



Tiger TRADITIONS

Inspiring Excellence and Leadership in All!

Winter 2019 - 2020 Volume 25 • Issue 2

National Honor Society Inducts 17 New Members



"Los Inteligentes," the Mexico High School chapter of National Honor Society, welcomed 17 new members during its recent 64th annual Rite of Induction.

excellence in the areas of character, scholarship, leadership and service, collectively referred to as the "four pillars" of NHS.

New members inducted, in order of their induction, included: Tyler Yankee, Emma Hyde, Ashleigh Anderson, William Ruby, Daniel Gowans, Eric Hyde, Reatha von Holtz, Libby Sheldon, Brynn Wills, Samantha Seeburger, Anna Bigelow, Morgan Fischer, Jordan Hamilton, Anna Pluff, Juliana Hernandez, Alivia Kelsey and Caden McCormack.

High school Principal Ryan Lanigan welcomed a large gathering of family, friends, mentors and community members while congratulating the group on their well-earned achievement. Mexico Superintendent Sean Bruno echoed those sentiments, noting he hopes the group will continue to thrive and serve as members of the society.

Each new members was inducted by a current NHS member, which included Aidan Sherman, Evan Blunt, Sydney Lawton, Kierra Webster, Emma McCarthy, Mariah Wright and Myles McMahon.

NHS Adviser Joseph Deckman then led the group in reciting the official oath before a reception was held in the school's lobby.

The Mexico Academy and Central School's chapter of National Honor Society held its 64th annual Rite of Induction in mid-November, welcoming 17 new members into its ranks at the Mexico High School Auditorium.

National Honor Society (NHS) recognizes students who have demonstrated

Mexico Elementary Students Raise Hundreds For Local Food Bank

A schoolwide effort at Mexico Elementary raised hundreds of dollars for the Mexico Food Bank through a project that combined creativity with literature.

Students were challenged to paint a Styrofoam pumpkin based on a literary work of their choice and then voted on their favorites with pennies, raising \$250 for the local food bank.



Mexico Elementary Librarian Dianne Barnes helped set up the fundraiser and procured pumpkins for all the entrants.

"I'm very proud of all the hard work and generosity they showed for such a good cause," said Barnes.

The winning pumpkin, which raised more than \$45 by itself, was created by fourth-grader Ally Rando and based on the popular children's book series "Fangbone!"

PHOTOS FROM MEXICO HIGH SCHOOL, MS THEATER (PAGES 4-5)

A Message from the Superintendent



I hope this edition of our Tiger Traditions find you and your family well!

In addition to our students and staff being hard at work for another wonderful

school year, there is also much work going on "behind the scenes." Below, please find updates regarding continuous improvement efforts for our District.

Daycare

Obtaining childcare during times when school is not in session seems to be getting more challenging every year! In the past, we have tried to be supportive by partnering with the Oswego YMCA to provide before and after school care for students at Mexico Elementary at reasonable rates. We have investigated how to improve this program and found a solution. We are immediately expanding this program to include half-day childcare on planned early dismissal days, school breaks and summer break.

Additionally, we are in the process of applying to expand the before and after school program to Palermo and New Haven schools. The approval process takes several months. Each school will notify parents as soon as we are approved.

Main Street Bridge

You may have noticed that the wall closest to our high school at the dam on Main Street is deteriorating. We have surrounded it with orange fencing while determining the fix. Our investigation has informed us that correctly fixing the wall will cost our District in excess of \$550,000. Addressing such a large and expensive project will take some planning and a public vote. In the meantime, we are working on a temporary fix that is much less expensive to shore up the wall and provide greater safety. We are awaiting NYSDEC approval, but we hope to get the temporary repair completed before winter and further damage.

Mexico Elementary Health Center

Construction at Mexico Elementary for our new health center is underway. We are working toward

having a fully operational health center that includes physical, dental and mental healthcare. We did hit a snag; it was uncovered that the actual costs for all three aspects exceeded the original quotes. Due to the difference in costs, we will be dividing the project into two phases. The first phase of a completed operational health center will be completed according to original expenditures of \$100,000 and timeline of June 30, 2020 completion date. Phase two for the additional dental care aspects will be included in our upcoming budget vote and, if successful, additional work would begin with an anticipated completion date for student arrival in September 2020. We are very excited that this health center will have the unique advantage to serve both Mexico Elementary students and our high school students as well.

MACS Visioning, 2020 and Beyond

As discussed in the previous school year, we have discussed many ideas on how to improve upon our great District. We would like to provide an opportunity for input and feedback in devising a vision of what we strive to be for our students, staff and community.

In the coming month, we will be looking for approximately 38 volunteers consisting of community members, students, parents and staff to serve on a collaborative visioning committee for our District. The goal of this committee is to review our current strengths and challenges along with our potential future challenges to develop a vision of what we can be. All this work will be public, transparent and collaborative, with opportunity for input. There will be consistent and comprehensive communication throughout the process.

Agriculture Business, AgroSciences and Agrotechnology Graduation Pathway

Our high school program is more than offering courses and keeping students on track for graduation. In our current times, it is not merely enough for us just to get our students to graduate. We must ensure that we are doing all we can to prepare our students to experience success in their post-graduation plans. Whether our students want to immediately enter the workforce, military, college or any combination of the aforementioned, we continue to develop pathways for their individual success.

One of the new pathways we are exploring is agriculture. Similar to our current pathways, we are exploring how to provide our students with an agricultural themed program of high school study. It connects relevant classroom learning with real-world applications outside of school, through internships, professional mentorship, job shadows and similar experiences. Our goal is to provide our students to be equipped with the necessary experience and training to succeed as a skilled member of today's workforce both locally and beyond. To ensure we have a comprehensive sustainable program, we have been working with agriculture experts, Cornell University, SUNY Morrisville and FFA (Future Farmers of America). More to come as we progress in making it a reality for our students.

Baseball Fields

As you may know, our baseball fields typically have been too wet for our teams to play on them. This fall, we crafted and began implementing a plan for our fields' drainage problem to be corrected. You may have noticed that the contractors have mobilized their equipment and parked it near where the work is to be completed. However, Mother Nature has not cooperated. The fields have been too wet for the equipment to be used. Unfortunately, this will delay the work until after winter. Although we hope for a drier spring so our teams can use the fields, our athletic director will create a plan just in case. We look forward to them being fixed as soon as possible so our athletes and community may use them.

Sincerely,

Sean C. Bruno

Proud to be MACS



September Proud to be MACS Honoree

Lynn Rathbun

Lynn Rathbun, a longtime third-grade teacher at Mexico Elementary School, was selected as September 2019's recipient of the Proud to be MACS award.

Starting with the district in 2005, Rathbun was a student teacher for Karin Musumeci and a longterm sub. After becoming a full-time instructor, she taught fourth grade for one year, but most of her time at MACS has been teaching third grade.

Rathbun has helped embrace the district's technology vision, becoming a member of Mexico's Blended Learning team because of her fascination with technology.

Nominator Darlene Upcraft noted that Rathbun has "made her third-grade classroom at Mexico Elementary a classroom of the future. She embraces technology and shares that love and excitement with her students."

Rathbun was raised in Sequoit, near Utica, but graduated from the East Syracuse-Minoa School District before earning her undergraduate degree at SUNY Potsdam, where she majored in anthropology and education. She would earn her master's degree with a concentration in curriculum instruction at SUNY Oswego.

Prior to teaching, Rathbun married husband, Larry, and raised a family consisting of children Katie and Lawrence.

When asked about her favorite part of her job, Rathbun said she loves to see a student when they grasp a concept and the proverbial lightbulb goes off. She also enjoys the connection that she makes with her students that often result in former students dropping by her classroom just to say "hi."



October Proud to be MACS Honoree

Laura Washburn

Laura Washburn, who has spent more than a decade as a teacher and supporter of the Mexico music program, was honored as the Proud to be MACS recipient for October 2019.

In 2005, Washburn began her career at Mexico Middle School before moving to her current position in the high school in 2016. Washburn is a music teacher at the high school and can often be found directing the chorus at concerts and other MACS events.

Nominator Darlene Upcraft said she was impressed with Washburn's commitment to the students of the district, pointing to last year when Washburn volunteered a large amount of her time and directed both the middle school and high school musicals.

Another accomplishment came last year when two of Washburn's students, Sheila Wallis and Josh Washer, were selected to perform at the renown George Eastman Theater as a part of the All-State chorus last year.

Washburn grew up in Oswego County, graduating from Sandy Creek in 1989. She went on to earn a degree from SUNY Oswego in applied music before earning a master's degree in music from Syracuse University. In addition, Washburn earned an associate degree in travel and tourism from Bryant and Stratton.

Starting in 1995, Washburn began subbing for South Jefferson before accepting her first full-time position with Pulaski. From 2000-05, Washburn taught music at the elementary level for Rochester-area school Gates Chili.

It was during her time in Rochester that Washburn joined the U.S. Army, providing her with an opportunity to perform in military bands and serve the U.S. Washburn continues to serve as a member of the Army today.

Along the way, Washburn married and had a daughter, Schally. Schally followed her mother into the education field and currently teaches at Mexico Elementary.



November Proud to be MACS Honoree

Keeley-Anne Carl

Keeley-Anne Carl, who has spent nearly two decades influencing and helping students as a teaching assistant, has been recognized as the November 2019 Proud to be MACS recipient.

Carl has aided students in a multitude of subjects while at Mexico High School throughout the years, always eager to lend a hand. She joked that she is a "one stop shop" for all academic needs.

As a member of the science team, Carl helped the school build an award-winning rocket program along with Matt McGiff. The team builds and tests their rockets as part of the program every year.

Nominator Jamie Battles applauded the work that Carl always does, noting "Keeley is always willing to give up her time to work with students. She is

amazing and very patient when she needs to explain math or earth science to a student."

Carl hails from Canada, growing up in Mississauga, Ontario, and graduating from Applewood Heights Secondary School. She continued her education at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario while majoring in French.

Love struck in 1987 when Carl met future husband, Joe, while shopping in Niagara Falls. They wed in Reno, Nevada, in 1989 and during Joe's time in the Navy, Carl studied abroad for 10 months in France coupled with a backpacking trip in Europe. She has two children, Meghan and Alex.

After Joe was discharged from the Navy, Carl and family moved into our area when Joe took a job at Nine Mile. With the kids growing, Carl took a job in 2000 at Mexico.

As for her favorite part of the job, Carl said she loves the sense of humor of the students. She says that it keeps her young!

Once Upon a Mattress

Mexico Middle School hosted its fall musical recently, raising the curtain on its production of "Once Upon A Mattress." The musical, directed by Corinne Upcraft, was put on by and featured dozens of students from the middle school.



Heartwarming Football Gesture Featured On News



A touching moment during a "tiny mite" football game between Mexico and Cicero allowed a player with special needs to score his first touchdown ever.

Brantley Watson, a 7-year-old who attends Mexico Academy and Central Schools, and his story was shared with News Channel 9, which ran a segment on the heartwarming play in early October.

Watson is seen in the video enjoying the run of his life to the end zone in front of a roaring crowd before celebrating with his teammates and mother on the sideline.

The whole story and a link to the video can be found on our website by scanning the nearby QR code with your smartphone.



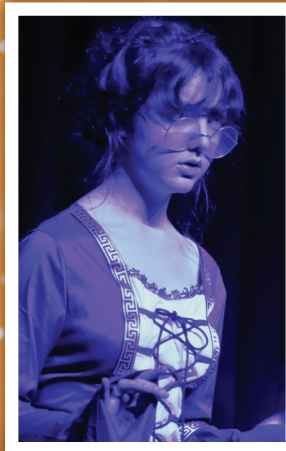
Thanksgiving Festivities At New Haven

New Haven Elementary hosted a variety of activities ahead of Thanksgiving break to mark the occasion, coming together to celebrate everything they have to be thankful for. Teachers had Thanksgiving-themed lessons, showed holiday movies and had traditional feasts and desserts.



'The Legend of Sleepy Hollow'

The Mexico High School Drama Club staged its fall play, hosting two nights of thrills and chills as it showed "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." The play, directed by Cassie Story, kept audiences on the edge of their seats and allowed students to get involved with acting, set design, lighting and more.



Athletic Teams Raise Thousands For Suicide Prevention



You
Matter.

This simple, yet powerful, message was carried by the Mexico High School swimming and volleyball programs as they raised thousands of dollars to benefit suicide prevention locally.

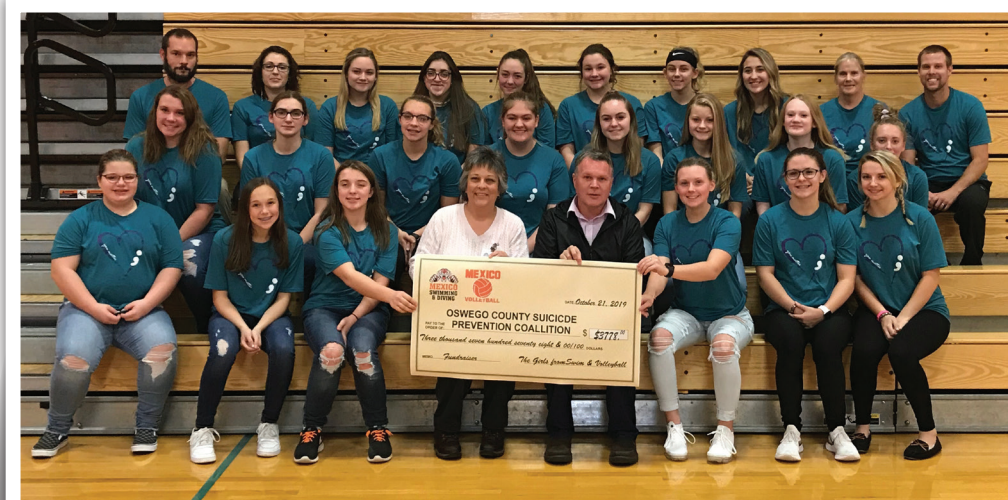
During a fundraiser this season, the teams raised a total of \$3,778 and presented a check in late October to the Oswego County Suicide Prevention Coalition.

The two teams, which play virtually neighboring each other in the high school, had home contests on the same day, and they came up with the idea to hold a benefit.

The fundraiser included raffle baskets made

by both teams, T-shirts, bracelets, baked goods and more with all the goods set up just feet away from the JV and varsity volleyball matches along with the swim meet.

The teams decorated the pool and gym while wearing teal and purple throughout the evening to bring awareness to their cause.



Hovercraft Project Visits Mexico MS

Fifth-grade students from Mexico zoomed around the gym recently as they piloted hovercrafts they helped assemble and test themselves.

The Hovercraft Project, developed by Chase Educational Consulting, visited Mexico and students used teamwork and different skills to solve 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 design and 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 leadership skills and critical thinking could be utilized.

After the construction was completed, students did multiple rounds of testing on the hovercrafts 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. Even the teachers got in on the action at the end, taking part in the fun day.

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



Varsity Girls Swimmers Go To States



The Mexico girls varsity swim team recently sent five swimmers to the state competition, held Nov. 22-23 at Ithaca College.

The Tigers who went to the state meet, pictured above from left, are Carolyn Zedack, Alexa von Holtz, Evie Fontana, Riley Baxter and Sydney Lawton.

Von Holtz finished 10th of more than 80 swimmers in the 200-yard individual medley. The 200-yard freestyle relay also competed at the state level, consisting of von Holtz, Baxter, Fontana and Zedack. Lawton was on hand as an alternate for the relay team.

The varsity girls team is coached by Shawn Parkhurst.



Space-Themed Painting Event Kicks Off Palermo Reading Initiative

Students launched this year's Palermo Elementary reading campaign with a special event that was "out of this world."

CNY-based Painting With A Twist came to the school with canvases, allowing students to paint space-themed art.

Palermo Elementary Principal Peggy Scorzelli noted that the creative time helped them "launch" this year's reading celebration theme "Blast off into Reading," during which students have been challenged to read five of seven nights per week for the school year.

"We were so excited to host Painting With A Twist as we begin another year of promoting reading for pleasure at home," said Scorzelli. "There was a lot of excitement and smiles during the event."

Students in kindergarten through second grade painted a rocket ship in the cafeteria, while third- and fourth-graders worked on a spinning galaxy in the school's gym. Students' work was displayed in the hall until open house, when they took their work home.

Painting With a Twist: Palermo Elementary students painted artwork with CNY-based Painting With A Twist held a special event recently to help kick off this year's reading celebration.



Hundreds Race In Annual Mexico MS Turkey Trot

A little rain and mud didn't slow down the hundreds of participants in the annual middle school Turkey Trot.

The race, held Nov. 5, featured students in grades 5-8 along with a number of teachers.

The 1.5-mile course started just outside the auditorium and wrapped around several athletic fields before finishing back near the starting line. After finishing the race, students got to enjoy apple cider and apples.

The race is directed by health teacher Richard Lenahan.

Eighth-graders Hunter Herrington and Avery Mack were the first male and female finishers from the entire school.

Listed below are the top three boys and girls from each grade level:

Gr. 5 Girls: 1. Aubrey Herrington; 2. Madalynn Nagel; 3. Mack Brynn.

Gr. 5 Boys: 1. Ian Bigelow; 2. James Law; 3. Noah Gagnier.

Gr. 6 Girls: 1. Kaylee Messick; 2. Avery Willis; 3. Aubrey Shaffer.

Gr. 6 Boys: 1. Aiden Bartlett; 2. Brayden Mack; 3. Carter Robert.

Gr. 7 Girls: 1. Zoe Grzesik; 2. Izabel Taylor; 3. Adriana DiManto.

Gr. 7 Boys: 1. Dominick Alfano; 2. Preston Searor; 3. Collin Derby.

Gr. 8 Girls: 1. Avery Mack; 2. Madison Neville; 3. Emma Scott.

Gr. 8 Boys: 1. Hunter Herrington; 2. Ethan Becker; 3. Everett Bryant.



Turkey Trot: Pictured is the start of the annual Mexico Middle School Turkey Trot, held recently in the fields behind the school.

MS Students Win 811 Poster Contest

Five sixth-grade middle school students recently won a poster contest through local organization Dig Safely New York. Kierstyn Ford, Aubrey Shaffer, Seanna Twiss, Angelina Nguyen-Truong and Avery Willis worked on their design about what the world would look like in 50 years, depicting a grocery store and how "going green" can help. Pictured below are four of the students discussing the project in a video that went along with the entry. The prize is \$1,000 and will be used for class supplies and other needs.



Mexico Elementary Honors Veterans With Ceremony

Students from Mexico Elementary gathered ahead of the Veterans Day holiday to mark the occasion and honor a number of local veterans in attendance.



With more than a dozen veterans looking on, the school sang a few patriotic songs and said the Pledge of Allegiance.

The high school's Marine Corps Junior ROTC program was on hand to display the colors for all to see.

After the assembly, the honored guests and students who invited them attended a reception in the cafeteria.



To view a video made from this event, scan the nearby QR code on your smartphone.



BOARD OF EDUCATION

James Emery - President
Darlene Upcraft - Vice President
Chad Bigelow
Dennis Brooks
Connie Douglas
Amy Shaw
Susan Teifke
Samantha Seeburger - Student Representative

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Dec. 23-Jan. 3** Winter Recess, NO SCHOOL
Jan. 7 NH Readers From Birth, 5 p.m.
Jan. 9 BOE Meeting, 6 p.m.
Jan. 13-17 HS Spirit Week
Jan. 17-18 All-County Band Festival @ Fulton
Jan. 20 Martin Luther King Jr. Day, NO SCHOOL
Jan. 21-24 HS Regents Testing
Jan. 23 BOE workshop, 6 p.m.
Feb. 3 PAL 4th Gr. Educational Band Concert, 6 p.m.
Feb. 4 MEX EL 4th Gr. Educational Band Concert, 6 p.m.
Feb. 6 HS True Beauty Day
Feb. 7 Staff Development Day, NO SCHOOL
Feb. 11 NH 4th Gr. Educational Band Concert, 6 p.m.
Feb. 13 BOE Meeting @ Mex Elem. Café, 6 p.m.
Feb. 17-21 Mid-winter recess, NO SCHOOL
Feb. 25 HS Junior/Senior Volleyball Game
Feb. 27 BOE Workshop, 6 p.m.
Feb. 28 French Club Semi-Formal, 8 p.m.
March 5-7 HS Spring Musical - "Mama Mia", 7 p.m.
March 10 HS Mardi Gras Magic
March 11 Music In Our Schools Month (MIOSM) Concert I, 6:30 p.m.
March 12 BOE Meeting @ Pal Elem. Café, 6 p.m.
March 16 Staff Development Day, NO SCHOOL
March 18 MIOSM Concert II, 6:30 p.m.
March 19 HS Variety Show, 7 p.m.
March 20-21 All-County Orchestra @ Oswego
March 24 MIOSM Concert III, 6:30 p.m.
March 26 BOE Workshop, 6 p.m.
March 28 HS 2nd Annual Community Connections Event
April 6-13 Spring Recess, NO SCHOOL
May 7 Oswego County Olympiad Invitational @ Phoenix
May 12 BOE Meeting/Budget Hearing, 6 p.m.
May 25 Memorial Day, NO SCHOOL
June 26 Graduation - Class of 2020, 7 p.m.

New Haven Elementary *Halloween* Gallery

