



Ceremonies honor student achievements

Wednesday ceremonies at Poughkeepsie High School's gym honored students for their academic, community and athletic achievements. On this festive day, the National Honor Society inducted 56 members during an afternoon event. That evening, PHS hosted its annual Scholarships and Awards ceremony.

For Principal Kelleyann Royce-Giron the ceremonies brought joy and tears.

"The NHS ceremony was the climax of a lot of work I physically saw throughout the year - including the hours of community service the young people put in," Royce-Giron said. "I'm so proud of how they represented themselves and Poughkeepsie High School. NHS inductees adhere to the values of scholarship, service, leadership and character.

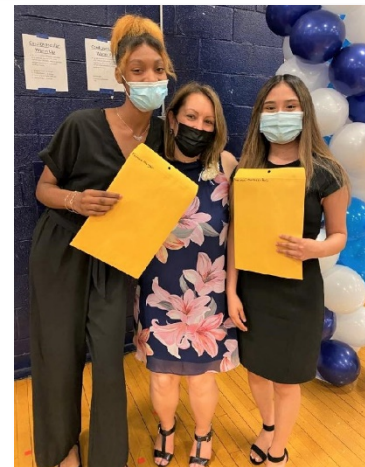
"As I heard the officers speak to these pillars I was in a space of reflection on how they fulfill them but also on my work and how these inductees will be role models of that work," Royce-Giron said. During the Scholarship and Awards Ceremony, 103 awards and 33 scholarships were handed out.

"For me, especially this past year, I could give an award to everyone. They all get the resilience award," Royce-Giron said, adding that students went through the challenges of the school year during a pandemic and "came out stronger for it on the other side." Awards and scholarships were given for honor graduates (those with a 90 or higher GPA), Service, English, Social Studies, Math, Science, Art, Music, academics and 10 from the Poughkeepsie Public School Teachers' Association.

It should be noted that there were 13 more NHS inductees and 15 more awards given out this year vs. 2020.



Above, the National Honor Society inducted 56 PHS students during a candle lighting ceremony. At right, students Tyonna Morgan and Dayaneri Martinez-Ruiz pose for a photo with Principal Kelleyann Royce-Giron (center) after the awards night. Morgan received a Universal Medical Resource scholarship of \$750. Martinez-Ruiz received scholarships totaling \$5,250 and earned an Honor Graduate award.



Close-up of some eels found in the net.

'Eelibration' recognizes student volunteers

Throughout April and May, 18 Poughkeepsie High School students made their way to Fallkill Creek by the Children's Museum, located on the waterfront of the City of Poughkeepsie, to help count eels as part of a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation project.

Each day, a different group of students were assigned to check the nets set up at the location. After being taught what to do initially, students excitedly would grab their gear from storage, put on waders and harvest the eels from a specially designed net, teacher Mark Angevine said.

As part of the project, students would count the eels and weigh them. They would also measure the air temperature, water temperature and turbidity, he said.

Poughkeepsie is one of 14 net locations monitored as part of the project.

While this is an extra-curricular activity, there are lessons built in.

"I emphasize ecology with migration, predator/prey relationships, the environmental characteristics that

favor eel migration,” said Angevine, who teaches living environment at Poughkeepsie High School. Other PHS teachers also volunteer and incorporate various learning opportunities into their interactions with students. “What I’m most proud of is that we take everyone,” he said, adding that it also changes the dynamic. “This takes away the authoritarian teacher-student relationship and they see teachers in a different light.”



Dr. Rosser and students Cheri and Cynthia Armstrong retrieve eels from the net.

Nadia Morales has been involved in the project for a couple of years.

“It’s very therapeutic. People get caught up with life but you go into the river and counting eels is very calming,” Morales said. One thing she remembered from the program is a woman teaching them about plants in rocks that grow above and below the water so they get air and water.

Morales said she preferred going into the water and taking the eels from the net because it “felt more involved.”

On the last day, Angevine gives out T-shirts, and Iron Eel Awards for the greatest number of hours volunteered. Students receive a certificate from the DEC and also take a survey about what they learned.

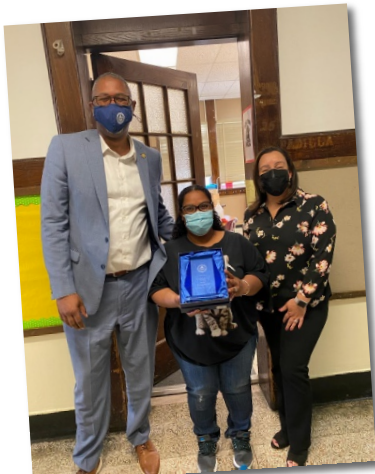
This year’s Iron Eel winners were: Brandon Cao with nine hours while Cheri Armstrong, Cynthia Armstrong, Nadia Morales and Isaias Bautista-Bautista all



NYS DEC’s Chris Bowser, PHS Principal Kelleyann Royce-Giron and students Brandon Cao and Zain Khan work at the site.

had seven hours.

District’s Exemplary Educators receive awards



At left, Superintendent Eric Jay Rosser with honoree Rhonda Nelson and Morse Interim Principal Samantha Mitchell; center, with Director of Special Projects Kristina Giangreco; at right, with Clinton Nurse Alyssa O’Donnell and Principal Dr. David Scott.

Superintendent Dr. Eric Jay Rosser and Director of Special Projects Kristina Giangreco surprised the district’s Exemplary Educators finalists this week, presenting them with awards.

In April, Rhonda Nelson, Alyssa O’Donnell and Giangreco herself were announced as finalists from a group of 51 individuals who were nominated for making a difference in the lives of students. All of the people nominated received certificates and a specially crafted Exemplary Educators lapel pin.

Rosser delivered the award to Nelson at Morse Elementary School where she is a fourth grade teacher. Then, he headed over to Clinton Elementary School to visit O’Donnell, the school nurse.

“While all of the individuals nominated stood out among their peers for the work they do day in and day out, these three people stood just a little bit higher. We wanted them to know how much we appreciate them and give them a little something they can look at with pride, knowing they are impacting lives,” Rosser said.