

SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEF

Together, We are the Champions for Children in Poughkeepsie City School District

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Caravan surprises Clinton Cougars moving up

A Cougar Caravan surprised Clinton Elementary School fifth graders earlier this month, honoring their achievements as they prepare to move on to Poughkeepsie Middle School.

Principal David Scott and Assistant Principal Samantha Mitchell were joined in the caravan by staff, all of whom drove through the City of Poughkeepsie with decorated vehicles, honking horns and stopping at each child's home to give them their certificates. Members of the Poughkeepsie Police Department brought up the rear of the caravan to keep everyone safe. "It was a wonderful opportunity to see our students before they embark onto the next leg of their educational journey," Assistant Principal Mitchell said.

Students appreciated the chance to see staff again, too. Some came out of their homes onto the sidewalk to chat with staff, give them a hug and get their certificate. Some even took time to pose for a photo. Fifth grade teachers Ms. Josephs-Clarke and Ms. Brown along with school secretary Audrey Mills helped plan the event with Principal Scott.



Principal David Scott and staff members pose with a student.



A close-up of some decorations.

Typically, the certificates are given out during a big end-of-year ceremony, Principal Scott said. Given the complexity of COVID-19 the school was going to initially mail the certificates but decided to hand deliver them to each student to express how much the school wanted this special moment to be remembered by students.

"Mrs. Josephs-Clarke said that teachers may want to go along and it snowballed," he said.

"The kids had a fantastic time, they loved it, the community loved it and pretty much the entire staff came out."

Virtual field trip shares area history

About a week ago, Lelia Craigg took Morse Elementary School students on a [field trip to Upper Landing Park](#) via a video posted on Facebook.

"The Real History at Poughkeepsie Landing" featured Mrs. Craigg as the guide and narrator, taking students inside to see the sights and learn about Dutchess County history and relating it to current events. As she and Teacher Assistant Carol Melton, who produced the video, traversed the land bridge, she stopped to talk about how the Fall Kill Creek is an inlet that feeds the Hudson River and how it used to be much stronger.

The virtual tour continues with Mrs. Craigg walking over to a series of plaques mounted on the wall, telling the history of the area.



Teacher Lelia Craigg talks to students about the history of Upper Landing Park and Poughkeepsie.

Did you know that the first deed for the parcel of land the park sits on predates Dutchess County? It's true, it was signed May 5, 1683

Mrs. Craigg relates how, according to the plaque, it was signed over by a Native American, Massany, to two Dutch settlers - Pieter Lansingh and Jan Smeedes, for free without the ability to claim anything. She tells students that back then, if someone was illiterate, their signature would simply be an "X." Massany's signature on the deed was an "X." The video then gives students a quick overview of the rest of the history, showing details on each of the plaques. Mrs. Craigg ends by encouraging students to come to the park with their families during the summer to read the history. She tied the history of the park and how it came to be to the suppression of indigenous people that happens the world over.

"It ties into American history and shows the pattern of what has happened," she said in an interview for this article. Melton said she scheduled two viewings with students in Google Classroom so they could watch it together and discuss the video. Mrs. Craigg spoke individually with parents and students in online meetings. "Student response was pretty positive. Kids were very curious. Many parents didn't know about Upper Landing Park," Mrs. Craigg said.

Once the video was recorded, Mrs. Melton said it took her about a day to edit and do the animations. As a newcomer to Poughkeepsie, I learned several new things from watching this very informative virtual field trip. Thank you, Mrs. Craigg and Mrs. Melton for finding a way to use technology to showcase our region's rich history and making a bridge to the past for our students.

My visit to the Poughkeepsie Public Library District



Monday, June 22, 2020, I finally was able to take full advantage of an invitation that Tom Lawrence, library director, had extended to me to visit the library and see firsthand this community asset. Prior to my tour of the facility, Mr. Lawrence and I discussed ways that we can enhance the library's and school district's partnership to expand opportunity and access to literary resources to PCSD students and families. I learned about the library's effort to engage the community in several family enriching activities, the spaces in the library that are designated for youth, and some history of the library.

After conversing with Mr. Lawrence and touring the facility, I became more enthralled with this community gem. As a youngster, I spent a lot of time in Cincinnati Public Libraries getting lost in my own imagination from the wonderful children books. Through my own experience, I can appreciate all that the Poughkeepsie Public Library District is doing and creating for PCSD students and residents. Kudos to Mr. Lawrence and his leadership team for all that you do. Learn of the [Summer 2020 events at the library here](#).

Teacher saves life of Newburgh neighbor

Julie Hayen impacts the lives of Poughkeepsie City School District eighth graders regularly as a special education teacher. Last week, she saved the life of a neighbor, thanks to training she received in the district a year ago.

Ms. Hayen said her Newburgh neighbor called, asking her to come over with her Narcan to help her brother who wasn't breathing because he had possibly overdosed. As she ran down the street to home, she reviewed the training in her mind. "I'm taking the gloves out, putting on my mask and reviewing the video - psyching myself up," she said.

Each kit contains two doses, she said, adding that in training they tell you to call 911, administer the first dose and then step back as the person could go into immediate withdrawal.

He let out a rattling breath, she said.

After waiting several minutes as trained, she gave the second dose.

"He gave a couple more rattling breaths and then sat up," Ms. Hayen said, adding that she began asking him questions and telling him to take deep breaths as the 911 dispatcher was instructing her to do.

Finally paramedics arrived. Ms. Hayen became emotional when asked how this incident affected her.

"I received the training but I never thought that I'd use it. I was glad I had it. As a teacher, you are not a nurse, a doctor or a paramedic ... to save another human being is utterly profound."

The training was offered as part of a superintendent's conference day, where the central focus was on teacher wellness and self-care. "My TA and another TA called us over to where they were and said, 'You need to learn this,' so we did." If given the chance, Ms. Hayen said she'd gladly take additional medical-type training.

"If they offered CPR, basic first aid, defibrillator training, I would take it all," she said, adding, "As a teacher you're in the classroom with children, you want to do anything you can."

We are proud of your actions, Julie, and this is just another example of how PCSD staff step into action to serve their students and the communities they live in. PCSD cherishes you.

Multiple news outlets, including the [Poughkeepsie Journal](#) and [MidHudsonNews](#), wrote articles about Ms. Hayen's efforts.

