It made me quite clearly see that when you are focused on surviving, you can become overwhelmed. Sometimes the systems - education, social supports, business - are not set up or operated with this population



*Heather Quigley from the United Way speaks to staff at Windom Elementary about the Poverty Simulation they are about to participate in.*

in mind."

According to Heather Quigley of the United Way, in Orchard Park 20% of households struggle to meet their basic needs. The simulation opened the eyes of many staff members to what others around them may be experiencing.

## Hornung Appointed as Technology Director



*Mrs. Sarah Hornung*

The District is pleased to announce the appointment of Mrs. Sarah Hornung as the new Technology Director and CIO for the Orchard Park Central School District. Hornung succeeds Mrs. Deby Eppolito who retired in August after serving the District for 8 years. Hornung was previously the Director of Educational Technology and Professional Development Coordinator at the Stanley G. Falk School for two years. Prior to that, she was a Special Education teacher in Lancaster for eight years. She has two Masters Degrees from St. Bonaventure: School Leadership (2017) and Literacy and Reading (2011) and a Bachelor of Science in Childhood Education and Special Education from Fredonia State University in 2009. Hornung and her husband Patrick are the proud parents of their two sons, Louis (4) and Vincent (2). The pair are looking forward to the third child arriving in late November.

## Ellicott Student Named Youth Honoree

Ellicott Elementary student Maya Katashuk was named the Juvenile Arthritis Youth Honoree at Buffalo's 2019



*Ellicott Elementary, fifth grader Maya Katashuk.*

Walk to Cure Arthritis held in September. Maya was diagnosed with juvenile idiopathic arthritis as a pre-schooler. She had undergone multiple tests before being diagnosed and she has seen several rheumatologists to treat this disease since its onset. She is passionate about curing the disease. This year she was the top fundraiser for Buffalo's walk and even had an appearance on Channel 7.

# Master Teachers at OPHS

The Orchard Park Central School District is pleased to announce that in October two Orchard Park High School teachers were selected as members of the New York State Master Teachers Program by Governor Andrew Cuomo. Mr. Adam Ziccardi III and Mr. Tom Zinteck are two of the 228 recipients chosen.

Mr. Adam Ziccardi III has been teaching for 26 years. Earning a BS in Mathematics in 1993 from State University College at Buffalo he began in the classroom while earning a Master's in Mathematics Education from Buffalo State College. In addition to mathematics, Mr. Ziccardi also extensively studied Astronomy and Computer Programming. Since 1996, Mr. Ziccardi has been teaching at his alma mater; Orchard Park High School. Current courses include CS Academy newly developed at Carnegie Mellon University, Advanced Placement Computer Science A (Java) and P (Principles). Also Mr. Ziccardi currently teaches in-depth C++ topics. Mr. Ziccardi has taught professional development for WNY STEM, is a nationally trained facilitator for Code.org, and participates with CSTA. Ongoing collaborations with University at Buffalo's Center for Computational Research and also Carnegie Mellon University have kept Mr. Ziccardi's classes relevant and rigorous. In Orchard Park, he is the Computer Science Coordinator building a K-12 CS program with colleagues. Since 2008, Mr. Ziccardi serves as the Orchard Park Teachers Association president focusing on community relations, collegial collaboration and student success. He looks forward to providing and improving opportunities in Computer Science.

Mr. Ziccardi was motivated to become a master teacher to be involved with educators of excellence and pursuits of intriguing information and activities. According to Mr. Ziccardi, "Extending learning for ourselves beyond what we do in our classrooms keep us fresh and curious about academic pursuits so our students benefit from an exciting and relevant teacher."

Orchard Park High School Principal, Jon Wolf states, "Mr. Ziccardi has single handedly built the coding program at the Orchard Park High School and through his leadership Orchard Park students are flourishing and accessing incredible opportunities."

Thomas Zinteck earned his BS and MS in technology education from Buffalo State College. He has been teaching technology education for a total of 13 years; his first five at Newfane High School and his last eight at Orchard Park High School. Mr. Zinteck is currently teaching Civil Engineering and Architecture, Technical Drawing, Photography, and Construction Technology. Within his school, he serves as the instructional leader for his department and is the co-advisor of the media club. In the past, he was the head advisor for the FIRST robotics team 378. In addition to his teaching duties, Mr. Zinteck is a very active participant within the Western New York Technology Education Association. Through this association, he serves as the head coordinator of



*Orchard Park High School teachers Mr. Adam Ziccardi and Mr. Tom Zinteck, pictured above, were named NYS Master Teachers in October 2019.*

an event at Tech Wars, hosted by Niagara County Community College. With his spare time, Mr. Zinteck enjoys spending quality time with his family, and playing various sports, such as, golf, hockey, and pickle ball. What he is most excited about for this educational opportunity is to meet like-minded individuals who share his passion for STEM education.

Mr. Zinteck pursued becoming a Master teacher because he wanted to be the best teacher he could be, and by putting himself in situations where he could learn from other master teachers he thought would be a better way to accomplish that goal. Mr. Zinteck says, "I hope that I can walk away from this program learning so much about the other disciplines in STEM education, have new project ideas, and meet professional like-minded people". According to Orchard Park High School Principal Jon Wolf, "Mr. Zinteck has undertaken a leadership role at the within the Orchard Park High School Technology Department. Under his direction STEM offerings have been expanded and enhanced."

The 228 Master Teachers are dedicated professionals who teach science, technology, computer science, robotics, coding, engineering, and math courses across grades K-12 including Advanced Placement, honors, Regents and International Baccalaureate levels. All Master Teachers are active beyond their classrooms.

"I salute these brilliant and dedicated teachers who have made an incredible, lasting impact on New York's future leaders," Governor Cuomo said. "These 228 new members of the Master Teacher Program will join the ranks of the state's top educators, a group who strive every day to enrich and expand the horizons of countless students in every corner of the Empire State."

The Orchard Park Central School District is so proud to have Mr. Ziccardi and Mr. Zinteck joining Master teachers Mr. Dena (2018) and Mr. Bella (2018) at the Orchard Park High School.

# Safety & Security Project Update

By: Jeffrey Petrus,  
Assistant Superintendent for Business, and  
Facilities Committee Chair

The detailed plans and specifications for the \$12.2 million Safety & Security Project, that was overwhelmingly supported by the district voters in November 2018, has been approved by the NY State Education Department. We now have approval to move forward



with bids so we are set for construction beginning in the Spring and continuing through the summer of 2020. The bids will be awarded by the Board of Education at its December 10, 2019 board meeting.

This Safety & Security project will improve security at all six of our educational buildings by providing secure vestibules at the main entrances to allow our security personnel to question visitors prior to issuing a visitor badge and granting entry into the building. This will require

some renovations to the front entrance foyers to all six buildings and the secondary entrances at the Middle School and High School. Some office renovations will also be included at South Davis and Windom to help with improving the security at those buildings. This project

will also address some roof replacement and masonry concerns at both the Middle School and Windom Elementary.

The project is eligible for 70% reimbursement from New York State through Building Aid and the District also received approval by the voters to use \$1.5 million from the Capital Project Reserve to help fund this project. There is no new tax impact to our community to fund this Safety & Security Project which will greatly improve school security at all our buildings.

# Veterans Day Celebrations



*Eggert Elementary students Landon Kirk and Cole Rodo played Taps during their annual Veterans Day assembly.*



*Veteran Kelly Shea is pictured with Windom Elementary students at Windom's Veterans Day breakfast.*



*Mr. Pietrantone welcomes the veterans at Ellicott Elementary's Veterans Day breakfast.*



*South Davis students are seated with the veterans being recognized at the South Davis Veterans Day assembly.*

# OPHS Students Celebrate Day of the Dead

Students taking View of Spain at the high school did a project for Day of the Dead. They researched what Day of the Dead is, what an ofrenda (altar) for Day of the Dead



*Pictured are View of Spain students in front of the ofrenda they created for deceased rapper, The Notorious B.I.G.*

entails, a famous person's life, and set up an ofrenda for a famous person of their choice. The ofrendas were on display in the Library Classroom for several days and other World Languages classes were able to view the ofrendas and vote on which one they like the most. After the votes were tallied the ofrenda for Cameron Boyce was selected as the winner.

## Middle School Student Raises Funds to Help Animals

Orchard Park Middle School student Thea Nahrebeski has been raising money the last several years to benefit local animal shelters. So far she has raised over \$5,000 by holding lemonade stands and selling Niagara Chocolate candy bars.



*Thea Nahrebeski was recognized by the Orchard Park Central School District Board of Education in October*

Thea's passion began with her own rescue dog Shayla. She felt it wasn't fair for certain dogs to get hurt and abused and that they should always get a second chance.

She has donated to Joyful Rescues and the Ten Lives Club. Thea's donations have sponsored many transports and has even helped Joyful Rescues purchase a play yard for their dogs to enjoy.

Thea was recognized by the Orchard Park Central School District Board of Education for dedicating her time and effort to help ensure that as many animals as possible get the second chances they deserve.

## Learning in the Forest Classroom

In September AP Literature students visited the OPHS Forest Classroom that the Ecology class had been studying. Mrs. Julie Bastedo had shared a chapter of Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac* with her students and the class decided to head out into the woods and see what one of these old growth forest oaks would look like.



The AP Literature students were able to visit five sites where student ecologists taught about trees, other forest plants, fungi, and evidence of the history of this rare fragment of ancient forest.

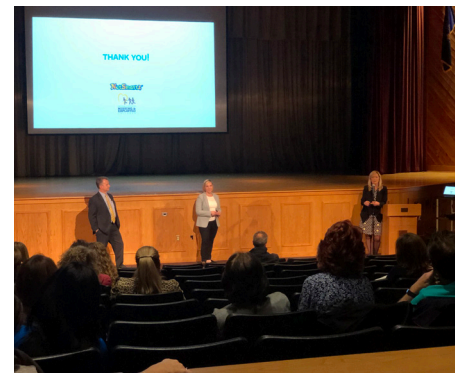
The Ecology and AP Literature students are pictured in the Forest Classroom.

The Ecology students shared their experience working in this setting and offered glimpses of the naturalist journals they have been working on. While the Ecology students were teaching, the AP Literature students used sketchbooks to record what they were learning from their peers. The AP Literature students were able to share an article by Henry David Thoreau with the ecology students to share the creative non-fiction approach to the importance of being surrounded by nature.

## OPCSD Presents the Parent Information Series 2019-2020

This fall the Orchard Park Central School District hosted an Internet Safety Presentation given by the Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the FBI and an Emotional Resiliency Presentation given by Mr. Brooks Gibbs, an award winning social skills educator. The Parent Information Series will continue in February with two presentations on Vaping. The final presentation of the year will be a Teen Driving Safety presentation given by the Orchard Park Police Department in May. Information about the upcoming presentations is listed below:

- Two identical presentations on Vaping will be held February 25, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. at the high school and February 27, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. at the Middle School. Roswell Park and the Erie County Health Department will offer their presentation both February 25, & February 27. The presentation will provide general medical information related to vaping and its addictive effects on teens and adults and the harmful side effects of nicotine on the developing teen brain. Intervention options will be discussed.
- A presentation on Teen Driving Safety will be given May 28, 2020 at 7 p.m. at the Orchard Park High School. The Orchard Park Police Department and the Orchard Park Central School District will present the dangers of distracted driving, driving under the influence of alcohol/drugs, license restrictions for permit holders and junior drivers, vehicle and traffic laws, pedestrians and other safety issues. This presentation is for both teenagers and their parents.



*The Internet Safety presentation took place on Wednesday October 23. The presentation focused on internet safety strategies and increasing parents awareness*

# Images Around the District



Windom Fire company visited Windom Elementary in October during Fire Safety Week to discuss fire safety. Mrs. Schermerhorn's class is pictured above.



This August, through the Subaru Loves Learning initiative, Subaru partnered with the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) to donate award-winning science books to students at Eggert Elementary.



Twenty-three Physical Education teachers and two Middle School monitors were trained in Project Adventure this fall. The training was given by Austin Paulson of Project Adventure, Inc.

## Check out the Virtual Backpack

The Orchard Park Central School District's Virtual Backpack is a central repository of informational flyers that can be found at [opschools.org/domain/1752](https://opschools.org/domain/1752).

New flyers are added on a weekly basis, so please be sure to check your school's Virtual Backpack regularly for the most up-to-date information. Scan code at right to view now.



Orchard Park Athletic Hall of Fame inductees were honored at the 2019 Homecoming Parade, a recognition brunch and at half time of the Varsity football game. Congratulations inductees: Robert Besch (51'), Art Aungst, Dena Owens (95'), Katie (Higgins) Fabbro (98') and Kyle Domogala (97').



Biology students are pictured above with Mr. VanDerwater and his cider press. The students were able to make some cider and learn the biology behind the process.



Kindness in Chalk Week (10/7-10/11) students are encouraged to spread kindness by writing words of encouragement on the sidewalks of their schools and communities. The slogan for the week is "One sidewalk, one message, one million smiles."





# Special Education Department Update

By: David Lilleck Assistant Superintendent for  
Personnel & Pupil Services & Lynn Czemerynski  
Director of Student Support Services & Special Education

The focus of the Special Education Department is rooted in the mission and vision statements created by the District's Special Education Leadership Council. The council, comprised of teachers, support staff, administrators, and parents, works together to define goals to focus and guide the district special education department.

## Mission Statement:

The Special Education Leadership Council is committed to promoting education, reviewing department policy and procedure, developing the potential of all children and improving the understanding of individuals with special needs.

## Vision Statements:

- Enhance the learning experience for students with special needs.
- Provide staff development through effective in-service training for teachers to keep current on strategies for students with special needs.

- Provide information for parents regarding special education services.
- Create a venue for teachers to share information from various buildings and levels.
- Respond to the needs of our students, as ALL students are general education students first!

The most important statement above is the fact that ALL students are general education students first and foremost! This is an area that the Special Education Department is continually examining and evaluating as they work to increase inclusive learning opportunities and environments for all of our students. Over the next few months and years, you will continue to see changes not only in our educational programming to meet the needs of all learners, but also our physical environment to improve the inclusive nature of our buildings.

As we continue to move forward as a District to meet the needs of all of our students, we have added key information and resources for parents and community

members on our website. Please visit <https://www.opschools.org/domain/31> to find information regarding:

- A FAQ document highlighting key terms and questions/answers.
- A document that outlines our continuum offerings in the District.
- Our long-range Special Education Plan.
- Transition supports for students and families.
- A list of key outside supports.

## Special Education Parent Information

### Meetings at OPCSD:

The District will be offering two opportunities for parents/guardians of students with special needs to share information, perspectives and ask questions throughout the current year. The first will be held on December 2, 2019 at 6 p.m. in the Orchard Park Middle School auditorium, the second will be held April 6, 2020 at 10 a.m. at the District Offices.

# Universal Pre-K Registration to Begin December 1<sup>st</sup>

## What You Need to Know

- Children must be 4 years old by December 1 of the year they start the program.
- Must be a resident within the Orchard Park Central School District.
- No cost to families.
- Classes are 2.5 hours a day, five days a week.
- Families are responsible for providing their own transportation.
- Based on grant funding, a total of 100 slots are available. A lottery will be held if more than 100 children apply.
- The 2019-2020 UPK sites were: EduKids, Eggert Road Elementary, Southtowns Family YMCA and WeeCan Preschool
- After December 1<sup>st</sup> visit [www.opschools.org/upk](http://www.opschools.org/upk) to register.



## Resident

# November is PowerSchool Parent Portal Month

**L**ogin today at <https://powerschool.opschools.org> to verify your demographic information so that OPCSD can reach you quickly and efficiently in the event of an emergency or school closing and to relay important student-specific information.

*\*If you've forgotten your password, please click "Forgot Username or Password". If you are unable to reset your password please click the "PS Help" link on the login page. One login will provide access to information for all of your children. Parents who prefer to have information mailed home should also make that request directly to their child's school.*



PowerSchool

## Inclement Weather Procedures

**T**he decision to close/delay schools is not an easy one to make and often the decision needs to be made quickly and decisively and in the best interest of the safety of our students and staff.

As early as 4 a.m., calls begin to be made by our transportation department and the Superintendent of Schools to the Orchard Park Police Department, the Orchard Park Highway Department, neighboring highway departments, the Erie County Sheriff, Erie County and New York State Highway Departments. While the phones are ringing, key district personnel are out surveying area roads and reporting the conditions to the Superintendent of Schools.

Once the decision is made to delay or close, radio and television stations are contacted and the district's iConnect system is activated.

Note that the district is over 50 square miles, and much of the area is hilly terrain shaped in a narrow band that stretches south. Due to the land formation, it is common to have varying weather at different ends of the district. Even though school may not be closed, your decision to keep your child home is quite appropriate if the weather conditions around your home are not good. We all know and believe that our top priority is the safety of

our children.

It is a good idea to talk to your child about cold weather safety. It is important to check your child's (even teenagers) outerwear. Protecting exposed skin during cold weather is extremely important: warm coats, hats, gloves, scarves and boots will help protect your child during the winter season.

When considering the safety of students in cold weather the following information from the National Weather Service is used as a guideline in making a determination to close schools:

Cautionary: Wind Chills of -18 to -20 degrees

Advisory: Wind Chills of -25 degrees or below

Warning: Wind Chills of -35 degrees or below

In many areas of the country, schools will not close until the wind chill temperature is at the Warning level of -40 degrees or below. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that no one should be outside with unprotected skin with wind-chill factors in the range of -40 degrees or below. In Orchard Park, if the wind chill temperature reaches above the advisory level, school may be delayed or closed.