

The Comet's Tale

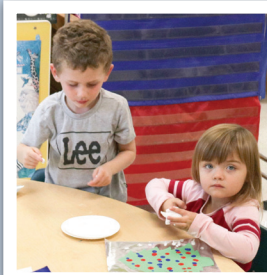
Fall 2019

Pre-K students make holiday cards for troops

Students in the pre-K class painted cards for troops who cannot spend the holiday season with their families.

During a couple of classes recently, students worked with teacher aide Ellie Manwaring to craft and create the cards, which featured trees and decorations.

Each card also came with a note thanking the recipient for their service.



Spirit week and Homecoming

Spirit week and homecoming brought a strong sense of Comet pride throughout the school that was evident to see as students dressed in school colors and cheered during the Friday pep rally.

After the junior class topped the seniors in the powderpuff game, Sandy Creek's football team won its final home game of the season, defeating Sauquoit Valley 20-12 on senior night.



Sandy Creek Central School District's new cook manager brings choice to the lunchroom



Tracy Sullivan, a longtime employee with the Sandy Creek Central School District, is looking forward to providing students with more customized meal choices as the district's new cook manager.

After serving the Sandy Creek Central School District in a variety of roles, longtime employee Tracy Sullivan is now serving up meals as the new cook manager.

Sullivan, who has worked for the district for 16 years, started as a bus driver and eventually got into the food service department. She noted she has observed many culinary trends come and go during that time, with the latest being a self-serve model. By

enabling students to choose what they put on their plates, it reduces waste and empowers them to make healthy decisions, she said.

"It's their excitement I enjoy the most, knowing I am getting them more involved with their nutrition," Sullivan said.

This year, Sullivan has implemented the self-serve model by providing new menu options, which include a taco

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Kindergartners visit Ontario Orchards

Rows of apple trees on a crisp, sunny fall day greeted Sandy Creek kindergartners on their recent trip to Ontario Orchards.

After spending a portion of the morning exploring where the orchard holds its annual festival, the children were brought up the hill to pick their own apples and take them home.

The group toured of the orchard, learning about the harvesting process and all the different kinds of apples grown.

Sandy Creek Superintendent Kyle Faulkner and Elementary School Principal Timothy Filiatrault both joined the group to enjoy the day of exploration and learning.

Smiles and laughter were heard throughout the orchard as the students filled bags with apples and enjoyed the warm fall weather.



Sandy Creek Elementary School builds Buddy Bench, commemorates student

Sandy Creek Elementary students will notice a vibrantly colored Buddy Bench near the playground this year, in honor of Cara Snyder.

Buddy Benches are designed to help students beat loneliness at playtime. If a child is feeling lonely, they can go to the bench as a signal they would like someone to play with, which gives other children the opportunity to invite them to play.

Jazmyn Baker, a high school junior at Sandy Creek, approached Elementary Principal Timothy Filiatrault with the idea of a rainbow-colored Buddy Bench to honor the memory of her cousin Cara Snyder.

"I always thought it would be great if there was some area for kids to go who felt they didn't have friends," Baker explained. "Other kids could then ask them to play, and Cara would have been that person."

Baker, with the help of the Elementary Student Council found the perfect bench. It was unveiled on Aug. 21 during a dedication ceremony at the school.



At left, The Sandy Creek Elementary School has a new rainbow-colored Buddy Bench to commemorate Cara Snyder. Family, friends, teachers and faculty attended a Buddy Bench dedication ceremony at the Elementary school playground.



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Sandy Creek Central School District's new cook manager brings choice to the lunchroom

salad that allows students to choose which fixings they would like to add. Other changes include new gluten-free menu items for students with Celiac disease, including personal cheese pizzas on Fridays, and a gluten-free bread line. Middle and high school students will now have fruit parfaits, and elementary students have a salad option.

Another new initiative for the year is the after-school snack program, which allows any student involved in a club, sports team or study group to grab a free snack before they start their afternoon activities.

For more information about the SCCSD Food Service Department or to check out the menu items, visit www.sandycreeksd.org/department/foodservice.

Co.R.E. Robotics Team visits CiTi's Manufacturing Day

Sandy Creek's Co.R.E. Robotics team hosted demonstrations during Manufacturing Day at the Center for Instruction, Technology & Innovation in October.



Musician Jared Campbell rocks Sandy Creek, brings uplifting message to the students



Jared Campbell, pictured, speaks to the crowd at Sandy Creek during his recent motivational concert.

Elementary students at Sandy Creek were ready to rock as singer-songwriter and motivational speaker Jared Campbell brought uplifting words and rhythms to share.

Campbell, a regular who has played at Sandy Creek before, had two shows during a recent morning and noted the power that positivity can have on each day.

"If we want to live a good life, we have to look out for each other," Campbell told the crowd, pointing to the importance of respect, friendship and kindness.

Most of the music that Campbell plays during his set has uplifting themes that show children they can do great things by helping out others and being themselves.

The students were pumped for the show, bringing a lot of noise and energy to the performance.



MS students learn from leadership scenarios

The middle school's Leader In Me student team recently put their leadership and critical thinking skills to the test.

During a recent exercise, students on the team were challenged to make decisions based on a fictional scenario as if they were stranded on an island.

The students are part of Karen Miller's student leadership team, and Middle School Principal Amy Malloy got to watch the scenario play out.

"It was interesting to see the variety of decisions that they made, both similar and not," said Molloy. "Overall the lesson was intended to support that leadership can look differently to each person and that's what makes our leaders unique."



Burrows joins staff at school-based health center

ConnexCare would like to take this opportunity to share a change in our professional staffing within the Sandy Creek school-based health center.

Val Salazar, Nurse Practitioner, who has been providing care within the district for the last five years, has accepted a transfer to a neighboring school to support the organization in furthering its efforts in growing the school-based program.

To assist in this transition, Crystal Burrows, who is a board certified family nurse practitioner, will assume the responsibilities full time. Burrows has been working with ConnexCare since 2016 while providing care to patients newborn through geriatric.

Prior to receiving her Master's in Nursing at SUNY Upstate, Burrows worked as an Registered Nurse for several years gaining experience and insight in medical/surgical, mental health, pediatrics and emergency medicine. These experiences have helped shape Burrows into the well-rounded provider she is today.

ConnexCare's goal is to maintain the success of the program we have established within the district, through the ongoing support we have received from the administration, faculty and parents. Please join us in welcoming Burrows to the Sandy Creek Central School District.

North Country Hall of Fame inducts SC softball teams

Two legendary Sandy Creek CSD softball teams were honored for their accomplishments, earning induction into the prestigious North Country Sports Hall of Fame in early October.

Players and coaches representing the Comets' Class C champion varsity softball teams from 1997 and 2004 joined an elite class of inductees during the Oct. 12 ceremony, held at the Italian American Civic Center in Watertown.

Players representing the 1997 team, which also claimed a state title, included Meridee Spano, Michelle MacDuffie, Jessica Soule, Lindsey Braunitzer, Crystal Reid, Michele Begalonis, Kim Hilton, Mary Beth Yerdon, Katie Hovey and Karen Prievo. From the 2004 team, inductees included players Megan MacVean, Katie Ouderkirk, Bethany Stockholm, Jenna Bulluck, Erin Clark, Kelcie Cashel, Samantha McKenzie, Courtney Blodgett, Lauren Clark, Jen Moody, Amanda Vandermark, Jen Crast and Kate Fowler.

Pat McDougal and Bill Fowler were the Sandy Creek softball head coaches in 1997 and 2004, respectively. Molly Yerdon was assistant coach both years, and Wayne McDougal directed the JV program during that time.



STEM skills on display during Hovercraft Project visit to SC

Fifth-grade students from Sandy Creek sped around the gym recently as they piloted hovercrafts they helped assemble and test themselves.

The Hovercraft Project, developed by Chase Educational Consulting, visited Sandy Creek and students worked as a team to solve different problems they were presented.

Under the direction of Matthew Chase, who founded the project, fifth-graders were placed in random groups and team members were assigned designated roles.

The full-day experience involved the planning and execution of the working low-friction hovercraft devices.

Communication, teamwork and collaboration were utilized throughout the session as the students worked to build their hovercraft before testing it to see what would get their pilots the farthest distance.

Chase worked closely with team leaders. While not giving away any answers, he guided them in the right direction so that leadership skills and critical thinking could be put to the test.

After the construction was completed, students put the hovercrafts through multiple rounds of testing with different criteria ranging from tight to loose skirt and one pusher to multiple pushers.

Once their findings were concluded, teams raced hovercrafts against each other until one remained and was declared the winner.

The Hovercraft Project is coordinated by the Arts in Education department at the Center for Instruction, Technology & Innovation.



Sandy Creek earns third place at OCAY League event



Sandy Creek's Oswego County Academic Youth (OCAY) League team took home third place in the first event of the 2019-20 season.

The first event, called Lit Pitch, challenged participants to create a story idea for a young adult book and then pitch their idea to a panel of judges who were acting as publishers.

Sandy Creek's third-place team consisted of Jessica Graham, Emma Halsey, Deanna Hathway, Abigail Lantry, Emma McDougal, Hailey McNitt, Alexia Phillips and Emily Ward.

Each team needed to create a book cover, a story synopsis and character portrait to support their story idea. In addition to the story pitch presentation, each team had to battle head-to-head in a variety of other mini-challenges including an author word scramble, a rotating Scrabble game and various literary-themed quizzes.

Halloween





Sandy Creek cheerleaders participate in Suicide Prevention Awareness night

The Sandy Creek High School varsity cheer team helped raise awareness during Suicide Awareness Month, which is every September.

As spectators arrived at the varsity football game versus Dolgeville, they were given handmade purple and teal ribbons they could wear to show support of Suicide Prevention Awareness week. During the game, competitive cheer members distributed handouts and other awareness items.

To show their support of the event, the competitive cheer team wore black, teal and purple shirts with teal bows in their hair as their uniform for the night. The football team supported the event by wearing teal stickers on their helmets.

At the end of the game the varsity cheer team raised \$100 to donate to Suicide Awareness Voices of Education. The team also walked in the SUNY Oswego SAVE 5K on Sept. 21 with other athletes and members of the National Honor Society.



Sandy Creek varsity competitive cheer members show off their uniforms for Suicide Prevention Awareness night, their efforts allow them to donate \$100 to SAVE. In the back row, from the left: Andrea Jennings, UnaRose McNitt, Brooke Rogers, Olivia Pappa, Abbie Battles, Riley Dowlearn, Samantha White. In the front are: Marley Yerdon, Jessica Graham, Rylee Katsoris, Madeleine Palmer, Madison Benedict, Madison Bauer

SCCSD joins Harvard center for rural education study

Sandy Creek over the summer joined 50 rural schools as a part of the National Center for Rural Education Research Networks (NCRERN), an initiative of the Center for Education Policy Research (CEPR) at Harvard University.

Funded by the Institute of Education Sciences at the U.S. Department of Education, the district will have the opportunity to apply the Proving Ground model of evidence-based improvement to address chronic absenteeism, college readiness and college enrollment.

"The mission of the Sandy Creek Central School District is to provide all students the knowledge and skills necessary to be self-directed, life-long learners by providing the highest quality education in partnership with parents, staff and community. Consistent student attendance is a key part of this undertaking," said Sandy Creek Superintendent Kyle Faulkner.

"One of our primary goals this year is to support and promote consistent attendance through targeted school and community-wide interventions as part of our work with the NCRERN. We look forward to working with our rural districts as part of this initiative and gaining evidence-based practices that will best support our students," added Faulkner.

NCRERN is producing tools for identifying students most at-risk for absenteeism and being unprepared for college as well as change management resources designed to guide rural schools in addressing chronic absenteeism, college readiness and college enrollment.

Throughout the five years, the center's member districts will collaborate on shared challenges, learning from one another to guide future work on school improvement.

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Middle School: Amy Molloy

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Sandy Creek Middle School continues collaboration with Farnham Family Services



With a focus on overall health, the Sandy Creek Middle School continues to offer prevention services to its students this year.

Student assistance counselor Abigail Kastick, through Farnham Family Services, will be in the building from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Fridays. She noted that she will employ an evidence-based curriculum to help students address a variety of topics and risk factors.

"Prevention services include individual counseling, group counseling, classroom group

education, presentations and more," Kastick said. She outlined her objectives in a letter to parents/guardians, which can be found on the district website.

Kastick said that students can be referred to prevention services by a staff member or as a self-referral seeking support.

"Prevention services are here as an additional factor of support and guidance for students," she said. "This helps them learn ways to build positive social skills, gain confidence in their ability to interact with others and learn ways to deal with problems and conflicts constructively."

For more information, email Kastick at akastick@farnhaminc.org, or call Middle School Principal Amy Molloy at 315-387-3445.

SCCSD welcomes new staff for 2019-20 school year

The Sandy Creek Central School District welcomed several new staff members ahead of the 2019-20 school year. In the front row, from left: Kaitlyn Bright, the guidance office secretary/registrar; Meredith Gibbons, general aide; Hayley Kimball-Denny, high school secretary; Patricia Bickford, bus aide; Lydia Larrabee, substituting for Tara Gardner's elementary art class; and Leon Steele, a new cleaner on the custodial staff. In the back is Fred Baird, the Oswego County deputy stationed at Sandy Creek; Kevin Seymour, high school principal; and Debra Joy, a new cleaner on the custodial staff.

