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MARCH 2024  
CALLICOON, NY

A Special Supplement to the Sullivan County Democrat

# SCENE



A look at activities in the Livingston Manor School District





# CAS KIDS

CAS Kids offers completely free drop-in arts education for children ages 4 - 12 years old at Catskill Art Space on Main Street in Livingston Manor. Please visit [www.catskillartspace.org/classes](http://www.catskillartspace.org/classes) for more information and to register your child.



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Tuesdays, 3:30 - 4:15pm

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## YOGA

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CAS Kids yoga provides accessible and age appropriate instruction to breathing techniques, yoga poses and mindfulness. Yoga enhances focus, comprehension, posture, bodily awareness and balance.



## AFTER SCHOOL ART CLASSES

Thursdays, 3:30 - 4:15pm

CAS Kids offers free arts-education to local children with art classes after school. Education at CAS is rooted in historical context, with students learning about the practice and work of renowned artists through making art.



## SPRING BREAK INTENSIVE

April 1 - 5, 9:30 - 11:45am

CAS Kids: Spring Break offers local children art making and theatre workshops during the local school's spring break. Between each session, a light snack will be served. Limited capacity and early registration is encouraged.

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# Superintendent's take on community

*"Today, more than ever, we need to support our students as well as their families. Not only supporting students to grow academically, but helping them develop emotional and social skills that are needed in every aspect of their lives."*

BY AUTUMN SCHANIL

The connection between a school and its community can have immense benefits for everyone involved, from the students and their families, to the teachers and their classrooms; and connection is something Livingston Manor Central School puts a lot of effort into.

"As small rural schools, our job extends beyond the four walls of the classroom," stated Superintendent John Evans. "Today more than ever we need to support our students as well as their families. Not only supporting students to grow academically, but helping them develop emotional and social skills that are needed in every aspect of their lives."

For Evans, coupling that with the health and wellness programs and initiatives being implemented across the school only adds to the ways that students and their families can be supported in and out of class

time.

"Faculty and staff are constantly looking for new and exciting ways to enhance and expand what we offer our students," Evans said. "Having both students and their families actively engaged in what we do here, helps make educating our kids a true collaboration between home and school."

With the addition of new classes and programs within the last year such as the Ag-Tech program, and the expanded offerings within the technology education and the family consumer science departments, both staff and students, according to Evans, seem to have a greater sense of pride and ownership of the things they're involved in, while also getting to interact more with the community at large.

"We have a lot of great things happening," Evans added, "and walking through the hallways you get the sense that not only do the kids really want to be here, but that learning can be fun for them."



Livingston Manor Central School District Superintendent John Evans

## School Scene

*'A Look Inside the Livingston Manor School District'*

Published by  
Catskill-Delaware Publications, Inc.

Publishers of the  
SULLIVAN COUNTY  
**Democrat**

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Callicoon, NY 12723

March 8, 2024 • Vol. CXXXIV, No. 79

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Cafeteria Manager Stephen Rogers



Eight years of experience and dedication in the kitchen at the Livingston Manor School District has given Rogers cutting-edge insight on the importance of food.

# Feeling good with fresh food

STORY AND PHOTOS  
BY AUTUMN SCHANIL

Cafeteria Manager Stephen Rogers has been overseeing school breakfast and lunches at Livingston Manor for eight years now, slowly implementing healthier eating for both students and staff. This year he's taking on Roscoe Central School as well.

A Livingston Manor Alum from 2010, Rogers later graduated from the Culinary Institute of America and kept it in his mind that if he ever had the opportunity to come back and help change the way food is in school, he would.

Eight years ago, that opportunity presented itself.

"When I started, there were already things that were set in motion like cooking certain items from scratch," Rogers explained, "but I wanted to keep building and expanding on that."

Healthy eating for Rogers, is knowing not just where your food comes from, but fully knowing each ingredient that's in it. Which means the less ingredients, the better.

"Much of the food today is just packed full of preservatives, and we may not think of it now, but years down the road it's going to affect us."

Rogers and the cafeteria team now make their own bread in house with just six ingredients in it, and that includes their pizza dough and other items. With flour sourced from the Finger Lakes region, Rogers knows the quality and nutritional value of what they're making.

"I'm a firm believer in using products that are grown either here locally, or at least within New York State," he stated. "We want to give back to the community and that means buying from local vendors, farmers and producers."

Rogers and the cafeteria even get some of their vegetables from the school's own vegetable garden,

which due to quantity, is usually used in making soups or items added to the salad bar.

And Livingston Manor, according to Rogers, is now the only school in New York State that has waivers through the Department of Health to do reduced oxygen packaging, which is the process of placing food in a package, removing the oxygen and sealing it. This process keeps food fresher for a longer period of time.

"Rather than buying fruit and vegetables from a company during the winter months at a high cost, the reduced oxygen packaging allows us to purchase fresh produce locally or within New York State at a lower cost during the summer months, process it, seal it and utilize it throughout much of the school year," Rogers explained. "It reduces labor, but it also allows us to know where the food is coming from that we serve to our kids, and we become more attuned to eating in season."

Growing up in a family where hunting and eating from the garden was the norm has helped guide Rogers in his food choices, and he and the cafeteria staff are now working with Cornell Cooperative Extension to be able to make their own tomato sauces in house as well.

"There's a bit more that we need to be careful and aware of when we start working with tomatoes, so Cornell Cooperative Extension is really helping us with that."

With the changes that have been implemented in their food service, Rogers has noticed an increase in the percentage of students and school faculty who now eat school lunch.

And he hopes to continue making good, healthy changes, as much as the guidelines allow him to, so students have not only more connection and knowledge about their food, but that they genuinely look forward to eating what's on their plate.



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The Interact Club operates beneficial events, like canned food drives and blood drives, to raise support for the Livingston Manor community.

## Staying involved with Interact

BY AUTUMN SCHANIL

Interact is Rotary International's service club for young people ages 12 to 18 who not only want to connect with other young people in their school and community, but also a club where students organize at least two projects every year.

At Livingston Manor Central School, the Interact Club hosts everything from blood drives in the gymnasium, to community Easter egg hunts on school grounds, to canned food drives at their sports games.

"The blood drives are probably one of the major things we do in terms of service," said Interact Club Advisor, and teacher, Jaime Snow. "Sarah Evans is the president of the club and has been running the blood drives since she was in eighth grade."

The blood drives, which are held in collaboration with the American Red Cross twice a year, are held inside the school's new gymnasium.

"One of the most important blood drives we held was during Covid," said Sarah. "We had so many people come that we surpassed our quota for pints of blood, and last year, we decided to hold a third blood drive during the summer."

Sarah has always been interested in giving back to the community, and with her drive to pursue a career in the medical field and with parents who were annual blood donors growing up, hosting blood drives just made sense.

"I'm at the front table, so by now I know most of our regular donors by name, and I think it's great that all of

us that are in the Interact Club have built a connection with so many people in the community," Sarah stated. "It feels good to give back."

One pint of blood can save up to three lives, and just last year alone, the blood drives organized by the Interact Club helped to save up to 300 lives.

"We saved over 100 lives just from the blood drive over the summer," said Jaime and Sarah.

Their next blood drive will be held on Wednesday, March 27, inside the gymnasium from 2 to 6:30 p.m.

Blood drives aren't the only thing they've focused on that has had a big impact on the community. Their canned food drives before Thanksgiving helped families ease the stress of the holidays while also adding to the food available for the school's backpack program.

"We held an annual canned food drive during the basketball season before Christmas," Sarah added, "and between monetary and canned donations, we were able to give over 1,000 food items to the pantry."

The upcoming Easter Egg Hunt on March 22, will be for Pre-K to sixth grade, and rather than filling each egg with candy, they'll be filling some with toys and trinkets.

For Sarah, who will be graduating this year and officially passing on her role in the Interact Club to another student, younger kids learning to give back to their community and helping others is important, and programs like the Interact Club are going to help them do that.

"If we can impact just one person's life, that's what it's all about," concluded Jaime.





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# Building a future in the FFA



Using the skills and knowledge gained from their time in FFA, Livingston Manor students make wreaths from harvested plants, herbs and berries.

STORY AND PHOTOS  
BY AUTUMN SCHANIL

**F**FA might make you think of production farming, but it's much more than that. The FFA can of course be traditional farming, but it can also be sustainability, research, biotechnology, or producing well-rounded doctors, nurses and scientists.

It's an intracurricular student organization committed to providing a path to achievement in premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education, as just one of three components.

High School Science Teacher and FFA Advisor, Jessica Freidenstine,

said that implementing FFA into the Livingston Manor School has been in process for the last few years, but officially came into being a little over a year ago in November.

"Ag Science is made up of three entities - classroom instruction, supervised Ag experience and the FFA chapter," explained Freidenstine. "FFA is mostly run by the students, where they do extracurriculars like coming together as a group to organize community events, school-wide events, FFA competitions and more."

Although the FFA is recent within the school, Freidenstine had been bringing some FFA ideas into her classrooms prior.

With an extensive background in Agriculture, a Bachelor's in Dairy Science, and a teaching certificate in Biology, it just felt right for her to bring real world scenarios into Ag Science.

"Because we live in a small community, students aren't always exposed to all the different agricultural aspects, so this gives me the opportunity to expose them to careers they might not have thought possible," Freidenstine said. "Careers that they didn't understand were related to agricultural science and to the real world."

Careers like forestry, conservation officer, greenhouse manager, wildlife manager, environmental lawyer, dentistry,

veterinarian, geneticist and a Peace Corps representative are all paths that can develop from Ag Science.

Just last week, Freidenstine and her students were outside collecting sap from the ten tapped trees on the school playground.

"We have bags, as well as the plastic traplines so the students can see the different systems of tapping maple trees. We do the science behind the sugar, how weather affects it and what systems work best for which areas."

Freidenstine's Ag science students also help with the school garden - planting, harvesting and transitioning the garden in the fall and spring. They also have a tower garden in four different





Leading by example, older students assist younger students as they harvest carrots and other fresh vegetables from the school's garden.

garden in four different classrooms growing fresh veggies and herbs that students snack on throughout the day, and which are also at times harvested and brought to the cafeteria for school lunches.

"The students have to test PH, the levels of nitrate and phosphorus. We also look at DNA and genetics," Freidenstine continued to explain, "of plants, animals and humans, to show how everything is connected."

For Freidenstine, Ag Science is important not just for the careers that it can offer students in the future, but in teaching the younger generations to care for the planet, to care for the Earth and to connect to it, to sustain it. She wants students to know that they can do things on their own, from little things like growing vegetables on the windowsill if they don't have an outdoor space for a garden to bigger things like respect for life processes and cycles.

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Alexis Acosta helps feed the trout.

# Training the trout

STORY AND PHOTOS  
BY AUTUMN SCHANIL

What could be better than having little fish in a big tank in your classroom? Being a part of the entire process - from egg to fry, to their release back to wild waters.

Trout in the Classroom aims to connect students with their watershed through environmental experience and education, and when staff at LMCS were asked who would like to participate in the program, Third Grade Teacher Stacy Evans and Special Education Teacher Lindsey Bauer jumped

right in.

"We went to an all-day training in the Poughkeepsie area," said Bauer, "and essentially they taught us how to raise our fish from an egg until we release them in May."

Trout in the Classroom isn't new to Livingston Manor, teachers and students have done it in previous years, but Evans and Bauer are taking part in bringing it back and hopefully keeping it going in the coming years.

At the training, Evans and Bauer, along with others, were taught the basics on how to set up their tanks and how to maintain it, as well as the life cycle of the trout which includes keeping the eggs in the

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Kayleigh Abram measuring the water levels.

dark for the first few weeks while they develop.

From there they get the students involved in helping understand what the water levels should be at, testing Ph levels, the ammonia and nitrate, keeping a weekly schedule on when it needs to be

done.

The students also are involved with the fish's feeding schedule and caring for the tanks, including being aware if the aerator is functioning properly.

"We try to implement the trout into everything we do," said Evans,



Stacy Evans' class proudly sit in front of their trout tank in their third grade classroom.

"from word and math problems, to science posters on their life cycles, to individual writing prompts."

"And the kids just love them. Especially for my students, the bubbles and the sound of the tank is really soothing and calming," said Bauer, "and they enjoy observing and learning about them."

Everything they do ultimately leads up to the trouts release day (tentatively May 16), which will be an event in itself with elementary

grades three through five participating in multiple activities and learning stations.

The trout the students have raised will then be released close by the school with the help of local trout hatcheries.

"We were excited to do this, even with the hiccups we've experienced along the way," said Evans. "It helps students understand the interconnection of everything."



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# About the after school programs at Livingston Manor



Extracurricular programs available to students bring a sense of fun and uniqueness to the school day.

STORY AND PHOTOS  
BY AUTUMN SCHANIL

As part of the administrative degree, you must identify a need in your school district, and for teacher Julie Buck, it was clear there was a need for an After School Program again, both for the kids as well as the parents.

"There hasn't been an after school program since before Covid, and parents in the district had expressed a need for something where the kids could come and attend a number of different activities," said Julie.

When starting this year, Julie had the idea of introducing STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) activities, space and

time for homework support, as well as time that the kids could simply play and have a bit of fun with their friends.

The After School Program runs from 3-5 p.m. and currently has 111 students enrolled.

"The kids are usually broken up by age group and the STEM activities that they learn are based on that as well as the experience of the teacher," explained Julie, "so some kids are learning coding, younger students are learning scratch, and some work with the sphero indi cars. In the Spring we'll be using drones. We're working at implementing different technological resources for the kids to use and become excited about."

Students are also learning about



After school activities give 111 students the opportunity to try new things, make new friends and learn about their interests inside and outside of the classroom.





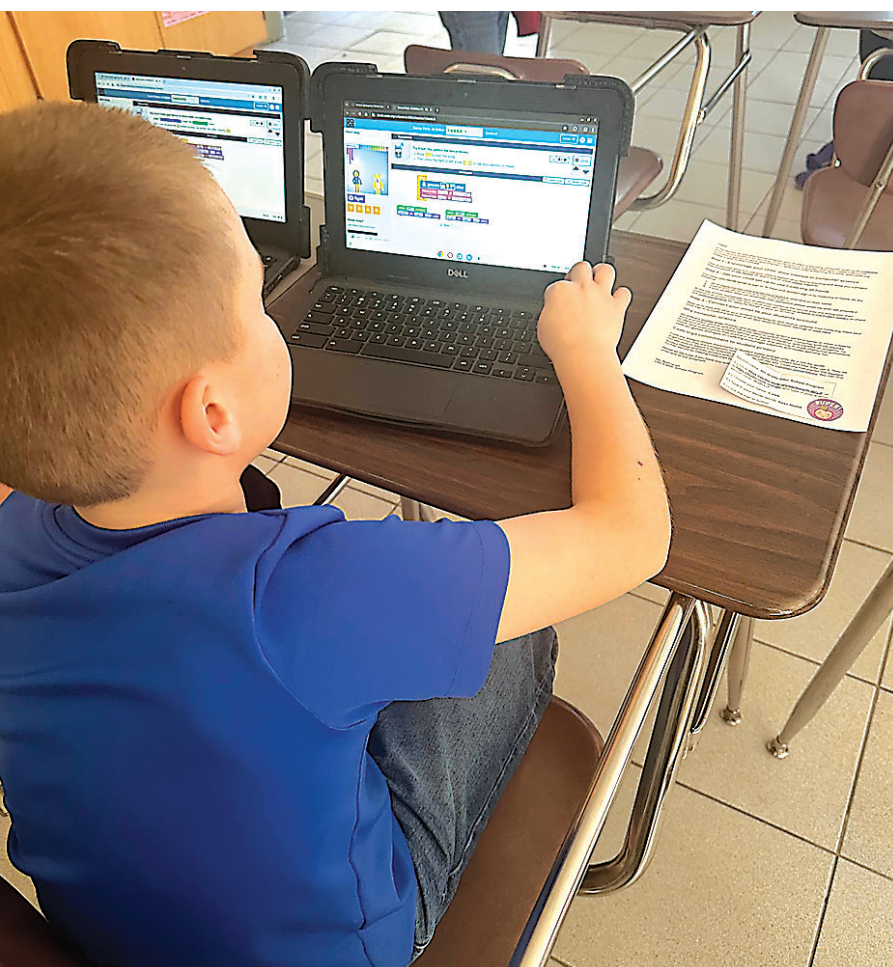
video creation, while other groups have had the chance to visit the Catskill Arts Society in Livingston Manor for theater performances.

Julie's goal for the future is to have actual STEM classes where when students enroll in the After School Program they can choose which STEM class they'd like to attend based on what they're interested in learning.

"Besides the STEM lessons, the other teachers and I are finding that the homework support is really important as well, so that the kids can be more successful in school," Julie stated. "I've just truly been enjoying watching it all unfold and I'm excited to see how the kids continue to grow with the program."

Seeing the kids each day having fun while exploring and learning is refreshing, and for Julie, it's ultimately all about giving kids more opportunities.

Students are given the opportunity to utilize technology and other devices to enhance their learning after school.



Finding time to do homework is no problem for the students who stay after school.

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