Hungry Hungry Humans: A Sparrows Nest Fundraiser

By Lea Chiappetta

On February 24th, 2017, the WCT LAP committee schools held an event at John Jay Senior High School to see which school was the hungriest team of all in an intense battle of Hungry Hungry Humans (based on the kids’ game Hungry Hungry Hippos). 13 teams competed at John Jay in support of Sparrow’s Nest, a local organization that provides meals to the families of caregivers diagnosed with cancer. This fantastic 2-hour event raised $2,300 for Sparrow’s Nest! Members of the Lap committee, Lea Chiappetta (Fishkill), Lea Lasusa (Fishkill), Marianna Golden (Fishkill), Lori Butler (Brinkerhoff), and Kristine Hyland (Brinkerhoff) want to thank Flip Gertler for MC'ing the event and keeping score. He did a wonderful job as host. Also, a special thank you to Rena Finsmith, Heather Zeuner, Chrissy Axtmann, Kerri Roger, Mandy Scalzo, Kathy Spinella, Maria Morrice, Norrine Loprinzo and Kate DeGroat for their help with the event.
Hungry Hungry Humans Teams

Brinckerhoff Team

Fishkill Team

Fishkill Plains Team

Gayhead Team

Gayhead Team

Gayhead Team

Gayhead Team

John Jay Teams

Myers Team

Oak Grove Team

Oak Grove Team
Hungry Hungry Humans

Hungry Hungry Humans Trophy

Hungry Hungry Humans Competition

Teams in Action

LAP Members Kate DeGroat & Kerri Roger

Teams in Action

Teams in Action

Teams in Action
Backpacks for Students
Kate DeGroat

The WCT’s relationship with First Book continues to grow and help families in our community. In October, our partnership with First Book led to a delivery of 40 backpacks to distribute to our neediest students. The backpacks were fully loaded with spiral notebooks, folders, pens, pencils, markers, crayons, erasures, rulers and many other supplies all students need. Of course, they also included a book for the child’s reading pleasure. Members Laura Brundage, Jessica Carola, and Tara Prockter immediately stepped up and were willing to help distribute the backpacks to all our schools so they could get out to the students quickly.

A welcome surprise came in December when First Book sent a second shipment to the WCT. This larger shipment included both empty and fully loaded backpacks. Again, Laura, Jessica, and Tara sprang to action to distribute backpacks right before the holidays. The WCT also had enough backpacks to make a donation to the Zion Food Pantry in Wappingers. Retiree Jack Devine came to the WCT office and picked up about 25 backpacks to give out to his families who use the food pantry. These “flew off the shelves” just after the New Year. In total over 100 backpacks were given to Wappingers students and the community. The WCT looks forward to our growing partnership with the First Book program and appreciates the aid they bring to our surrounding area.

Social Media Club

Brinckerhoff’s Social Media Club meets each week to report on the goings on around school. The students, under the supervision of John Neevel, scout out, and report upon the good work of students and classes around the building. At the end of each week they meet to tweet about what they have seen. The club also discusses the responsible use of social media in their own lives and the importance of keeping posts accurate and positive.

Pennies for Patients at Fishkill Plains

Denise Lombardi, Special Education teacher at Fishkill Plains, runs the Pennies for Patients program every year at Fishkill Plains. “Pennies for Patients” Leukemia and Lymphoma Society was given a total of $2198.22, all raised by the Fishkill Plains Community!

The winning class was Mrs. Horton’s, Mr. Sanborn’s, and Mrs. Nicolette’s 6th grade classes, having collected $363.91. The students received an Olive Garden lunch for all of their hard work and generosity.
Union Members Tell Serino to Support Public Schools

On Friday, March 24th, from 4-6 pm teacher union members from Wappingers, Dover, Highland and other locals arrived at the office of New York State Senator Sue Serino, located in Hyde Park. Their goal was to let her know it is imperative that she give her support to our public schools.

Panther Parliament Fun for All at Fishkill Plains!

By Coco Scalzo

Panther Parliament is the Student Government here at Fishkill Plains! It is a fairly new organization. It is only in our Sophomore year, but already we’ve been able to make a difference in our school community!

One student is picked per 5th grade and 6th grade classes to represent the student body after a long and hard fought campaign!

Both last year and this year, we knew that we wanted to improve the school atmosphere for kids. Therefore, we decided to make more school spirit days, “Panther Pride” days and ask the students to donate $1 to participate.

Last year, representatives from 5th and 6th grade set a goal of raising funds in order to provide a recess bin and equipment for both the primary and secondary playgrounds. Not only did they meet that goal, but surpassed it. We were able to purchase footballs, bases, chalk, and much more!

This year, our new group of Panther Parliament members decided to raise funds to make the cafeteria a little sunnier! We are painting murals depicting common themes found in books such as, “acceptance” and “cooperation.” We have almost finished the first mural and working to start the next two!

We are so grateful to both the adults and the students at Fishkill Plains for making this a success.
Evans Art Club

Our dedicated and hardworking art teacher, Mrs. Schor, holds Art Club every Wednesday morning at 8 AM. She always goes above and beyond to decorate our school hallways and make beautiful artwork with and for our students. Mrs. Schor has fantastic ideas and projects.

In Art Club, students have been working on learning how to do Henna painting which led to some projects about Mandalas. They learned about the patterns, the radial symmetry and colorful beauty. They started by drawing pencil mandalas and moved onto color versions in thin marker. After that, they rolled clay slabs and used geometric shape cutters to make a clay version. They had to make sure that it was radial and used all sorts of clay tools and found objects to make the designs pressed into the white earth clay.

At their last art club gathering, they slumped them over cups to create bowls out of their designs! These designs and artwork are all made possible because of the effort and work Mrs. Schor does for our Evans Eagles!

Evans’ Health and Wellness Committee

To jumpstart the new year, the Health and Wellness committee at Evans, made up of many dedicated teachers and staff members, teamed up with RCK students for some after school programs. Each month features a new sport. January kicked off with basketball and the students at Evans had a blast! Special thanks go out to Mrs. Olmo, Mr. Wurster, and Mrs. Hernandez for chaperoning the event for January. The students enjoyed breaking up into teams and learning some techniques and new tricks from the high school students. A big thank you also goes out to the high school students who dedicated their time to make this first ever basketball afternoon a success!

VW Fundraises for Sparrow’s Nest

Nicole Amendolia works at fundraising for Sparrows Nest. She reported that, “Last year, between two bake sales and a generous donation from the VW Drama Club’s Silent Auction, over $2000 was raised for Sparrow’s Nest and Team Sparrow. This school year the committee is hopeful that we can surpass that amount and give even more to this amazing charity.”
VW Food Drive

Mary Witkowski spearheaded a food drive at Van Wyck JHS over the holiday season to encourage students and staff alike to think about those in need during such a special part of the year. The building came together and raised a total of 2,718 items that all went to local food pantries to help those in need.

WJHS SADD Having a Productive Year

So far this year SADD has:

- All expense paid trip by DCH Toyota to Pittsburgh, PA for 3 nights to the 2016 SADD Conference. Previous Trips include, Nashville, Washington D.C. and Disneyland.
- 2016 SADD club of the year!
- Record Breaking 130 students signed in on the first meeting of the year!
- A successful School Winter Holiday Block Party
- Field trip to Marist College
- 2017 Mr. and Ms. Cupid Carnation Day
- Sponsored SADD Conference trip for the 2017 summer includes a paid trip to Tampa Bay, Florida; Thanks again to Wappingers DCH Toyota!
What’s Going on at RCK

Kelley Hedin (Art): https://memoryproject.org/
My students are working on portraits of children in an orphanage in Ukraine. They have this month to complete them. Also, I have two students who have work that will be exhibited at the legislative exhibit in Albany in March- March is Youth Art Month. I will be taking photos and videos throughout the month.

Matthew Orwick (Music): I am conducting the Westchester Junior All-County Orchestra, a group comprised of the best 6th and 7th grade students in Westchester County as determined by an audition process. It’s very cool and I’m honored to have been asked. Also, 70 members of the RCK String Orchestra program are traveling to Hershey Park on June 2 to participate in a music competition. We were grand champions the last two times we went.

Kathleen Conroy (Business): PBIS has done Hot Chocolate, Cereal and Pancake breakfasts, Outback fundraisers, Faculty basketball game, Faculty lunches and breakfasts, and Peace Pole. I also escorted FBLA to Rochester for the State Competitions for 3 days before Spring Break.

Natalie Laff (Spec Ed): I am volunteering to run the new club at RCK- the Hip Hop Dance Club and the students are planning on a performance at the Staff Basketball game against John Jay.

Michael Panzer (Social Studies): On April 14, 2017 I presented/lectured to the Penn State History Department (Professors, Graduate, and Undergraduate students) on the topics of pursuing a Ph.D. while also working a full-time job, the challenges/differences/rewards of teaching both at the secondary and collegiate levels, and the pros/cons of teaching as a profession in the twenty-first century. It is an hour-and-a-half lecture and I was invited to present.

Thank You

Dear Kate DeGroat,

Thank you for thinking of the Zion Food Pantry when you were dispersing the back packs provided by the WCT. They literally flew out the door. We have gotten to know most of the children whose families utilize the Food Pantry, and it was very satisfying to see the pleasure they derived from your thoughtfulness. We keep unofficial tabs on our Food Pantry kids, and they all (mostly) are doing very well in their respective schools. The back packs were a great reinforcement to show that the community cares about their success.

The WCT has been very supportive of the Zion Food Pantry over the years, and we appreciate your help in keeping our mission on track. You yourself have shown wonderful leadership in this respect; so to you and all the Wappingers teachers we say, "Thanks!"

Sincerely,
Jack Devine

Be Informed

Visit the Network for Public Education to understand school privatization—https://networkforpubliceducation.org/9121-2/
ST Caucus Forum
By Diane DiChiara

On January 28th at John Jay High School, the WCT hosted the Stronger Together Winter Caucus. The event was attended by 40 plus union members from around the Hudson Valley.

The WCT President, Pasquale Delli Carpini, gave a welcome to all in attendance and introduced Nate Morgan, President of the teachers’ local in Hastings and ST Caucus Vice Chair, Hudson Valley. Nate explained the history of the ST Caucus which started approximately four years ago in part as a reaction to Revive NYSUT who endorsed the slate running against former NYSUT President, Richard Ianuzzi. Revive supported the current NYSUT Executive Board currently led by Karen Magee and Andy Pallotta. Nate pointed out that under the current NYSUT leadership we now have Tier 5, Tier 6, 3012-d, 4-year tenure, Commissioner Elia, P-14 Seamless Education, continue High Stakes Testing, Embedded Testing, Re-organized Field Services, etc. Interesting to note is that this all happened even though 91% of NYSUT endorsed candidates won their elections. So, why then do the teachers keep losing? Who are our endorsed candidates supporting?

Nate introduced, Michael Lillis, President of the Lakeland Federation of Teachers who is also the ST Caucus Chair. The vision of the caucus is a more democratic union. Mike, a founding member, felt that “NYSUT was not working for our best interest.” He went on to say, “We are controlled by what leaders in NYC (UFT) want.” As president, Michael, an RCK graduate, supports distance balloting as part of the NYSUT election process. Currently, locals can only vote if they attend the spring RA Convention. This places an unfair financial burden on locals with less economic resources. This year, voting ballots must be cast by 8 a.m. on Saturday which is another unfair burden placed on locals who have to travel a great distance to attend the two-day convention. Mike wants to educate others about our profession. Currently “we are down 40% in teacher training programs...students now say ‘no’ to teaching.” Why?

Mike believes that “teaching is more of an art than an engineering project.” He believes in the “character of teaching” and that we must “defend our profession.” He feels that assessment creates a false narrative about teaching” and that NYSUT’s role should be to “educate members, so that they can educate legislators.”

The forum had two presentations “A New Framework for Public Education” and “Let’s Speak Plainly About State Tests.”

ST Caucus is about $10.00 and a dream. It is important to support this group of educators as they bring democracy back to NYSUT. For more information about the ST Caucus and to join the caucus go to http://stcaucus.weebly.com/
ST Caucus: What are College and Career Readiness Standards Really?

In 2013 NYSED, through a College Board study, set the benchmark to a combined score of 1630 on the SAT, which is in the 66th percentile. This creates an expectation that all of New York’s students will do better than the top 34% of college bound student nationally. Also, in 2013, the College Board conducted its own readiness study and benchmarked readiness to a combined score of 1550 on the SAT, which is the 57th percentile. NY has an inappropriately high College and Career Benchmark that creates a false narrative of failure about New York’s students and schools. Thousands of students each year are inappropriately labeled NOT College and Career Ready because of these standards.

Last May, at the Representative Assembly, we voted to oppose and replace New York’s College and Career Benchmarks. NYSUT must respect its resolutions and vehemently defend our students and schools against abusive standards and tests.


World Down Syndrome Day
By Tammy Gehlert

World Down Syndrome Day was on 3/21, the date representing the 3 copies of chromosome 21, which is known as Down syndrome. This day is observed to bring and raise public awareness for Down syndrome and bring to light the need for advocating for the rights, inclusion and well-being of people with Down syndrome. Down syndrome does not have a definitive cause and is present in all populations, regardless of race, affluence, or gender. People with Down syndrome can have varying degrees of physical and intellectual disabilities and other related health issues.

In celebration of World Down Syndrome Day, the Down Syndrome Association of the Hudson Valley and Wappingers Congress of Teachers sponsored a “Friends and Family” Dance for people in our community with Down syndrome. The guests enjoyed music and party games with Wappingers staff, DJ Harry Ramirez and Jenn Nevel. We had some wonderful students come and mix it up on the dance floor with our special guests. We also provided a quieter space for our guests with sensory issues, or who just wanted to socialize, where we had refreshments, games, activities and other entertainment. Everyone from ages 5-65 had a great time!

On World Down Syndrome Day, Wappingers Junior High staff and students participated in “Rock Your Socks” and other activities to promote awareness for Down syndrome. In addition to “Rock Your Socks,” which is when people wear silly socks to show support and start conversations to spread awareness for Down syndrome, the generous people of Wappingers Junior High contributed to a sticker fundraiser, further promoting awareness for Down syndrome and helping to fund educational

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World Down Syndrome Day
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opportunities for people with Down Syndrome and their families.

I would like to extend my personal thanks to the students, staff and administration who helped make these two events a success!

This Month in Labor History

http://www.unionist.com

April 4, 1968  Martin Luther King Jr. is assassinated in Memphis, where he had been supporting a sanitation workers' strike. In the wake of this tragedy, riots break out in many cities, including Washington, D.C.

April 6, 2006  What was to become a two-month strike by minor league umpires begins, largely over money: $5,500 to $15,000 for a season running 142 games. The strike ended with a slight improvement in pay.

April 7, 1952  President Harry S. Truman orders the U.S. Army to seize the nation’s steel mills to avert a strike. The Supreme Court ruled the act illegal three weeks later.

April 15, 1916  Teacher unionists gather at the City Club on Plymouth Court in Chicago to form a new national union: the American Federation of Teachers.

Members’ Classified Ads

18 cu ft. Refrigerator/freezer  6 mo. Old. Purchased for grown kids who moved. Come and take it for $300 (originally $449)

Susan Roger  845 226 8285

Robert Seipp
NEA Retirement Specialist for the WCSD, Investment Advisor Representative,

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To learn more about me and my story, click here: https://vimeo.com/123792899

Security and Advisory Services offered through
WCT Welfare Trust Fund
Legal and Financial Days
2016-2017

- May 17, 2017
- June 14, 2017

*If you would like to schedule an appointment, please call the union office at 227-5065.

The WCT Welfare Trust Fund
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Theresa Stowell—Treasurer
Erin Mulligan—Secretary
Kim Mahusky—Trustee
Pasquale Delli Carpini—Trustee
Ronnie Dwyer—WTF Administrator

LOCATION OF WCT OFFICE
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WAPPINGERS FALLS, NY 12590
Located directly across from Dutchess County Airport
On the right 2.5 miles from Rt 9
On the left .25 miles from All Angels and 376 Intersection
Next to Mid-Hudson Podiatry

Important Phone Numbers

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PUT THIS ON YOUR CALENDAR!