Partnership brings vaccine clinic to PHS Saturday

Poughkeepsie High School is hosting a COVID-19 vaccination clinic Saturday, April 17, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in conjunction with the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and Community Health and Spackenkill Union Free School District.

Woodstock pharmacist Neal Smoller, from Village Apothecary, has a goal to administer 20,000 COVID-19 shots through independent clinics in the region, most of them in Ulster County. But, he reached out to the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and Community Health about doing one in Dutchess County. The county reached out to the Poughkeepsie City School District and due to the proximity of and collegial relationship with the leadership of Spackenkill Union Free School District, an offer was extended for Spackenkill students to participate.

“The goal is to vaccinate 16- and 17-year-olds.” Dr. Timothy Wade, assistant superintendent of administrative services said. But, since parents must be present for a minor to be vaccinated, parents are encouraged to make an appointment and get vaccinated, too.

Information on the clinic is also being sent to every adult in the City of Poughkeepsie and to a list the health department maintains, Wade said. The clinic has 1,140 does of the Pfizer vaccine available. Register for an appointment at https://hipaa.jotform.com/211015448290145. A valid ID (acceptable forms of identification are listed on the form) is required along with an insurance card. However, Wade said people who don’t have insurance are still able to get vaccinated.

An appointment for the second dose is automatically created for May 8.

Elevating Families debuts May 1

The Poughkeepsie City School District is excited to announce that May 1, 2021 will mark the start of what it hopes to be an annual event, the Elevating Families parent and family engagement festival. The event will be held from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. at the Poughkeepsie High School Football Stadium Complex. The Elevating Families festival provides another opportunity for the Poughkeepsie City School District and community partners to support families with the intent of promoting student success. Activities will range from family fun activities, live music, educational resources, performances, free food and refreshments, giveaways, and helpful information.

“Elevating Families’ is the Poughkeepsie City School District’s recognition that all PCSD parents and families should be celebrated for all that they do to support their child’s success. We are ecstatic that the district and community partners are coming together to provide multiple activities for PCSD families” said, Ms. Natasha Cherry, interim executive director of Community Schools.

Community partners interested in tabling at the festival should contact Ms. Cherry at 845-451-4900 ext. 0779 or ncherry@poughkeepsieschools.org.

Families interested in participating should contact:
- Talent Davis, family advocate – 845-705-6512
- Lorraine Boughton, bilingual family advocate – 845-264-0794
- Christina Peterson, family advocate – 845-705-8699
Bowling helps boost academics

Bowling coaches Richard VanScoyk and Diane Moore are proud of their teams. Both the boys and girls teams received the Scholar Athlete Team Award - meaning that the team’s average GPA for 75 percent of its roster was at or better than 90 percent.

The coaches have high standards for team members.

“We follow-up regularly with them and their teachers,” VanScoyk said. “We refer them to our Academic Support Center, which is open to all students for help.”

VanScoyk runs the math department’s Academic Support Center at Poughkeepsie High School, which is open to all students for help. “For bowlers, they can come in and work on any subject,” he said. If VanScoyk or Diane Moore, the girls coach, see a student struggling in classes, they request that the student come into the center for help.

“They want to bowl so they want to get good grades so it is a big motivation for them,” Moore said.

Junior Julianna Powers is one student who said bowling has helped improve her academics.

“When you bowl, you learn how to process your steps and Mr. V is there for us if we need help with academics, he does a good job because he explains it and makes sure that you understand the concept,” Powers said. She has been on the team since it started three years ago.

“Bowling started because we had very few winter sports and it was something many students in the P.E. classes talked about,” VanScoyk said. “The students enjoy it and have a lot of fun. They bring a lot of energy to it and they’re proud of what they do.”

Aside from learning to bowl and improve her game, Powers said being part of the team has enabled her to make friends with teammates and help them along the way.

Powers said she plans to continue bowling in her senior year.

“They support us academically and socially. It doesn’t just feel like we’re a team - we’re like family,” she said.

This year, the girls placed fourth of seven teams in the section, the boys 7th of eight.

Morse literacy lesson ends with ice cream experiment

Students in Erica McIntosh’s second grade class at Morse Elementary School recently learned all about how ice cream is made AND were able to try making their own in class and at home!

The sweet treat was part of Ag Literacy Week.

Each year, New York Agriculture in the Classroom and Dutchess County 4H team up to bring a different agriculture lesson to students in Dutchess County. The last time they chose dairy was 10 years ago - when the program first launched, said Emma Jenks, 4H educator and club manager in Dutchess.

The program includes a book, videos and a kit for a hands-on activity.

This year’s book was, “Chuck’s Ice Cream Wish: Tales of the Dairy Godmother,” and the kit was, you guessed it, ingredients to make your own ice cream - minus the ice, of course.

McIntosh said that through the book and videos (some of which were done locally by 4H), her class learned about dairy farms and how ice cream is produced from cow to cone.

“The kids were really engaged,” she said.

Normally, someone from 4H would present the program in the classroom and do the hands-on experiment with the kids. However, due to COVID that wasn’t possible. So, McIntosh made arrangements with parents for them to pick up the books and materials before she did the lesson.
The program provided an interdisciplinary lesson where students had to read, analyze, use math and science. When it came time to do the actual experiment, the kids were excited. “They wanted to do more experiments,” McIntosh said, explaining that even after going through the lesson step-by-step the ice cream was more of a liquid than soft serve.

“Some of the kids said, “Maybe I can put it in the freezer overnight.” Student Rose Santiago said, “I watched a video on how ice cream is made from a factory. I learned how to make ice cream in a bag using half/half, vanilla, ice, sugar, and salt. I had to shake the ingredients in a plastic baggie for 2-3 minutes. It was fun. It tasted like vanilla ice cream.”

Fellow student Sincere Thomas learned that the boy who wanted ice cream in the book had to do chores on the dairy farm and follow the steps to make the ice cream. “My favorite part was when I put the small bag in a big baggie and shook it up. It was lots of fun. I used lots of vanilla and it tasted good.”

Thank you to New York Agriculture in the Classroom and Dutchess County 4H for bringing real-life, hands-on learning experiences and literacy programs to our schools.

If you would like to see a video of the book being read in English by a variety of readers or in Spanish by Diana Obregon Corredor, visit ny.agclassroom.org. To see a video about how ice cream goes from cow to cone in Dutchess County, visit https://youtu.be/6j_7XpPa3Qc.

Student voter drive yields 13 new registrations

Poughkeepsie High School student government helped 13 classmates register to vote in New York State last Friday. The group’s registration drive took place virtually from 10:30 a.m. to 1:52 p.m.

President Briceida Reyes said it was slow going at first. “A friend said that even if you help one person, that one person can make a difference and that made me change my perspective,” Reyes said.

Jameel Richardson, a tenth grader, was one student who took advantage of the help offered. “I wanted to register so that when the next election comes around I don’t miss the process,” Richardson said, adding that he felt the presentation and instructions the group prepared were helpful. He heard about it through the morning announcements, but the group also had posters throughout the school and the district shared information on its social media channel and website.

Though Reyes was the sole presenter Friday, she said she could not have done it without the support of the entire student government team who helped research the material, create an instructional PDF and design the poster. Some members who were able to join the session helped answer questions in the chat window and let Reyes know when new people had joined.

“I learned to be more appreciative and I’m just excited something like this came to PHS.” Reyes said.

Thursday ceremony recognizes district staff

Poughkeepsie City School District is honoring our Exemplary Educators Thursday night with a virtual award ceremony, recognizing the 51 nominees and winners from each of the following categories: Teachers, support staff and administrators.

Please join us at 6 p.m. for the event on our YouTube channel.