



YOUR SCHOOLS

www.sweethomeschools.com

Sweet Home Central School District

February 2009 Your Schools - The Newsletter for the Residents of the Sweet Home Central School District



Bald for Warbucks!

Eighth grader Orvis Collins gets his head shaved by Dr. Paula Adams in preparation for his role as Daddy Warbucks in the Middle School's production of **Annie Jr.**

The production performed to packed houses in the middle school auditorium on February 6th and 7th.

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New Group Brings SOUL to the High School

A new club at the high school has made a tremendous impact on students, teachers and administrators. SOUL (Student Outreach Under Leadership) Brothers and Sisters meets once a week and allows students, particularly African-American students, a place to talk with peers and teachers about any topic, situation or problem - school related or otherwise.

The group was founded by student Andie Finley and blossomed out of a book study workshop attended by high school teacher Nick Newman. With the help of Reverend Eugene Copeland the group has taken off this school year. Nearly 70 students have attended one meeting this year and weekly gatherings have an average of 25 students.

The meetings center on helping students rid the WAR (Worry, Anger and Resentment) in their minds through simple group discussion. Students talk with other students about avoiding conflict, problems at home, work and school and how to be a better student and individual. Students offer real-life examples to aid in the discussion.

The groups goals include bridging the gap between African-American students and the rest of the student population , create a better sense of personal character and empathy for others and increase the in-school performance of club members.

One of the ways the group is working toward improving the in-school performance of its members is by having everyone create a PSS (Personal Success Stories) newspaper where teachers, parents and friends share with the student inspirational quotes and stories.

The group meets every Tuesday after school.



Sweet Home's SOUL Brothers & Sisters Group

A Message from the Superintendent of Schools...



*Superintendent of
Schools
Geoffrey M. Hicks*

Budget Process & School Start/End Times

The Board of Education has been developing the 2009-10 budget for the past two months. The current economic climate makes this budget development cycle more challenging than usual, especially in light of the fact that New York State has reduced overall aid to Sweet Home by more than \$1.8 million. The School Board has always utilized a two-fold approach to crafting a budget that includes protecting the core programs of the district while exhibiting fiscal responsibility with tax dollars.

The drastic reduction in state aid to Sweet Home means that the Board has been looking at a variety of ways to reduce overall spending. It will not be possible to transfer the entire loss of state aid to the tax levy, the resulting tax increase would be exorbitant in these economic times. Therefore, the Board has considered cuts, in both efficiency items and personnel.

The Board has taken a long-term view when contemplating reductions, and while it has been recommended that some elements of programs be reduced, no entire program has been eliminated. In order to allow community input on the process I have scheduled a special open community meeting on **February 24, 2009 at 6:00 pm in the Norman Vergils Community Center**. At the meeting I will review the budget work that has been completed to date, and will seek feedback from community members. The community meeting is not a Board of Education meeting, but rather a chance for community members to learn more about budget plans and comment upon the process.

The Board of Education will continue budget deliberations at a special session held on Saturday, February 28th beginning at 8:00 am. The Board will also consider budget issues at the regularly scheduled March meetings and vote on the proposed budget at the April 21st meeting.

One of the other elements we wish to discuss at the open community meeting is the possibility of changing the start and end times of schools in the district for 2009-10. Our recent contract settlement with the teachers association will allow us to add an additional 30 minutes to the elementary school day. The length of day will now be consistent among the three levels (elementary, middle, high school) and will force us to rethink bus sequences and start/end times. The meeting on February 24th will provide us with an initial opportunity to gather community feedback on the three different options we've brainstormed. I encourage all community members to attend the open meeting on February 24th at 6:00 pm in the Norman Vergils Community Center. Please contact me at 250-1402 if you have any questions.

Congratulations to Andie Finley...

Congratulations to senior Andie Finley on being recently awarded the Female Youth Volunteer Award by the Amherst Youth Board at its annual Service to Youth Awards dinner on Wednesday, February 11. Andie is currently the president of the All-Class Leadership Council at the high school and holds the honor of being the student representative on the Board of Education. She is also a member of the Senior Class Council, High School Pep Band and Wind Ensemble and will star in the school's musical. She is also a founding member of the SOUL (Student Outreach Under Leadership) Brothers and Sisters group aimed at bridging the gap between African-American students and the remainder of the school population. It is expected that Andie will log more than 90 hours of service to Sweet Home High School and her community by the end of the school year. Sweet Home congratulates Andie on this well deserved honor.



*Amherst Youth Board
Service to Youth
Award winner, Andie
Finley*

PTA COUNCIL CRAFT FAIR IS SATURDAY, MARCH 28

The Annual Sweet Home PTA Council Craft Fair is scheduled for Saturday, March 28 from 10:00am – 4:00pm. Over 100 area crafters will be on hand at Sweet Home High School, 1901 Sweet Home Road in Amherst. The \$2 admission fee benefits a scholarship fund given to graduating Sweet Home seniors.

The Council will also be hosting a theme basket raffle during the Craft Fair with a number of great items and gift certificates available to win.

There still is limited display space available for local crafters. Tables are \$40. Call 250-1414 for more information or to make a space reservation.

Please make a point of it to stop by the high school and support Sweet Home's PTA Council.

HIGH SCHOOL OFFERS PRACTICE PSAT / SAT

Save the date of Saturday, February 28 for the opportunity to take a practice PSAT or SAT. The PSAT/SAT Practice Test, which is being sponsored by Kaplan Test Prep and Sweet Home Dollars for Scholars, will be offered to all students in the sophomore (PSAT) and junior (SAT) classes on Saturday, February 28 at 9:00am. **Students must preregister and can do so February 25 and 26 between 10:30am and 1:30pm outside the high school cafeteria. Cost of the test is \$7.** Following the practice test, students and parents are invited to come back on Monday, March 2 at 7pm where students will be given a computer-analyzed printout detailing their strengths and weaknesses. For more information, please call 250-1414.

Three Board of Education Members Earn Top Honors...

Three Sweet Home Board of Education members have earned a top award from the New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA). Scott M. Johnson, Joe Miranda and Dirk D. Rabenold have received the Association's Master of Boardmanship Award.

The award is currently the highest honor bestowed by the Association's Leadership Development Program. It recognizes the extensive time, effort and commitment required of exemplary board members who strive continually to expand their knowledge of education and skill in school district governance.

To qualify for this distinctive achievement, each of the three board members participated in NYSSBA training events totalling at least 200 credits, including completion of the School Board Institute. This series of eight intensive courses developed by the National School Boards Association examines the key work of school boards in enhancing student achievement.

Johnson was first elected to the school board in 2007 after being appointed to fill a board vacancy in 2006. He has served as a parent representative to the district's Shared Decision Making, CDEP and Professional Learning Community teams. He has also been a member of the Glendale PTA and PTA Council. Miranda was elected to the Board in 2001 and has been an active member of the Middle School PTA and served on the District Health & Safety Committee. Rabenold was elected to the Board in 1999 and has been an active member of the district audit committee.

The award was given to only 28 board members across the state in 2008. Each of the three will be recognized at the March 17 Board of Education meeting by NYSSBA Area Director David Smaczniak.

Board president Douglas J. Galli and vice president Carol A. Nowak are also recipients of the Master of Boardmanship Award.



Scott M. Johnson



Joe Miranda



Dirk D. Rabenold

Amherst Lions Pancake Breakfast...

The Amherst Lions will hold a pancake breakfast on Saturday, March 21 from 8:30am - 12pm at the United Methodist Church on the corner of Harlem and Saratoga Roads. Tickets will be available at the door and are \$5 for adults and \$3.50 for children 12 and under. The Amherst Lions have long been a supporter of Sweet Home through various efforts including funding scholarships for our graduating seniors.



52 Inducted into National Honor Society...

Sweet Home Senior High School is pleased to announce that fifty-two juniors and seniors have been inducted to the National Honor Society. Inductions took place Wednesday, January 14 in the high school auditorium. In order to be inducted to the National Honor Society, students must maintain an average of 90 percent and demonstrate qualities in scholarship, service, leadership and character.

The 2009 Sweet Home High School National Honor Society inductees are as follows:

Shanice Alyster, Jessica Andriatch, Kelsey Andriatch, Kelly Balsom, Gage Bateman, Ashley Bernier, Lauara Bielecki, Hans Boos, Karen Connelly, Kayla Cummings, Corey Desiderio, Kelly Donovan, Trevor Feger, Erika Frase, Piane Fu, Julianna Goetz, Katherine Griffin, Katelyn Hafner, Rebecca Healy, Connor Hoffman, Reta Jabar, Matthew Kuntz, Casey Liberty, Morgan Liberty, Mackenzie Lynch, Jocelyn Mankowski, Justin McNess, Kari Moley, Katie Niblock, Brian Palmer, Nicholas Pangrazi, Bradley Pinto, Lindsay Prentice, Kaitlyn Press, Shauna Presto, Kaitlyn Putzbach, Corrine Rabold, Erica Reeb, Emmalee Russo, Robert Saraceno, Petrina Scaglione, Ashley Schalberg, Tyler Schrembs, Michael Sheridan, Julie Starr, Cody Stonish, Michael Stroka, Jenaye Tyno, Emily Victor, Joanna Ward, Rebecca White and Shin Yin,

Of the inductees, two were seniors and fifty were juniors.



Trevor Feger accepts his National Honor Society pin from his mother during induction ceremonies.

Willow Ridge Welcomes Master Guru...

Willow Ridge Elementary welcomed Bob Hartz coordinator of the Master Guru website. Mr. Hartz visited the 4th grade enrichment class to answer questions and demonstrate some of the highlights of the site. Master Guru is designed to help students build critical thinking skills across the four core subjects of English Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies in an exciting, motivational and innovative format.

Master Guru Bob Hartz works with the 4th grade enrichment class at Willow Ridge Elementary.



Parent Open Forum...

The Sweet Home Board of Education is once again a hosting parent open forum on **Tuesday, March 10, 2009** from 5-6:30pm in the high school library. The open forum format allows parents to talk with the Board of Education on any topic. If you are interested in attending the open forum, please call the Office of the Superintendent of Schools at 250-1402 to reserve your space.



PTA Council Seeking Nomination for Sid Oberacker Award...

The Sweet Home PTA Council's, Leon "Sid" Oberacker School-Community Service Award is a way of citing those who, with no regard to tangible reward, have made outstanding contributions toward the improvement of the Sweet Home schools and community. Because of their efforts, our schools and community are not only closer, they are better.



This award bears the name of Leon "Sid" Oberacker, the district's former Superintendent of Educational and Community Services. It is a tribute to his selfless and tireless efforts on behalf of our school and community. These efforts consistently went well beyond the scope and demands of Mr. Oberacker's job. The award is given each year to honor an outstanding individual that exemplifies his volunteer spirit, and to serve as a cornerstone pronouncement that the Sweet Home School District is a community of people who recognize both the joy and importance of working together for the good of our families and children.

Please assist the PTA Council in honoring an exemplary Sweet Home volunteer that you may know by nominating him or her for the Leon "Sid" Oberacker School and Community Service Award. A nominee may be anyone who has rendered outstanding service to our schools and community. It may be a District employee, a parent, a resident, a business person, a service provider or a student. He or she does not need to be a member of a PTA/PTO to qualify. The award may be given to co-recipients or posthumously if the selection committee so chooses.

Nominations must be made in writing on the application form and received **on or before April 1, 2009**. Applications are welcome and encouraged from PTA/PTO's, individuals and/or organizations throughout the Sweet Home community at large and are available in each of the district schools' main offices.

PTA Reflections Program at Heritage Heights...

The National PTA Reflections Program is an arts recognition and achievement program for students. The Reflections Program provides opportunities for students to express themselves creatively and to receive positive recognition for original works of art inspired by a pre-selected theme, while increasing community awareness on the importance of the arts in education.

Reflections Program is a great way for students to explore and learn about various art forms. Creating art is a valuable learning process that challenges students to use their critical thinking skills as well as their creative talents to create art that supports a specific theme.

This is the second year Heritage students have participated in the Reflections Program. This years theme was "Wow!" and students submitted pieces in the categories of literature, visual arts and musical composition. Student work was on display during the school's recent Visual and Literacy Arts Night.

Literature: Jasmine Nguyen, Brendan Bingaman, Jianna Pelicci

Visual Arts: Anna Belous, Ariana Sanders, Annalise Hoffman

Musical Composition: Madeline Bell, Kynnedi Coleman, Alex Nowak, Luke Schriver

Overall, Heritage students did very well this year when their pieces were judged against other students from area elementary schools. Congratulations the following students who received recognition from the Western Region PTA. Pictured left-right: **Kynnedi Coleman** (Grade 4) finished in 3RD place in Musical Composition at the Intermediate Level; **Luke Schriver** (Grade 1) received 1st Place in Musical Composition at the Primary Level; **Madeline Bell** (Grade 5) achieved 1st Place in Musical Composition at the Intermediate and **Anna Belous** (Grade 5) achieved 1st Place in Visual Arts at the Intermediate Level. As area finalists, Luke, Madeline, and Anna will be continuing on in the New York State Reflections competition. Good Luck!



Health & Wellness Corner...



Beverly Ann Shipe, SNT/P
District Nurse
Practitioner &
Health Teacher
250-1269

Nuts, Nuts and More Nuts

Nut allergies are on the rise. It is important to understand the basics of nuts. For example, a peanut is not actually a true nut, but a legume. Peanuts are in the same family as peas and lentils. Tree nuts are almonds, Brazil nuts, walnuts, hazelnuts, macadamias, pistachios, pecans, chestnuts, beechnuts, pine nuts (pignoli or pinon), ginkgo nuts and hickory nuts, and cashews. Walnuts and cashews are the two tree nuts that cause the most allergic reactions.
<http://foodallergies.about.com/od/nutallergies/p/treenutallergy.htm>

Nutrition Nuggets Clarification

The February 2009 *Nutrition Nuggets: Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child*, which was attached to the February school menu, printed a small section on peanut butter substitutes and mentioned cashew butter as one.

Please know that a cashew is a tree nut. Many children who are allergic to peanuts are also allergic to tree nuts. And there are children who are only allergic to tree nuts. It is safest to select a nut free alternative in that case, such as sunbutter, soybutter, or peabutter. We ask this because of our increased numbers of children with nut allergies in school. It would be best to avoid any nuts or nut products in classrooms that have students with any allergy.

Many of our classrooms are nut free due to many students who have severe allergies to nuts. Classroom accommodations are available for each classroom. Parents should check with their child's teacher before entering and/or bringing any food into the classroom to help keep students who are allergic avoid anaphylactic reactions.

Regarding Cashews Cashew is a primary nut related to nut allergies. 'Cashew is now the #1 tree nut crop in the world, since its production surpassed that of almond in 2003.' It is also in the food family with mango and pistachio.

Websites

FDA Tree Nut List <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/2lg-6.html#major>
Cashew Info <http://www.uga.edu/fruit/cashew.html>

Local Resource

Kathy Lundquist, Western New York Food Allergy Connection, P.O. Box 220, Clarence, NY 14031
T/P: (716) 759-1314 FAX: (716) 759-1315
allergy@roadrunner.com, buffalomomslkeme.com - Food Allergy Families Group

Child Abduction Prevention Program Grant

Sweet Home has again been a recipient of a 10K grant to help provide safety programs to our students on child abduction prevention and Internet safety. Our students annually receive instruction on two NYS mandated programs: Sexual Abuse Prevention, and Child Abduction Prevention.

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

The tragic abduction and murder of 6-year-old Adam Walsh in 1981 brought national attention to the issues faced by the families of missing children each year. Adam's parents, John and Revé Walsh, rallied our nation to change the manner in which we respond to the issue of missing and exploited children. The result was the establishment of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children through Congressional mandate in 1984.' We are fortunate to have a local office located at 610 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14202 (716) 842-6333 that provides local support, and educational training to schools and community groups. http://www.missingkids.com/missingkids/servlet/PublicHomeServlet?LanguageCountry=en_US

Wired Kids, Inc.

Wired Kids Inc. is a 501(c)3, dedicated to protecting children from sexual exploitation related to the Internet. For more information visit: <http://www.wiredkids.com/>. A large portion of Wired Kids, Inc.'s work involves preventing and helping investigate cybercrimes and abuses, but it also has a softer side. Website <http://www.wiredkids.org> has many online safety games for younger children and information for children of all ages as well as helpful information for teachers, parents and law enforcement.



Health & Wellness Corner Continued...

Flaxseed

Flaxseed is high in fiber, omega-3 fatty acids and phytochemicals called lignans, and a rich source of a number of beneficial nutrients, including vitamins, minerals and protein.

- Flaxseed can help reduce total blood cholesterol and LDL (“bad”) cholesterol levels — and, as a result, may help reduce the risk of heart disease.
- Adding more fiber to your diet can lower blood sugar and cholesterol levels, also reducing the risk for heart disease and stroke.
- With about 3 grams of fiber per tablespoon, flaxseed is a good source of roughage. The combination of oil and fiber in flaxseed make it an excellent laxative and an effective remedy for sluggish bowels and chronic constipation.
- Based on a University of Toronto study, researchers concluded that dietary flaxseed has the potential to reduce tumor growth in women with breast cancer.
- As plant estrogens, the lignans in flaxseed can help alleviate some symptoms of menopause. Scientists at the Mayo Clinic found that postmenopausal women who consumed 40 grams of crushed flaxseed daily for six weeks experienced a welcome 57 percent reduction in the frequency and severity of hot flashes. The women also reported noticeable improvements in mood, as well as reductions in joint and muscle pain.
- Combined, the benefits of consuming flaxseed significantly improved their health-related quality of life.
- The essential fatty acids in flaxseed have been credited with improving symptoms of dry eyes, psoriasis and eczema.
- Omega-3 fatty acids are known to possess potent anti-inflammatory properties, making flax a popular remedy for arthritis and other inflammatory diseases.

Most nutrition experts recommend ground flaxseed because your body is better able to digest it. Adding a sprinkle of ground flaxseed or a dash of flaxseed oil to your favorite foods is a simple way to improve the quality of your diet.’

Tips for including flaxseed in your diet:

- Add a tablespoon of ground flaxseed to your hot or cold breakfast cereal.
- Add a teaspoon of ground flaxseed to a food spread or mustard when making a sandwich.
- Mix a tablespoon of ground flaxseed into an 8-ounce container of yogurt.
- Bake ground flaxseed into cookies, muffins, breads and other baked goods.’

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/flaxseed/AN01258>

<http://www.buffalonews.com/opinioncolumns/columns/otherlife/story/561305.html>

Fun and Educational Websites for Kids

U.S. Food and Drug Administration [FDA]

The FDA ‘s home page for adults is <http://www.fda.gov/default.htm>.

But, check out the FDA’s site ‘FDA & You’ for a newsletter for teens, parents, and educators. Here you’ll find current information on many of the FDA medical products and health topics you’ve been wondering about. Also, health and science educators will find many resources, including pre-packaged lesson plans designed to generate classroom discussion.

And of course, they have a wonderful site for kids that is exceptional. Children can learn just about anything from animal care and responsibility to skin care to the latest developments in medical care. This site also offers many links to other healthcare sites. <http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/kids/>

Puzzle Choice

This is a family-friendly site offering a wide selection of puzzles and games for all ages. Entry to the site is free and there is no requirement for visitors to register or submit email address information. This includes jigsaws, mazes, memory games and a choice selection of classic puzzles and games. http://www.puzzlechoice.com/pc/Puzzle_Choicex.html

Welcome to Multiplication.com

This site contains the techniques, tips, and secrets used by master teachers. Help your children embrace math concepts while having fun. www.multiplication.com

Universal Pre-K Registration...

Participation in the Sweet Home Central School District's Universal Pre-K program is open to any 4 year old who resides in the district.

The half-day Pre-K program operates out of each of the four elementary schools and is overseen by Four Seasons Day Care Center. Each site has a morning and afternoon session. Transportation to and from the Universal Pre-Kindergarten program is the responsibility of the parent and/or guardian.

If you have a child turning 4 by December 1, 2009, your child will be eligible to attend the district's free Universal Pre-K program. Letters were sent to parents in January asking for interest in the program. If you have not received a letter, please contact Elaine Skalski at 250-1414. Registration packets will be sent to parents in March.

Registration dates for Universal Pre-K are set for April 22, 23, 28 and 30 at the district's Central Registration Office. Appointments will be scheduled in 45 minute intervals to allow for both registration and a short screening on the pre-schooler by the Universal Pre-K staff. **If you have any questions, please call the Central Registration Office at 250-1600.**



Parent Workshops offered in March

Parents, do you find yourself repeating directions to your children? Are consequences losing their effectiveness? Is communication breaking down in your home? Would you like more laughter and less yelling? Common Sense Parenting Workshops are for you!

All parents find themselves at a loss of what to do or how to handle certain situations with their children. Sometimes we just need to take a break and re-evaluate how we are communicating. Sometimes we need to restock our parenting tool box with new ideas. Come join other parents in a discussion about our number #1 priority, our children. Learn different approaches to handling common behavior issues such as accepting no, following directions and getting along with others, in a relaxed atmosphere.

The Family Support Center and the Amherst Youth Board are sponsoring a workshop in March that is open to all parents of children ages 3-17 years old. The workshop is for 6 consecutive weeks and is free but a \$10 refundable book deposit is required.

Tuesdays, March 3rd – April 7th, 6:30pm-8:30pm, held at Sweet Home High School

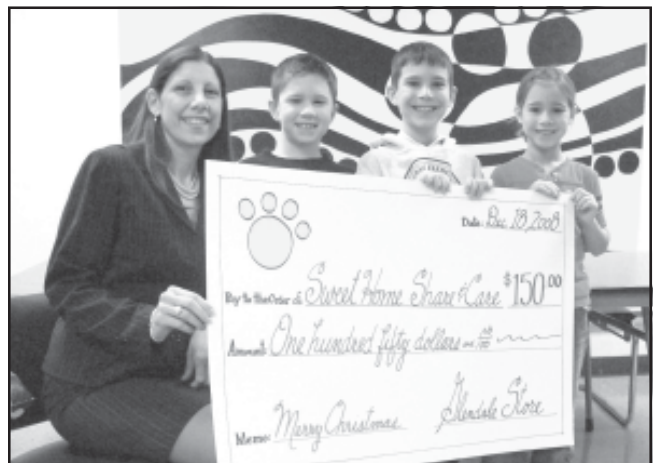
Call 250-1229 to register today!!!!

Holiday Help from the Glendale School Store...

The holidays were a bit brighter for several district residents thanks to the hard work of the Glendale Elementary School Store. The store donated \$150 to the Sweet Home Share and Care Program which provides holidays gifts for the district's less fortunate members.

Ben McKie, Colin Gerlach and Kaley Sorrentino presented a check to Mrs. Beverly Ann Shipe on Thursday, December 18 on the live broadcast of Glendale News Daily.

Thank you to all of the Glendale store staff who made many December sales to make this donation possible.



An Update from The Office of Instruction...



*Asst. Superintendent for
Instruction
Anthony J. Day*

“Every student proficient in every subject. Great teaching every day in every classroom.” These simple statements reflect Sweet Home’s vision for our students and our schools. As a district, we continue to monitor our progress and take steps toward achieving this worthy goal.

All Schools in Good Standing... The New York State Education Department released an early look at school accountability reports to school districts last week. These reports, based on final data from the 2007-08 school year, provide a snapshot of student achievement on state assessments in Math, English Language Arts and Science. They also provide the official status of the school in relation to key targets established by the No Child Left Behind Act. We are happy to report that each school in our District will be in “good standing” for the coming school year. Achieving this status grows increasingly difficult as the targets for achievement increase each year and the performance of subgroups of students, such as those with disabilities, is held to the same standard as that of all students.

We are pleased and proud of the hard work of students and all the adults who support them in achieving this status. We are especially proud of the Middle School staff and students that met the challenge of raising student learning and achievement to meet the accountability standards of No Child Left Behind and regain the “good standing” designation.

Longer Elementary School Day... Last month, the Board of Education approved a new contractual agreement with the teacher’s association. The agreement includes a provision to extend the school day for our elementary children by 30 minutes, beginning in September 2009. This extra half-hour will prove extremely valuable in providing additional daily time for literacy and math instruction. The time will also allow greater flexibility to schedule personnel needed to support at-risk learners as well as those that are achieving at high levels. This extra time will be a great asset for our teachers and kids and help us continue to work toward our vision of excellence for all students.

Response to Intervention... The New York State Education Department has established a timetable for school districts to establish a means of monitoring the progress of all students in literacy and mathematics. Additional requirements will focus on gauging the progress of all students receiving intervention services to determine how each is responding to the intervention. This system is designed to help ensure that each child’s progress is carefully monitored and to avoid unnecessary referrals to special education. Last month, Sweet Home hosted a meeting of the Erie 1 BOCES IDAB group. These county-wide district instructional leaders heard a presentation from a group of our teachers and administrators on the Sweet Home system for collecting and responding to reading data. The Sweet Home system is a well-respected model of an effective Response to Intervention model which has helped us improve learning for all students and greatly reduce the number of students performing at the very lowest level on NYS assessments.

Senior English Redesign... The High School English Language Arts department and administration presented a slate of new course offerings for Board of Education approval last month. Currently, seniors may freely choose from a number of electives to fulfill senior English requirements. Beginning next year, seniors will still have a choice, but only among a set of courses designed to prepare them for life beyond high school. The three new courses- Writing and Thinking, Introduction to Literature, and Mass Media- are all affiliated with Niagara University and are eligible for college credit. Technical Reading and Writing, College Preparatory Reading, College Preparatory Writing, Mass Media, and Advanced Placement English are the other courses from which students may choose to fulfill graduation requirements. While other courses are available as electives, the decision to narrow the choices fulfilling senior year credit recognizes the need of all graduating students to continue their learning, the specific skill set needed for success in those endeavors and the high school’s commitment to prepare them for that end.

Unit Redesign Initiative... Six years ago, Sweet Home set out on a journey to facilitate the development of a Professional Learning Community. This organizational goal sought to create a culture in which real teamwork is used to improve the learning of all children would be a system-wide norm. Our recently completed Superintendent’s Conference Day continued that effort and provided the time needed for our teacher teams to complete or nearly complete their “re-designed” units. There are some wonderful student tasks that will come of this endeavor - rich tasks requiring application, high levels of thought and deep understanding of content.

Sweet Home Athletics News...

The months of December and January proved to be a time of milestones and accomplishment for several Sweet Home student athletes.

On Tuesday, December 9 senior basketball star Ellie Allen was recognized for scoring her 1,000 career point in a game against Holy Angels on Thursday, December 4. More recently, Ellie has surpassed single season scoring mark of 380 points set by Gretchen Gegenfurter.

The Tuesday, January 20 Board of Education meeting saw a number of state qualifier athletes be recognized for their accomplishments by the Board. Paige Gutowski was recognized for swimming, Katie Niblock for cross-country and varsity football coach John Faller and his four captains: Steve Phillips, Casey Kacz, Ryan Wilson and Will Reese were honored for winning the state varsity Class A football championship.

Finally, Jason Heubert started February off with a bang as he rolled a perfect 300 game in a varsity bowling win over Amherst.

Congratulations to all these fine athletes on their terrific accomplishments!



(Left) Ellie Allen is recognized for her 1,000 career point; (center) Sweet Home's state qualifiers: Katie Niblock, Casey Kacz, Steve Phillips, Ryan Wilson and Faith James; (right) Jason Heubert is all smiles after his perfect 300 game.

Bus Safety Reminder...



When picking up or dropping off your children at school, parents should be reminded that all traffic laws pertaining to school buses are to be obeyed in school parking lots.

When a bus is dropping off and/or picking up students on school grounds with its warning lights on and flashing, automobiles should not pass or go around the bus.

By adhering to simple traffic rules on school grounds, we can make pick-up and drop-off times safer for our students.

Amherst Police Department Youth Police Academy...

The Town of Amherst Police Department's Youth Police Academy is an internship program for high school students considering a law enforcement career at the local, county, state or federal level. In addition, this program meets the minimum requirements of the NYS Education Department's Career Exploration Internship Program (CEIP), allowing participating students to receive high school credit toward graduation upon successfully completing the academy. To receive credit, the student must also apply for the internship through their school Internship Coordinator prior to entering the academy.



Although the primary purpose of the academy is to acquaint the students with the various functions of the Town of Amherst Police Department, the students will also discover the minimum qualifications, training requirements and daily responsibilities of other county, state, and federal law enforcement agencies through guest speakers and tours of their facilities. Students will view actual pictures and video of crime and accident scenes, have the opportunity to take the actual physical fitness test required for police officers, can be exposed to O.C. (pepper) spray, and will take part in the Firearms Training Simulator and shoot the Glock. In addition to the regularly scheduled sessions, students will ride with an officer for an 8-hour tour of duty and participate in a courtroom observation.

The 3-week academy is held Monday through Friday from 9:00am – 12:00 noon beginning Monday, July 6th at the Town of Amherst Police Headquarters, 500 John James Audubon Parkway, Amherst, N.Y. A graduation ceremony is held on Thursday during the final week at 7:00pm at Amherst Police Headquarters. Family and friends are welcome to attend.

Students must reside within the Town of Amherst or attend a school in Amherst and parental consent is required for students to participate in the academy. All applicants must successfully complete a background investigation and interview. Further information and applications may be found on our website (www.amherst.ny.us/police) by clicking on "Youth Services." Completed applications must be submitted to the Amherst Police Department by May 1st. Any questions, please contact Officer Cathy Onions at 689-1387.

Middle School Global Ambassadors Continue to Aid African School...

The Middle School Global Ambassadors presented a check for \$500 to Mrs. Maponga for the Ezekial Guti school in Zimbabwe. The money was raised by running the concession stand at the district craft fairs and will help the Ezekial Guti school purchase a water purification system. To date, the Global Ambassadors have funded electricity for the school, provided numerous school supplies and look forward to purchasing a fence for the school.



Sweet Home Middle School Global Ambassadors

The students presented the check to Mrs. Maponga on Friday, January 9 and gave her a number of poems to send back to the school children. The students also completed a tapestry for the school as well.

The Global ambassadors are advised by foreign Language teacher Deborah Carlson.

Faculty Art Show and Recital...

Please join the Sweet Home art and music faculty for their annual Faculty Art Show and Recital on Tuesday, March 3 at 7pm in the Middle School Auditorium. The show is free of charge and features the art work and music of the Sweet Home's outstanding faculty.



Your District



The high school jazz ensemble performs at the District Music Festival on Sunday, January 25. Over 1,500 people attended the event in support of Dollars for Scholars.



Four high school students were part of the Daemen College Photo Show on February 7. Sarah Orrico (far right) won honorable mention and a \$1,000 scholarship from the college.



The high school football team recently received an Erie County proclamation for winning the Class A state high school football championship.



On Wednesday December 17, 2008 a mix of Heritage students performed original songs composed by Heritage students.

SWEET HOME CENTRAL SCHOOLS OF AMHERST & TONAWANDA

1901 Sweet Home Road • Amherst, NY 14228

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