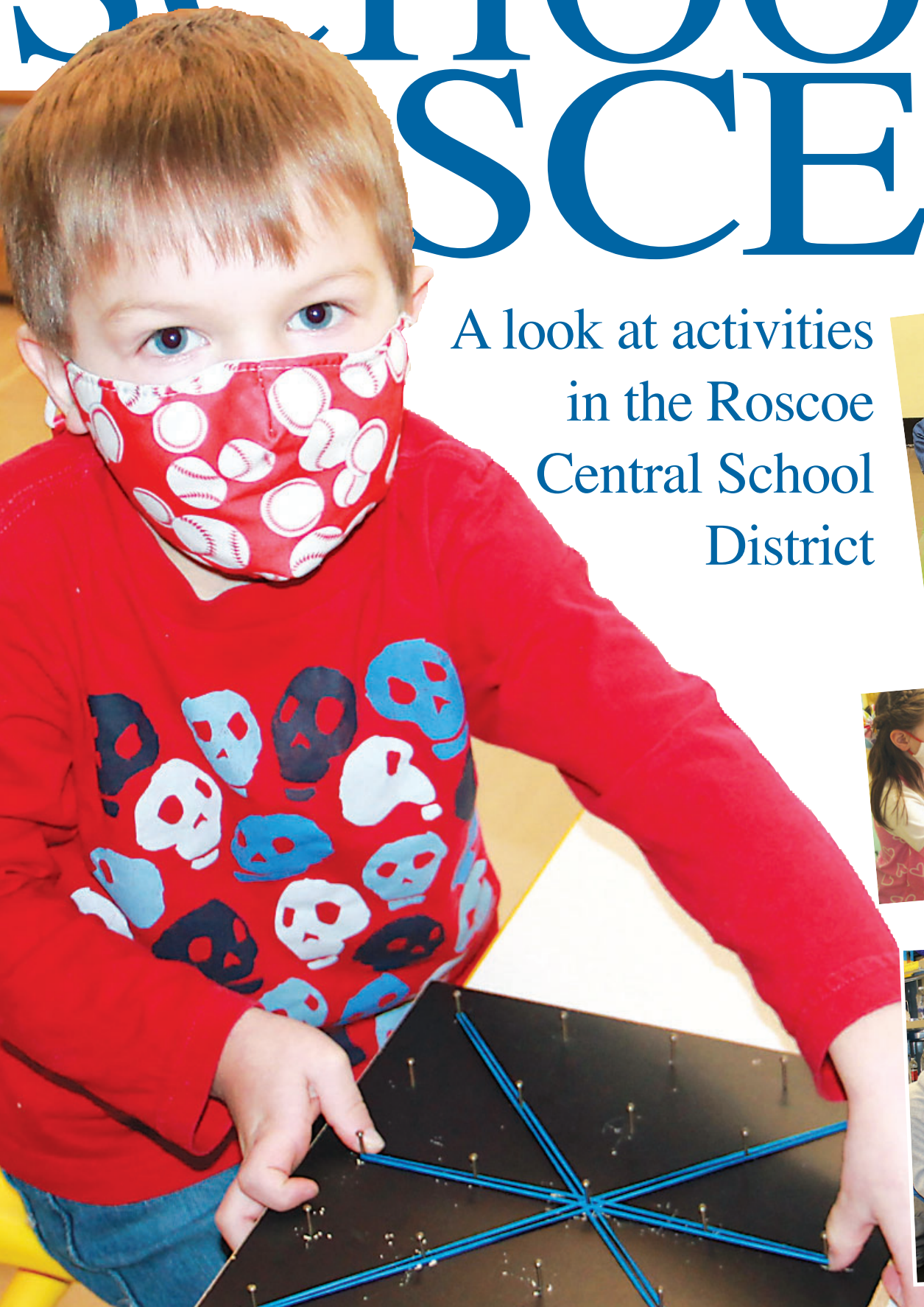


# SCHOOL SCENE

TAKE ONE FREE

A look at activities  
in the Roscoe  
Central School  
District



# Two new teachers follow their dream to 'have an impact'

BY KATHY DALEY

"I've wanted to teach for as long as I can remember," says new teacher Nicole Davidson. "I feel like when people say once you find your passion, you'll know — I felt that with teaching."

Fifth and sixth grade math and science teacher at Roscoe, Davidson grew up in Liberty, where her dad is known for Pestech, his insect control business. After graduating from Liberty High School in 2015, she went on to SUNY Oneonta and graduated with a degree in childhood education for grades 1 to 6.

Davidson student-taught third grade in Roscoe, "and I'm actually teaching those same third graders as fifth graders now, which is awesome," she

said. "And I now live in Grahamsville and am more than happy to be back home in Sullivan County."

Colleague Ashley Letteri is new to teaching as well. She graduated from John Jay High School in Hopewell Junction and earned a BA in political science, a BA in French and a minor in economics at Siena College in Albany. During the second semester of her junior year she studied abroad in France. Her masters degree is in social studies education from Binghamton University.

As first year teachers during a pandemic, the duo reported that the work can be both frustrating and fun.

"I have most of my students in person, and have just a few

remote students," said Davidson. "Remote teaching is working out well for me, but the biggest challenge is the barrier the computer screen makes. My students are able to learn their lessons and get their work done through a screen, but building that personal connection with them is just a little harder than if we were in person."

For example, "In fifth grade math we're learning how to read and answer word problems, and in sixth grade we're comparing fractions," she said. "In science we are learning about plant and animal cells on both grade levels and are starting to make 3D cell diagrams

PLEASE SEE **NEW TEACHERS**, 7R



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

It's her first year at Roscoe Central School, but new teacher Ashley Letteri is hoping to offer after-school activities next year, perhaps in French, debate or history 'so students can expand their knowledge and share with others on their own time,' she said.



'When I was going through middle and high school, I always babysat and helped out teachers in their classrooms,' recounted new teacher Nicole Davidson, a Liberty native. 'Once I pursued my degree and started working in classrooms, I knew I was on the right track to where I belong.'

**Best Wishes to the Roscoe School Staff & Students.**  
**Especially, Pamela Carpenter,**  
**Robert & Emma Buck and Tyler Carpenter**  
*Nancy Buck Sullivan County Treasurer*

# Enhancing health and learning:

## *A school nurse talks the ABCs*



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Abby DeFreitas, R.N. serves as Roscoe Central School's on-site nurse. She took over this school year after the retirement of longtime school nurse Patti Casey.

BY KATHY DALEY

**K**eeping schoolchildren healthy and ready to learn is a top priority in schools everywhere, and school nurses play a crucial role. Here, local resident Abby DeFreitas, R.N. at Roscoe Central School talks about her work with **Sullivan County Democrat** reporter Kathy Daley.

**Democrat:** Did you always want to be a nurse?

I knew I wanted to be a nurse since high school. My grandmother was a nurse and I wanted to follow in her footsteps. I always loved the idea of being a school nurse because you get the opportunity to watch the kids

grow up and also assist with their health care if needed.

**Democrat:** Where were you educated?

I graduated from Livingston Manor Central School in 2004 and from Sullivan County Community College in 2008. My first nursing job as an RN was at The Center for Discovery. Then I took some time off after I had my daughter and later went to work at Crystal Run Healthcare in the pediatrics department. I stayed there for almost nine years, working with all the pediatricians but mainly with the pediatric infectious disease doctor.

**Democrat:** How is your work different now with Covid?

I became the Roscoe Central School school nurse after Covid began, so for me this is all I know of school nursing. Keeping track of each student who is out of school and why and when they can return is a big part of what I do right now. Contact with the local Department of Health has also increased since Covid.

**Democrat:** Are students' temperatures checked every day?

Yes. They are checked at the door when they enter. If there is an issue with the temperature reading, I will then re-check with my thermometer.

**Democrat:** What medical

PLEASE SEE **NURSE**, 7R



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# Inspired yearbook club records joys, struggles of 2021

BY KATHY DALEY

It's the official publication of the school year. The Roscoe Record – the school's yearbook, compiled during the challenging world of Covid.

"Last year, the yearbook changed a lot because we didn't have spring sports, a prom, Spirit Week, a spring concert, etc.," recalled computer teacher Liz Ross, who co-advises the 10-member student Yearbook Club.

Physical education teacher, Melissa Ebeling, also advises the group. "We needed to fill those pages with other activities: Roscoe versus Covid 19, remote learning with students in their home classrooms," Ebeling said.

There were new pages entitled Students at Home With Their Furry Friends and a page called Spring Sports Take on a New Look that included copy and photos on kayaking, fishing and hiking.

Last year, from March until June, the yearbook staff asked parents and the community to send in photos through Facebook, and it worked.

"We did a recognition page for the Seniors who were unable to play sports in their senior year. We had quite a few people respond to submitting photos," said Ross.

Right now, the teachers and students are hard at work on Yearbook 2021. As usual, the journal is not only focused on the high school seniors but on the school in general, pre-kindergarten through 12th grade.

"The sections of the book will include: Elementary/Middle/High School, faculty and staff, special Senior sections," said Ebeling, noting that "since we're a small school, each senior has her or his own page."

There will be pages on the virtually-held Junior and Senior Honor



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

The school's yearbook entitled The Roscoe Record is the work of an annual Yearbook Club advised by Liz Ross, computer teacher, far left, and physical education teacher Melissa Ebeling, far right. At center is student and club member Rebecca Stickle.

Society, the prom, Halloween, Christmas, the talent show and the school play, Spirit Week and other special occasions, along with band, chorus and sports.

"We were able to get pictures of our first boys' basketball game last week," said Ross. "We're hoping to have a spring season but if not, we'll get creative like we did last year. We will do special sections for senior athletes who weren't able to participate in their sport."

Dedication pages for a retiring teacher or someone who has gone above and beyond for the school are always part of the yearbook too.



Last year's yearbook addressed the issue of Covid and its changes in the life of the school. Here, a two-page spread included photos of students working from home and finding cheer in their pet dogs and cats.

"It's a time capsule and a memory book to look back at from their time at RCS either in elementary or high school," said Ross, noting that ad space paid for by local businesses and parents help defray the costs.

"It's important to have the students look back at the last year and what we've gone through," said Ebeling. "After they've lost so much in other areas, we think it's important that kids have the yearbook."

# ‘Where’s my Chromebook, where’s my charger, where’s my friends’

BY KATHY DALEY

**W**hy are middle school students particularly in need of special attention during the pandemic?

“Along with the increase in academic rigor (from elementary school), middle school students seem to become ‘Hormonal Hurricanes,’” notes Emily Miner, teaching assistant and seventh grade social studies teacher. “They are experiencing many changes. Developmentally, middle schoolers’ primary need is acceptance from their peers, a need not met during the early months of the pandemic.

“We had weeks of remote instruction where students really did not interact with each other,” Miner said. “Now, they are able to interact a little more, but the need is still not being met. For example, we were remote for a week and a half. When we returned to in-person instruction, the kids were bananas.”

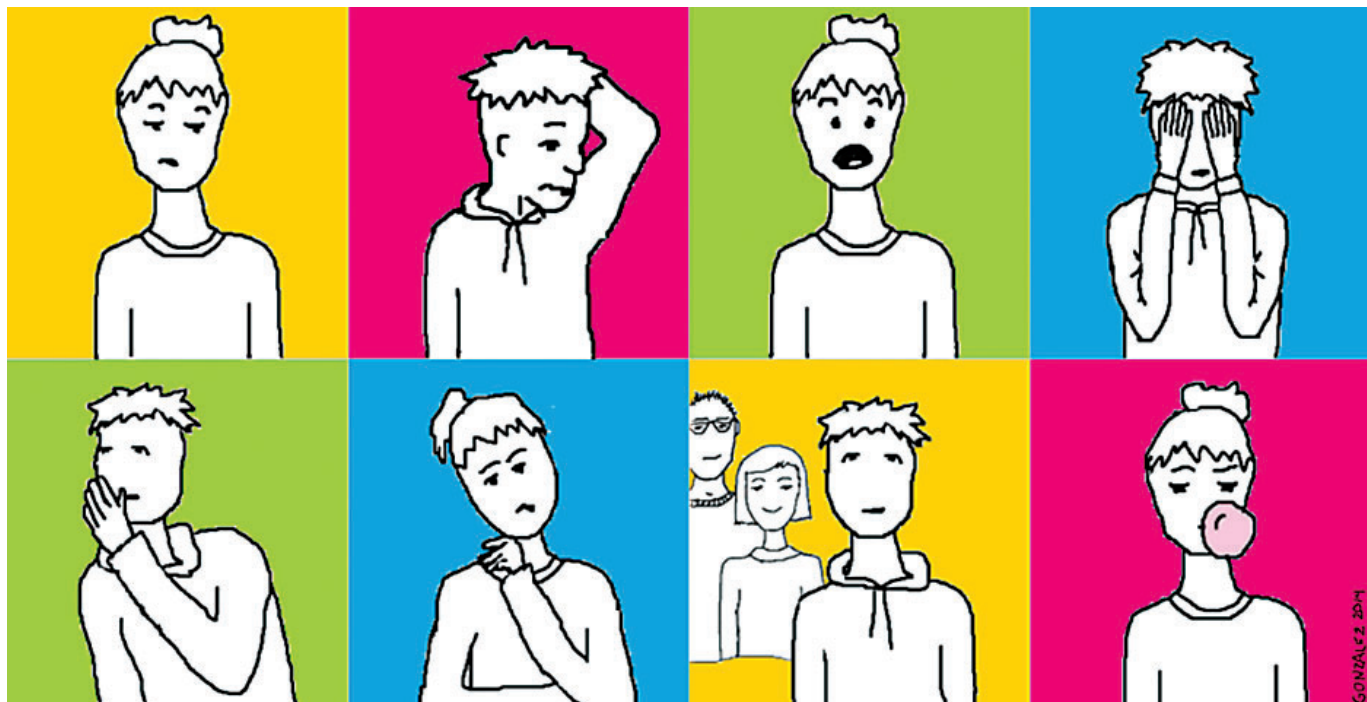
Special Education teacher Rebecca Geer pointed out that middle schoolers must be coached through this particular need.

“It’s hard to be accepted when you don’t see your peers for days at a time,” Geer said. “This increases their stress because they’re missing a vital component of their development.”

Optimally, the teachers manage to offer a safe place for students to ask questions and get advice on relating to peers.

Then there’s the issue of heightened academic expectations.

“The students started the year only coming to school part-time and now have a combination of remote and in person learning. That makes academics even more challenging, because it’s hard to even remember where their Chromebook and/or charger is,” said Geer.



CONTRIBUTED CARTOON

For Geer and Miner, supporting students academically means giving them instant access to teachers and to immediate feedback.

“We hold students accountable for assignments on Google Classroom,” said Miner, pointing out that the platform provides kids with assignment deadlines, with the ability to see when assignments are due and to see if they completed them or not. Teachers can give students feedback on their work, which helps the adults understand what needs to be worked on first.

A Chromebook charger right in the classroom helps the learning to keep on flowing. And structured study halls give students a quiet place to do their academic work and to ask for help without the whole class watching.

Fortunately, at lunch time and in physical education class, students manage to enjoy themselves, even while masked. “This is a piece that was missing when the school year began. Our students seem to be happier in general,” Geer said.

As for the learning that takes place from student homes, the big issue is the family actually getting the internet running, the Chromebook open to the right place and their child focused on learning.

“Often in a home there are more than one child learning remotely, and this can cause internet connection problems. And there are a multitude of distractions at home,” said Geer.

Another big issue is that middle schoolers working from home are

often caretaking younger siblings while parents go to work. “There is limited accountability as to whether the students are online and are completing their assignments,” said Miner.

But parents on the whole take their child’s learning seriously, even during ups and downs.

“We have communicated with parents our concerns,” said Geer. “They are very open to working with us and appreciate suggestions to help during this unique time.”



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# Techno-teaching students at home and in the classroom

BY KATHY DALEY

**L**ike most educators during the pandemic, math teacher Pam Carpenter instructs students in the classroom and students at home simultaneously.

"I usually have two devices connected to my 'meetings' so that I can work with remote students through the chromebook or the desktop as well as my in-person students," said Carpenter. "This seems to be working out for them, and I think I'm doing pretty well with it."

It's not always easy, of course.

"Every lesson needs to be adjusted to accommodate what is basically two different classrooms," she noted. "But my students are flexible and understanding. There have been many times where I needed to resend something remotely, or adjust access but they hung in there with me. And students who attend in person are also extremely patient and helpful as well."

"Our school is like a family, as clichéd as that sounds," Carpenter continued, "so the support of my students and knowing I can call someone for help to figure something out gives me the ability to try new things."

Because Roscoe is a small school, this math teacher instructs 8th through 12th graders. She uses technology for

every class. For example, there's Desmos, a math-based site on the web.

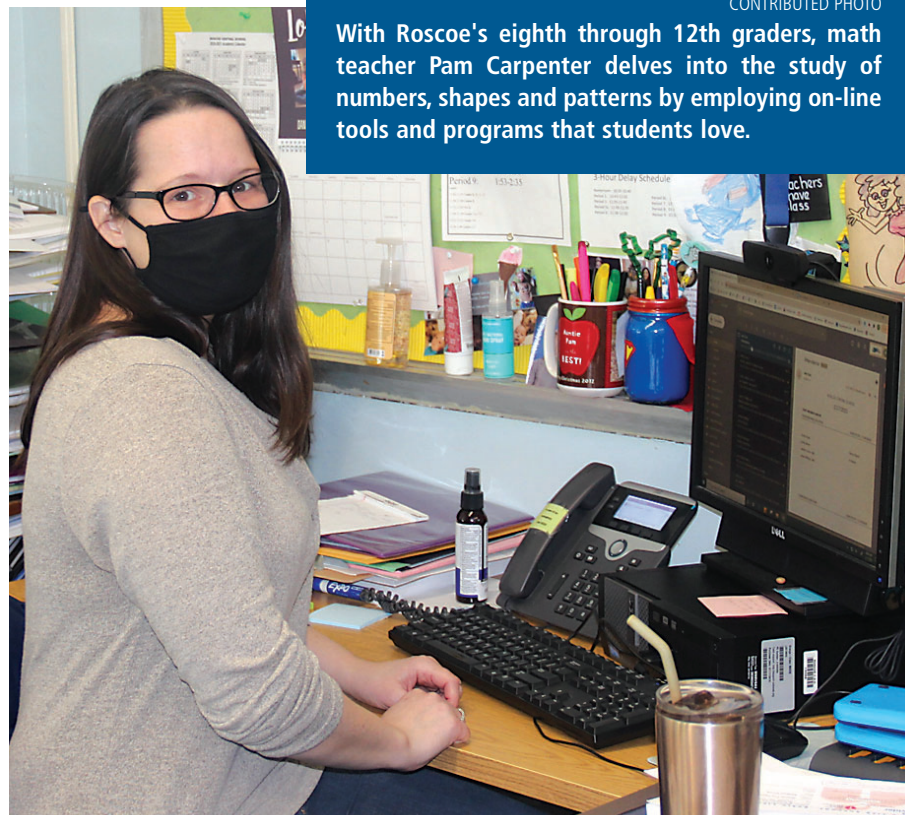
"Desmos is an excellent site for me," said Carpenter. "It allows for the creation of labs and activities to discover and learn new material. It has built in calculators, graphing screens, places to show work, etc. I discovered this site during the pandemic."

She also employs TI-Nspire cx calculators, which are valuable tools for calculus, AP calculus, and college-level algebra. And she uses the educational technology platform Kahoot, which offers user-generated multiple-choice quizzes. "Kahoot allows me to send and schedule assignments virtually. It is easily accessible on all devices."

"I use teacher software to demonstrate how to use the calculator as well as to conduct labs, activities and the discovery of mathematical properties and definitions," said Carpenter, adding that Google Classroom allows for quick and efficient grading and communication with students. "And I use Zoom for class, while some of my colleagues use Google Meet."

"Our administration allows us to use the platform that works best for each of us and our students," Carpenter said.

So, in eighth grade, Carpenter's students are finishing a unit on graphing and writing linear equa-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

With Roscoe's eighth through 12th graders, math teacher Pam Carpenter delves into the study of numbers, shapes and patterns by employing on-line tools and programs that students love.

tions, slope, rate of change and word problems. In ninth grade Algebra 1, the kids are working on functions and their applications.

"In 10th grade geometry, we are solving word problems with right triangle trigonometry," said Carpenter. "Last week I used Desmos to introduce the topic through a lab and then students solved equations to find side lengths and angle measures."

Her eleventh grade Algebra 2 class will take a test in trigonometry on the unit circle, graphing and identities and then moving

into logarithmic functions. In calculus, mostly for seniors, "we are working on the basic properties of differentiation to start the week and will move onto the product, quotient and chain rules for derivatives to end the week," said Carpenter.

Because of Covid, she said, "students have had to navigate different instructional platforms and different presentation methods, and work with teachers who are learning right alongside them. We're grateful for their flexibility and hard work."

## School Scene

*A Look Inside the Roscoe Central School District*

Published by  
*Catskill-Delaware Publications, Inc.*

Publishers of the

**SULLIVAN COUNTY  
Democrat**

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March 2, 2021 • Vol. CXXX, No. 76

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## NEW TEACHERS: Follow their dream

CONTINUED FROM 2R

this week."

"Teaching in a small school is wonderful," Davidson said. "From the moment I walked in here, I felt completely comfortable and like I belonged here. Roscoe is a really great place to work, and I'm lucky to be surrounded by such a supportive community."

For her part, Letteri said, "I love seeing the students every day and getting to know them while sharing what I'm passionate about. Hearing from students that they love coming to my class and they love what they are learning makes the stress worth it."

"I've had parents tell me that their students point out things outside of school and can talk about why certain political situations or products exist because they learned it in my class. That makes my entire day 10 times better," she said.

Letteri teaches social studies in grades 8-12. Her eighth graders are now studying up on the Spanish American War, while in ninth grade Global History, kids learn about the first humans on up to the Enlightenment of the 1700s. Tenth graders are taking on World War I, while eleventh graders are focusing on the post-Civil War era. In grade 12, students get to experience Participation in Government class for the first half of the year and economics for the second half.

"When I first went to college, I wanted to work for a think tank and work on public policy to help make laws that would help people," reflected Letteri. "Then I had a few internships doing policy work and ended up hating it. I stared at a computer screen by myself and felt that I wasn't really contributing and helping others."

"Teaching," Letteri said, "allows me to really have an impact on people."

## NURSE: Enhancing health in school

CONTINUED FROM 3R

equipment do you use?

I have a stethoscope, a sphygmomanometer to check blood pressure, a thermometer, a pulse ox to check oxygen saturation, an otoscope to check ears, and also equipment to check vision and hearing.

**Democrat:** What is a day like for you?

I triage the situation and determine if a child can be helped by me, or needs to go home, or needs to go to an emergency room. Some of the things I deal with are pink eye, stomach aches, ear pain and minor abrasions. I also review any medical documents that I receive, such as doctors' orders, and ensure they are implemented. I am also responsible for attendance at the school. I ensure attendance is taken and corrected when a student comes in late or leaves early.

**Democrat:** What, physically, can keep a child from learning?

Many things that affect a child's education can be detected by a school nurse. For example, if a child has wax in their ear or an ear infection, their ability to hear will be compromised. Another example is if a student shows signs of vision problems. I can check their vision, notify the parents of the results, and recommend they should see an eye doctor if needed. I do play a role in wellness: I advise parents if a child is due for a physical, a specific vaccination or dental screening, etc.

**Democrat:** What do you like about your job?

There are many things I love about working at Roscoe Central School, but what I love most is getting to actually know the kids and making them feel better when they are hurt or sick.

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