



Saugerties spelling bee winner Donovan Barros and runner-up Sophia Kamrass.



## Top Spellers Have What it Takes to ‘Bee’ Winners

Riccardi Elementary School Grade 6 student Donovan Barros and Cahill Elementary School Grade 6 student Sophia Kamrass won spots at the regional spelling bee in Schenectady this month after taking first and second place, respectively, in the Saugerties District bee on January 14.

Donovan, a **savvy** student, proved to be the **quintessential** speller by spelling those two words, and quite a few others, correctly to win the bee and an opportunity to take part in the regional competition on February 24 at Proctor’s Theatre in Schenectady. Sophia, a returning speller from last year, showed her skill by hanging in long enough to earn second place.

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# Saugerties School District

WINTER 2015

## SHS Key Club to Help Fight Child Hunger in Saugerties with Boost from Sawyer Savings

Members of the Saugerties High School (SHS) Key Club will soon launch a new program to fight hunger...not in a faraway country, but right here at home. The club plans to begin a weekend backpack food program for District students soon.

Established in hundreds of communities across the country in recent years, backpack programs fight child hunger by making food-filled backpacks available to students in need every Friday afternoon. The packs are stuffed with cereal, granola bars, canned soup, macaroni and cheese cups, peanut butter and jelly, and other ready-to-eat or easily prepared foods. For some students, the food from the packs may be the only thing they have to eat on weekends.

The project will be organized by the Key Club, a community service club sponsored by Kiwanis of Saugerties. Phoebe Defino, an SHS senior and president of the Key Club, said it’s an ideal project for the group because part of the club’s job is to create awareness of social issues and human needs.

“It’s good for all of us,” said junior and Key Club Vice-President Kellyann Averill, who added that becoming aware of the needs of others helps give the teens a sense of gratitude for what they already have.

To help get the program up and running, Sawyer Savings presented the Key Club with a check for \$1,500 in December. Jenn Gutheil-Denier, manager of the Saugerties branch of Sawyer Savings and a

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Members of the Saugerties High School Key Club accept a check from Sawyer Savings to launch the club's weekend backpack food program. From left: Saugerties Business Manager Lissa Jilek; Key Club advisor Missy Greco; Key Club officers Lauren Ball, Maggie Pedersen, Marissa Hogan, Kellyann Averill, and Phoebe Defino; Sawyer Savings Branch Manager Jenn Gutheil-Denier; and Superintendent Seth Turner.

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## Saugerties Junior High School Stages *Beauty and the Beast*

The Saugerties Junior High School (SJHS) drama club welcomed the community to be its guest and put its magic to the test at two performances of *Beauty and the Beast* in mid-February.

The classic Disney musical featured the talents of 58 students, both on the stage and behind the scenes. Over the course of four months of rehearsals, students learned lines, practiced songs, perfected French and British accents, organized props, and created costume pieces to supplement rented costumes. The lead role of Belle was double cast to give two young actresses, Grade 8 students Sasha-Kay Bernard and Rebecca Sauer, their moment in the spotlight.

The show was directed by SJHS social studies teacher Theresa Hogan, who said she chose the play in part because its large cast would give the school's many talented singers and actors a chance to shine. "Everyone loves Disney, so I knew that would make a popular choice," Hogan said. "Most importantly, I think the story shares a really positive message about learning to like or love someone for what's within rather than simply on appearance."

Giona Kleinberg, a Grade 8 student who played Gaston, said the musical was fun because it gave him a chance to be someone else and act out his emotions "times ten."

Gabriela Mills, a Grade 7 student who played Cogsworth, said her favorite part of the production was getting to use a British accent and to make puns.

Hogan said she was proud of all the students. "I am overwhelmed and so proud of the amount of hard work this year's cast has put in. Their talents are extraordinary and I can't wait for them all to get their time to shine. Every time they perform my heart is filled with pride."



Background: Grade 7 student Carter Vail as the Beast and Grade 8 student Giona Kleinberg as Gaston.

Members of the cast of *Beauty and the Beast*. Back row, from left: Ethan Via Pietrzak as Lumiere; Gabriela Mills as Cogsworth; Rebecca Sauer as Belle; and Julia Veorg as Mrs. Potts. Front row: Ethan Quinto as Chip.

## Arctic Wolf Wows Cahill Students

Students at Cahill Elementary School recently got to learn about life in the wild from a very special teacher...who happens to be four-footed and furry.

Atka, a 12-year-old Arctic wolf, visited the school on January 21 along with his human friends Rebecca Bose and Alex Spitzer of the Wolf Conservation Center (WCC), an environmental education organization in South Salem, New York, that promotes education about wolves as well as their preservation.

Before introducing Atka, Spitzer shared interesting facts about wolves and showed photos of some of the 24 animals that live at the WCC. Students learned how wolves keep warm in the wild, why they howl, and what they like to eat. Spitzer assured the students that despite what they may have heard through fairy tales and legends, wolves are wary of humans and rarely attack them.

Atka, who was born in Minnesota and came to the WCC as a pup, is a sub-species of the gray wolf. Students learned that Atka is a carnivore that



Rebecca Bose of the Wolf Conservation Center walks Atka the Arctic Wolf while Cahill students watch.

would normally eat elk or bison in the wild, but also enjoys a good banana now and then. He also likes the smell of both peppermint and lavender and students giggled as they watched the wolf eagerly roll around in peppermint oil that Spitzer sprayed on the gymnasium floor.

"It was funny," said seven-year-old Sydney Poyer, a Grade 2 student who said her favorite part

of the assembly was seeing Atka and watching him roll in the oil.

Although Atka, as an ambassador or teacher wolf, is socialized and accustomed to humans, he is still a wild animal and students were not allowed to touch him or interact with him directly. However, he did roam the gymnasium on a chain with Bose walking close beside him, so students were able to observe him from just a few feet away. Despite their excitement, they followed Spitzer's instructions closely and remained quiet and calm as they watched the wolf.

Atka's visit was a special treat for the entire student body and especially students

in Bill Hanson's Grade 6 class, who are studying wolves this year. The presentation not only enriched students' education about the natural environment, but also tied in with the school's January character trait of responsibility by helping teach children how to behave responsibly around all kinds of animals, both domestic and wild.





Sierra Woolsey, the new Ambassador of Kindness at Grant D. Morse Elementary School, receives her chocolate snowman from Principal Don Dieckmann.

## Grade 2 Student Sierra Woolsey is Ambassador of Kindness at Morse

When Sierra Woolsey goes to class at Grant D. Morse Elementary School every day, she has special responsibilities beyond learning and having fun. At seven years old, Sierra is already leading by example, showing everyone how to be kind to others.

Sierra was named Morse's new Ambassador of Kindness and Generosity at the school's annual "Show You Care" assembly in December.

The Show You Care event began a number of years ago when a Morse student, Michael Judge, purchased a chocolate snowman and raffled it off to raise money for local families in need.

Over the years, the program evolved and students were able to win one of many larger prizes that included games, toys, scooters, and electronics. This year, Principal Don Dieckmann and the teachers comprising the Show You Care committee decided to return to tradition and raffle only the chocolate snowman, with the winner being named the school's Ambassador of Kindness and Generosity.

Sierra, a student in Joni Granwehr's class, was all smiles as she claimed the snowman and posed for pictures amid cheers from the entire student body. Her sunny personality and optimism were evident when she said she felt it was entirely possible that she would win the raffle.

"She's really a bubbly little girl," Granwehr said. She described Sierra as a curious, friendly, helpful student who works hard in the classroom, is very close to her family, and has lots of friends. Sierra's favorite subject in school is math.

Following the raffle, students were treated to cookies and juice by the PTA and enjoyed a pajama dance party in the gymnasium with music teacher Josh Tyler spinning the latest hits and favorite holiday songs.

In all, the students of Morse raised \$518 and collected 548 non-perishable food items as part of the Show You Care program. The money and food were given to the Judge Family Food Pantry and the Saugerties Council of Churches.

## SHS Math Teacher Jenn Sauer Named NYS Master Teacher

Congratulations to Saugerties High School (SHS) math teacher Jenn Sauer, who was named a New York State Master Teacher this year. Sauer's appointment was announced by Governor Andrew Cuomo at his State of the State address in January.

Governor Cuomo launched the Master Teacher Program in 2013 in an effort to reward the state's highest performing secondary school STEM educators who are well versed in content, pedagogy, and student needs.

Sauer, who teaches accelerated math and Algebra 2/Trigonometry, has been a teacher for 11 years. During the 2013-14 school year, she began using the innovative technique of "flipped" lessons, in which students watch a short video as homework and work on math problems in the classroom with the teacher's help.

"Jenn Sauer truly personifies a Master Teacher," said SHS Principal Tom Averill. "She always maintains a growth mind-set and continuously strives for excellence from herself and her students."

Sauer is one of only 29 teachers in the Mid-Hudson region selected for the program this year. She will participate in various professional development opportunities and join a statewide network of outstanding STEM educators.

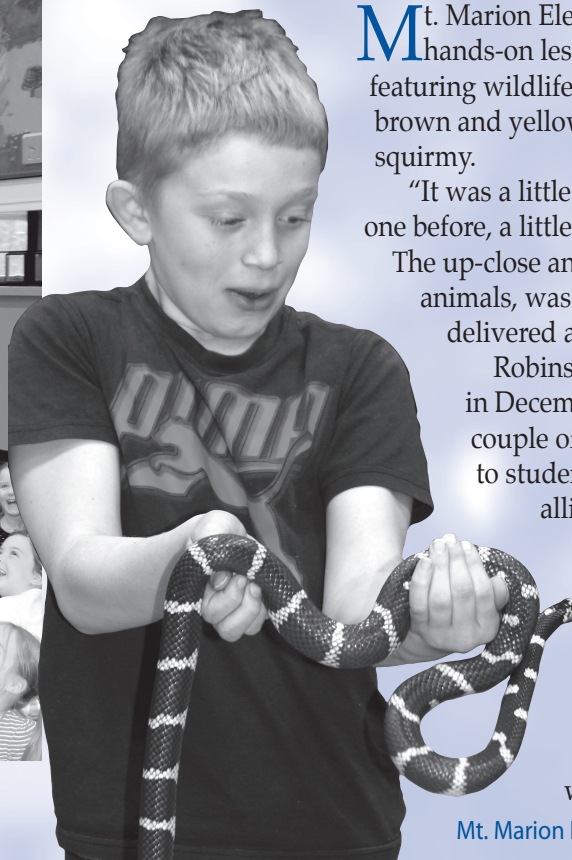


New York State Master Teacher Jenn Sauer, right, works with a student at SHS.



Mt. Marion Elementary School students laugh as wildlife educator Bill Robinson walks among them with a turkey vulture.

## Mt. Marion, Cahill Students Go Wild for Animal Assembly



Mt. Marion Elementary School student Christian Infante recently got a hands-on lesson in biology if ever there was one. During an assembly featuring wildlife educator Bill Robinson in December, Christian got to hold a brown and yellow king snake that was several feet long, not to mention very squirmy.

"It was a little weird," the Grade 4 student said afterward. "But I've held one before, a little while ago."

The up-close and personal visit with the snake, and several other types of animals, was part of a popular wildlife lecture program Robinson has delivered at schools in Saugerties and elsewhere for some years.

Robinson visited both Mt. Marion and Cahill elementary schools in December, bringing with him a few fine-feathered friends and a couple of the slithery type, too. Among the wild creatures he displayed to students were a red-tailed hawk, a turkey vulture, an owl, a baby alligator, and the king snake. In demonstrating how the owl eats or the alligator closes its inner eyelids, Robinson was helping the students understand how animals use their natural features to survive in the wild, a key idea that students are expected to learn in elementary school science.

While allowing the hawk to fly around the room and giving students a chance to hold a snake, Robinson urged students to use their school library to learn more about wild animals.

Mt. Marion Elementary School student Christian Infante holds a king snake.



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## Top Spellers Have What it Takes...

The District event featured 12 spellers from all four Saugerties elementary schools and Saugerties Junior High School (SJHS). Three of the students – Sophia, Nino Tuccillo of Cahill, and Caroline Johansen of Morse – were returning spellers, having taken part in last year's bee. Caroline was last year's winner and competed in the regional bee.

This year, spellers' families, District staff, and other guests were on the edge of their seats during the nail-biting 17-round bee, during which no one missed a word for the first three rounds. As the words grew increasingly difficult, ranging from **edification** and **exoneration** to **circumflex**, **apocryphal**, and **hydroponic**, spellers began to miss, eventually leaving just Donovan, Sophia, and Grade 8 student Eddie Cullenen of SJHS by the end of round 12.

Despite being nervous and doubting that he could win, Donovan projected total confidence during the competition, making quick work of words like **emporium**, **centenary**, and **anathema**. He started round 13 with the word **thyme**, was given the word and its definition, but had to pause a few moments before spelling because of a brief technical interruption. When asked by pronouncers if he wanted to hear the word again, Donovan spoke up brightly, "I'm good," and proceeded to spell the word flawlessly.

In the end, Donovan's winning word was **kraken**, a legendary sea monster. It was a fitting finish for the young spelling champ, who enjoys reading the fantasy novels of Rick Riordan. When he's not busy learning hundreds of spelling words, he also likes to play video games and build with LEGOs.

Riccardi Principal Sue Osterhoudt said she wasn't surprised by Donovan's victory, noting that he is an excellent reader.

"I'm proud of all the students who competed, especially Donovan," Osterhoudt said.

Runner-up Sophia Kamrass also likes to read Rick Riordan books, or anything else that has to do with Greek mythology. She visits the Saugerties library several times a week and also likes to draw and play soccer. She described her second-place finish as "happy and terrifying at the same time."

Susan Gies, Coordinator of Elementary Education for the District and one of the pronouncers, said the competition was the best she had ever seen and the sentiment was echoed by the other adults on hand, many of whom admitted that they didn't know some of the words the students were asked to spell.

"This was A-W-E-S-O-M-E," said Superintendent Seth Turner, who offered consolatory handshakes and high-fives to students who were eliminated in each round.

The spelling bee was organized by Grade 5 teacher Amy Hopf. Pronouncers were Susan Gies and Cahill Principal Dawn Scannapieco. Judges were Junior-Senior High School Principal Tom Averill and Morse Principal Don Dieckmann. Riccardi Principal Sue Osterhoudt and Mt. Marion Principal Carole Kelder were also on hand to cheer on the spellers.



Participants in this year's District spelling bee. Front row: Donovan Barros and Sophia Kamrass. Back row, from left: Cassie Lucas, Eddie Cullenen, Megan Elbadwi, Ethan Kleinke, Caroline Johansen, Zander Luz, Nino Tuccillo, Sophie Turner, Hannah Yonnetti, and Gracelyn VonAhnen. Morse student Liam Curtis was the winner of his school bee, but was unable to compete in the District bee. Gracelyn VonAhnen took his place.



Dressed in traditional Italian costumes, students at Cahill perform the Tarantella.

Toes were tapping and hands were clapping recently at Cahill Elementary School as students wrapped up a week-long artist residency with an international dance performance.

Students in Grades 2 and 3 spent four days in early January

learning and practicing dances from Mexico, China, Italy, and Ireland under the guidance of members of the Vanaver Caravan, a New Paltz-based international music and dance company.

On January 13, the students performed for the rest of the student body in the afternoon and for their parents in the evening. Accompanied by live music by Vanaver musicians and wearing colorful costumes that reflected the heritage of each nation, the young dancers performed an Irish step dance, the Italian folk dance the Tarantella, the Mexican hat dance, and the Chinese ribbon dance. Despite only learning the dances a week earlier, the students performed with poise and delighted fellow students, staff, and parents alike with their skill and enthusiasm.

"It's amazing to see how quickly they learned their dance," said Cahill Principal Dawn Scannapieco.

The theme of the Vanaver residency was "America: A World Within a Nation," and in addition to dance steps, the students learned a few basic words of Spanish, Chinese, and Italian, and explored international customs. They also created art projects that included Celtic knot brooches, drawings of Chinese lions, and Eye of God crafts from Mexico.

The Vanaver program helps enrich student learning in Social Studies and language arts and prepares students to be global citizens. Scannapieco said all the multi-cultural learning fits nicely with the Grade 3 curriculum, which explores other nations and their customs.

The students, meanwhile, thought it was just plain fun.

Grade 2 student Cathrine Swon Young said she enjoyed the residency because learning Irish step dancing gave her a chance to be with her friends. "And I really like Ireland," she added. Cathrine's fellow Grade 2 student Anders Forrest got a kick out of kicking up his heels, literally. He said his favorite part of the dance was the "thread the needle" segment. Both said their dance was fun and not hard to learn.

The Vanaver Caravan residency was sponsored by the Cahill PTA.

## MAD SCIENCE Comes to Morse



Morse students react as they prepare to be showered with a spray of water during a Mad Science demonstration.



Morse student Olivia Hapeman balances a Ping-pong ball in the air with a hair dryer.



# Cahill Students Dance Their Way Around the Globe



Above, a traditional Chinese dragon puppet is controlled by Cahill students during their Vanaver Caravan dance residency finale.



Laughter and excitement – to say nothing of fog and crepe paper – filled the air at Grant D. Morse Elementary School recently as students enjoyed a presentation by Mad Science of the Mid-Hudson.

Brian Crandall, aka “Brainstorm Brian,” a former teacher and co-owner of the Goshen-based Mad Science, gave students a blast of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education and entertainment during three workshops on January 29.

In his “Up, Up and Away” workshop, Crandall used everyday objects, student participation, and a big dose of humor to introduce kids of all ages to the mysteries of air pressure. To demonstrate how strong air pressure can be, Crandall challenged eager student volunteers to pull apart two plungers that had been pressed together. Later, students looked on in wonder as Crandall made a Ping-pong ball appear to levitate in the air generated by a hair dryer, and held up their hands to feel the fog he blew across the room using a only a specially equipped trash can and a fog machine. For the finale, Crandall propelled a shower of crepe paper over the audience in a simulation of the air pressure created by a human sneeze.

“Our whole goal is to stimulate their interest in science and make it fascinating and accessible,” Crandall said, pointing out that all of his experiments could safely be conducted by students in their own homes, which helps kids understand that “you don’t need fancy laboratory equipment. I’m doing it with plungers, a

garbage can, a rubber ball, and a hair dryer.”

Crandall used music and jokes to capture the students’ attention, but ultimately held them in thrall with fun, interactive demonstrations of principles discovered hundreds of years ago by scientists like Otto von Guericke and Daniel Bernoulli.

“We make them laugh first, then we get them thinking about science,” Crandall said.



Morse Elementary School students Gabby Staby and Cody Houghtaling attempt to pull apart two plungers sealed together with air pressure during the school’s recent Mad Science assembly.





Students in Frances Murphy's class hold objects representative of their heritage. From left: Michael Pettit, Jr. holds German lederhosen; Holden Myers displays a Norwegian troll doll; Grace Madelone holds an Italian cannoli; Liam Boek wears a German hat and stands at the keyboard where he performed a German folk song; and Sahil Sekhon holds a bag of money from India.

## Riccardi Students Travel Around the World in One Day

With a hearty *buongiorno*, *Guten Tag*, and *hallo*, students in Frances Murphy's Grade 2 class at Riccardi Elementary School welcomed their classmates and families on a virtual trip around the world in December.

Heritage Day, an annual event that Murphy launched about six years ago, is a multi-cultural celebration during which each student presents a short talk about his or her ancestors and the countries from which they came. Parents, grandparents, and other family members are invited to attend the presentations.

Students worked on their projects for about 10 days, culminating in presentations that were informative and entertaining. Whether their families came here recently or as far back as Colonial times, the students were excited to share their background. With photos, maps, and props that ranged from Norwegian troll dolls to Egyptian scarabs, they offered a glimpse into life in Germany, the Netherlands, Egypt, France, India, Vietnam, Italy, and other nations. Several students even enhanced their talks with a performance. Liam Boek accompanied his grandmother on the

keyboard as she sang a traditional German folk song, *Du, du liegst mir im Herzen* ("You are in my Heart"), and Grace Madelone sang the fun Italian Christmas tune "Dominic the Donkey."

Following the presentations, families enjoyed an international buffet of homemade delicacies prepared by each student's family. With choices that included everything from Italian meatballs and German spatzle noodles to quiche, salads, and a wide array of desserts, the buffet echoed student Katie Bucci's description of her family's homeland of Sicily, where food is "plentiful and yummy." Parent volunteers, some dressed in native costume, helped serve while families enjoyed chatting with each other and sharing their country's traditions.

In addition to being a fun and festive event, Heritage Day also helps prepare the students for Grade 3, in which they study cultures and civilizations around the world. Murphy said having parents attend is also a key component.

"It's a way to bring families into the classroom," Murphy said. "Having the parents come sends a message that school is important."

## Mt. Marion Student is Epilepsy Foundation's 'Winning Kid'

Tyler Corvin, a Grade 5 student at Mt. Marion Elementary School, has been selected as a "Winning Kid" for 2015 by the Epilepsy Foundation of Northeastern New York.



Tyler Corvin

Each year, the Foundation chooses several children from across the region to represent all youngsters with epilepsy. Winning Kids are selected for their courage in dealing with their condition and their ability to overcome obstacles.

Tyler, who is 11, has had more than his share of challenges. He has had epilepsy since he was 15 months old and has seizures several times a month and sometimes in his sleep. He also suffers from a connective tissue disease, sleep apnea, and narcolepsy. Hospital visits are a common occurrence in his life and he's on several types of medication.

"People think he's a typical kid who's just small for his age," said Tyler's mom, April Corvin. "But for him to even go to school, it's a big deal."

Despite his difficulties, however, Tyler is a smiling, happy, busy boy. He's a Boy Scout and enjoys karate class and attending Hebrew school, where he has learned most of the Hebrew alphabet. An avid swimmer, he loves traveling to water parks like Zoom Flume with his parents, April and Matthew, and older brother Jordan, and will soon have a place to enjoy the water in his own home thanks to having his wish for a hot tub fulfilled recently by the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

For the past several years, Tyler has also assisted his brother with a charity project called Jordan's Wish. During the holidays, the Corvin brothers make and distribute gifts to patients at local hospitals.

Mt. Marion Principal Carole Kelder described Tyler as a sweet boy with an infectious smile and said the entire school is thrilled about his Winning Kid honor.

Among the benefits of being a Winning Kid are an invitation to all Foundation events, plus a full scholarship to summer camp. Tyler is hoping to attend a camp that specializes in horseback riding, something he has tried and enjoyed before.

Tyler will be formally introduced as a Winning Kid at the Foundation's 27th Annual Confections in Chocolate Gala on March 7 in Scotia, New York. The event will feature a variety of chocolate desserts, which April said will thrill her son.

"Tyler's going to be in heaven. He loves chocolate," she said.

April described the Winning Kid honor as a "very, very big deal" and it's clearly well-deserved. Despite Tyler's many medical challenges, he keeps smiling.

"It doesn't stop us and it doesn't stop him," April said.

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## SHS Key Club to Help Fight Child Hunger

Saugerties alumnus and parent, was on hand to present the check to club officers and pledge the bank's ongoing support for the project.

Superintendent Seth Turner said he was moved that the Key Club stepped up to organize the backpack program.

"It's a great idea and I'm very thankful to Sawyer Savings for contributing," Turner said.

Key Club faculty advisor Missy Greco expressed her pride in club members for their willingness to

help others. "They're very caring, very giving," she said.

Saugerties Cafeteria Manager Sheila Melville said that in addition to the non-perishable items, the backpacks would include a coupon from Stewart's for a gallon of milk every other week.

"I'm so excited that we get to do this," said senior and Key Club Treasurer Maggie Pedersen.





# Nobel Prize Winner Among Honorees at Saugerties Veterans Day Ceremony

Nobel Peace Prize winner and Saugerties High School alumnus Peter Zmiyarch was among more than 40 veterans honored during Veterans Day ceremonies at Grant D. Morse Elementary School in November.

Zmiyarch, a 1983 graduate of Saugerties High School, served in the United States Marine Corps from 1984 to 1992. In addition to taking part in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, he also served on Presidential detail for Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush. Today, Zmiyarch is the Assistant Head of Operations Security for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in the Netherlands. In the fall of 2013, the OPCW and its staff, including Zmiyarch, were honored with the Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts to rid the world of chemical weapons.

"The threats and the battlefields have changed," Zmiyarch told students, faculty, and other veterans assembled for the Morse ceremony, but "Saugerties still produces many admirable men and women" willing to put their lives on the line for freedom. He added that the Saugerties School District does an outstanding job of recognizing those who have served. He called the ceremony, which included songs and presentations by students, "wonderful" and "fabulous."

Another distinguished veteran honored at the ceremony was Joe Sinnott, a native of Saugerties who served with the United States Navy Seabees on Okinawa.

"I'm so proud to have been a part of the U.S. Navy during World War II," Sinnott said, recalling his enlistment in 1944 as a young man of 18 who had "rarely been past Kingston" but was headed for the jungles of the Pacific.

When he returned from the war, Sinnott went on to a career as a comic book artist, ultimately bringing to life classic characters like Spiderman, Captain America, and the Fantastic Four.

Sinnott expressed his appreciation to the students and staff at Morse for the moving ceremony in the veterans' honor.

"It's a great tribute to us," Sinnott said. "Thank you."

In addition to Zmiyarch and Sinnott, honorees included WWII veterans Paul and Amelia Chmura, Board of Education President George Heidcamp, former Morse principal Bruce Eymann, and many students' family members, representing every branch of the Armed Forces. The Saugerties Junior High School band performed the theme song of each branch while the honorees stood to be recognized.

"This is where we keep World War II alive, in the schools, and we do a tremendous job of it," said Paul Chmura.

Superintendent Seth Turner reminded the students that "all members of the armed forces are heroes, and so are their families," while Principal Don Dieckmann said, "Today and every day, veterans are in our hearts."

## Riccardi Elementary School Salutes Veterans



Ezra Cafaldo, left, and Zane Cahill, both Grade 2 students at Riccardi Elementary School, salute during the "Navy Cadence" performance at the school's Veterans Day ceremony on November 14.



Grade 1 students at Riccardi Elementary School read poems honoring soldiers. The handmade paper hearts they read from were then presented to veterans attending the ceremony.

With songs and salutes, poems and paper hearts, Riccardi Elementary School students paid tribute to the men and women of the United States armed forces during Veterans Day ceremonies at the school in November.

While enjoying a breakfast provided by the entire Riccardi staff, the veterans were treated to performances that students had been rehearsing for weeks. Introduced by members of the school's student council, the acts included the recitation of original acrostic poems by Grade 6 students and "A Soldier's Poem" by Grade 5 students. Everyone in Grades 3 and 4 sang a song thanking veterans for their sacrifices and Grade 2 students, dressed in imitation sailor suits, had everyone clapping along with their "Navy Cadence" presentation. Kindergarten and Grade 1 students presented handmade paper hearts with poems on the back to all the veterans present.

Members of Saugerties American Legion Post 72 served as the color guard for the ceremony. Also on hand was Hannah Roberti, a Riccardi alumna and aide to New York State Assemblyman Peter Lopez. Roberti presented Student Council President Aidan Whitmarsh with a flag in recognition of the school's efforts to honor veterans.

After the ceremony, guests were invited to enjoy a display in the hallway with photos and information about veterans related to students or staff.

This was the second year Riccardi hosted a Veterans Day program and Principal Sue Osterhoudt thanked students and staff alike involved for their contributions.

"I'm so proud of everyone in our school," Osterhoudt said.



Saugerties alumnus and Nobel Peace Prize winner Peter Zmiyarch, right, shakes hands with Amelia Chmura, a former World War II Army Nurse, while Chmura's husband, Paul (second from right), a WWII Air Force veteran, and Joe Sinnott, a WWII Navy veteran, look on. Zmiyarch, Sinnott, and the Chmuras were distinguished guests at Veterans Day ceremonies at Grant D. Morse Elementary School in Saugerties in November.



## Saugerties Offers Common Core Support to Parents

Saugerties Central School District parents with questions and concerns about the Common Core Learning Standards received answers and resources at a workshop November 17 at Saugerties High School.

Approximately 75 parents attended the session, which began with a 30-minute introduction to the philosophy behind the Common Core, followed by four breakout groups that outlined the expectations for students, provided key information about the standards, and offered parents resources for English Language Arts (ELA) and math for Grades K-5 and 6-8. The breakout groups were led by Ulster BOCES department of Instructional Services representatives Marcella Jones and Stephanie Laffin, consultant Halle Kannack, and Saugerties Junior High School math teacher Ginger Vail. All five Saugerties school principals were in attendance as well.

Susan Gies, the Coordinator of Elementary Education in Saugerties, referred to the Common Core as a valuable document, but conceded that it was rolled out quickly, leaving everyone, including teachers and administrators, on a learning curve.

"It's a very powerful tool we're all getting on board with," Gies said. "There's a lot that's fabulous about it and there's a lot to learn about it."



Math content specialist and consultant Halle Kannack discusses K-5 math with Saugerties parents during the Common Core parent workshop on November 17.

Gies said that she is aware that some parents have been struggling to help their children with homework, particularly math, since the implementation of the Common Core.

"Homework is harder and that's why we set tonight up as a stepping off point," Gies said.

About half the parents who attended the workshop chose to take part in the K-5 math breakout session, led by Kannack, a math specialist. Several expressed the frustration they have felt while trying to help their children, with one referring to their experience as being "on the front lines." Kannack explained that the goal of the Common Core is to teach students models they can use throughout their school careers.

"There is a real, genuine need to transform math education and that's what the Common Core is meant to do," said Kannack, who demonstrated

several math problems to illustrate how they are solved and how parents can help their children understand and complete the problems.

Rhonda Darmstadt, the mother of a Grade 1 student at Riccardi, said she viewed the workshop as a tool that would help her daughter succeed in school.

"Whether I agree or disagree [with the Common Core], I need to be able to help my daughter," Darmstadt said.

Saugerties Assistant Superintendent Lawrence Mautone said he felt the instructors did an excellent job and that parents asked thoughtful questions. He added that he will be reviewing parent feedback and working with district administrators and teachers to plan additional sessions for parents.

In the meantime, Mt. Marion Elementary School parents can attend the school's monthly Supper Support, where they are treated to dinner and given time to work with their child on homework with teachers on hand to answer questions or provide guidance.

Parents who attended the Common Core workshop each received a packet of information to help them support their children and Gies also urged them to send any questions to her or Mautone.

"We're in this together. We're partners," Gies said. "We'll take our cue from you."

## Saugerties High School Students Attend Governor's State of the State Address



Thirty-two students from Saugerties High School's (SHS) AP Government and AP US History classes were in attendance at Governor Andrew Cuomo's State of the State Executive Budget presentation on January 21. Saugerties was one of only 10 schools around the state selected to attend.

Tony Tuccillo, who teaches AP Government at SHS, said his students were excited to attend the presentation and enjoyed their behind-the-scenes look

at state government. Tuccillo said the students were intrigued by a variety of different aspects of the experience, from how security is handled in Albany to the amount of money the state expends on education. Being able to observe elements of political outreach was also a highlight for the teens, who are avidly interested in politics and government. Following the visit to Albany, the students were asked to reflect on and write about their experience.



### Hoop Dreams

The Saugerties High School boy's varsity basketball team enjoyed an outstanding season this year, following on the rubber-soled heels of many a Sawyer hoops team before them. Pictured above is the 1941 SHS JV basketball team, which clearly had its eye on the goal during its 11-game season, which included games against Kingston, Catskill, Liberty, and Cairo. Basketball has been a popular sport at SHS for more than a century.