

Rondout Valley High School Newsletter

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER

2009

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Welcome to the 2009-2010 school year! This year brings a lot of change. We have a dynamic new superintendent, Rosario Agostaro. We also have a new assistant principal, Charles Tadduni, though as a former English teacher, he is not new to our school. We also have several new faculty members at the high school (see below).

I am new (sort of) to the school as well. While this is my first year as the high school principal, I grew up in Stone Ridge and attended Rondout Valley schools for most of my early years. After years of working and traveling in many parts of the country, it is great to be back at Rondout Valley. It has been fun getting reacquainted with old friends (some of whom now have children in the high school) and making new ones. Thank you all so much for making me feel welcome.

Perhaps the most noticeable change this year is the construction project. If you have visited the school recently, you have seen our new "urban chic" or "loft look" in the 300 wing and main hallway. Please know that your children have adapted wonderfully to the changes brought by the construction project. In addition, our faculty and

staff have been terrific throughout this process and are committed to keeping the focus on student learning. A special thanks needs to go out to our custodians who have worked tirelessly this summer and fall to ensure that the school is clean and safe for our students. The challenges of the construction project are temporary, while the benefits will be tremendous and long lasting. We look forward to the renovated school as well as a new science and music wing. We will begin to reap the advantages of the project when the renovated 400 wing opens mid-year. For more information on the project, go to the district website (<http://www.rondout.k12.ny.us>) and click on "Capital Project News."

Another change we are seeking to implement this year is improving communication. To that end, you may now find our daily

announcements posted on the high school website (<http://rondoutvhs.sharpschool.com>). Just click on the "News" icon. This newsletter is another means of communicating to members of our extended school community. Freshmen parents can also gain access to the "parent portal" (part of our student data managements system) where you can check your child's grades and attendance. For more information on this feature contact Dr. Timothy Wade at extension 4863. The School Improvement Team (S.I.T.), faculty, and staff will also be working to create a comprehensive high school calendar. The idea is to create one calendar accessible to parents, students, and faculty, which lists the time, date, and location of every high school event (clubs, sports, detention, field trips, etc.). It may take a while, but we are going to get there.

Thanks again for your support! You and your children are fortunate to have a great faculty and staff and an ever improving school facility. We look forward to a great year and hope you enjoy the newsletter. **Andrew Davenport Principal**

New Staff and Staff with new positions:

Carlos Perez, new physical therapist

Megan Miller, new Crisis Counselor for Holly Miller

Holly Miller, new junior class counselor

Tiffany Ivino, new math teacher for Flannery Denny

Jamie Kellogg, Special Education teacher 1st semester for Angela Longway

Ligeia Mondugno and **Glenn Dannaham** return as paraprofessionals

Lisa Van Orden, paraprofessional from Kerhonkson

Christine Berg will be teaching French in place of Robin Levy

Eric Johansen, Special Education teacher for Lauren Willingham

... Continued "New Staff"

Pat Salovich returns as attendance clerk with new full time status

Delores Pitcock will be a substitute for Charles

Tadduni in the English Department

- **Rondout Valley Families:** *If you or anyone you know is having a hard time during this economic climate and need help with food, clothing or hygienic items, we would like to offer our help. Information will be kept confidential. Please contact Marian Stafford Zajac at ext. 4242 or Megan Miller at ext. 4157. If transportation is a problem we can deliver these supplies to community members in need.*

Back from Across the Pond

Special Congratulations to Emma Hoffman !!!

Emma, a 17 year-old senior, was in Bristol, England for the annual meeting of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology. She was not there as a mere observer. Emma, who researched tooth enamel of the raptor family (yes, dinosaur tooth enamel) submitted an abstract of her research to S.V.P. and was invited to present her research to more than 1,000 paleontologists! Emma has been working with a mentor scientist from the American Museum of Natural History for the last two

years who encouraged her to submit her work. A high school student presenting at this annual convention of scientist is remarkable and the entire Rondout Family is extremely proud of Emma's achievements. Kudos also goes to Elissa Jury for working closely with and encouraging Emma. Emma's story was even chronicled in *The London Times!* See the district website for the full article.

Congratulations to:

- **Maggie Whalen**, who was named a Commended Student in the 2010 National

Merit Scholarship Program. Maggie placed among the top five percent of more than one million students who entered the 2010 competition by taking the 2008 PSAT National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Great job Maggie!

- **Corinne Niekrewicz's** artwork has been selected to be part of the 2009-2010 Ulster BOCES Calendar. Way to go Corinne!

Art and Music News

Art News: Introduction to Art students in Mr. Hutcheon's classes completed an extraordinary art project at the end of last year. The students explored myths from different cultures then they wrote their own myths. After, they created incredible paper mache masks based on their stories. These myths and masks are currently displayed in the main high school showcases. They are wonderfully unique and powerful. They make a strong connection to our shared cultural human heritage. Please stop by and take

a look— you will not be disappointed.

Music News: Emma Hoffman, alto and Jared Decker, tenor, who have been accepted to the All-State Mixed chorus. They earned this honor by receiving scores of A+ on their NYSSMA solos last Spring. Additionally, Gwennyth Epstein has qualified as an alternate on saxophone for the All-State Band. They will attend the NYSSMA conference in Rochester, NY on December 3-6. We congratulate them and wish them well.

The concert Band has been invited to perform as a part of the "Walkway Over The Hudson" dedication ceremony on **October 3rd** in Poughkeepsie.

The Rondout Valley Music Boosters will be holding their 2nd annual golf tournament on **October 17th at Stone Dock Golf Course in High Falls**. The proceeds go to provide opportunities for music students not included in the budget. The cost is \$90 and forms can be obtained through the music department.

RVHS News

Newcomers Uplifted is a program at the high school that provides ongoing support to freshman students.

Their annual field trip to Tongore Park was a great success. The freshman participated in team building activities with upper-class members and faculty as a way of becoming orientated with the high school.

Special thanks to Franny Hertz, Joe Reeder and all the chaperones, students and parents who contributed to a wonderful day and made the pot-luck feast one to be remembered.

Sophomore Project Learning took place on 9/30. This is a great event that started last year, where sophomores are out in the community for the entire day volunteering their time and energy in a variety of settings including all of the elementary schools, The Culinarians' Home, Mohonk Preserve and Mountain House, The DEP site in Olivebridge, as well as the high school court yard. Special thanks to Allison Abbruzzi, Steve Gilman, Franny Hertz, Mary Schrieber, Marian Zajac, Meg Maisch, and Kristine Barnes and all the chaperones for all their efforts.

The RVHS Diversity Club, Synthesis, and the AIDS Awareness Club invite you to be part of a wonderful event. RVHS students and staff will be taking part in the **Hudson Valley AIDS Walk on Saturday October 17th(9am-1pm) at Waryas Park in Poughkeepsie** to benefit ARCS (AIDS Related Community Service) ARCS is an organization dedicated to not only providing outreach services to Hudson Valley residents, but also to offer HIV/AIDS prevention education to individuals, organizations and schools. Contact Chris Wynkoop x 4203 for more information.

Mark Your Calendar

- **October 3rd** Concert Band "Walkway Over the Hudson"
- **October 8th and 9th** Senior Portrait retakes at the District Office
- **October 9th** End of the 5 Week Grading Period
- **October 9th and 10th** Homecoming Weekend (see schedule below)
- **October 12th** Columbus Day—School Closed
- **October 17th** PSAT Exam starts at 7:45 in the High School
- **October 17th RV Music Booster's** Annual Golf Tournament at Stone Dock Golf course
- **October 17th** Hudson Valley AIDS Walk in Poughkeepsie
- **October 19th and 20th** Peer Mediation Training. This is an excellent preventative program that trains students to become mediators for their peers. Contact Anna Brudvig or Megan Miller in guidance for more information
- **October 28th, 29th and 30th** PAVE (Peer mediators Alternatives to Violence for Everyone) is a violence prevention/community building program open to all grade levels. Contact A. Brudvig or M. Miller for more information.

MOAS News

The Model Organization of American States Club at Rondout, in it's 24th consecutive year, is representing the U.S.A., Antigua and Barbuda at the

28th annual MOAS in Washington, D.C. MOAS is a program of the Department of International Affairs designed to promote democracy among the youth of the Organization of American States in the Western Hemisphere by familiarizing students, faculty and academic institutions of the Americas with the work of the OAS and it's Member States. Rondout's participation in MOAS is long and storied including having the Model President this year, Phoenix Trent. The last Model president from Rondout was Dr. Christopher Shaw, PhD of Maryland, class of 1997. Being chosen to represent the United states is traditionally an honor at the MOAS and is typically reserved for the strongest participating schools. For more information on MOAS visit www.moas.oas.org/English/index.html

Health News

Physicals for 10th grade students done by their own physicians are due in the Health Office by the end of October. If your appointment is scheduled for later in the year, please let Mrs. Van Sickel, the high school nurse, know the date.

Parents and Guardians: If your child is ill with symptoms such as fever, coughing, respiratory distress, muscle aches, or headaches they *should be kept*

at home until they are symptom free. This will limit the spread of viruses. Please encourage your child to practice good hand washing techniques; this is an excellent way to prevent spreading germs.

Please review the addition hand-out that was previously sent home to you. Thank you.

The Student Congress Fall Blood Drive is Friday, November 6 at the high school from 8am to 1:30 pm in the auditorium. Students 16 years or older may donate (with an appointment) and must have picture ID showing their birthdate. Staff and community members do not need an appointment. Contact Connie Dill at x 4225 for further information.

Homecoming 2009: October 9th and 10th

- **Spirit Week** starts on October 5th and runs to October 9th, which will culminate in the gym with our annual Homecoming Pep Rally. Students are encouraged to dress-to-impress. See the high school web site for all the details.
- **The Pep Rally** will be held on Friday Oct. 9th followed by the **JV Football Game** vs. Wallkill @ 4pm, free of charge to everyone.
- **A Spaghetti Dinner** will take place in the high school cafeteria from 4:00 to 6:30 after the game to benefit the senior class. Cost is \$5 for students and adults, \$4 for senior citizens, children 2 and under are free.
- **The Homecoming Dance** will be in the cafeteria 10/10 from 7:30-10:00. Cost is \$5. Rondout Valley High School Students Only.
- **Please join us for our Homecoming Game on Saturday, October 10th** Festivities will start at 1:30 with an official recognition of all the fall varsity athletic teams on the high school soccer field fol-

the Varsity Soccer Team taking on Pine Plains at 2:00 pm. Come support our varsity boys soccer team as they continue their quest to be league champions!

Bring the whole family as:

The Booster Club will be selling food and beverages.

The Class of 2011 will set up their 'Pumpkin Patch' where you can purchase pumpkins and snacks.

The Student Congress will be selling Rondout Valley gear.