

Morse Elementary School Grade 3 student Katherine Mollenkopf hugs her father, soldier Kurt Mollenkopf, at Morse Veterans Day ceremonies.

# Saugerties

Central School District

FALL 2015

## Morse Celebrates 50 Years of Learning



Morse Student Council representatives from last school year carry the school's brand new flag to be raised at the 50th anniversary kickoff.

**Dear Veteran,  
Thank you for  
saving the world.**

These words, written by a student at Mt. Marion Elementary School, summed up the spirit of gratitude on display as Saugerties elementary school students honored members of the U.S. Armed Forces for their service and sacrifice at Veterans Day ceremonies across the District in November.

At each school, students were encouraged to invite a family member or friend who has served in the military to join the celebration, which included

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When Grant D. Morse Elementary School opened its doors for the first time in September 1965, students arrived in the pouring rain to find an unfinished building with no working cafeteria or PA system and wires still hanging from the ceiling.

A lot has changed since that day half a century ago, and students, faculty, and current and former Morse staff gathered on September 18 to celebrate 50 years of fun and learning in a school that has been home to thousands of students since its beginnings.

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## Morse Mural: A Work of Art and a Labor of Love

"It serves as a school calendar, compass, color wheel, and time capsule...Its design is geometric, its color is the rainbow, it speaks about the garden, it's a PARP challenge and I SPY game all in one."

It is, of course, the Grant D. Morse Elementary School 50th anniversary mural.

A large, colorful, interactive showpiece that attracts the attention of everyone who passes by, the mural is the end result of many hours of work by four dedicated artists from the Morse School family.

Morse moms and artists Judy Defino, Jessica Riozzi, and Mandolyn Wilson Rosen, and Morse art teacher Elisa Tucci, each painted one block of the barn quilt design. Although they come from diverse creative backgrounds, the four women collaborated to create a work of art that captures the heart of Morse and its students.

Each of the panels represents a season and is filled with references to life at Morse, from all the special activities and traditions that take place during different times of the year to memories of the past and the learning that takes place every day. The panels are linked by the focal point of a tree in every season and each contains three inspirational words, as well as references to more than a dozen classic books.

The North panel, painted by Judy Defino, represents Fall and the start of the new school year. It includes mum flowers, math references, and depictions of wildlife, Mustang Bowl, Halloween, and Thanksgiv-

ing. The words included are "wish," "dream," and "hope."

The East panel represents winter and was painted by Elisa Tucci. It pays tribute to late Morse teaching assistant Mary Cosentino, honors the traditional December reading of "The Polar Express" by Superintendent Seth Turner, and makes reference to sledding on Snyder's Hill. The words "give," "receive," and "create" reflect the school's year-long spirit of generosity.

The South panel, painted by Mandolyn Wilson Rosen, blooms with everything related to spring, from butterfly hatching and the sprouting of seeds to recycling lessons on Earth Day, the traditional leprechaun traps, Lip Sync contest, and Pickle Ball. Spring's special words are "grow," "read," and "recycle."

The West panel depicts summer and was painted by Jessica Riozzi. It represents the end of the school year and includes all the fun and memories made at Field Day and school plays to Moving Up Day and graduation, rides on the Hudson River aboard the Sloop Clearwater, and all the buzzing, humming busyness of year's end. Students are urged to "harvest," "play," and "explore" during the summer months.

The four artists drew their inspiration directly from students and a poem called "Schools Are For...?" by

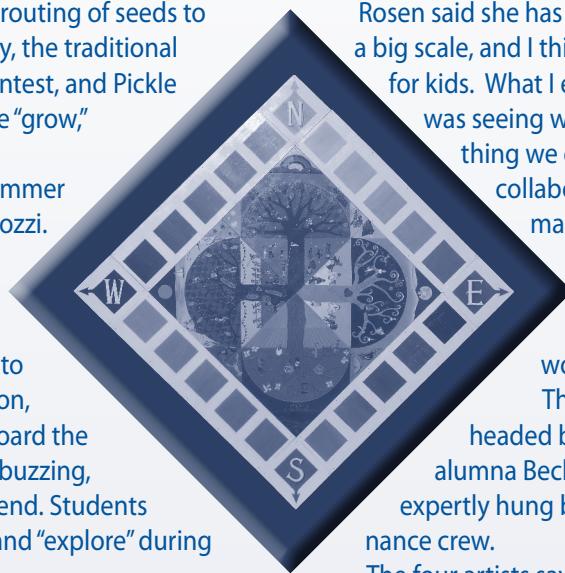
the school's namesake, longtime Saugerties teacher, principal, and Superintendent Grant D. Morse.

"It was a big honor to be asked to contribute" to the mural, said Riozzi, who is active with the school garden, which the mural overlooks. "I loved the collaborative process that got us from all the ideas we had floating around to the actual work everyone can see today. It was a joy to work with everyone and watch how our individual paintings changed as we connected our seasons together."

Rosen said she has "always been moved by art on a big scale, and I think it can be especially powerful for kids. What I enjoyed most about our project was seeing what a huge and meaningful thing we could accomplish through collaboration." Rosen said she also made many new connections with parents, students, and staff at Morse through the process, "which is what I had hoped would happen."

The mural project was spearheaded by Grade 4 teacher and Morse alumna Becky Mulford. The large mural was expertly hung by Randy Ricks and his maintenance crew.

The four artists say they hope their work "captured the heart of the Grant D. Morse School past, present, and future."



## Diversity and Dance Come Together at Cahill

Cahill Elementary School students went on a toe-tapping trip around the world October 22 during the school's second international dance performance.

The event was the culmination of a three-week artist residency by the New Paltz-based international music and dance company Vanaver Caravan. Vanaver staff worked with students in Grades 2 and 3 for a total of five days, teaching them dances from as close to home as the Big Apple and as far away as Japan.

As students learned to step to the music, they also got lessons in the history, culture, and language of the country whose dance they were practicing. Their learning journey included a few words of Portuguese from Brazil, a story from Hawaiian mythology, and information about festivals held in Japan.

Dressed in colorful costumes that ranged from Japanese kimonos to cowboy hats, the young dancers performed for the entire student body in the afternoon and their parents in the evening. The performance consisted of five dances: the Brazilian Maculele, the Hawaiian Hula, Cotton Eyed Joe from the American West, the Big Apple from 1920s New York, and dances commemorating the peach blossom festival and doll festival in Japan.

Following the in-school performance, Livia Vanaver invited the entire Cahill student body to learn and perform a short Indian poem.

The students who danced said they had fun learning and sharing the dances on stage.

"I liked when we entered and got to jump up and down," said eight-year-old Jackson Minew, who performed the Maculele. His Grade 3 classmate Abby Hopf agreed that the entrance was one of her favorite parts. The other? "Having fun with my friends."

The Vanaver Caravan residency was funded by the Cahill Elementary School PTA with money raised during the 1K and 5K races held in early October.

Joshua Pereira was ready to perform the Japanese dance.



Cowboys Isaiiah Raleigh and Steven Hunlock, Jr. danced to "Cotton-Eyed Joe."



Performing a Hawaiian hula were, from left: Anna Conrad, Savanna Jones, Mykaila Murphy, Ava Miller, Hailey Hall, Daniela Rodriguez, and Jasmine Urrutia.

## Running is 'Fund-amental' at Riccardi



Riccardi Elementary School put the "fun" in fundraising on October 8 during its annual FunDRun. Students enjoyed time with their friends and plenty of healthy physical activity on a quarter-mile course complete with obstacles like hurdles and an agility challenge using tires. The highlight of the course was a kiddie pool ball pit that youngsters from every grade enthusiastically leapt into. Competing with friends and challenging themselves to do their best, the students completed eight laps of the course for a two-mile run.

As part of the activity, students raised money, eventually collecting \$8,550, which will be used by the PTA to pay for educational assemblies and other enriching activities throughout the school year.



## Obstacle Course Gets Mt. Marion Students on the Run to Raise Funds

Swinging, running, jumping, and having fun were the name of the game at Mt. Marion Elementary School on October 2 as students took part in the 2nd Annual Obstacle Color Fun Run.

On a course designed by physical education teachers Sean Collins and Melinda Glover, students tested their skills on a balance beam, Army crawl, hurdles, two cargo nets, and a maze, as well as a brand new obstacle, the "Peanut Butter Pit" rope swing. As they completed each obstacle, the students received a spritz of fabric paint on a white shirt as a memento of the day.

The activity was a true collaborative effort that involved support from school staff, the PTA, and business sponsors, plus a little help from Cahill Elementary in the form of a loaned cargo net.

The run raised money for the PTA, which will use it to fund assemblies, field trips, and plenty more fun activities throughout the school year.

The students also had another incentive for collecting as much money as possible. Mt. Marion Principal Carole Kelder promised she would spend the day on the school roof if students met their fundraising goal. The students raised more than \$9,000 and were thrilled to find Kelder waving at them from a desk on the roof when they arrived for school on the morning of October 6.



## Patriots Win Mustang Bowl 12

The Grant D. Morse Elementary School Patriots captured the coveted Green Apples Cup for the second year in row on October 14, winning the school's annual Mustang Bowl by 10 points.

The fun and festive day, a favorite with students, staff, and families alike, included all the traditional pomp, from face-painting and hot dogs to music and the delivery of the special game ball by Superintendent Seth Turner on a float honoring Morse's 50th anniversary.

On the field, outstanding play by both the Mustangs and Patriots made for an exciting game.

Halftime featured a routine by the talented cheer squad, followed by the players of both teams kicking up their heels to Cotton-Eyed Joe on the field before the start of the second half.

After honoring Mary Cosentino Spirit Award winner Samantha Tubby of the cheer squad, the Patriots and Mustangs faced off for one more quarter, each team playing its heart out.

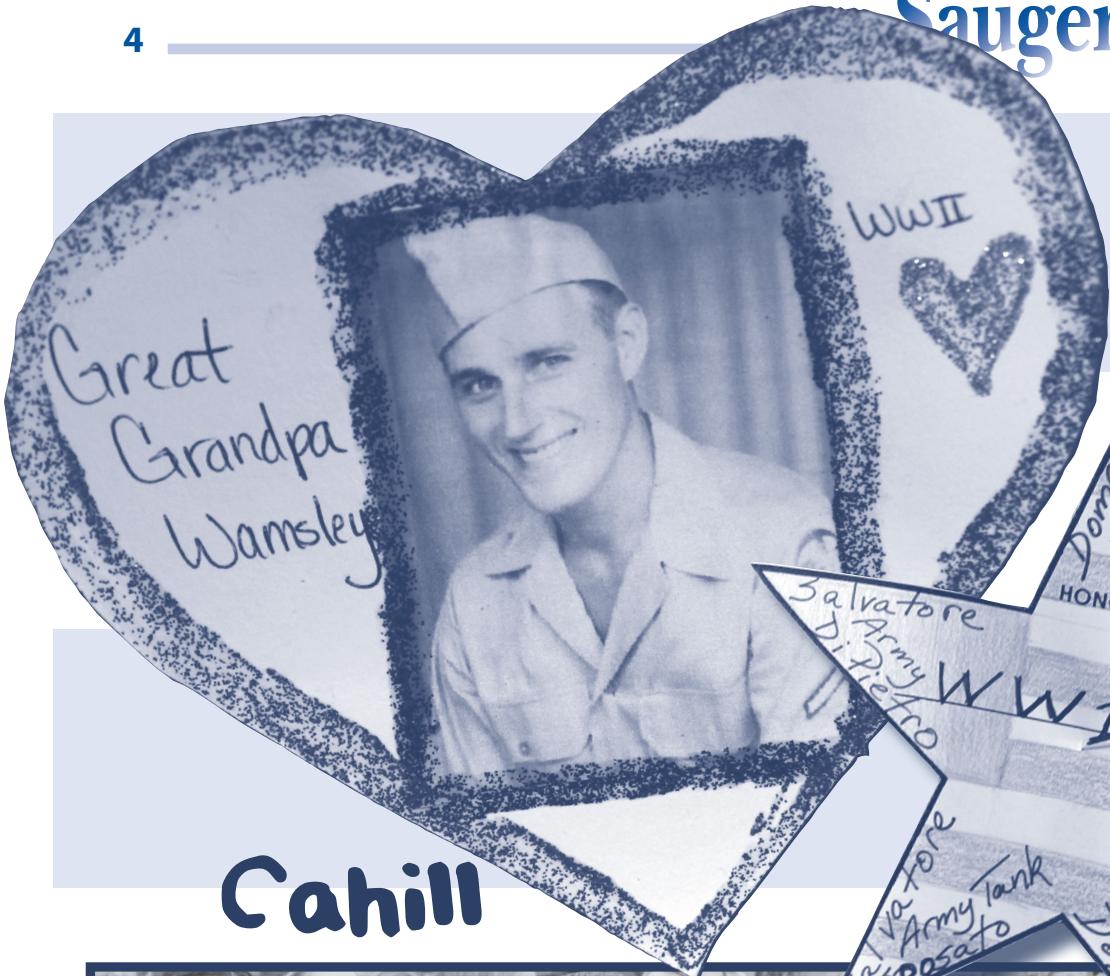
The Offensive Most Valuable Player Award went to Mitchell Hart, while the Defensive MVP Award was given to Renee Baldwin. The Seth Turner Award for Outstanding Line Play was given to Aiden Lydecker. The Patrick Buonfiglio Sportsmanship Award went to Mustangs head coach Ginger Defino.

Mustang Bowl is organized by teacher Joe Defino. Jessica McCaig and Tammy Drost assist with the cheer squad.

The Patriots' victories this year and last put them two games ahead in Mustang Bowl history.



# Riccardi



# Cahill



# Grandpa Bart



# Elementary School Students Pay Tribute to Veterans

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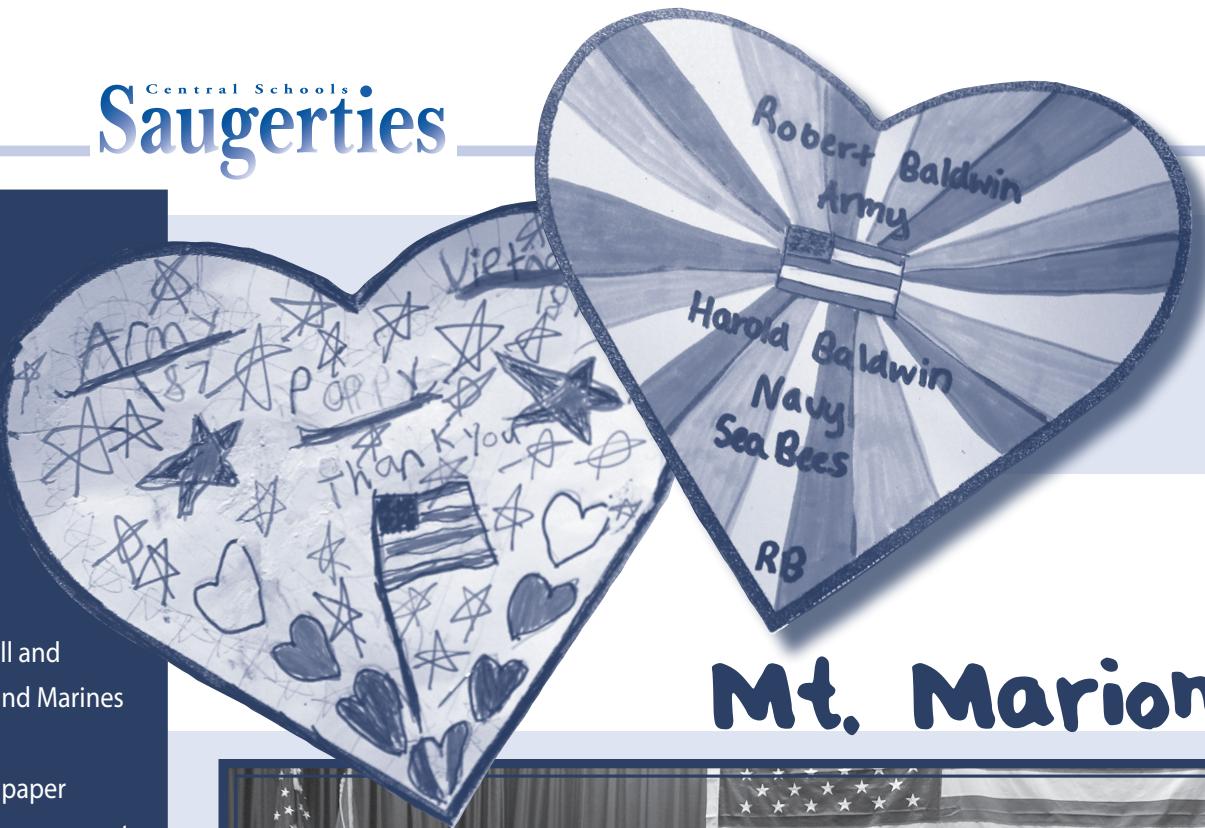
breakfast at Morse and Riccardi and refreshments at Cahill and Mt. Marion. Students paid tribute to the soldiers, sailors and Marines with songs, poems, scrapbooks, drawings, and gifts.

Grade 2 students at Mt. Marion presented handmade paper poppies to veterans, while members of Riccardi student government gave an informative talk about the history of all the branches of the military. At Morse, Kindergarten students read aloud a poem about why they love veterans, while students at Cahill honored each and every attending veteran by announcing their name and sharing information about their military experience. Star-spangled bulletin boards and paper hearts of true red, white, and blue welcomed servicemen and women at all four schools.

More than 150 veterans were recognized at the four ceremonies, including special guests of honor Bob Howe at Morse, Cliff Snyder at Riccardi, and teacher Don Glass at Mt. Marion.

Members of Saugerties American Legion Post 72 participated in all four ceremonies.

Mt. Marion Principal Carole Kelder said Veterans Day provides a great opportunity to learn about the sacrifices made by men and women in uniform. She added, "The students have been planning and practicing, reading and writing. This is not just a one-day ceremony."



## Mt. Marion



## Morse

## From Water Cannons to Dry Ice Bubbles, Saugerties Junior-Senior High Science Fair Has it All

Innovative ideas as bright as a solar oven and as powerful as a vacuum cannon were on display at the Saugerties Junior-Senior High School Science Fair in November.

The fair, sponsored by the Science Alliance Club, was the third of its kind to be held in the last two years and participation has grown each time. Almost 60 projects by 80 students were on display at the November fair.

"We're excited," said teacher Ara Krom, who co-advises the Science Alliance Club with teacher Amy Scanlon. Krom and Scanlon noted the high quality of the projects, many of which students developed directly from insights and interests they found in their daily science curriculum.

Two such students were freshmen Jae Kleinberg and Rebecca Sauer. The two young ladies love astronomy and the idea for their "Rotation Violation" project came from a classroom discussion about why Venus and Uranus rotate clockwise rather than counter-clockwise like the rest of the planets.

Courtney Sedlak's soda bottle lava lamps were inspired by a desire to improve the planet by creating a project from materials found around the house.

And it was a good thing that Courtney didn't put her lava lamps in the path of student Irving Brown's water cannon, which was capable of destroying an aluminum can with a blast of water traveling at 632 miles per hour.

The students created projects that delved into every branch of science and attempted to solve everyday problems like which bike helmet offers the most protection, and some of the bigger mysteries of the universe, like how to make Mountain Dew glow.

More than 200 people visited the science fair and enjoyed not just the students' creativity, but also an opportunity to try hands-on exhibits, see a live reptile show, and take in some star-gazing.



Saugerties Junior High School student and science fair participant Dylan Burns watches as a dry ice bubble expands, then bursts.

## Morse Celebrates 50 Years of Learning

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Morse Principal Don Dieckmann displays a painting by the school's first principal, Patrick Buonfiglio, right. Buonfiglio donated the painting to Morse in honor of the 50th anniversary.

The 50th anniversary kickoff included music, the presentation of a new American flag, and the unveiling of an anniversary mural.

On hand for the occasion as special guests were Morse's first principal, Patrick Buonfiglio, his successors, Bruce Eymann and Seth Turner, and current and former school secretaries Debra Landell and Eileen Grant Scarselli. Current principal Don Dieckmann acted as master of ceremonies for the festivities.

"It's so good to be back here," said Buonfiglio, who noted that, despite having retired years ago, he still feels connected to Morse, in part because his son Steve is currently a physical education teacher at the school.

"If anyone wants a demonstration of school spirit, come to Grant D. Morse."

—Morse's first principal, Patrick Buonfiglio

## Junior High Students Show Generosity, Community Spirit During Big Give & Food Drive

Saugerties Junior High School (SJHS) students showed their big hearts once again this year at the annual Big Give and Food Drive. Members of the SJHS Builder's Club got friends and family members to sponsor their participation in a 5K run/walk, with proceeds going to assist a local family in need. This year, students reached out and provided almost \$800 to a family affected by a car accident. The Builder's Club also organized a food drive contest among the Junior High School homerooms. Together, students collected 15 full boxes of non-perishable items to be donated to local food pantries, just in time for the holiday season.



Photo by Preston Schlebusch

Morse alumna and Grade 4 teacher Becky Mulford spearheaded the creation of a colorful mural for the anniversary. The mural panels were unveiled at the kickoff celebration amid gasps of awe and excitement from students and grownups alike.

Also in honor of the 50th anniversary, the school received a brand new American flag from Congressman Chris Gibson. The flag was flown over the United States Capitol in honor of Buonfiglio, who is a veteran of World War II. Last year's student council representatives carried the flag to the pole in front of the school, where it was hoisted by Morse custodial staff.

Rounding out the celebratory program were current Morse students singing a song called "Oh, Grant D. Morse" under the direction of music teacher Jen McMahon and the Saugerties School District Marching Band playing a repertoire of lively and patriotic tunes under the baton of music teacher Bernhard Spirig.

Buonfiglio told students that Morse was meant to be a place where children "earned a solid education and created memories that last a lifetime" and it has become just that.

"We planted some good seeds that continue to blossom, bloom, and produce, even up until today," Buonfiglio said. "If anyone wants a demonstration of school spirit, come to Grant D. Morse."

## SHS Key Club Members Go Hungry So Others Don't Have To



Imagine a teenager giving up pizza. Hard to picture? Then imagine a whole group of teens giving up food entirely for 24 hours. That's exactly what the Saugerties High School Key Club did during its annual "famine" in November.

A Key Club tradition for many years, the famine is intended to raise awareness about hunger in the community. Club members in Grades 9-12 volunteered to go completely without food from 3 PM on Thursday, November 5 to 3 PM on Friday, November 6. During that time, they collected donations and non-perishable food for the Saugerties Food Pantry.

The students said the experience was hard, but made them realize how much they take for granted.

The Key Club's year-round charitable efforts support the Food Pantry, the Saugerties Animal Shelter, and the Saugerties Historical Society. The club is advised by Missy Greco.

# MUM BOWL 2015



**Saugerties** High School scored a victory over Monticello in the 45th Annual Mum Bowl, held on October 3. The varsity Sawyers, coached by Dominic Zarrella, established an early lead in the first quarter and held on to

it throughout the game for a 10-6 win over the Panthers. Halftime ceremonies were highlighted by the crowning of the 2015 Mum Queen, Darian Kassler, and her court members, Olivia McNiff and Megan Rea. Darian was

escorted by Nicholas Perpetua. Olivia and Megan were escorted by Nick Slate and Irving Brown, respectively. Twelve past Mum Queens from the 1970s through recent years were also honored at halftime.

# Saugerties Schools Host Howling Good Halloween!

Saugerties was a spook-tacular place to be on October 30 as ghouls and boys at all six schools turned out in their fun and frightening finery for Halloween. Morse, Cahill, and Riccardi each held traditional parades, while Mt. Marion invited students to drop in for a spell at an evening social. The students' boo-tiful costumes included pirates, presidents, and purple-haired princesses, soldiers and superheroes, mimes, mummies, and Minions. Cahill's delightful disguises even had a decidedly dietary twist, thanks to students dressed as bacon, a banana, a hot dog, and a carton of milk. The day was a treat for kids and grown-ups alike, with not a trick in sight.



**SHS**

**MORSE**

**RICCARDI**

