

GOOD NEWS



SYRACUSE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Flag Football Teams Open Doors for Female Athletes



New this year, several dozen girls from all SCSD high schools represent the **Syracuse East** and **Syracuse West** flag football teams. Each day after school, the teams engage in warm up activities, then move into agility work. Then routes, then a rotating focus on either offense or defense before their daily scrimmage.

The teams practice every day, where they learn the game, watch film... everything that a professional football team would do to prepare. Thanks to a grant from Dick's Sporting Goods, the teams all received equipment, uniforms, and other necessities.

"I've only ever done running sports like track and cross country," **Nottingham** senior **Azaria White**, a wide receiver, explained. "So the hand-eye coordination



is new and tough! I had no knowledge of football coming in, so there's been a lot of learning. I've been working hard at studying the play book! I'm excited to tell people I'm one of the first... I have to give myself props for that!"

For student athletes, their excitement stems not only from being the first to try something – but also from the camaraderie that the football experience has created with loved ones.

"I know a lot of people who play football," **ITC** senior **Treasure Taylor** said. "My cousin played D1, and my brother played. It's really fun! I like running the plays, and catching the ball is so fun! I'm a receiver. I already know what most of the routes are – I've had to learn particular rules like how to defend. I follow the offensive playbook! I

know we'll have a lot of eyes on us... so I hope we'll be good!"

"I'm a Bills fan, and my family is all huge Bills fans... so I had to try it out!" **Corcoran** senior **Caroline Menon** shared. "I'm the quarterback, and it's a lot harder than I expected! Flag rules mean you only get one second to throw the ball! Being a point guard in basketball has helped me with that. It's awesome – a good way for us girls to break the stigma that women's sports are 'easy' – flag is way harder than regular football!"

The SCSD Athletics Department continues to prioritize increasing participation in sports. Next winter, they hope to introduce girl's wrestling, if there is enough interest!

Read the entire article, watch highlights and see game day photos at tinyurl.com/SCSDFlagFB24



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Syracuse, NY 13210

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Families,

It's hard to believe that we are nearly to the end of the 2023-24 school year! Our students and staff have been working exceptionally hard this year, and I am so proud of their successes – big and small.

This spring, our female student athletes had an exciting new opportunity: taking part in our first-ever flag football teams! Here in the Syracuse City School District, we are constantly striving to offer our students the best – and we are excited to watch the flag football teams continue to grow, as well as to expand into other athletic offerings as time goes on.

As the Class of 2024 graduation season approaches, we are also proud to focus on preparing students for their future – whether that means college, career, or the military. Our Career and Technical Education department hosted a CTE Career Fair this spring, offering students part time, full time, and summer employment – as well as information about internships, mentoring, and more. High school students interested in pursuing careers in the healthcare field explored those interests through a paid program at Upstate Medical University. And, of course, our students of all ages are being inspired and supported each and every day thanks to the generous support of community partners – including We Rise Above the Streets, Book Buddies, and the 100 Black Men Brilliant Young Minds Book Club, all featured in this newsletter, and others.

If there is anything we can do to help support your child or your family as this school year concludes, please don't hesitate to reach out by visiting syracusecityschools.com/letstalk.

Sincerely,



Tony



IMPORTANT DATES

May 2024

- 23 Elementary and Middle School Interim Report Card Distribution
- 24 **No School**
- 27 **Memorial Day (No School)**
- 28 **No School**

June 2024

- 4 Regents
- 6-9 Science (Written) Grade 8 Make-up Dates
- 13 High School Marking Period 4 Ends
- 14 Regents Exams
- 17-25 Regents Exams
- 19 **Juneteenth (No School)**
- 25 **Last Day of School (Half Day)**
- 25 Elementary and Middle School Marking Period 4 Ends & Report Card Distribution
- 26 High School Report Card Distribution

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Student & Staff Spotlights

Congratulations, Class of 2024!

The Class of 2024 – representing Corcoran, Henninger, ITC, Nottingham, and PSLA at Fowler – will soon be taking their next steps! Each graduation ceremony will be streamed LIVE on the SCSD Facebook page. Just visit facebook.com/SyracuseCitySchools on the dates and times listed on the right, and you'll be able to watch and comment



on the ceremonies live. Photos from each ceremony will be shared online in the week following the ceremonies. We hope you'll join us in cheering on this group of **#SCSDGraduates!**

Thursday, June 27 – 6 pm – Corcoran

Friday, June 28 – 6 pm – Nottingham

Saturday, June 29 – 9 am – PSLA at Fowler

Saturday, June 29 – 12 pm – ITC

Saturday, June 29 – 3 pm – Henninger

Henninger Student Receives National Aspirations in Computing Award



Henninger junior **Soha Alghazeer**, who also participates in the Le Moyne College Upward Bound program, recently learned that she's a National Center for Women & Information Technology 'Aspirations in Computing' High School Award Winner! Soha's greatest technical accomplishment involved using a computer to look at a patient's genes to determine their pathogen or disease. She is currently studying Health Professions at Henninger and is interested in biotechnology, biomedical engineering, and pursuing a career in medicine. Soha had to apply for the award and will be recognized at an Award Ceremony. She will also receive internship and scholarship opportunities, as well as access to the NCWIT network of professionals.

Syracuse Latin Student Wins NASA Art Contest



We love hearing about students who go above and beyond to show their talents! **Syracuse Latin** 4th grade student **Nataliah Smith** was recently recognized for her **#SCSDArts** talents – winning the NASA “Connecting

the Dots” contest – which she completed at home on her own time! Nataliah will be receiving an official award and a swag bag from NASA.



SCSD Students Recognized in Bilingual Education Contests



We love to see students celebrating **#SCSDDiversity!** Four SCSD students recently received honors in the New York State Association for Bilingual Education's student essay contest and student art contest. **Nottingham** sophomore **Ganguenon Merlin** won first place in the student art contest; **Nottingham** senior **Maram Al Taleb** won third place in the student essay contest in the grades 9-12 category; **Lincoln** 6th grader **Mwamini Patrick** won third place for the student essay contest in the grades 6-8 category; and **Seymour** 4th grader **Alix Ramos** (not pictured) won third place for the student essay contest in the grades 3-5 category.

Seymour highlighted at the NYS Association for Bilingual Education

Great things are happening at **Seymour** Dual Language Academy!

Scan QR code or visit: www.youtube.com/watch?v=AAVT2CBnWNg&t=79s



Community Partners Spotlight:

#SCSDGivesThanks for the many community members, groups, and organizations that partner with our schools to provide support for our students, families, and staff!



Brilliant Young Minds Book Club
The 100 Black Men Brilliant Young Minds Book Club at Syracuse Latin, now in its second year in the building, focuses on helping 4th, 5th, and 6th grade boys develop a love for literature. Through weekly meetings during the school day, the group mentors boys through both individual and group reading time.

“Reading is fundamental – things are in books for a reason,” **Syracuse Latin** 5th grade student **Ian Owens** shared. “Something about this group screamed out to me: it'll be beneficial to me! It's really helped me. The group is really helpful because with all the struggles and adversity in the world right now, it's important for us to learn about our history and our culture, so when we go out into the world, we're not lost.”



Book Buddies
The Book Buddies program, organized through the United Way of Central New York, operates in five SCSD schools this year – **Delaware, Dr. Weeks, Roberts, Seymour, and STEAM at Dr. King** – serving about 500 students.

Book Buddies aims to provide one-on-one literacy support to students. Each week, a volunteer reads with a student for half an hour during the school lunch period, working with students to encourage them to read at their own pace and develop reading skills and improve their language and comprehension. The program also provides student participants with free books throughout the school year that they are able to keep, to help encourage literacy at home.

The Book Buddies program is always in seek of new volunteers to join the program! If you're 18 years old or older and are willing to commit to 30-60 minutes per week, please visit www.cnybookbuddies.org to sign up.



We Rise Above the Streets
Al-amin Muhammad leads We Rise Above The Streets Recovery Outreach Inc., an organization that supports and empowers people who are

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homeless or in need. They feed many people in Syracuse and host many events and giveaways to support people in need. **ELMS** Principal **Kevin Burns** shared the impact that group organizer Al-amin has made on the ELMS school community.

“Al-amin has served as one of our role model agents of change here at ELMS for many years now,” he shared. “He has

dedicated his time to speak to our students, be interviewed by them, has attended their E-Nights to see their work and has provided meaningful service-learning opportunities for our 7th graders over the years. Al-amin teaches our students that every person has a gift and that everyone deserves to be treated with dignity.”

CTE
CORNER

SCSD Students’ Career Readiness Shines Bright at CTE Career Fair



Zymir Douglas:
Future Engineer.

This is how his business card read, as he handed it to some of the more than 70 businesses on hand at Onondaga Community College’s SRC Arena at the annual

SCSD Career and Technical Education (CTE) Career Fair. Juniors and seniors from all SCSD high schools were invited to the event.

“This is actually a thin piece of metal that my engineering teacher had,” ITC Electrical Technology P-TECH senior **Zymir Douglas** shared as he held up the card. “We used Canva to make templates, and then used a machine to laser our design onto it to make unique business cards.”

As Zymir made his way to different tables, he noted that there was something for everyone, representing all career fields and all CTE program areas: healthcare, engineering, finance, landscaping, food service, environmental fields, military, and more. Part time and full time work, summer employment, internships, and more were offered – with on-site applications and on-site interviews.

For those uncertain about their plans for the future, the career fair presented a great opportunity for students to be exposed to new career paths.

“This has been nice because it allows me to see where my head is – if I want to pursue college or enter right into a career,” **Nottingham** senior **Johnny Teague** said. “The Career Fair showed me basically everything I need to succeed... every career I can think of! This experience is going to help me think about where I want to start out on my path to greatness.”

To learn more about the CTE pathways and P-TECH programs offered in the SCSD, visit www.syracusecityschools.com/CTE!

PK-8th Grade News

Hearing through Hands: Syracuse STEM at Blodgett ASL Club Helps Students Learn the Language of Inclusion



Syracuse STEM at Blodgett 8th grader **Toya Lemons** brings one pointer finger in to meet her other pointer finger.

‘Goals,’ she signed in American Sign Language (ASL).

Toya’s goal is to one day become a Forensic Scientist. But this year, two to three days each week, she’s spending her school lunch period in 8th grade ELA teacher (and building Diversity, Equity, and Belonging Leader) **Leeza Roper**’s classroom, practicing sign language with her peers.

Through an American Sign Language club – new this year – Ms. Roper, who is fluent in ASL herself, is helping students learn conversational sign.

8th grader **Tajin’arie Sheppard** said that new understanding was one of the reasons she was drawn to the group in the first place.

“I joined this group because sign language has always been a language I wanted to learn,” Tajin’arie said. “My best friend is fluent in it, and we have lots of hearing-impaired friends, so I wanted to be able to communicate with them better.”

Moving forward, Ms. Roper hopes to expand the group beyond the Syracuse STEM at Blodgett school walls... looking into organizing a field trip to visit an OCC ASL class taught by deaf professors, or inviting OCC students and professors from the program to do a workshop with her ASL group. She also hopes to see more students working toward earning the New York State Seal of Biliteracy in American Sign Language – something a few of her students are already working toward.

Syracuse Football Players Inspire SCSD Elementary and Middle School Students

Members of the Syracuse University football team visited **Brighton Academy, Ed Smith, Huntington, HW Smith, McKinley-Brighton, Meachem, Salem Hyde, STEAM at Dr. King,** and **Syracuse Latin** this spring – volunteering to read to elementary school students and answering questions from middle schoolers.

While the younger students were excited just to welcome guest readers, middle school students said the visitors really inspired them to pursue their dreams.

“When I grow up, I want to be a veterinarian,” Brighton Academy

6th grader **Aubrey Moore** shared. “It inspired me to hear from the football player because he plays in college and he’s made it a long way already. It inspired me because it showed me that you can actually do anything. It made me feel like I can do what I want to do. If he could get there, I can, too. If he can achieve his goal, I can do it, too.”



After School Robotics Program Sparks Student Interest in STEM

SCSD elementary and middle school students are gaining STEM skills that will set them ahead in life, thanks to an after-school robotics program now in 17 schools.

The after-school robotics programs are free to students and include a full curriculum led by former teachers and STEM professionals. Units touch on the Engineering Design Process, an Introduction to Robotics, VEX Coding, Simple Machines, Pendulums and Pulleys, and more, wrapping up with a unit on aerospace and drones, as well as rockets.

“I love robotics,” **Grant** 7th grader **Shafiqullah Baborai** shared. “I helped design our robot. I worked with [school robotics advisor] **Mr. Trujillo** to design the robot and make it the most effective, and then I helped build it. The hardest part was actually building it – it took



about two weeks. My favorite part is trying to program the robot so it can do things on its own... it makes me feel very bright! I’m always working to make my robot better in the future. I hope to be an engineer one day and I feel that robotics will help prepare me.”



Kaden Lemons – Syracuse **STEM at Blodgett** 6th grader has been participating in robotics since he was in elementary school.

“I’ve always had a thing for making stuff,” he shared. “It started out as just a fun way to go on field trips! At first, I wasn’t able to do much – I was just observing. But now, I’ve learned so much! The controls are the hardest thing to learn – things are almost reversed on them. But I love robotics. I love working as a team and trying to get the highest score!”

Thank you to the committed students and staff who dedicate their time each day after school to developing a love for science, technology, engineering, and math!



High School News

Corcoran Builds Community through Unofficial ‘Puzzle Club’

“Which color are you focusing on?”

Corcoran senior **Haley Cesare** and several staff members sat around a folding table in the school library, huddled over a 1,000 piece puzzle.

As they each scoured the table for pieces to complete the ‘Dancing Africans’ puzzle they selected in celebration of Black History Month, the group chatted about everything except school or work. They debated the best kind of animal crackers, how people spell their names, old puzzles they’d completed together, and life in general. It wasn’t a group of students and staff – it was a friendly team.

“Puzzles are a great equalizer,” Library Assistant **Liz Strodel** shared. “They’re great for relationship building! Students and staff will come in and see it, ask what we’re up to, and usually, they’ll end up staying to try to find a piece.”

At **Corcoran, Henninger, ITC,** and **PSLA at Fowler,** puzzle tables have become the norm this year – out for students and staff to tackle during their free periods or lunch breaks.

SPRING 2024





NFL Legend Inspires Building Men Students at Annual Day of Peace Conference

Corcoran, Henninger, ITC, Nottingham, and PSLA at Fowler attending the Building Men Day of Peace recently had an opportunity to hear from SuperBowl champion Dorsey Levens – a Nottingham graduate himself. The SCSD alumnus gave a keynote address, speaking about success, failure, and the characteristics needed to grow themselves as men.

“I appreciate these opportunities, because I know that later in life, I’ll be able to look back on these,” Henninger junior **Ja’sir Williams** shared. “Building Men is a brotherhood. It’s a solid core that I can fall back on... there’s a real camaraderie there. It’s dope that Mr. Levens is here... and that he’s from here. He shows where you can go... how far you can go... but you can still come back and give back.”

High School Students Jump Start Future Health Careers through Upstate Program

This year, SCSD students from **Corcoran, Henninger, Nottingham, and PSLA at Fowler** were invited to get a head start on their future, thanks to the Upstate Medical University’s Jump Start Your Health Career program.

Through the ten-week paid program, students met for several hours on Saturdays on the Upstate Medical University Campus. There, led by Upstate students, faculty, and clinicians, they learned and practiced the clinical reasoning process that guides the diagnostic and treatment process. They participated in interactive learning experiences in on-campus laboratories, and used complex, realistic patient cases to explore the field of health care and health careers.

Corcoran senior **Sahrie McIntyre** said she hopes to become a Registered Nurse one day. She hasn’t taken any healthcare classes in high school, so she saw the program as a helpful opportunity to provide her with medical insight.

“It’s tough sometimes to pick up the medical terminology, so I know this will be an advantage in the future when I study nursing in college and take classes like this,” she shared.



Alumni Spotlight:

Corey Driscoll Dunham

SCSD Schools Attended:

Levy Middle School ('97) and Nottingham High School ('01) – between me and my siblings, we had someone at Nottingham every single year from 1989 to 2004.

College and Major(s): St. John Fisher University (Bachelor of Arts – English/Political Science), Rockefeller College at University at Albany (Masters in Public Administration)

Career Path: I am the Chief Operating Officer for the City of Syracuse, so I oversee departments including Public Works, Water, Engineering and Parks. I’ve been in this role for six years, but my career has largely been dedicated to public service with previous positions with the City as well as state and federal levels of government. I have also had positions in government and community relations at Syracuse and Cornell Universities.

The coolest thing about my job is... that I get to spend my every day at work as part of a team whose sole purpose is to try and

improve the lives of the people living in the city we all live in and love. I grew up here in the city, and aside from college and graduate school, I’ve lived here my entire life. I can think of no better way to give back to this community that has given me so much than working every day to make residents’ lives a little bit easier.

The most valuable thing I learned in school is... that once you’ve identified a problem, if you’re not part of the solution, then you’re part of the problem. You need to be the one to make change happen and not wait for someone else. It’s true that many of our problems are complex and can’t be solved by one person – but what we can commit to is to do what we can, with what we have, where we are.



ITC Students Are Stepping Out to Show Art is Everywhere

Sophomore **Tellease Frazier** made a Hunter x Hunter manga design. **Aaliyah Nickens** made a design centered around apparel brand Bape and its trademark monkey. Junior **Amrell Bender** designed a chronology of The Weeknd's albums. Senior **Aleda Guerrero** featured Disney Cars animated star Lightning McQueen and his catchphrase 'Kachow!'



Thanks to a grant provided by the SCSD Educational Foundation, students in ITC Studio Art Teacher **Laurie Alfieri's**

classes (and the school's Art Club) had the opportunity to design a pair of canvas shoes – to create, keep, and show off!

The grant provided about 125 pairs of shoes, as well as an assortment of acrylic paints, paint pens, waterproof sealer, and more. At the last minute, Ms. Alfieri added a request for some white trucker hats, which some students themed to match their shoes.

Faris Khan, a sophomore in his school's Automotive Technology CTE program, said this project helped spark an idea for his future career.

“I've been doing art since first grade,” he shared. “I'd like to be a mechanic... but this made me think about how I'd really like to try car wraps, car spray painting, things like that to show my artistic ability.”



Henninger Library Becomes Creative Escape with Mysteries to Solve and Journals to Make

A pair of sisters faced identity theft. A maid killed her employer to fund her child support. What initially looked like two unrelated suicides started looking a lot like murder. And it was **Henninger** students who tracked down the culprits for all three!

Thanks to two grants funded by the SCSD Educational Foundation, there are two new initiatives in the Henninger



High School Library this year. Intended to help foster community in the library and get students off their devices, Librarian Assistant **Kelaiah Wolf** created both a self-directed mystery “game” and a journaling space.

Through the mystery series, students are encouraged to stop in to the library during a free period or lunch break. They're given a letter as a starting point, and must identify clues to lead them through the library, finding a disguised safe, decoding Morse code, reading documents created in invisible ink, solving puzzle boxes, and more.

“We try to take the small pieces of evidence and use those to figure out the full story,” Henninger junior **Charlie Armstead** said. “I like the puzzles and seeing how everything comes together in the end. I didn't really come to the library until we started doing trivia, and then I got hooked on the mysteries... it's so fun!”

For students who may not have a knack for solving murders, the library team also developed a journaling space. Complete with blank journals and an assortment of decorating materials like maps, books and magazines for collaging, stickers, and more, students are welcome to cozy up and get creative.



To learn more about the grant projects funded by the SCSD Educational Foundation this year, visit scsdfoundation.com.



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MISSION

To build, support and sustain school communities that provide all students with a high-quality education that prepares them to graduate as responsible, active citizens ready for success in college and careers and prepared to compete in a global economy.

VISION

To prepare and inspire all of our students to innovate locally and contribute globally.

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The Syracuse City School District hereby advises students, parents, employees and the general public that it is committed to providing equal access to all categories of employment, programs and educational opportunities, including career and technical education opportunities, regardless of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, Native American ancestry/ethnicity, creed or religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, age, gender identity or expression, disability or any other legally protected category under federal, state or local law.

Inquiries regarding the District's non-discrimination policies should be directed to:

Civil Rights Compliance Officer
Syracuse City School District
725 Harrison Street • Syracuse, NY 13210
(315) 435-4131
Email: CivilRightsCompliance@scsd.us



>> Share your questions, comments or concerns 24/7 using the Let's Talk tool at www.syracusecityschools.com



Say Yes Scholar Spotlight: Audrey Rosenthal

Audrey Rosenthal, a 2019 alumna of Henninger High School, epitomizes the transformative power of Say Yes Syracuse. Graduating from SUNY Cortland in 2023 with a major in history and a minor in Africana studies, she's now pursuing a master's degree at NYU in social studies secondary education, expecting to graduate in 2024. Audrey aims to teach at SCSD and pursue a Ph.D. in Africana studies, urban education, or cultural foundations of education. Say Yes Syracuse played a crucial role in her journey by offering financial support that enabled her to attend college without burdening her family, and by connecting her to valuable resources like SUPA classes and SAT prep courses. Audrey advises students to embrace mistakes and lifelong learning and take advantage of what Say Yes has to offer. She thanks Say Yes for helping her attend college and achieve her goals. Her story underscores the profound impact of higher education on local students' lives.



Important Say Yes Reminders for Seniors:

1. Now is the time to complete the financial aid process and check all deadlines.
2. Find your dream school and apply from the list of Say Yes college partners at sayyessyracuse.org.
3. Your Say Yes online application must be submitted no later than July 1.
4. Once you have decided on a school, remember to re-log into your application to indicate the college you will be attending.

Learn more and sign up for the Say Yes newsletter at SayYesSyracuse.org