



Firefighter friends at Charlotte Avenue

Fire Prevention Month in October brought a visit by the Hamburg Volunteer Fire Department to Charlotte Avenue Elementary School. PreK-Grade 1 students learned about smoke detectors, making a 911 call and having a safe meeting place after an emergency in a presentation by Captain Tom Moses and EMS Chief Beth Moses. Mr. Moses also suited up in fire gear to show what a firefighter would look and sound like so that the children wouldn't be afraid if approached during an emergency.

New twist for holiday food drive

In lieu of turkeys, gift cards will feed the need

Grocery store gift cards will be distributed instead of turkeys and all the trimmings in November as Hamburg High School's annual holiday food drive adjusts to logistics of the pandemic while remaining determined to help school families in need.

In the past, an abundance of food filled the entryway at the High School in the days leading up to the annual distribution, which last year served 312 families. Families were provided with food not only for a Thanksgiving dinner but for several meals.

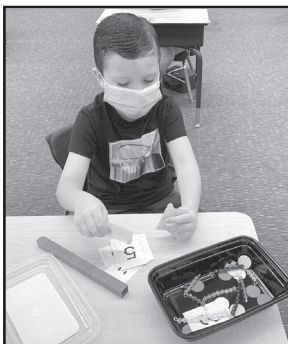
This year will look much different but the goal remains the same, said School Counselor Kathy Battin, who coordinates the drive with the student Character Committee. She's hopeful that donors will respond as generously as always so that each family in need can be given a set amount in gift cards to create their own feast.

"Our community is phenomenal," Mrs. Battin said, expressing optimism for response to this year's Hamburg Thanksgiving Gift Card Giving Campaign.

"Our Hamburg families need our help now more than ever. We don't plan on disappointing. Please help spread the word and consider donating."

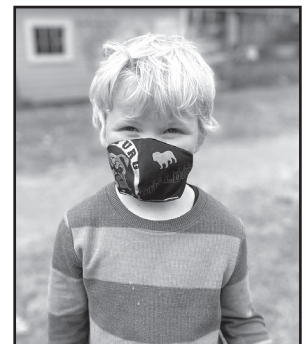
Financial donations and grocery gift cards marked to Mrs. Battin's attention may be mailed or dropped off at the High School, 4111 Legion Dr., until Thursday, Nov. 19. Checks should be made payable to "HHS Character Committee."

A healthy return to school



Armor Elementary first grader Ryan Goodberry uses a math tool kit to visualize and process concepts. Teacher Kate Nowinski created the individualized kits to replace communal math tubs in her classroom so that students still have the benefit of hands-on learning within new measures for sharing and sanitizing of supplies during the pandemic.

Students and staff are steadfastly following social distancing and face masking protocols, doing their part to help keep everyone in the school community healthy. Union Pleasant Elementary first grader Henry Aldrich is a model citizen when it comes to the new daily routine.





Superintendent's Column

School reopening maintains priorities despite challenges of Covid era

This past August, we held a district leadership retreat during which our shared decision-making teams in each school poured over our district Reopening Guide and worked together to ensure that it would result in effective daily practice for Covid-era learning. I started the meeting by making the claim that we would “successfully reopen our schools according to our four priorities of safety, equity, adaptability and compliance.” The evidence that I offered was a photo collage of our students, school staff, and families. In fact, we have reopened our schools successfully, and it is entirely because of the people of this amazing community. We still have a long way to go, but we have done very well so far.

I also want to emphasize the vital contributions of our Board of Education. Our Board President, Tom Flynn, Vice President, Cam Hall, Laura Heeter, Robbin List, Dave Yoviene, Michael McGarry and Rich Schneider have offered unwavering support, asked thoughtful questions, and have demonstrated much needed flexibility as we continue to adapt to the changing guidelines from state agencies and the challenges brought on by the virus, itself. I am writing this on Oct. 19th, which is the beginning of Board of Education Appreciation Week. Please thank our Board members for their leadership and partnership if you happen to see them around town.

The primary purpose of this column is to give the community an update on the ways in which we've committed to our four reopening priorities under difficult circumstances.

Health and Safety

The health and safety of our students and staff remains our primary area of focus every day. To date, there has not been a single documented case of school-related spread of Covid-19 in the Hamburg Schools, or anywhere else in Erie County, for that matter. Our students and our staff are faithfully following our distancing and masking requirements, and adapting to all of the new routines that the “new now” requires. We have purchased 22,500 facemasks, including two washable, cloth masks for every adult and child. We also bought 1,800 mask lanyards for our elementary school children. We have installed barriers in workspaces as needed, are following our cleaning protocols



Michael Cornell
Superintendent

throughout the day, and have ample cleaning supplies in all classrooms.

We also continue to offer meals free of charge to students of families in need, including to hybrid students on their off-campus days and to those students in our 100% online program. Finally, our nursing staff continues to exercise great care and judgment in working with students and families as questions about symptoms arise. Our schools are clean and safe, helping our students and staff to stay healthy.

Equity

Obviously, our hybrid learning model and our 100% online learning model are new for everyone. I appreciate the fact that we are all working really hard to strike the right balance in both models, ensuring equity between on-campus/off-campus learning, as well as between synchronous and asynchronous learning. In particular, we are really proud of the ways in which we've provided outstanding learning opportunities in our 100% online learning program. As of today, 94 teachers are working to provide learning for the 364 students we serve in grades PK - 12. Fourteen of them are fully dedicated to the program. The other 80 teachers teach one, or two, secondary-level classes which allowed us to customize the program to the needs of our students. For this reason, we were able to accommodate

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“ From cleaning protocols and mask wearing, to physical distancing and completing health checks, our employees, students, and families have met every challenge that Covid-era school has presented. ”

Student leader strives for normal in a year that's anything but

*Keeping school community in sync
is key despite in-person separation*

As Hamburg High School students acclimate to this year's new way of learning due to the pandemic, senior Tyler Herman wants to do his part to make it as close to normal as possible for his peers. In his roles as Student Government President and student representative on the Hamburg School Board for 2020-21, he has a vantage point to help make that happen.

With students separated into cohorts who attend school in-person on differing days or who are fully learning remotely from home, one of the big challenges this year is staying connected to each other, Tyler said.



T. Herman

"Our mission this year is to do everything we can do to make our school the community it usually is, even being divided in half," he said. "I hope to be able to work with the board to provide Hamburg students with a year that is as close to a normal year as possible."

Tyler started his service as the School Board's non-voting rep over the summer. Board meetings have been held remotely due to the pandemic, so he's yet to have the benefit of an in-person experience. However, he welcomes those virtual meetings as an opportunity to report on activities at the High School.

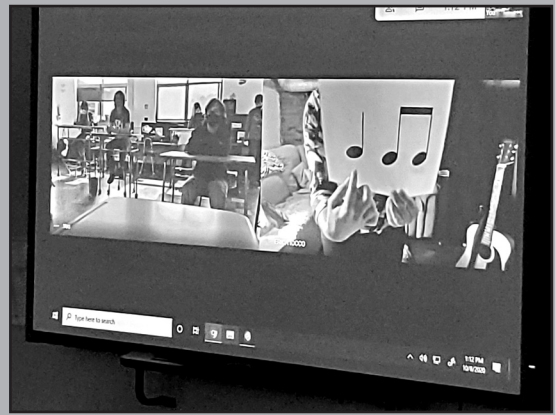
Those activities look very different this year, as well. Student Government's signature event is Homecoming/Spirit Week, which was postponed in October. Career Exploration Day won't happen this year and will become a biennial event. The organization's school and community projects are still on and will be firmed up at a later time.

Student Government serves as the voice of Hamburg High School students in both community and in-school relations. It's the umbrella organization that unifies all the classes and clubs in order to make the school a better place for all.

Tyler has been building his leadership capacity through that organization during his time at the High School. He was previously Student Government's corresponding secretary and Vice President, as well as its student liaison with PTSA. He's been involved with the Academy of Finance as Vice President, Character Club as a Holiday Food Drive organizer and the musical as stage manager.

"The best thing about being a student at Hamburg are the opportunities provided to students," he said. "Whatever you are interested in, there's an organization for you."

After graduating, Tyler plans to attend college for business administration and political science. Then, perhaps, it'll be on to law school as he heads toward his goal of becoming a politician.



Movin' & groovin' to virtual music therapy

Learning is taking many shapes and forms this year. Hamburg High School's Workforce Development students rocked out during a virtual music therapy session in October with Erica Iocco.



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"Even though we aren't in the buildings right now,
we never stop working on behalf of children."

Students learn “seed to table” by growing organic produce

Students in Hamburg Middle School’s 8th grade culinary class are growing to understand the concept of farm-to-table through hands-on experience. They’re planting and tending organic produce that will be used in both recipes in their classroom and in school lunches.

This “seed to table” experience recently caught the eye of the New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA), which presented the district with a Champions of Change for Kids award. The award recognizes innovative programs in school districts across the state.

In a presentation at the October School Board meeting, Superintendent Michael Cornell credited Food Service Director Anne Rich and Tricia Miller of the Farm-to-School team, along with Family & Consumer Science teachers Sheri Gund and Stacey Smith, for spearheading the project.

The project sprouted in early 2020 when district parents Gary and Gina Wieczorek, owners of Produce Peddlers, donated a terraponic indoor growing system to the culinary program.



Elise Boettcher waters seedlings on the indoor grow rack.

Harley Sobczyk-Zylinski, *left*, and Nora Tomasulo work the soil.

Farmer Brendan Monaco of Goodman Farms, distributor of the four-tier grow rack, spent time with students teaching them how to use it. The rack has since become a staple in the culinary classroom, typically used for such plants as lettuce and basil.

From soil and seeds to food preparation with freshly cut greens, students are learning about the source of food and healthy eating. And, as what they grow makes its way into the cafeteria kitchen, they’re also sharing that bounty with their peers.



From left: student teacher Lauren Niebbalski, with junior chefs Lilly Williams, Emily Gollus, Emma Pietrzak and Darren Stry.

Jr. Chef team’s winning taco pizza featured on school lunch menu

The taco pizza featured on November’s school lunch menu came from a recipe perfected by a team of Hamburg Middle School culinary students. Judged as the favorite pizza in the second annual Jr. Chef Challenge in October, it’s the creation of eighth graders Lilly Williams, Emily Gollus, Emma Pietrzak and Darren Stry.

For the Chef Challenge, student teams made their choice of pizza for judges to taste test. Local ingredients were used as toppings for this kick-off to Farm-to-School (F2S) month. The teams first worked on refining their recipes with tips from local professional chefs during virtual sessions. The winning team had advice from Butera’s Pizza. Due to this year’s hybrid schedule, the judging took place over two days.

The event was coordinated by Food Service Director Anne Rich and Tricia Miller of the F2S team, with Family & Consumer Science teacher Sheri Gund.



Superintendent Michael Cornell joined in making the announcement with, *background from left:* Assemblyman Sean Ryan, Anne Rich and Tricia Miller.

Farm-to-School to grow with new greenhouse at Hamburg High School

A seed that was sown years ago when the first learning garden was cultivated on school grounds continues to grow at Hamburg Central. NYS Assemblyman Sean Ryan joined Superintendent Michael Cornell in September to announce \$125,000 in state funding to enhance Farm-to-School (F2S) education in the district through construction of a greenhouse at Hamburg High School. The greenhouse will provide agricultural science and agribusiness experiences for students. Produce grown in it will also be used in the school lunch program.

There are raised garden beds at all four of Hamburg's elementary schools, where young students are introduced to gardening and learn where food comes from. A soft plastic seasonal hoop-house is in the works for the Middle School. The addition of the large poly carbonate year-round High School greenhouse will expand the growing season and provide hands-on experience applicable to agricultural careers.

"Our Farm-to-School program provides really unique modern learning opportunities for our students and Assemblyman Ryan's support for our new greenhouse will allow us to maximize those opportunities for years to come," Mr. Cornell said.

He credited the growth of the district's F2S program to Food Service Director Anne Rich and Tricia Miller of the F2S team.

Leading Bulldog online learners

Kaitlin Sylvester, the district's Coordinator of Curriculum & Instruction, is in an expanded role this school year, now also serving as Principal of the Bulldog Online Learning Community. There are 94 teachers and about 364 students in this online learning community, which was offered as an option due to the pandemic. Hamburg is committed to ensuring that these 100% online learners receive the same great educational experience as those students who are physically present in school.



K. Sylvester

High School teacher is JA Education Champion for connecting business, students

Junior Achievement of WNY (JA) has been a part of Hamburg High School business teacher Krissy Lawrence's life for more than 25 years. In fact, she attributes her career choice to her involvement with the group.

That connection was celebrated in October when Mrs. Lawrence was honored at JA's 100th anniversary virtual gala as an Education Champion for her commitment and dedication to the organization.

JA delivers financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and career and work readiness programs to students. Its goal is to give students the knowledge and skills they need to make smart economic choices. Last year, JA programs reached 16,089 students in 778 classrooms via a network of 745 corporate and community classroom volunteers in an eight-county footprint.

It was her service as a corporate volunteer who visited business classes in another school district that solidified Mrs. Lawrence's decision to become a teacher all those years ago.

"Once I became a teacher and came to Hamburg, I immediately reached out to JA of WNY and brought various programs to our Business Department," Mrs. Lawrence said. "We've had several members of the business community push into our classes as JA volunteers, teaching programs including Business Ethics and Career Success."

Mrs. Lawrence also serves as the High School's Work-Based Learning Coordinator and Academy of Finance (AOF) Director. JA hosts the annual WNY Stock Market Challenge in which Hamburg students participate, as well as job shadow experiences for both AOF and Life Skills students. Last summer, two Hamburg students participated in a JA virtual national town hall, which gave teens direct access to some of the country's most knowledgeable economists, entrepreneurs, psychologists and counselors to ask how to best adapt to the new normal created by the pandemic.

"We are so thankful for our long-standing partnership with Junior Achievement!" Mrs. Lawrence said.



K. Lawrence



Teachers at Union Pleasant Elementary made use of the great outdoors for instruction with plenty of room for social distancing.



First grader Giana Ferrari put a music kit to use in an outdoor class at Boston Valley Elementary.

Learning as we go

Covid-era learning brought with it social distancing, face masks and plenty of sanitizing in the weeks since schools reopened in September. Despite changes in operations and the physical setting, Hamburg's schools remain places of innovative teaching and active learning.



There's an emphasis on hand hygiene to help prevent the spread of germs.



At Boston Valley Elementary, teacher Bethany Vay took her first graders on an outdoor listening walk where they focused on sounds. It was a way for students to practice being present and aware of their surroundings. *At right*, Josie Stone was mindful in her observations.



There was reason to celebrate when a music classroom reopened at Armor Elementary. Throughout the district, music and other special area teachers had been traveling into classrooms rather than having students come to them to limit interior movement as schools cautiously reopened. In other instances, classes were held in larger alternate areas.



There's more KanJam at the High School these days.



Playing 4 Square at the Middle School

The "new now":
Fitness & personal skill progress



Middle Schoolers try their hand at golf.

Physical Education adapts & adjusts to limitations of pandemic

Locker rooms and pools are out. The outdoors is in. Lots of individual physical skill development. Team sports, not so much.

Sanitizing equipment, rotating equipment between classes and hand sanitizer stations.

All these are scenes of the new normal in Physical Education (PE) in the Hamburg Schools as curriculum and teaching methods are adapted and adjusted to promote learning while ensuring safety of students and staff.

With social distancing, masking and equipment sharing limitations, the "new now" emphasizes fitness and personal skill progress over large group and team activities, said Patrick Cauley, the district's Director of Health, Physical Education and Recreation.

"We're in a state of constant evolution with this," Mr. Cauley said. "We're doing all we can to provide quality physical education for our students with the many guidelines imposed on us."

PE classes have primarily been taking place outdoors. Students know to come dressed for the conditions and that they will be going outside well into the fall, as long as the weather remains reasonable. While some traditional team-building activities and team sports aren't possible at this time, there's a silver lining to this reinvention of gym class.



Disc golf is a popular option, as demonstrated by fifth graders at Boston Valley Elementary.



Phys. Ed. class on the playing field at Union Pleasant Elementary



High School students fitness walk at Howe Field.

"Where you normally might have expected to see games such as basketball, floor hockey or soccer, you are now seeing activities such as golf, Frisbee golf, badminton or tennis," said Kurt Grobe, Middle School PE teacher.

"In spite of all this change, we do see many exciting opportunities for students to learn about the benefits of physical activity and about themselves and their preferences when it comes to staying physically active. We believe that through all the quarantines and social distancing measures, young people are starting to recognize and appreciate the importance of physical activity."

"More than ever before, our students need a quality physical education program," agreed Jordan Neufeld, PE teacher at Union Pleasant Elementary. "Experts tell us that quality health and physical education programs help build physical, mental and emotional strength. These are critical lessons students need as they heal, re-socialize and adapt in the new learning environment."

He also sees new opportunities created by the challenges.

"This particular set of circumstances has allowed us to focus on individual skills and fitness-centered activities," he said. "Also, with the

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School reopening *(Continued from page two)*

the same percentage of middle school and high school scheduling requests in our 100% online program as we did for our students in the hybrid model (more than 90% for both).

Importantly, our teachers have gone the extra mile to assure access to learning on off-campus learning days by creating nearly 1,500 Google Classrooms in the cloud for their students. To facilitate access, the district has purchased more than 300 iPads and 1,150 Chromebooks, so that children do not miss out on learning while off-campus for lack of a district-managed device. While the iPads have been delivered, we learned recently that the Chromebooks will not be delivered until December.

Finally, clubs and sports are underway, with most being available to students whose families have chosen to enroll their children in 100% online learning for the first semester.

Adaptability

Many of you have recently asked why we can't just have all of the students in school. At this time, New York State Education Department guidelines regarding student density, physical distancing and mask use preclude school districts from having all of our students attend school each day. So, we have been asked to adapt the school experience to meet these guidelines. However, rest assured that when school districts are allowed by the state to invite all students to attend school in-person each day, we will be ready to adapt to that right away.

Alternatively, we also need to be prepared if we are ordered

Physical Education *(Continued from page seven)*

smaller class sizes, we are better able to focus on the individual needs of our students and include activities that we were unable to do in the past, due to a larger number of students."

There also is the new element of engaging students at home. High School PE teacher Steve Chaffee observed that with the presence of remote learning, students are being required to work harder outside of school.

"There is a great deal of technology they can incorporate to

by the Governor to move to a fully off-campus learning plan because of rising infection rates. We have a detailed plan for this that we will share with families and students in the event that fully off-campus learning is required.

One of the key components to our ability to adapt is our partnership with Fisher Bus. They continue to work with us so that we can meet the needs of children and families while allowing the district to adhere to state-level mandates regarding density and physical distancing on each bus.

Full Compliance

Our team has been able to incorporate all of the guidance from the New York State Department of Health, New York State Education Department, Gov. Andrew Cuomo, New York State Public High School Athletic Association, and Erie County Department of Health to the letter, while remaining committed to our own Vision, Mission and Core Values that make for great learning in every classroom and in every after-school activity, every day. From cleaning protocols and mask wearing, to physical distancing and completing health checks, our employees, students, and families have met every challenge that Covid-era school has presented.

On behalf of all of us who work for the Hamburg Central School District, please know how fortunate we feel to be your partners in the learning and growth of the children of this community.

Stay safe and be well.

prove to us the effort they are putting in on remote days," he said. "Currently, students are downloading a fitness app and showing us their work either by distance, heart rate, calories burned or video to show us their high intensity interval training."

Mr. Chaffee said teachers are meeting weekly to adjust and develop new Covid-appropriate activities.

"Nothing's perfect but we are doing our best to meet the needs of all."