



## Kindergarten Students Welcome the New Year

Kindergarten students returned to school from break ready to usher in the new year! They each chose a word to represent a focus for them in the year ahead. Students from Mrs. Merritt's class are 'Beary' excited to share their word!



# Cherry Road School

## Holiday Singalong

Fourth grader, Molly Mannion, third grader, Silas Checksfield, and second grader, Hanad Osman rocked some air guitar during the Cherry Road Holiday Singalong on Friday, December 19th. Their enthusiasm filled the room with holiday spirit as the whole school came together to sing "Run Rudolph Run" by Chuck Berry. It was the perfect way to kick off our winter break.



## DrumFIT at Cherry Road

While construction on the Cherry Road gymnasium was being completed, students in Mr. Connelly's PE classes used the conference room to participate in some Cardio Drumming lessons, also known as "DrumFIT." DrumFIT is a high-energy fitness activity that combines cardiovascular exercise, rhythm, and music into a fun, full-body workout. The workouts performed can be found on the "Coach J. Hayes & Coach C. Hayes" YouTube channel. (Pictured are students in Mrs. Vertucci's class)



# Cherry Road School

## SU School Day

Cherry Road students and staff enjoyed an unforgettable building-wide field trip to Syracuse University School Day at the JMA Wireless Dome, celebrating women's basketball in an electric atmosphere. The game drew 10,266 fans, marking the second-highest attendance for a women's basketball game in program history, and the Orange delivered an exciting 106–40 victory.

From the moment they arrived, students were all smiles—each received a pom-pom and joined thousands of others dancing to music, cheering loudly, and showing their school spirit as they supported the women's team. A special thank-you goes out to the CRS staff and parent chaperones whose support, time, and dedication made this memorable experience possible.



# Cherry Road School

## Second Grade STEM

Second graders at Cherry Road have had the opportunity to do some learning with Mrs. Geiss by participating in a before school STEM Club. STEM Club is an extracurricular group where students explore Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math through fun, hands-on projects, building skills like problem-solving, creativity, and teamwork. Through help with a grant from the Westhill Educational Foundation, Mrs. Geiss has been able to buy unconventional materials and has challenged the students to design a turkey trap, build a pool noodle tower and a skyscraper and construct a marble maze.



# Cherry Road School

## Second Grade STEM



# Onondaga Hill Middle School

## Spreading Joy! Harmonizers and Chorus Students Hit the Road!

The halls (and streets!) were alive with the sound of music this December as our talented singers brought holiday cheer to the entire Westhill community. From neighborhood strolls to school-to-school visits, our students truly hit a high note!

### *A Season of Song*

Our singers stayed busy with a packed schedule of festive performances:

- **The Harmonizers Take the Lead:** On Saturday, December 13th, our select choir, the Harmonizers, kicked off the season by caroling to homes around the Cherry Road School area.
- **Heading to the High School:** The 6th grade singers headed to the High School to share their talents with the older students.
- **Elementary Excellence:** On Thursday, December 18th, our 8th grade singers traveled to both Cherry Road and Walberta Park Elementary, inspiring our youngest future singers.
- **Keep the Music Flowing:** On Thursday, December 18th, the music kept flowing when our 5th grade singers performed for some of our OHMS classes!

### *Building Community Connections*

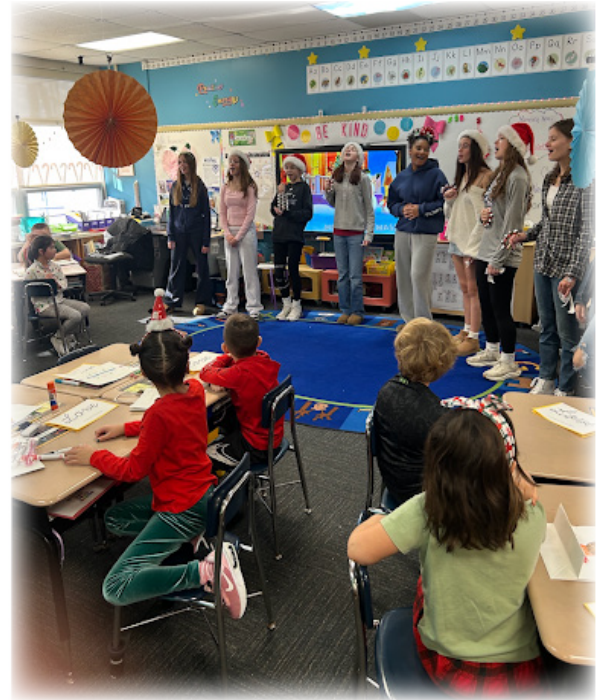
These caroling events are more than just practice—they are a fantastic way for OHMS chorus students to connect with one another and give back to the Westhill community.

**A Note for 7th Grade:** While the 7th grade caroling trip was unfortunately canceled this year, don't worry—we are already planning a full season of caroling for all grades next year!

Fantastic work to all our singers! We also want to extend a huge “Thank You” to everyone who welcomed our carolers with such warmth, smiles, and excitement. We can't wait to do it all again next year.

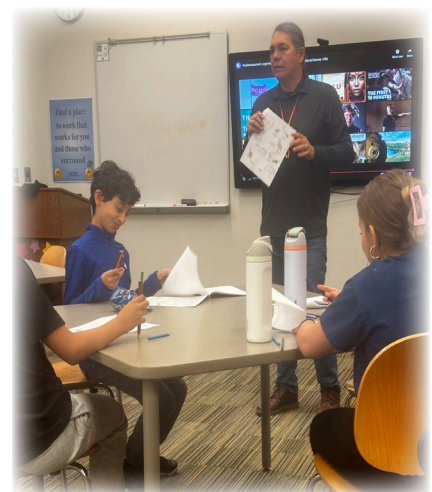


# Onondaga Hill Middle School



## IDEAS Club

Our 5th graders in IDEAS club stepped outside their comfort zones to explore a complex and important social issue: homelessness. Our goal was to move past stereotypes and understand the human stories behind the statistics. As a group, we advocated for this community by doing an activity outdoors. In November, our 5th graders dove deep into the rich history and vibrant present of Native American communities. Rather than just looking at the past, students explored how Indigenous cultures continue to shape our world today. Students identified the ancestral lands of the tribes who first lived here. We welcomed our guest speaker, Dehowähda•dih, who shared the importance of oral traditions, teaching us how stories carry laws, history, and values through generations. The focus of our conversation has also been learning about perspective and discrimination. To help students understand that “where you stand determines what you see,” we engaged in several activities. We also had great conversations about Asian American culture. In IDEAS the students have been deeply engaged in a dual celebration, honoring the Native American community while simultaneously exploring the diverse collection of Asian American culture. By studying these two communities side-by-side, students are discovering the common threads of resilience, family importance, and the deep connection between land and identity. We also took part in a “chopstick challenge”.



# Onondaga Hill Middle School

## Chess Team

Onondaga Hill Middle School sent a team of fifth, sixth and seventh graders to compete at the Central NY Scholastic Chess Championship that took place on Saturday, November 15th. There was a record breaking turnout of 147 players competing between Kindergarten through 12th grade. In the K-5th grade section, OHMS had a team made up of Nathan Samhammer, Sebastian Henderson, Carson Latone, Charlie O'Neil and Abraham Adegoke. Overall, our team of fifth graders came in 3rd place out of 13 teams competing and were able to add to our growing collection of chess trophies. In the K-12th grade section, OHMS had a team made up of John Samhammer, Matthew Rose, Colton Cassidy and Jackson Tarkowski. Participating in the highly competitive high school section, our middle schoolers placed 7th out of 11 teams and are excited for the chance to play in the next tournament.



## Celebrations Tree

OHMS students decorated our Celebrations Tree in the main office. Thank you to Officer Croft for 3D printing ornaments - both Wolf Pack and Menorahs! Thank you to Mrs. DeLine for decorating the tree with wolves dressed in Holiday spirit!



## Food Drive

November is a time when OHMS focuses on community, generosity, and gratitude. In the spirit of giving, the OHMS Counseling Department organized their annual Canned Food Drive the week before Thanksgiving. With the help of our Social Workers, items this year were donated to the St. Charles Food Pantry. St. Charles Food Pantry serves our very own Westhill community. Homerooms competed to bring in the most food items over a period of five days. The energy, enthusiasm, and generosity displayed by our OHMS students was amazing! Mrs. Calkin's homeroom brought in the most food items for the week and was treated to a pizza and movie before break. Overall, OHMS donated over 3,000 items! We are very proud of our students!



# Westhill High School

## DECA Competes

On December 16, 70 DECA members went to Le Moyne to participate in the regional competition. We had 12 students qualify for the state competition that is held in Rochester March 4-6.



## DECA Travels to the Big Apple

On December 5, 45 DECA students went to NYC for the day to visit the Rockwell Capital Management company and REBNY (Real Estate Broker of New York.) We had two wonderful presentations. The attached picture is the group outside of the Rockefeller company.



# Westhill High School

---

## Westhill Bands Alumni Welcome Back Rehearsal 2025!

On December 18th, the Westhill Bands welcomed back nearly forty Westhill Alumni-Musicians spanning more than forty years of graduations to play Leroy Anderson's Sleigh Ride together with our Wind Ensemble Student-Musicians. Westhill Grads from classes of 1983 through 2025 joined us for rehearsal, music-making, sharing, and a fantastic breakfast reception generously hosted by the Westhill Central School District Educational Foundation! There were many pairs and trios of siblings and parents with their children, and many friends who gathered in reunion. The auditorium and band room were full of the sounds of Sleigh Ride, story-telling, and laughter! You can find media from the rehearsal on the Westhill Instrumental Music Department Facebook Page or on IG @westhill\_bands

If you're a Band Alumni who didn't play with us this year but who would like to join in the future, please reach out to Ms. Althen, [ealthen@westhillschools.org](mailto:ealthen@westhillschools.org), with your email address and interest; and we will add you to next year's outreach!



# Westhill High School

---

## Modern Band Performs at NYS Conference All-State

Congratulations to our very own Westhill Music Department All-State Rockstar, Junior, Isabella Destito!

In early December, Bella sang vocals as part of the first-ever New York State All-State Modern Band in the Modern Band Showcase at the NYSSMA Winter Conference. This year's All-State Modern Band was led by ground-breaking NYS Music Educators and Modern Band advocates and champions: Kris Gilbert, Director, and Lindsey Williams, Manager. This was a historic moment in New York State Music Education, and Bella Destito was center stage of the movement and moment!

Bella and the All-State Modern Band rocked out (with an incredible audience singing, dancing, and cheering along!) to:  
Holding Out for a Hero - Bonnie Tyler  
Ain't it Fun - Paramour  
Smooth - Santana  
Edge of Seventeen - Stevie Nicks  
Signed, Sealed, Delivered - Stevie Wonder  
Uptown Funk - Bruno Mars

Bella is an amazing leader in the Westhill Music Department; she is a Tri-M Officer and member of our WHS Choruses, Wind Ensemble, and Modern Band: Clockwork. In the next few months, she will also be representing Westhill in the OCMEA Senior High All-County Chorus at Solvay HS and NYSSMA Area All-State Mixed Chorus at Ithaca College. We are SO proud of your work to make it to All-State, Bella - you are incredible!



# Westhill High School

## November Leaders of the Pack

### **Annie Horning - 9th Grade:**

Annie has been outstanding in class and goes out of her way to make others feel accepted and comfortable. She consistently brings positive energy everywhere she goes. She is willing to work with anyone in class and her kindness makes the Westhill community a better place!

### **Adrien Marceau - 10th Grade:**

Nominated by Mrs. Bower

It is with great enthusiasm that I nominate Adrien for Leader of the Pack! Adrien is an incredibly mature, polite, and dedicated student. He is upbeat and positive each day - with friendly greetings for all. He is an excellent role model for the rest of the Pack!

### **Chris Gilkes - 11th Grade:**

Chris shows exceptional character every day—polite, friendly, and always making others feel valued. His positivity lifts our whole community. Most recently, Chris had knee surgery near the end of his Cross Country Season. Even though he had to miss sectionals, he stayed fully committed to the team, writing thoughtful notes to teammates and cheering them on. Chris's resilience, sportsmanship, and genuine care for others make him a truly deserving Leader of the Pack candidate.

### **Erin Satalin - 12th Grade:**

Erin shows up each day with a great attitude and a genuine enthusiasm that makes our classrooms and community better. She consistently offers to help in any way she can and sets a wonderful example for her peers. She is an absolute pleasure to teach. Keep up the great work Erin!



# Westhill High School

## December Leaders of the Pack

### **Gurtej Dhamoon - 9th Grade:**

Gurtej is a fantastic leader of the pack! He comes to class everyday always willing to go the extra mile, and has an incredible work ethic to go above and beyond to make sure his assignments are completed well. He is a kind, respectful, funny, and thoughtful individual. Way to go Gurtej!

### **Caleb Ross - 10th Grade:**

Caleb is an incredibly friendly student. He participates often in class and is often reflective of his work and constantly trying to improve in class. He is an incredibly conscientious individual. He works well in groups and helps others in class. Keep it up Caleb!

### **Grace Horning - 11th Grade:**

Grace was nominated as Leader of the Pack this month because she consistently makes others feel welcome and included. She is inviting, friendly, and goes out of her way to ensure everyone feels comfortable and valued. Her positive energy helps create a supportive and encouraging classroom environment. We are so proud of you Grace!

### **Braelyn Turner - 12th Grade:**

Braelyn was nominated as Leader of the Pack this month because she consistently sets the standard for what it means to be an ideal student. She is patient, kind, and respectful to everyone around her, and she leads by example in both her actions and attitude. We are proud of the positive impact she has on our classroom and school community. Congratulations Braelyn!



# Westhill High School

## Westhill High School Drama Club Presents This Year's Musical...

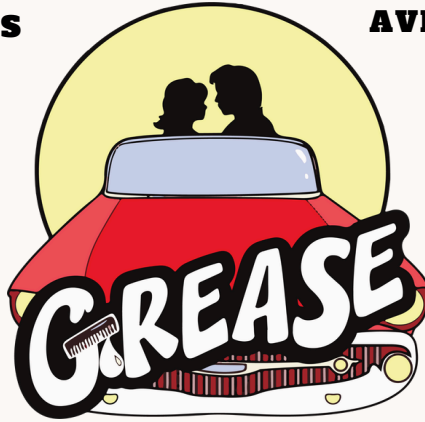
**AIDEN MAINES**  
as Danny

**SOPHIA HOFFMAN**  
as Rizzo

**BURGER PALACE BOYS**  
ROGER  
Christian Cordova (All shows)

**DOODY**  
Mathew Shephard (Th/Sat 2 pm)  
Adam Stotler (Fri/Sat 7 pm)

**SONNY**  
Spencer Marshall (Th/Sat 2 pm)  
Collin Lopez (Fri/Sat 7 pm)



**AVERY WINKLER**  
as Sandy

**NICK PICHOSKE**  
as Kenickie

**PINK LADIES**  
MARTY  
Bella Destito (Th/Sat 2 pm)  
Hazel McNeilly (Fri/Sat 7 pm)

**JAN**  
Grace Faigle (All shows)

**FRENCHY**  
Angelina Centore (Th/Sat 2 pm)  
Elliette Ryan (Fri/Sat 7 pm)

**Patty Simcox**.....Brooke Allen (Th/Sat 2 pm) AND Samantha Colangelo (Fri/Sat 7 pm)  
**Eugene**.....Griffin Jackson (Th/Sat 2 pm) AND Ben Czaplicki (Fri/Sat 7 pm)  
**Teen Angel**.....Trey Tjaden (Th/Sat 2 pm) AND Charlie Soule (Fri/Sat 7 pm)  
**Cha-Cha**.....Molly Ryan (All shows)  
**Miss Lynch**.....Madelyn Soule (Th/Sat 2 pm) AND Josselyn DeJesus (Fri/Sat 7 pm)  
**Vince Fontaine**.....Alex Piel (All shows)  
**Johnny Casino**.....Lucas DeLine (All shows)  
**Radio Voice**.....Aiden Terek (All shows)

### **TICKETS:** **\$16**

All tickets are reserved seating and will go on sale to the public on February 11th! Tickets will sell out fast!

### **GREASE SHOW DATES & TIMES**

**Thurs, February 26<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM**

**Fri, February 27<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM**

**Sat, February 28<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 PM**

**Sat, February 28<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM**

**WHS Auditorium**

Please buy tickets in advance online using the QR code (Ticket sales open Feb 11th)



Grease is a high-energy rock and roll show set at the fictional Rydell High School in 1959, focusing on the summer romance between the greaser Danny Zuko and the "good girl" Sandy Dumbrowski. The musical follows the couple as they navigate peer pressure, high school cliques, and teenage life while their love is tested. Included are a colorful group of characters like the Pink Ladies and Burger Palace Boys, and a nostalgic look at 1950s American youth culture. The show features popular songs like Summer Nights, Greased Lightnin', You're the One That I Want, Hopelessly Devoted to You, We Go Together, Beauty School Dropout, Look at me I'm Sandra Dee, Sandy as well as many other great tunes.

There will be over 100 students involved in the cast/crew/pit band!

This will also be the final production of Joe and Mary Buchmann (Directors/Producers) before they retire.

# Westhill High School

## Westhill Musicians Perform with the Syracuse Youth Wind Symphony at NYSSMA Winter Conference

Congratulations to our Westhill High School Band students who performed with the Syracuse Youth Wind Symphony at the NYSSMA Winter Conference! The SYWS is an incredible group of musicians from all across Central New York and beyond who gather weekly to rehearse and perform exceptional Wind Band repertoire.

The SYWS presented a performance-clinic on Saturday afternoon titled “Building an Ensemble Culture of Joy!” to a fantastic crowd in the Grand Lilac Ballroom at the Rochester Convention Center. The session featured commentary from many SYWS Students and from Manager, Westhill Alumna (Class of 2022) Sofia Benderski, and Directors, Ms. Erin Althen from Westhill High School and Mr. Greg Borsz from West Genesee. The Wind Symphony interwove performances of Flight of the Piasa/Robert Sheldon, Khan/Julie Giroux, Country Club Stomp/JaRod Hall, Lucid Dreams/Adrian B. Sims, and In Living Color/Katahj Copley throughout the clinic presentation. The musicians played beautifully and had the chance to connect with ensemble directors from across New York State about what makes the culture of the Syracuse Youth Wind Symphony so musical, supportive, compassionate, enjoyable, family-like, community-centered, and JOY-filled!

Congrats to our musicians for their part in the phenomenal SYWS performance at NYSSMA!

Jena Wilbur (senior) - Flute and Piccolo  
A'zhawn Weaver (sophomore) - Oboe  
Sofia Savelesky (sophomore) - Bass Clarinet  
Eli Walker (junior) - French Horn  
Clark Durant (freshman) - Tuba  
Jackson Flegel (freshman) - Percussion  
Matthew Henesey (junior) - Percussion  
Ms. Althen - Co-conductor  
Sofia Benderski (class of 2022) - Management Team



# Westhill High School

## From the Page to the Bench: WHS Students Help Design NYS Court Learning Toolkit

Ninth-grade students in Mrs. Starowicz's English classes have been participating in a powerful unit of study exploring the complexities of social and criminal justice. Developed through a collaborative planning partnership between Michelle Coolbeth (Senior Law Librarian, Onondaga Supreme Court Law Library), Jessica Regitano (WHS Librarian), and Mary Ann Murphy and Sarah Starowicz (9th-grade English Teachers), this unit used Bryan Stevenson's *Just Mercy* as a guiding text to move students beyond the classroom and into a unique community-based learning experience.

Bryan Stevenson's *Just Mercy* provides a firsthand account of the American legal system in action. By examining real-world cases, students explore fundamental concepts such as the right to counsel, the appeals process, and the constitutional principles of due process, encouraging a deeper understanding of civic literacy and the judicial branch.

Throughout the unit, students participated in virtual small-group book discussions with judicial and non-judicial court staff from New York State's Fifth Judicial Court in Syracuse. These conversations transformed the reading experience, allowing students to ask thoughtful questions, challenge assumptions, and gain insight from professionals who work daily within the legal system.

Students participated in an immersive courthouse visit at the Onondaga County Courthouse, where learning became tangible and immediate. Students toured the historic building, observed live calendar and arraignment proceedings, and engaged with deputies and court officers who shared insights into their roles in maintaining safety and order. Most meaningfully, students held their final *Just Mercy* discussions on site with their court staff mentors, allowing them to meet in person the court staff they had communicated with virtually throughout the unit. Building on these discussions, students are now beginning a research project in which they explore topics of personal interest related to the criminal justice system, such as sentencing practices, parole, juvenile justice, and the role of law enforcement.

By pairing a rigorous text with authentic community engagement, this unit helped students see that the law is not an abstract concept, but a cornerstone of civic life. The experience challenged students to think critically, listen carefully to different perspectives, and consider their own roles as informed and compassionate citizens.



# Westhill High School & OHMS

## A Heartfelt Thank You

We are incredibly grateful to the legal professionals who dedicated their time and expertise to mentor our students. This experience would not have been possible without the support of:

Hon. James Murphy, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge  
Hon. Deborah Karalunas, Administrative Judge  
Hon. Julie Cerio, Onondaga Family Court Judge  
Hon. Julie Cecile, Onondaga Family Court Judge  
Andrea Ferro, Support Magistrate, Onondaga Family Court  
Eileen Casey, Principal Court Attorney, 5JD Help Center  
Erin Kovalsky, Principal Law Librarian, Onondaga Supreme Court Law Library  
Aaron Wilkinson, Supervising Clerical Asst., Syracuse City Court  
Carly Donnelly, Clerical Asst., Syracuse City Court  
Tammy Alvarez, Secretary to Hon. Limpert (and former criminal justice instructor)  
Michelle Coolbeth, Senior Law Librarian, Onondaga Supreme Court Law Library



## 7/8 Modified Girls' Volleyball

Led by Coach Caputo and Coach Kurro, the 7/8 Modified Girls Volleyball program finished a stellar season with an incredible experience of learning, teamwork, and camaraderie. 7th grade finished with a record of 13-0 and 8th grade finished at 12-1. They also paired 7th and 8th grade girls with "buddies" to develop new friendships. Westhill's varsity team also showed their support for the modified program, proudly wearing their state championship shirts and gold medals! Congratulations on a fantastic season!



# Athletics

## Westhill Boys' Soccer Captures State Title

The Westhill boys' soccer team, led by Coach Tom Etoll, made our community proud by winning the 2025 NYSPHSAA Class B Championship! In the state final, played at Middletown High School on November 15th, the Wolf Pack dominated Lafayette International with a 6–0 victory, the largest margin of victory in a New York "Class B" State final and earning the Westhill soccer program their third state title. The team's impressive postseason performance showcased the team's unselfish play, unity, cohesion, teamwork, skill and determination, bringing home a well-deserved championship and culminating a memorable 2025 season. Congratulations to the players, coaches, and supporters on this fantastic achievement!



## Westhill Volleyball Brings Home State Title

The Westhill girls' volleyball team made history this season by capturing the 2025 NYSPHSAA "Class B" Championship at Harding-Mazzotti Arena in Glens Falls. The Wolf Pack delivered a dominant performance in the state final game, sweeping Section V's Charles G. Finney, to claim the title. This state championship adds to Westhill's proud volleyball tradition. This is the program's third NYSPHSAA title following victories in 2018 and 2019. Congratulations Westhill volleyball players and coaches on bringing the state crown home to Westhill!



# Athletics



## Scarfino Honored by Army

Dominic Scarfino wrapped up his high school football career playing in the 2025 John Arcaro Classic Senior All-Star game. After the game Dominic was awarded the US Army Award of Excellence in recognition of his dedication and leadership on the football field. Congratulations Dominic!



## Sectional Champs in Volleyball & Boys' Soccer



# District News

---

## Doctor, Lawyer... Hall of Fame!

The 1988-89 Westhill High School Girls' Basketball Team was recently inducted into the Greater Syracuse Sports Hall of Fame. This was the first ever athletic team from Westhill High School to win a state championship. They were in amazing company with fellow HOF inductees to include Syracuse University grad and NFL coach Tom Coughline who led the NY Giants to two Superbowl victories; and Syracuse native Frank Riccelli who was a major league pitcher for several professional baseball teams. When in such company, you realize this is an elite group and an elite honor.

Westhill Team members included: Karen Blumer, Sally Dee, Colleen Erwin, Renee Melfi, Amy Russo, Meagan Schlueter, Suzanne Sitnik, Lynn Slosberg, Jen Metz, Lisa Terranova and Coach Mrs. Cindy Moss.

Coach of that championship team, former Westhill teacher Cindy Moss, gave the team presentation that went far beyond describing the athletic prowess of these remarkable women as high school athletes. She focused on the academic and professional achievements of these ten extraordinary women now in their adult lives. This group now includes a medical doctor, four who have earned PH.D.'s, another who has earned a Master's Degree. There is an attorney, three teachers, a school administrator, a college professor, an LPGA golf pro, an author, the physical therapist for the Syracuse, University's women's basketball team, and several who run their own very successful businesses. The lessons learned in athletics – persistence, tenacity, self-discipline, and so much more, no doubt had carry over in their careers. All earned college scholarships for either their academic or athletic achievement. Nine competed on college athletic teams. They boast degrees from: the University of Arizona, Fairfield University, the University of Kentucky, Amherst College, Western New England University of Law, SUNY Binghamton, Nazareth College, SUNY Brockport, University of Scranton, Mansfield University, Johns Hopkins University, The University of Arizona, and Georgia Institute of Technology.

Mrs. Moss went onto achieve her Doctorate from the Curtin Institute of Technology in Perth, Australia. She became the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Curriculum and Instruction Director for the 145,000 student Mecklenburg County School District in Charlotte, North Carolina, and went on to win grants in excess of \$1 million. She has spoken in person on STEM in 48 states and 40 countries, Thailand being her favorite. She has been named one of the top 100 Women in STEM-by-STEM Connector and the US News and World Report.

Perhaps when folks like Tom Coughlin, Frank Riccelli and other inductees consider they are in a group to include the accomplishments of the 1988-89 Westhill Girls' basketball team members, they might realize how exclusive and elite this honor is for them! Westhill High School, and the entire Westhill School District is so proud of the achievements of this extraordinary group, both on and off the court. The team is congratulated on their induction into the Greater Syracuse Sports Hall of Fame, and further congratulated on their academic and professional successes and achievements.



Pictured from the left: Jennifer (Metz) Blossey, Karen (Blumer) Fausnaught, Colleen (Erwin) Colabufo, Renee Melfi, Lisa (Terranova) Roveda, Sally Dee, Amy (Russo) Renna, Meagan (Schlueter) Munger, Suzanne (Sitnik) Skibinski, Lynn (Slosberg) Patterson, Cindy Moss

# District News

---

## Westhill Educational Foundation

The Westhill Educational Foundation is pleased to announce the recipients from the fall 2025 grant cycle. Grants were awarded to support programming throughout all schools in the district, impacting students in grades K-12. Thank you to our community for continuing to support the Foundation and congratulations to all of our awardees! Recipients for fall 2025 are:

### **Hamilton, David Rahme**

In September, a group of WHS students in AP US Government and AP US History had the chance to attend a performance of the touring Broadway production of *Hamilton*. This innovative approach to teaching history gave students an opportunity to learn about the US Founding Fathers in a more engaging and memorable way.

### **Tina Shepherdson Author Visit, Aneisa Linton**

Retired OHMS teacher and children's book author Tina Shepherdson visited Walberta Park School to present to students about apologies. Using her book and character props she met with students in one large school-wide presentation as well as smaller groups.

### **Zoo Field Trip, Melissa Prior**

Fourth Grade students at Cherry Road School visited the Rosamond Gifford Zoo to expand classroom learning in their ELA and Science units. While at the zoo they learned more about animal defense mechanisms that help animals protect themselves against predators.

### **Insights and Inspiration with Megan Freeman, Penny Feeney**

This grant supports a visit from author Megan Freeman that will be taking place in May 2026. Freeman is the author of *Alone*, which was the OHMS summer One School, One Book read. Students will engage in pre-visit activities, such as a 6th grade read aloud, and Spin It to Win It, which gives students an opportunity to win one of the author's books. All students will listen to a presentation by the author, and there will also be opportunities to meet the author during this fun and engaging event.

### **Band Day Concert Composition Project, Liz Buell**

This grant will allow the instrumental music department at OHMS and WHS to bring in local composer, Stephen Moro, to work with music teachers to create an arrangement of a popular tune appropriate to students' skill, range, and experience level and produce a piece of music that will be added to the Westhill Pep Band repertoire. The piece will include multi-level arrangements appropriate for each grade level. Mr. Moro will be invited to speak to each of the bands to discuss the composition process and provide feedback from a composer's point of view.

### **Second Grade Theater Field Trip, Maria Geiss**

In May, second grade students at Cherry Road will have the opportunity to travel to Gifford Family Theater at LeMoyne College to attend "Elephant and Piggie's We are in a Play," based on the book by well known children's author, Mo Willems. Students will compare and contrast the book to the play.

### **Social Worker Community Fund, Colleen Adams**

This grant provides support to the Social Workers' Community Fund which supports students at all schools in the Westhill School District. The purpose of this grant is to provide enrichment opportunities for those who struggle with meeting student's most basic needs and will make a positive impact on the community as a whole.

### **Second Grade STEM Club Supplies, Maria Geiss**

This grant supports the newly launched before school STEM club for second graders at Cherry Road School. The STEM club provides hands-on, creative activities for students to build confidence, increase problem solving and teamwork skills and explore science, technology, engineering and math fields.

### **John Farrell Singalong, Meaghan Stanton**

Local songwriter and musician, John Farrell, will visit both Walberta Park and Cherry Road Schools to lead singalongs with students at both schools. With silly and fun songs that are educational and entertaining, students will benefit from messages of kindness and inclusivity.

### **Tom Knight Puppeteer, Aneisa Linton**

Students at Walberta Park school will enjoy a puppet show by Tom Knight which focuses on bullying prevention. Students will learn how to support each other and how to stand up to bullies.

# District News

---



Have you recently moved?

Did you purchase a new home or sign a new lease?

The Westhill Central School District will need documents from families that moved into the district or live within the district and now have a new address. It is essential to ensure the district has the most updated and accurate information for transportation, record keeping, mailings, and continued communication.

Families must contact the Central Registration Office at 315-426-3440 to update the home address and will need to provide TWO (2) Proofs of Residency from the following list. 1 Primary and 1 Secondary Proof per household.

Primary Proof:	Deed or Mortgage Statement Signed Lease (within 30 days of current date)
Secondary Proof:	Car or Homeowners Insurance Health Insurance Pay Stub Government mail Income Tax (within a year)

Documents and the Change of Address Form can be dropped off **by appointment** in person at the Central Registration Office (District office - 400 Walberta Road) or via email at [registrar@westhillschools.org](mailto:registrar@westhillschools.org) with the subject line Change of Address.

## ***Employment Opportunities:***

**Bus Drivers  
Bus Attendants  
Substitute Bus Drivers  
Substitute Bus Attendants  
Substitute Nurses**

**Applications can be found on our website, [www.westhillschools.org](http://www.westhillschools.org), under the District Tab.**

**Please submit applications to:  
Personnel Office  
Westhill Central School District  
400 Walberta Road  
Syracuse, NY 13219**

# District News

---

## Transportation to Nonpublic Schools

Following the guidelines of Section 3635 of New York State Education Law, the Westhill Central School District is advising the parents of students seeking transportation to a nonpublic school that a written request must be submitted to the Westhill Board of Education by April 1st of the preceding year. New residents may submit their request after the April 1st deadline, but must do so within thirty days after establishing residence in the district and must also submit a residency affidavit. The school board may refuse to grant a late transportation request where additional expenses and new transportation arrangements would be necessary. A formal transportation request form may be received directly from the nonpublic school at the time of enrollment and must be completed and received at the Westhill Central School District prior to April 1, 2025. The transportation request form and residency affidavit may be found on the Westhill CSD website under Transportation.

On days in which public schools are scheduled to be closed, in accordance with the Westhill School District calendar, the district is not obligated to transport to the nonpublic schools. Under no circumstances may transportation be provided on legal holidays or Saturdays.

## Notice of Annual Inspections

Notice is hereby given that the annual inspection for 2025-2026 of the school buildings, concession stand, and bus garage of the Westhill Central School District for fire hazards, which might endanger the lives of students, teachers, employees therein, has been completed and the report thereof is available at the Westhill CSD Building and Grounds Office during office hours from 8:00AM to 4:00PM. For more information, please contact the following individual: Steven Smith, L.E.A. Asbestos Designee, 315-426-3000 for inspection by all interested persons.

## Notice of Availability of Asbestos Management Plan

As provided under the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act, (AHERA-EPS 40 CFR 763), Westhill Central School District hereby makes known the steps it has undertaken to comply with AHERA and the availability of asbestos management plans.

1. Beginning in 1989, all district owned facilities were inspected for asbestos and management plans were developed for each building according to the requirements of AHERA. Triennial reinspections are conducted every three years. Onondaga-Cortland-Madison BOCES of Syracuse, NY completed the 2004 AHERA Triennial inspection and update to the asbestos management plans.
2. Periodic surveillance of asbestos containing building materials is conducted every six months.
3. All custodial and maintenance staff have undergone 2-hour Asbestos Awareness Training.
4. All response actions taken are within federal and state guidelines.

Management Plans may be viewed at the Westhill CSD Building and Grounds Office during office hours from 8:00AM to 4:00PM. For more information, please contact the following individual: Steven Smith, L.E.A. Asbestos Designee, 315-426-3000.



BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Westhill Central School District  
400 Walberta Road  
Syracuse, New York 13219-2214

Non-profit Organization  
U.S. Postage PAID  
Permit No. 3523  
Syracuse, New York

BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Andrew Starowicz, President  
Lisa O'Reilly, Vice President  
Andrew Hunter  
Christopher Haigney  
Kelly Ristoff Coholan

The Westhill Central School District does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, religion, creed, disability, marital status, veteran status, national origin, sex or race in its employment practices or educational programs.

---

## Universal Pre-K - 2026-2027 School Year

The Westhill Central School District is pleased to once again offer a 4-year-old UPK program for the 2026-2027 school year.

To be eligible, a child must:

- Have a birthdate between December 2, 2021 and December 1, 2022.
- Reside in the Westhill Central School District.
- Agree to attend the program 6 hours a day for 5 days per week.

Instruction is consistent with the New York State Pre-Kindergarten Standards, which focuses on a child's social/emotional, cognitive and physical development.

Those who submit an interest form online (look for a ParentSquare and on the WCSD website on January 20, 2026) will receive an email with the registration packet to be completed and returned to the District Office. Following completion of the registration process between January 20 and March 31, students will be considered for the lottery selection process to be held in early April. If there are more students interested than seats available, a random, computerized lottery will be held. All families will be contacted to be updated on their child's status of accepted or waitlisted.

It is important to note the UPK Program is not housed in Westhill Central School District school buildings. Instead, as in the past, the district has partnered with the YMCA (OCC campus location) and Bellevue Heights Nursery School. Transportation to and from the program is the responsibility of parents/guardians. Students must attend the program five days a week to maintain their seat.

---