



Observer

SPRING 2023

The Student CONNECTION

Partnerships among schools and classes cultivate a positive learning experience for students.

This school year, we have expanded the educational experiences of our students through meaningful connections between the three school buildings and peer-to-peer partnerships. From academics to athletics, our students have been able to look up to and support one another, bringing our school community closer than ever before.

During the past few months, Oyster Bay High School students have met with James H. Vernon School students to shine light on some high school course

offerings. At the start of 2023, sixth graders connected with students in Oyster Bay High School's French and Spanish courses to learn about culture, language and the benefits of language learning. They also played games in French and Spanish and learned bachata, a style of dance that originated in the Dominican Republic. This school-to-school partnership continued in March as third and fourth graders at James H. Vernon School received a visit from juniors and seniors in the high school's College American Sign



As part of their Readers' Theater, second graders at Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School teamed up with prekindergarten and kindergarten classes for a penguin activity.

Language course. The high schoolers rotated classrooms and conducted ASL lessons

with fun activities to test student knowledge. Both students and staff from James H. Vernon School enjoyed learning the signs for different people, places and things.

Aside from academics, Oyster Bay High School students have served as role models, positively highlighting extracurricular activities and athletic opportunities for our young Oyster Bay-East Norwich students. Members of the Oyster Bay High School Robotics Team visited second graders at Theodore



Members of the Oyster Bay High School Student Athletic Leadership Program visited James H. Vernon School in February to speak with fifth and sixth grade students.

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Members of the Oyster Bay High School Robotics Club visited second graders at Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School to perform a robot demonstration.



Oyster Bay High School students in Dr. Nicolle Sisia's College American Sign Language class visited third and fourth grade classes at James H. Vernon School to educate them on ASL.

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Roosevelt Elementary School and sixth graders at James H. Vernon School in March to showcase the high school's robotics program and provide a robot demonstration. Roosevelt students watched in awe as the high schoolers controlled their robot; they were eager to learn more.

"It's been really fun to go back into these old classrooms that we haven't been to in a really long time," junior robotics member Nicholas Ramirez said. "The students seemed really excited about it, so that was great to see."

After the visit, some sixth graders at Vernon said that they hoped to join the club themselves next year when they step into the high school.

In addition to after-school clubs, James H. Vernon sixth graders have found more to look forward to thanks to members of Oyster Bay High School's Student Athlete Leadership Program (SALP). SALP is

the Oyster Bay chapter of a larger organization, Athletes Helping Athletes, and student-athletes are selected based on an application and glowing recommendations from coaches and teachers. Advised by Ryan Towers, this group of 28 juniors and seniors visit fifth and sixth grade classes at James H. Vernon School three times a year to present on important topics.

"An integral part of SALP is to give members the chance to receive training on various aspects of being a good leader and a positive role model," Mr. Towers said. "These training sessions emphasize the importance of sportsmanship, participation in athletics, representing your school proudly and respectfully, the value of education, and encourage younger students to make positive choices."

Along with the important life lessons that these student-

athletes share, the visits also help Vernon students better understand the athletic offerings at the high school. Did you know that Oyster Bay High School has a sailing team and a fencing team? These high school leaders have been able to shine a light on their teams and inspire Vernon students to explore all the athletic opportunities that will be there for them in the future.

Peer-to-peer connections are also occurring within our individual schools. At Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School, every second grade class participates in the Readers' Theater Program. Led by literacy coach Christine Bartell and school librarian Roseann Davidson, each second grade class practices a story for about a month and then performs the story for their families. For the first time this year, the second grade performers are visiting other

classrooms in the building to share their storytelling skills. For example, this past February, Alison Cavuto's class read "Tacky the Penguin" and "Three Cheers for Tacky" by Helen Lester. Students stopped by prekindergarten and kindergarten classes to share the book and information that they learned about penguins. The second graders also taught the young students a penguin dance and helped them create their own penguin puppets. This new Readers' Theater expansion has been a positive way to boost student confidence and foster new friendships within the school.

We are better when we are together. As we continue into the spring months, we look forward to seeing all the new partnerships that will form between our schools and students.

A Message from the

Superintendent of Schools

Dear Oyster Bay-East Norwich
Community,

I cannot believe how quickly the school year is flying by. Spring is here, which means our schools are busier than ever with exciting activities and events. It also means we are one step closer to breaking ground on the second phase of our bond projects. Thanks to the support of the community, the first phase of projects has been successfully completed. This phase included improvements such as the high school turf field, which our spring student-athletes are having a great time utilizing.

As we approach the final months of the 2022-2023 school year, we have some wonderful events such as spring concerts and honor society inductions on the horizon. I encourage you to join me in celebrating the talents of our wonderful students, for their successes would not be possible if it were not for the ongoing community support and the focus on the district's vision of "Empowering All Students to Achieve Excellence."

Coming up is the district's Budget Vote, which will be held on Tuesday, May 16, from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. in the chorus room of Oyster Bay High School. I encourage you to head to the polls and make your voices heard. Additional information on the budget for the 2023-2024 school year can be found on the district website at www.obenschools.org.

Let's make the final stretch of the 2022-2023 school year a strong one!

Sincerely,
Francesco Ianni, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools

Student-Athlete Spotlight: Christopher Tardugno

When it comes to running, junior Christopher Tardugno is one of the most celebrated student-athletes in Oyster Bay High School history. He had an incredible winter track season, earning him the titles of All-Conference, All-County, Conference Champion and three-time County Champion. This year, he also broke the school record for the 3200-meter with a time of 9:34.10 and was the first male to represent Oyster Bay High School at the New Balance Nationals. He ran nine minutes and 41 seconds in the 2-mile race. Congratulations, Christopher! We look forward to your continued success on the track!



NEWS AROUND THE SCHOOLS

Students Present 'Bye Bye Birdie'

Students from Oyster Bay High School delighted on stage from March 10th to 12th during their production of "Bye Bye Birdie." The production was directed and choreographed by Teriann Chiappardi and was held in the Oyster Bay Performing Arts Center at the high school.

The cast took audiences back in time to the late 1950s as they told the story of Kim MacAfee, her family and her small Ohio town that gets rocked when teen idol Conrad Birdie arrives. The students kept audiences laughing and fully entertained with high-energy musical numbers and interesting characters.

Student-musicians provided the music under the direction of Matthew Sisia and members of the school's Baymen Backstage Club, led by teacher Alexander Dollin, provided the lighting and sound design. In addition, the production's cast and crew built and painted the show's set from scratch and did a wonderful job incorporating it into the story.



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NEWS AROUND THE SCHOOLS

Local Author Revisits History With Vernon Students

Fourth graders from James H. Vernon School received a special visit from local author S. G. Taylor on March 23rd. Hosted by James H. Vernon librarians Erin Dubon and Elizabeth McGee, this marked the school's first author visit since 2019. Mr. Taylor, whose children once attended James H. Vernon School, had visited the school years ago and was excited to return to speak with students about his book, "The Ghosts of Raynham Hall."

The book, which corresponds with the fourth grade curriculum, was based on Oyster Bay's historic Raynham Hall. This was once the home of Robert Townsend, George Washington's Culper Spy Ring agent, which the students learned about during their study of the War of Independence. During the presentation, Mr. Taylor discussed the Culper Spy Code, and students tried to interpret coded messages on their own. He also read some of "The Ghosts of Raynham Hall" to the students and shared how the main characters were based on his sons. It was a great experience for the students.



Protecting Pollinators at Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School

Kindergarten students at Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School kicked off their butterfly unit with a visit from two special guests on March 22nd and 23rd. Science and Technology teacher Regina D'Orio invited Jamie Arty from Monarchbutterfly.com and Laura Escobar, founder of Oyster Bay's Hive Market and Maker's Space, to the school to speak with kindergarten classes about the importance of bees and butterflies.

Ms. Escobar spoke with students about bees and the many benefits of honey, while Mrs. Arty shared her knowledge of butterflies and their life cycle. Students asked questions and learned about pollination with the help of Ms. D'Orio. They then created their own wildflower seed balls by rolling together soil and different seeds which will grow into plants that will attract butterflies. These seed balls will be planted in the school's new butterfly garden and around the Oyster Bay-East Norwich community. Students were also able to take some home to plant in their own backyards.

