

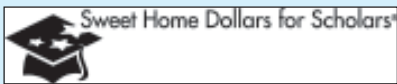


# YOUR SCHOOLS

www.sweethomeschools.com

## Sweet Home Central School District

March 2008 Your Schools - The Newsletter for the Residents of the Sweet Home Central School District



### Thanks for Your Support!!

The Sweet Home Central School District Dollars for Scholars Chapter would like to thank the entire Sweet Home community for its support during our 18th Annual Phone-a-Thon conducted February 10-12. Those that made pledges should have received their pledge letters by now. If you have not or would still like to contribute to Dollars for Scholars, you may do so by sending your **tax-deductible** donation to:

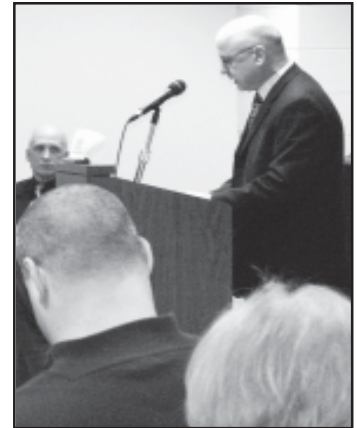
Sweet Home Dollars for Scholars  
District Offices  
1901 Sweet Home Road  
Amherst, NY 14228

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## Neighboring School Boards Share Concerns With Elected Officials

School board members and the superintendents from Sweet Home, Williamsville, Amherst and Clarence school districts discussed several topics of concern with state legislators and Board of Regents Chancellor Robert Bennett during a public forum held January 24 in the Williamsville Central School District Offices. Also in attendance were Senator Mary Lou Rath and Assemblymen Jim Hayes and Mike Cole.



*Board president Douglas Galli addresses the panel at the Legislative Forum on January 24.*

Each school board presented a topic for the round table discussion. Topics were special education, Universal Pre-Kindergarten, school funding and the state's newest education reform initiative of pre-school through college or P-16.

Sweet Home Board of Education president Douglas Galli addressed the issue of special education, noting it as the most highly regulated sector of the school district because of its exorbitant amount of paperwork and numerous regulations. School boards from Clarence, Amherst and Williamsville Central School Districts spoke on Universal Pre-Kindergarten, school funding and the P-16 initiative respectively.

Each school district's position papers can be viewed on the district website at [www.sweethomeschools.com](http://www.sweethomeschools.com). Upon conclusion each school district emphasized the importance of continuing collaboration in order to support the more than 20,000 students attending schools in the four districts.

## Tax Code: 628

**The tax code to be used by Sweet Home Central School District residents when preparing state income tax returns is 628. This applies to all district residents whether they live in the Towns of Amherst or Tonawanda.**

## A Message from the Superintendent of Schools...



*Superintendent of  
Schools  
Geoffrey M. Hicks*

### Task Force on Redistricting Update

The Sweet Home Task Force on Redistricting was created two years ago with the expressed purpose of recommending solutions to the Board of Education regarding the problem of uneven enrollment at the four district elementary schools. The early work of the Task Force concentrated on the potential of redistricting the northern most portion of the school district, which is also the most densely populated section. We enlisted the assistance of professors from the University of Buffalo who helped us to “geocode” families across the district into a database, allowing us to run computer simulations of redistricting scenarios.

Last spring, the Board of Education implemented one of the Task Force recommendations, to move all “English as a Second Language” students to a single elementary school, Heritage Heights, so they could be better served academically. The Board also directed the Task Force to continue studying enrollment patterns and to seek additional information from outside consultants.

In the beginning of the 2007-08 school year, the district contracted with two companies, Information Management Systems and Middle Cities Education Association, to conduct 5-10 year enrollment projections. The enrollment projections were presented to the Task Force last November and to the Board of Education in January. The projections paint a picture of continued declining enrollment throughout the school district. Over the past five years we have seen the elementary population decline and the high school population increase. Future data estimates show a decrease in enrollment across the district for the next five years, following a similar trend in Erie County. The projections also indicate that enrollment is likely to continue dropping over a 10-year period.

There are many implications for the school district if the trend data of declining enrollment become a reality. We are counting on the Task Force to continue gathering data and to help us with future decisions. One thing is certain; the idea of simply redistricting the northern end of Sweet Home is no longer a practical long-term solution. The Task Force is focused on considering other solutions, both short-term and long-term. We invite any community member to join us. **The next meeting will be held in the Norman Vergils Community Center on March 25, 2008 at 5:30 pm.**

## Middle School Art Honors...

The months of January and February proved to be busy months for middle school art students. A number of them had their work on display at various shows and locales around the district and the art department would like to recognize the following students for their participation.

**NYS SUPERINTENDENTS ART EXHIBIT:** Annie Zhu, Nicholas Padley, Mackenzie Hoffman, and Zocales Assefa

**NYS SCHOOL BOARD ART EXHIBIT:** Alex Paluch, Emily Lambe, Katie Stoll, Danielle Dedline, Jacky Chen, Sarah Phelan-Tiedman

**COMMUNITY CENTER DISPLAY (Photo on Page 12):** Kristine Becker, Tori McQueen, Lamees Mehanna, Ben Pastwick, Liz Utkin, Lisa Gagnon, Sarah Shallowhorn, Jenny Delsignore, John Forrestel, Jesse Alt-Winzig, Nick Meloon, Taylor Johnson, Sarah Athans and Rachel Polanski.

Congratulations to all on their fine accomplishments.



*Sweet Home Middle School student art presenters.*

## HARKNESS STUDENT OF THE MONTH

Congratulations high school student **Phillip Rhodes** who was named a Student of the Month at Harkness for the month of December. Phillip was described by his teacher as ready to work and eager to learn. Phillip is in the building maintenance program at Harkness. Congratulations Phillip!



## 1960's ALL CLASS REUNION

The Classes of 1960-1969 of Sweet Home High School will be holding an all-class reunion on August 23 from 7-11pm at The Cedars Banquet Facility in Williamsville. The cost is \$35 per person. For more information, please visit the Alumni Association page on the district website at [www.sweethomeschools.com](http://www.sweethomeschools.com).

## PANTHER FOOTBALL NEWS

Belated congratulations to two members of this year's Panther varsity football team. **Nick Christman** was named to the 1st Team All New York State Offensive Team and **Marcus Johnson** was named to the 2nd Team All New York State Defensive team. Congratulations to both Sweet Home players and to the entire football team for a terrific 2007 season.

## Sweet Home Dollars for Scholars Craft Fair

Saturday, April 5  
10am - 4PM

Basket Raffle!!



Over 100 Crafters!!

Sweet Home High School  
1901 Sweet Home Road, Amherst

\$2 Admission

All proceeds benefit  
Dollars for Scholars Scholarship Fund

## 2008-09 Budget Presentations...

District administration will be visiting upcoming PTA/PTO meetings to present the proposed 2008-09 district budget. Time and dates for the meetings are listed below and the public is welcome to attend.

### Thursday, May 1, 2008

High School - 7:00PM

### Tuesday, May 6, 2008

Willow Ridge Elementary - 7:00PM

### Monday, May 5, 2008

Heritage Heights - 6:30PM

Glendale Elementary - 7:00PM

Middle School - 7:30PM

### Tuesday, May 13, 2008

Maplemere Elementary - 6:30PM

## Pre-Kindergarten 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 your child is eligible to attend the program and you have not received a registration packet from the district, please call Elaine Skalski at 250-1414 to do so.

Registration will take place Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday April 28-30 from 8:30am - 3:30pm. **Appointments must be made through the Central Registration Office by calling 250-1600.**

## 80 Inducted into National Honor Society...

Sweet Home Senior High School is pleased to announce that eighty juniors and seniors have been inducted to the National Honor Society. Inductions took place Wednesday, January 16 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 2008 Sweet Home High School National Honor Society inductees are as follows:

Dragana Abramovic, Irin Alamgir, Ellie Allen, Allison Balcerzak, Emily Bartkowski, Lindsay Bender, Dane Bostwick, Joelle Breidenstein, Victoria Bryndle, Ryann Carroll, Kevin Cleary, Rebecca Corner, Frank Cuomo, Eric Daigler, Kelly Deabold, Maria DeMartinis, Hayden Denesha, Kristin Derby, Andrea Finley, Nicholas Fiorello, Katherine Goetz, Michael Halter, Jericah Harris, Taylor Heald, Melissa Hill, Stephen Hoescht, Erin Hutchinson, Faith James, Solomon Karchefsky, Mandeep Kaur, Zachary Kindron, Hether Kolbas, Jessica Koprowski, Lauren Korniczky, Colleen Kozlowski, Daniel Kozlowski, Megan Land, Kelly Lansing, Jamie Levin, Jesse Lewandowski, Mackenzie Lewandowski, Elizabeth Link, Mariya Lokshin, Kevin Lyon, Peter Maier, Kelsey Maving, Kelsey McGinty, Jared McHenry, Meaghan Milbrand, Corey O'Brien, Alexander Olear, Emily Olmstead, Jennifer Osei, Nicole Panaro, Tracy Phillips, Michael Pietka, Alexander Polanski, Lauren Prentice, Jillian Reeser, Jessica Rosiek, Anna Rozansky, Juliana Ruiz, Sean Sanders, Justin Schrembs, Jennifer Semonian, Alyssa Serba, Lauren Siegler, Anthony Silveri, Amanda Skinner, Philip Stewart, Leann Stiver, Meghan Stout, Vilona Trachtenberg, John Valkwitch, Natalie Vazquez, David Wantuck, Emily Weinheimer, Bryan Wherry, Craig Young and Matthew Zon.

Of the inductees, three were seniors and seventy-seven were juniors.



*Melissa Hill receives her NHS pin from her mother at Induction Ceremonies on January 16.*

## Family Support Center News...

### Attention Parents

- ***Tired of repeating directions to your children?***
- ***Have consequences lost their effectiveness?***
- ***Would you like to have more laughter and less yelling in your home?***
- ***Common Sense Parenting is for you!***

This FREE\* 6-week program will help with everyday parenting issues as well as more intensive challenges you may be dealing with. This is appropriate for parents of children ages 3-17 years.

**WHEN: April 23, 20 & May 7, 14, 21, & 28, 2008**

**TIME: 6:30PM TO 8:30PM**

**WHERE:** Sweet Home High School

**CALL 250-1229 TO REGISTER**

\*\$10 deposit required refunded at the end of the workshop



## Gambles Signs to Run Track at Northern Alabama...

**Katie Gambles**, a member of Sweet Home's varsity track team, signed a National Letter of Intent to run track for the University of Northern Alabama Lions on Thursday, February 7.

The signing took place in the Athletics Office of Sweet Home High School and Katie's mother, coaches and teammates were present for the signing.

Gambles is also an active member of the United States Army Reserves, completing basic training in the summer of 2007.

Some of Gambles's other accomplishments include:

- Running cross country for Panthers
- Both indoor and outdoor track
- Previous class council member
- Played JV softball for the Panthers
- Very active in community service including Brush Up Buffalo, Friends of the Night People Soup Kitchen



*Katie Gambles will run track at Northern Alabama next year..*

Sweet Home offers Katie its congratulations and wishes her well as she continues her studies at Northern Alabama.

## 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 3, 2008**. 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.

## Middle School Chamber Orchestra Performs at M&T Bank...

The Middle School Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Mr. Quader had their annual holiday music performance at M&T Bank on December 20th. The following seventh and eighth grade students participated in this event: Annie Zhu, Brittany Smith, Leyla Mamedova, Kristen Milleville, Mackenzie Hoffman, Cally Hess, Samantha Brass, Farah Sahibzada, Katie Keefe, Emily Lambe, Lisa Gagnon, Aryanah Rivera, and Laura Ciminelli.



## Scholar Athletes Recognized at January Board Meeting....

Four Sweet Home High School students were recognized at the January Board of Education meeting for being selected as an All-Western New York Scholar Athlete. **Andrew Hopkins, Betsy Forster, Laura Hanzly** and **Lauren West** were presented certificates of achievement prior to the Board's study session on Tuesday, January 8. In order to be selected to the Scholar Athlete team, student athletes must be a senior, have an overall grade point average of 90 or above for six semesters and be a starter or important reserve on their respective sports teams. Congratulations to Andrew, Betsy, Laura and Lauren for their outstanding achievement.



*Sweet Home High School's  
Fall 2007 Scholar Athletes.*

## District Music Festival is Another Huge Success....

Once again this year, the District Music Festival thrilled all in attendance at UB's Alumni Arena on Sunday, January 27. With possibly the largest audience to ever take in the Music Festival, over \$2000 was raised for music scholarships.

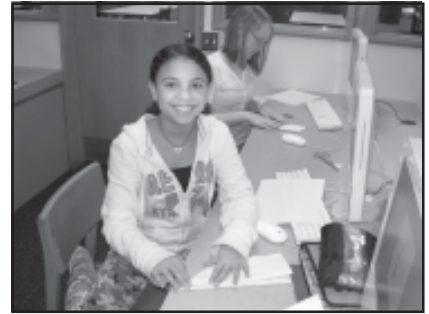
The District Music Festival has grown to be one of the premier events at Sweet Home thanks to the wonderfully talented music faculty. Congratulations to Lori DePoint, Doug Fronczek, Jim Marone, Cory Morrow, Melinda Easter, Maria Emmi, Joe Quader, Gavin Petrie, Pam Daigler, Barb White, Debra Coniglio, Patrick O'Donnell, Deborah Imiolo-Schrivver, Melissa Udy and Joanne Cretacci on a job well done.



## 7th Graders Aid Local Cancer Patient by Making Paper Airplanes...

Seventh graders in Miss Iwankow's enrichment classes spent the month of February working on a unique and very thoughtful project during their free time before and afterschool. The class learned of a local boy named Hunter who was recently diagnosed with a rare form of Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma called Burkitts cancer. It affects only 300 children per year, usually between the ages of 2 and 11. Hunter is 5 years old and currently at Buffalo Children's Hospital. The staff at the hospital set Hunter up with the Guinness Book of World Records to try and receive the most paper airplanes.

Miss Iwankow's seventh graders took the mission to heart and stuffed seven cardboard retention boxes full of paper airplanes. The airplanes were delivered to Hunter over the mid-winter recess.



*Savannah Hearitt makes a paper airplane in support of Hunter's cause.*

## Sweet Home District Jazz Festival....



**Thursday March 27, 7 pm**

Sweet Home Middle School Auditorium

### *Performing*

MS Jazz Ensembles, Gavin Petrie directing  
HS Jazz Ensemble, James Marone directing  
2 Special Dixieland Bands!

The Morgan Street Stompers and Jambalaya

**All seats are \$5**

Reservations can be made by calling 250-1368.

Tickets will also be available at the door.

Refreshments will be served **after the concert.**

## Two Elementary Groups Trying to Rebuild Playgrounds....

Community and parent groups from Glendale and Maplemere Elementary Schools have organized with the hope of rebuilding each of the school's playgrounds. The Glendale group is headed by parent Paul Yacano and to date have raised over \$8,000 of the \$75,000 needed to build a new playground. The group plans to hold a Glendale Project Fun Run on May 17 at the school as well as other fundraisers. The group partnered with **Texas Roadhouse Restaurant** on Colvin Boulevard for a fundraiser night. Management from the restaurant presented the school with a \$350 check in January. Please be sure to check the next edition of Your Schools for more information on the Glendale Project Fun Run.

Maplemere parents have organized a group called **ROMP** (Rebuilding Our Maplemere Playground). Their first major fundraising initiative was a spaghetti dinner and auction on January 20 at Banchetti's by Rizzo's. The event raised over \$5,500 in support of a new playground.



*Principal Ann Laudision readies to cut the cake at the Maplemere playground fundraiser on January 20.*

Donations to either project may be made in each of the school's main offices.

## Heritage Heights Has 3 Winners in Western Region PTA Contest...

***I can Make A Difference***...was this year's theme for the PTA's Reflections Arts program. This was the first year Heritage participated in the regional program and the school was well represented when the winners were announced. Heritage fourth grade students **Anna Belous** and **Lauren Neudorf** were named finalists in visual arts intermediate division and will represent the Western Region's PTA in the statewide competition later in March. Anna's piece was first place among work submitted by students from many local elementary schools. Lauren's work earned second place at this level. Kindergarten student **Luke Schriver** submitted the musical composition- I Can Change the World by Planting Trees. His piece was selected as a winner at the primary level.



*Western Region PTA Winners Lauren Neudorf, Luke Schriver and Anna Belous.*

## Glendale Student Recognized as Child of Month by Key Bank...

We are proud to announce Zachariah S.C. Davis as March KeyBank Child of the Month. Zach is a student at Glendale Elementary School.

Zachariah has exemplified a strong effort to meet the challenges he faces in and out of school; such as playing the saxophone in the school band, singing with the chorus club and participating in the science and chess clubs after school. Zachariah will be testing for his Black Belt in Tae Kwon Do this April. He enjoys helping his little brother with his homework and also helping him with his status of becoming a Black Belt.



*Student of the Month Zachariah Davis*

Through these efforts, Zachariah has committed to putting himself in position to face these challenges and compete and contribute in a way that will make himself, his family and friends very proud. The KeyBank Child of the Month honors fifth or sixth grade children throughout Western New York who exemplify the "Do Your Best, Never Quit" philosophy. Zachariah's award will also be featured at [www.doyourbestneverquit.com](http://www.doyourbestneverquit.com).

## Middle School Auditorium Art Gallery...



Thanks to the hard work of some of Mr. McCaffery's art students the foyer of the new middle school auditorium has been transformed into a beautiful art gallery. Selected works were hung in the foyer for all to enjoy. Those students pictured are (l to r): **Annie Zhu , Hunter Gilmour, Lydia Penberthy, Ricky Sacco, Heather Titanic, Max Lewis and Nancy Lieberman.**

## Willow Ridge Visits Oakwood Manor...



Students from the Willow Ridge Student Council made their annual trip to the Oakwood Manor Nursing Home on December 19th. The students sang for the seniors, handed out cards they made and then joined them for a sing-a-long. They really did a great job and the seniors loved the event. Thank you to the Willow Ridge Student Council for being such an important part of this event.

## An Update from The Office of Instruction...



Asst. Superintendent for  
Instruction  
Anthony J. Day

At Sweet Home, we have a very special school district. When you take opportunities to take some “snapshots” at different times, you’ll see a breadth of ideas and events that create a “photo album” of what makes Sweet Home a great place for kids.

**Internet Safety.....**Last week, students at Maplemere participated in the NetSmartz program offered as part of a grant effort spearheaded by our Sweet Home School Nurse teacher Beverly Shipe. The program offered students tips and information to ensure that they can remain safe while using the Internet. As technology becomes an increasingly important tool, all students and their families should talk about steps to take to ensure safe kids on the Internet. On Wednesday, March 12<sup>th</sup>, FBI Special Agent Holly Hubert spoke to the community about how to keep kids safe from “cyberpredators.” The program took place at the Middle School Auditorium. Thanks to Mrs. Shipe for leading our efforts in this area!

**PBIS-** This month, the Board of Education will hear a report on District efforts to implement an initiative known as PBIS or Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. This program looks at fostering a climate conducive to learning by taking a systems look at student behavior. The PBIS system looks at supporting all kids then smaller numbers as the need arises. The first level is really about all the kids. At this level, behavioral expectations are explicitly taught and modeled for all students. Clear routines and procedures are established for all non-classroom areas and consistent expectations are reinforced in every classroom. Incentives are offered to all students for demonstrating positive behaviors.

At the next level, a small number of students that may be having troubles meeting expectations are identified and supported with interventions, explicit training and feedback for growth. At the highest level, a very small number of students are provided even more intense support by a team of caring adults. The result of successful PBIS systems is strong, healthy cultures supportive of good learning. The program operates in different ways in three of our schools: Heritage Heights, Maplemere Elementary and the Middle School. All three schools have done a good job implementing PBIS in their buildings.

**Musicals...** Last month, the Middle School Drama club presented their annual musical “Once Upon A Mattress.” It was a fun, enjoyable presentation by a cast of close to 100 talented kids and dedicated adults. The High School offers their production of “Bye Bye Birdie” this month.

**Literacy Monitoring.....**That same kind of thinking applies to our efforts to monitor growth in literacy as well. Every student in grades K-8 is assessed using a consistent set of probes three times per year. This quick assessment allows us to monitor their growth in reading fluency- a critical component in the development of effective readers. That data, in combination with other measures, is used to identify students for extra assistance and support. Providing the support is only one piece of an effective school-wide reading model. Teams of teachers establish interim goals for each of the children receiving intervention. They are assessed more frequently to determine progress against their goal. District-wide, literacy teams in each building are monitoring the progress of close to 500 students to ensure that our intervention efforts are making a difference. It is quite a tribute to the dedicated teachers and administrators in each building.

**African American History Month....** I attended a special presentation at Glendale Elementary as part of Sweet Home’s celebration of Black History Month. The African American History and Music Awareness Club staged a special reading of the book The People Could Fly. The kids did a beautiful job offering a dramatic reading of the book complete with interpretive acting by the young troupe. It was a wonderful tribute to the spirit of freedom, facilitated the kids’ understanding of the heritage of African American students and helped engage parents and bring them into our schools.

At Sweet Home, we are committed to “learning for all.” However, we must acknowledge that the learning we desire for our kids is broader than that measured on tests. I encourage you to learn about and take advantage of our comprehensive program.



## Interested in Becoming a School Board Member?....

Petition packets for qualified candidates seeking election to the Sweet Home Board of Education are now available. Candidates must obtain at least 25 valid signatures and petitions are due in the District Office by 5:00 P.M. on Monday, April 21, 2008.

Only one seat is up for election as the term of Scott M. Johnson expires in June. For more information, please contact Judy Russell in the Business Office at 250-1400.

**Save this Date! Parent Program: Wednesday, April 23, 2008 from 6 – 8 PM**

Ask the Experts- a question and answer opportunity for parents to ask questions and engage in a discussion about the statistics and facts of underage drinking. Wednesday, April 23, 2008 from 6 – 8 PM Harlem Road Community Center Auditorium. 631-7215

**Save this Date! Friday-Saturday, May 23-24, 2008 Amherst Dusk to Dawn 12 Hour Relay Challenge**

The Amherst Dusk to Dawn 12 Hour Relay Challenge is geared for ages 12 and up. Starting at 7 PM on Friday, May 23 until 7 AM on Saturday, May 24 at Sweet Home High School Outdoor Track. The event features continuous entertainment, food and fun, and health fair on Friday late afternoon. A “mini-Relay” is also offered from 7-10 PM for service clubs, groups and organizations. Get a team of 10-12 individuals together (cost is just \$30 per team member) or just come out and be part of the action! Call the Amherst Youth Board at 631-7215 for more information

**Don't Get Sidelined By The Flu- Influenza Prevention and Treatment**

Children are two-to-three times more likely to get sick with the flu and spread the virus to others. Flu outbreaks are a major concern to schools nationwide. See the CDC site for info. <http://www.cdc.gov/FLU/>

Hand hygiene is the single most important factor of preventing the spread of communicable diseases, including skin infections such as CA-MRSA [community associated staph infections]. Encourage your family members to wash their hands thoroughly and regularly.

**Skipping Breakfast May Lead to Obesity Among Teenagers**

'American teenagers who skip breakfast are more likely to be obese than those who eat a morning meal, according to a finding that researchers say may be linked to rising obesity among adolescents. Teens who skipped the meal were five pounds heavier on average, ate less healthy during the day and exercised less frequently than those who ate breakfast, researchers reported in the journal Pediatrics.'

<http://www.bet.com/News/NewsArticleHealthTeensBreakfastFat.htm>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-wellbeing/health-news/eating-breakfast-helps-teens-lose-weight-says-us-study-791338.html>

**National Survey Finds One Million Youth in America with Hearing Loss May Be Left Behind**

'An estimated 1.4 million youth have hearing loss, but only 12% wear hearing devices, according to a national study release by the Better Hearing Institute (BHI). Untreated hearing loss among young people was shown to lead to social, emotional, behavioral, and learning difficulties, according to the study. Three out of four parents indicated their child experienced “minor” to “serious” problems due to their hearing loss. The study was conducted among a national sample of the parents of 225 youth from infancy to age 21, all of whom were reported to have hearing loss by their parents. To download a copy of this study “Are 1 Million Dependents in America with Hearing Loss Being Left Behind?” or to download a copy of “A Guide to Your Child’s Hearing”, visit the BHI website at <http://www.betterhearing.org>.

See the 9.5 minute PBS documentary “Spotlight on Hearing Loss”, introduced by Internet co-founder Dr. Vinton Cerf. Dr. Cerf discusses the value of hearing as well as the hearing healthcare process and the making of hearing aids. <http://www.betterhearing.org/video/pbs/spotlight.cfm>

1. Can you hear someone three feet away?
2. Do you have pain in your ears after leaving a noisy area?
3. Do you hear ringing or buzzing (tinnitus) in your ears after exposure to noise?
4. Do you suddenly have difficulty understanding speech after exposure to noise; you can hear people talking but you cannot understand them?
5. Do you find yourself saying “huh”, and asking others to repeat themselves?
6. Do you misunderstand what people are saying?

Noise is one of the most common causes of hearing loss, and one of the most common occupational illnesses in the United States. A single loud, close range noise may permanently damage your hearing in an instant, along with repeated exposures to loud noise over an extended period of time.

Excessive noise damages the delicate hair cells in the inner ear. This damage results in sensorineural hearing loss and often tinnitus (ringing of the ears). Dangerous levels of noise can come from working in noisy occupations or in engaging in dangerous recreational activities: video arcades, fire crackers, music concerts, shooting a gun, movie theatres, sporting events, motor boards, motorcycles, snowmobiles', loud ear phone music/I PODs vacuums, leaf blowers, etc. See [http://www.betterhearing.org/hearing\\_loss\\_prevention/](http://www.betterhearing.org/hearing_loss_prevention/).

**Fun and Educational Website for Kids: Line Rider**

A simple concept yields endless fun and the latest Internet Phenomenon-

Line Rider allows players to construct their own track filled with as many ramps, hills, and jumps as they can imagine utilizing a pencil tool. Once the player is done creating their course, they can send a virtual sledder down the route until he wipes out. The possibilities in Line Rider are only limited by physics and the player's imagination with an almost endless number of variations and replay. <http://www.linerider.com>



## The Global Connect System...

The Sweet Home Central School District now has the ability to communicate with parents, students, faculty and staff via personalized telephone messages using the Global Connect system. The phone messages can be broadcast quickly to keep you informed of emergency situations, school activities, important dates and critical events. Over the past two months, we have utilized the system to inform parents of weather-related school closings and other emergencies.

This dynamic tool is not intended to replace, but rather to enhance our current modes of communication. The Global Connect System is a positive reinforcement to our commitment to remain personally connected to parents.

We upload information from our student management system, PowerSchool, to the Global Connect website on a regular basis. The system will initially contact the home phone number of the student, and if there is no answer after two attempts, it will contact the work phone and/or cell phone of one parent, then the other. After the voice message is received, the system stops broadcasting. The ability of the system to contact parents is only as good as the information we have in the student database. We are confident that all of the home phone numbers in our database are accurate, but we may be missing information on parents work phones or cell phones. If you want to ensure that your work or cell number is in the system for emergency messages, please fill in the information in the tear-off box below and send it to school with your child.

The voice message is activated when the person answering the phone says "hello". There is a slight pause while the message begins, and we ask that parents wait an additional second to hear the voice message before hanging up. On digital phones, a call back number will also be displayed, usually the number of the District Office.

We recently have been informed that the Global Connect system also has the ability to broadcast text messages to cell phones. We haven't tested this type of broadcast, but we believe it has great potential. **Again, getting accurate cell phone numbers is critical, and we encourage parents who wish to have a text message sent to verify cell phone numbers by using the tear-off section below.**

If you have questions about the Global Connect system, please contact Superintendent Geoff Hicks at 250-1402.

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## The Global Connect Text Message Sign-Up

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **School:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **\*Mother Work Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Father Work Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Mother Cell Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Father Cell Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

\* The system will not call phone numbers with extensions, so please make sure that if you have a work number listed above that it is a direct line.

**PLEASE TURN IN THIS FORM TO ANY SCHOOL MAIN OFFICE**

## Your District



*Amaya Turnage of Miss Monroe's second grade class reads 'Jumping Rope' a poem by Shel Silverstein at a poetry reading of the author on February 6.*



*Above: UB Dental School students visit Willow Ridge as part of Dental Health Month in February. Below: Willow Ridge students demonstrate their tooth brushing prowess.*



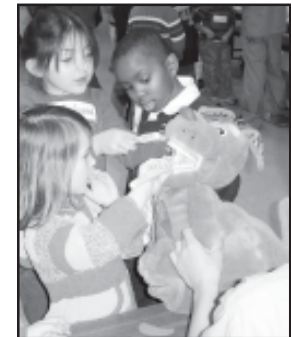
*At a very snowy February Board of Education meeting a number of middle school students were recognized for having their artwork on display in the Vergils Community Center. Those recognized were: Jennifer Hanicki, Johnathon Weatherbee, Amanda Moore, Edward Kovalchuk, Madeleine Jason, Kenna Lewis, Cynthia Buzanski, Leonard Ranallo, Ryan Petruso, Jennifer DelSignore, Lisa Gagnon, Michelle Marinaccio, Cally Hess and Tonya Tucci. Congratulations to all on this terrific accomplishment.*



*The high school celebrated its many diversities at the annual International Night in January.*



*High school student Ally Balcerzak unveils 'Lax Rocks' Street on the high school campus. Ally won the right to name the street through a school wide raffle benefiting the Phil Russell Scholarship.*



## SWEET HOME CENTRAL SCHOOLS OF AMHERST & TONAWANDA

1901 Sweet Home Road • Amherst, NY 14228

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