Local Students Reach Out in Historical Community Project

By Cynthia McCusker, Wappingers Junior High School

The entire first weekend of October marked the grand opening of the “Walkway Over the Hudson,” the longest elevated footbridge in the world. Anticipation built as the forecasts looked grim, but events continued as planned. October 3rd in particular was a huge success!

On Saturday, October 3rd Wappingers Junior High School art teacher, Cynthia McCusker led twenty students from various schools within Wappingers Central School District and over two dozen local volunteers as the flags were carried in a ceremonial parade. Volunteers proudly showcased their handmade flags, each with an image that represents the town of Wappingers and the village of Wappingers Falls. Miss McCusker also displayed two 30” diameter emblems that she created to represent the town and village. These medallions “introduced” the town and village in the parade.

This was truly a community project with locals coming together to donate materials and volunteering their time. Everyone from elementary-aged Girl Scouts to senior citizens active in the Town of Wappingers Senior Center were involved. Wappingers Central School District art teachers Christine Attlesey-Steger, Adrienne Monzet, Kathy Murphy, Crista Roa, and Monica Schor also participated in the projects by sewing flags and making images with the appliqué technique. The Gray, Harisch, Meaney, and Stafford families also dedicated many hours of their time to sewing flags together to prepare them for the next step, appliqué, which they took part in as well! The Grays installed grommets in all fifty of the flags and the Stafford family always had delicious home baked goodies to share, which were always very well received!

Thanks to Town Supervisor, Chris Colsey, workshops were held at the Wappingers Town Hall during the summer to design and complete the flags. Wappingers Junior High School art teacher, Cynthia McCusker organized and led the workshops where volunteers gathered to sketch images then use a technique called appliqué to attach fabric to the flags. Volunteers also recently gathered there for a flag tying party to celebrate all of their efforts and to preview the grand array of unique and colorful symbolic imagery. Flags will now take up permanent residence at the town and village halls. Congratulations to all local volunteers for a job superbly done!

The “Walkway Over the Hudson” is now officially open to the public daily from dawn to dusk and is free of charge. For more information about the “Walkway Over the Hudson” visit http://www.walkway.org.
Oak Grove Gets a Mascot!
By: Dawn Turpin-Orgetas

Thanks to our Art teacher, Martha Jones, Oak Grove now officially has a school mascot - a squirrel. Our parents had the pleasure of meeting our new squirrel mascot, aka PE traveling teacher, Christopher Knight, at our Parents as Partners Night. A special thanks to the Dittenhoffer Family, for providing all the funds for the costume materials. The Oak Grove community has dedicated this mascot to the memory of former WCT member, Kasey Monopoli. Our new “nutty” squirrel will now be an active participant in all of our upcoming events, for many years to come.

Oak Grove Gets a Mascot!

from the... WCT Welfare Trust Fund

A financial consultant from Stacey Braun Associates, Inc. will be in the WCT office on the following dates:

November 4th
December 9th
January 13 & 27
February 10 & 24
March 10 & 24
April 14 & 28

May 12 & 26
June 9 & 23

Appointments are (1) hour blocks available between 2pm & 6pm on a first come first served basis. When you call the office to schedule an appointment, we will forward a questionnaire to you. Please complete it and bring it with you to the meeting.

Since these slots fill up very quickly CALL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. The WCT office number is 227-5065.

If the above dates are not convenient for you, call Stacey Braun Associates, Inc. directly at 1-888-949-1925 and other arrangements may be possible.
In Memory of Kimberly Zwissler DiNonno

RCK Class of 1988

Daughter – in – Law of Myers Retiree Carole DiNonno

Thank you for your sympathy during these difficult times. Whether it was flowers, food, calls, cards, prayers, donations, or anything at all, it has been greatly appreciated. Kim will be deeply missed, but hopefully her memory will live on in all who knew her.

The DiNonno Family

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Important Information about the WCT Welfare Trust Fund....

Trustees:
Christine Romano, Chairperson
Betty Seifert, Treasurer
Erin Mulligan, Secretary
Philip Gertler, Trustee
Pasquale Delli Carpini, Trustee
Ronnie Dwyer, Administrator

WCT Telephone Number: 845-227-5065
Daniel H. Cook Telephone Number: 1-800-342-6651

- You must let the WTF know of any changes in your personal information ASAP
- Student verification forms must be sent to Daniel H. Cook every semester
- Dental & prescription reimbursement forms are on-line at the WTF website
- Please direct all questions & concerns to the WCT office or directly to Daniel H. Cook
In October of 2008, the Wappingers Junior High School Team 7-Yellow Little Doctors’ Blood Drive was a huge success. In fact, it was a record-breaking drive! The team kicked off this year’s first of many community service projects with a student presentation to the WJH faculty at the October faculty meeting. Good job by Katherine and Sarah!!

As of press time, the new 7th grade team 7-Yellow students had just finished running the October 29th drive at Wappingers Junior High School. Tune in next issue to hear from the students just how the drive went!

also from the Welfare Trust Fund ......

The attorney will be in the WCT offices to meet with members on the following dates:

- November 18
- December 16
- January 20
- February 17
- March 17
- April 21
- May 19
- and June 16.

Times - 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Please call 227-5065 to schedule an appointment.

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Engagements
Reported by Jennifer Segal (Oak Grove)

Kaara Bishko (Oak Grove) is engaged to be married to Kevin Walker. They are planning a July 2010 wedding.

Kirstin Chapman (Oak Grove) is engaged to be married to John May. They are planning a Summer 2011 wedding.

Melissa Kluge (Oak Grove) is engaged to be married to Mark Manee. They are planning a 2010 wedding.

On October 8th, Rosellen Hardt, 7th grade science teacher at Wappingers Junior High School, received confirmation that she has been awarded a grant from the Community Foundation of Dutchess County. The grant money, which totals $750.00 will be used to offset the costs of a Team 7-Yellow field trip to see the 3-D IMAX version of the new film A Christmas Carol. Charles Dickens’ play A Christmas Carol is required reading for our 7th grade ELA students. In addition, the students will use the feature film as part of an ongoing careers exploration theme. Also tied in with this trip is the year-long community service theme the team works on with the students (as in “Don’t be a SCROOGE!”)

Renee Lord (4th grade Gayhead) and her husband John Lord have added to their family, on October 9, 2009 they welcomed a baby boy, Joseph.
My Fellow Colleagues and Retirees,  
As educators we consider ourselves to be very blessed. At this time of year  
and in this depressed economy there are so many people in our community  
who will not be able to give their children a happy holiday. Last year several of you generously donated to a needy family in Dutchess County. The holiday season was so much brighter for the children in those chosen families.  
The Wassaic Fire Company Ladies Auxiliary sponsors the Adopt A Family Program. You may choose to be recognized or remain anonymous. You will be given information regarding your family enabling you to shop for them. If you do not wish to personally shop there is a team of shoppers who will use your donations to purchase clothing, coats and toys for children ages newborn through fourteen.  
We estimate that a small family will require a $350 donation, $450 for a medium family and $550 for a large family. Perhaps several of you would prefer to jointly adopt a family. Any and all donations are greatly appreciated. Please remember to include your return address information so that you will receive a tax deductible receipt for your generosity. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Clarice Murphy at 845-832-9572. Please make your checks payable to Adopt A Family Program. Send them to Adopt A Family Program, PO Box 353, Wassaic, NY 12592  
Thank you so much.  
Happy Holidays  
Gail Buckle (Brinckerhoff Retiree)
Rachel’s Legacy at RCK
by Tara Prockter

On November 17, 2009, Roy C. Ketcham Senior High School will host Rachel’s Legacy, a character education assembly. Rachel’s Legacy is the second part of the larger Rachel’s Challenge program, named for Rachel Joy Scott, the first person killed in 1999’s Columbine High School tragedy.

Rachel’s Legacy works to create a positive and lasting culture change not only within the school and the larger community but change within the student themselves. Kindness and compassion are taught to students in a 1 hour presentation and follow up leadership group. Roy C. Ketcham invites parents and members of our community to also take part in this chain reaction at a special evening assembly of Rachel’s Legacy also on November 17, 2009.

Reverse Trick-or-Treating highlights social justice, child labor abuses

reprinted from: NYSUT News Wire - October 14,

ALBANY, N.Y. October 14, 2009 - New York State United Teachers has launched a state-wide initiative to raise educators' awareness of Reverse Trick-or-Treating, an annual campaign highlighting child labor abuses and social justice issues. Through the initiative, union leaders hope to inspire classroom discussions about the prevalence of child labor worldwide, and the importance of social justice and fair trade.

The concept of Reverse Trick-or-Treating is simple: On Halloween night, after receiving a "treat," trick-or-treaters offer a gift in return - a small, fair-trade chocolate bar and a card promoting the use of fairly traded products. "This program gives teachers the opportunity to involve students and community members in a truly worthwhile social justice cause, particularly with regard to child labor," said NYSUT President Richard C. Iannuzzi, explaining that forced child labor is still common in cocoa production overseas.

"It's our hope that teachers will use this campaign to educate students about child labor and show how purchasing fairly traded products speaks out against the practice," said NYSUT Secretary-Treasurer Lee Cutler, who is working to introduce the program into New York schools. "We want to help students see beyond their own communities and realize that we're all a part of one world, a global community."

Editor’s note: Our own WCT members, Michelle Ross & Dawn Sala participated in reverse trick-or-treating with their children last weekend!
**NYSUT launches all-out campaign to fight midyear cuts**

*(reprinted from NYSUT Leader Briefing of Oct. 23, 2009 - Special Edition)*

We are mobilizing now to combat what could be one of our toughest budget seasons ever, with an urgent timeline underscored by the news that the governor will call the Legislature back after the election. First up, we need to beat back Gov. Paterson’s devastating midyear cut proposal for K-12, higher education, libraries and health care. At the same time, we need to prepare now for what’s sure to be an even more brutal budget plan for the coming year.

Take a moment right now to send the NYSUT letter to your legislators asking them to do the right thing in rejecting the governor’s proposal. Circulate this link to members and your allies and ask them also to send a letter. Local newsletter editors and webmasters are asked to share the link as widely as possible.

NYSUT’s Political Action Committee is mobilizing to schedule visits now with legislators in district offices to press our concerns before they return to Albany, which the governor is pushing for next month. Here are talking points that make the case why midyear cuts will disrupt and derail our students’ education, undercut the intent of the stimulus fund and jeopardize much-needed access to public higher education. Instead of painful cuts, we’re advocating for cost savings that don’t hurt services and for tapping into the state’s rainy day fund.

Both the Senate and Assembly are holding a series of hearings on the governor’s proposal. NYSUT and other union leaders testified on Wednesday. Check the Leader site for upcoming hearings across the state.

- Local presidents are asked to immediately share with your NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist information as you receive it about proposed layoffs or position cuts and the projected impact of cuts on students, patients and the community. This kind of information is essential in allowing us to do targeted messaging.

Higher education union leaders are ramping up strong advocacy initiatives in concert with NYSUT. Professional Staff Congress/CUNY is hosting an emergency mobilization rally from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Oct. 27 at Hunter College in New York City. PSC members will be joined by colleagues from UUP/SUNY, the United Federation of Teachers and NYSUT to make the point that midyear cuts would cause untenable harm to students. For more information, click here (PDF 35KB). Photo: Phil Smith (left), president of United University Professions, and Steve London, first vice president of the Professional Staff Congress at CUNY, are pictured speaking before the Assembly Ways and Means Committee at a hearing on the proposed cuts.

- NYSUT Communications is developing radio, print and billboard ads which will run in targeted areas and be timed as closely as possible to hearings and the Legislative calendar. These will be posted on the website as soon as they are edited and available. We’re also supplying op eds and letters to editors to amplify our messaging and working closely with community coalition partners. Remember that we are not only pressing strongly against mid-year cuts but also laying the groundwork for what will be a very difficult budget battle beginning in January at the latest.

Check the NYSUT Web site regularly. While these are challenging times, we’re confident NYSUT members will work tirelessly to convince our friends in the Legislature to do the right thing.
Governor drops flu shot mandate for health care workers

(reprinted from NYSUT Leader Briefing of Oct. 23, 2009 - Special Edition)

In a significant union win, Gov. Paterson on Thursday rescinded an order that would have forced thousands of health care workers to get immunized against seasonal and swine flu. New York State United Teachers, the Public Employees Federation and four Albany nurses had filed lawsuits challenging the state’s emergency mandate that required workers to get vaccinated by Nov. 30, or face fines and possible dismissal. A state Supreme Court judge last week issued a restraining order temporarily halting the mandate. The governor said he dropped the mandate due to the shortage of flu vaccine.

NYSUT lawyers filed the lawsuit on behalf of two United University Professions members at Stony Brook University Medical Center. UUP President Phil Smith thanked NYSUT for standing “shoulder to shoulder” with the higher education affiliate in defending workers’ right to choose whether they want to be vaccinated.

Send Ideas for BEP

By Ellen Korz

Most of you reading this are probably saying what is BEP? BEP is the Business Education Partnership that the WCSD and other surrounding districts have entered into with the Southern Duchess Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber has been trying to work with our district in any way possible to assist in or out of the classroom. Two programs have been Walk In My Shoes and the Summer Institute. The Chamber Foundation has also created a summer scholarship to the CIA for high school students that qualify. The shadow program and lecture series have been successful in previous years.

The Chamber is asking for ideas on how they can continue this partnership. Please send any thoughts, big or small, to me, Ellen Korz, at Van Wyck Junior High School.

PRESS RELEASE

The Thomas D. Macrini Sports Hall of Fame will be holding its 19th induction ceremony on April 22, 2010. Nominations for inductees are now being accepted. Athletes who have graduated from a Wappingers’ high school, in 1999 or prior, retired coaches and special service award candidates will be considered. Please mail your nomination, along with any supporting documentation, to WCSD Athletic Office, RCK Annex, 99 Myers Corners Road, Wappingers Falls, NY 12590 no later than Tuesday, December 22, 2009.
Get Your WCT Gear

Short sleeve tees, long sleeve tees, and lanyards are available for purchase at the WCT Office. Shirts range in size from small though 3X. Please stop by the office to make your purchases. Payment for these items must be a check made out to WCT - cash will not be accepted.

WCT Gear is available at the WCT Office:

- $9 for short sleeve tee
- $12 for long sleeve tee
- $2 for lanyards

2009-2010 Newsletter Schedule

October 2, 2009       February 19, 2010
October 16, 2009      March 5, 2010
November 6, 2009      March 19, 2010
November 20, 2009     April 9, 2010
December 4, 2009      April 23, 2010
December 18, 2009     May 7, 2010
January 8, 2010       May 21, 2010
January 22, 2010      June 4, 2010
February 5, 2010      June 18, 2010

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**WCT COMMENTATOR Policy**

The content of the *WCT COMMENTATOR* shall reflect the official positions and policies of the WCT, with the following three exceptions:

1. The President of the WCT should present his/her views in a message to the members from time to time, but not less than bimonthly.

2. Signed Letters to the Editor (of responsible length) containing personal views from members and subscribers shall be published subject to laws of libel.

3. Members of the WCT may place articles adhering to the Canons of Journalism concerned with WCT positions, policies, and issues of interest to teachers in the Commentary Section. (For both Letters to the Editor and the Commentary Section, the writer’s name and WCT affiliation shall be attached, and an editor’s note shall accompany these sections indicating that “The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the official views and policies of the WCT.”)

Reprints of articles from the *WCT COMMENTATOR* are allowable only with the permission of the WCT President.

**WCT COMMENTATOR Advertising Policy**

The *WCT COMMENTATOR* advertising policy as adopted by the Executive Board is as follows:

Noncommercial (Personal) ads for WCT MEMBERS only will be run for two issues at no charge.

Commercial (Business) ads for WCT MEMBERS only: guaranteed placement for half of the school year, **$35.00 per half year payable Sept. 15th and Feb. 1st or $5.00 per issue.**

For prompt placement of advertisements and articles in upcoming issues of the *WCT COMMENTATOR*, e-mail the information to **commentator@wcteachers.org**. Information can also be sent to the editor at the WCT Office. Do not send articles or ads through the GroupWise e-mail system.