

BOBCAT TALES

WINTER 2016

Superintendent's Message**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:****ANNOUNCEMENTS** 2**STUDENT HIGHLIGHT** 3**RESIDENTIAL NEWS** 4**HEALTH CENTER NEWS** 5**EDUCATIONAL NEWS** 6**STAFF PROFILE INTERVIEW** 7**HAPPENINGS AROUND CAMPUS** 8-13**BRAILLE CHALLENGE FORM** 14

It's hard to believe that it's already December! So far this has been a wonderful and exciting school year at NYSSB. Our students are working hard in their classes and enjoying the many activities we offer. Our dedicated teachers and support staff engage and challenge their students through innovative educational methods while supporting our caring social environment. The support we receive from our parents and extended family members has never been stronger. I feel privileged and honored to work in this supportive and amazing community. I am grateful for your trust, help and desire to make the New York State School for the Blind the best environment for our students.

Our mission here at NYSSB goes beyond academics and includes character development. Each month we focus on a character trait and this month it is appropriately, "Generosity." This begins by explaining and demonstrating to children that the true gift of the holiday season is giving of your time and caring for others. So it is the perfect time for the entire school community to role-model this by doing the following: Share what you have with others, don't expect anything in return for your generosity, give the gift of your time and talents to others and praise the good you see in others. Sure, I see these behaviors throughout the school year but they seem especially heartwarming during the holiday season.

We want to thank our parents and extended family members for the encouragement you give our students to strive for academic success and good character. I thank you for allowing us to be a part of your child's life. I never take for granted the opportunity and responsibility to help them in their growth towards adulthood. Yet, what warms my heart the most is when I see our students smiling, laughing and clearly enjoying themselves in this safe and caring school community.

With the holiday season upon us, we can get stressed by the feeling that there is too much to do and not enough time to do it. It may help to remind ourselves what famed mystery writer Donald E. Westlake once said, "*As we struggle with shopping lists and invitations, compounded by December's bad weather, it is good to be reminded that there are people in our lives who are worth this aggravation, and people to whom we are worth the same.*"

In this time for rejoicing and rededication, I truly hope you will have the time to spend with the people in your life who mean the most to you and who enrich your life. Please give yourself the time to recharge your spirit, and rededicate yourself to the people and causes that are important to you.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELCOME NEW STAFF

In addition to our growing student population, we would like to recognize a new staff member, Courtney Bald. Courtney is a Food Service Worker 1. We are pleased to welcome Courtney to our NYSSB family.

LUNCH IN THE DARK

NYSSB is working with Independent Living of Genesee Region to host our 2nd annual "Lunch in the Dark". We are inviting 50 local business owners and community members to come to NYSSB for lunch on 4/27/2017. Lunch will be provided in a darkened environment so participants can experience first-hand what it's like to live with a disability. This collaboration is an effort to promote disability awareness within our community.

HAPPY RETIREMENT!

Best wishes to the following staff who will be retiring from NYSSB!

Lucy Sloan (Senior Occupational Therapist)

Congratulating to Lucy Sloan for her many years of service, since 1991, with the New York State School for the Blind! Lucy's leaving marks the end of an era here at our school...we will continue to sing the tooth brushing song when you are gone! Lucy, with her 25+ years at NYSSB, has been a mentor to all of us. Her particular attention to detail and dedication to her craft are commendable. Even more important though are the relationships Lucy developed during her time at our school. We will all miss her very much.

Pamela MacLaughlin (Human Resources)

Pam MacLaughlin, our payroll specialist, retired on November 30th after 46+ years of devoted State service. We wish her a wonderful retirement as she looks forward to spending time with family and friends.

BOWLING TOURNAMENT

The NYSSB annual bowling tournament will be held on Wednesday, April 5th at Mancuso Lanes from 9am-11:30am. This is always a fierce and fun competition!

BRAILLE CHALLENGE

It's that time of year again! The New York State School for the Blind will be hosting its' 2017 Regional Braille Challenge on **Saturday, January 28th from 11am – 4pm**. Registration forms are available on our website or on page 14 of this mailing. If you would like to register a student, **return a completed registration form no later than January 6th**. If you have any questions please contact Chris Wolske at christopher.wolske@nysesd.gov or by phone at (585) 343-5384 ext. 245.

STUDENT HIGHLIGHT

AUSTIN AYEN

Austin has been working hard in the Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES) Lab. He has increased his time in the Lab to four days a week. Austin has learned to use small hand tools such as ratchets, adjustable wrenches and socket wrenches. He also uses a vise which is attached to the workbench to hold objects firmly in place while he uses both hands to complete his work. Austin is willing to try any task given to him in the PAES Lab.



-Linda Johnston, Special Education Assistant (PAES Lab)

In the classroom, Austin continues to be our “Go to guy,” for any new and upcoming technologies. He has been a great resource in teaching his classmates how to use their phones, and sharing any tricks he has learned. Austin looks forward to checking the weather everyday and reporting to our school. Austin has also been doing great work assisting the kitchen staff by getting desserts ready for all of the students. He has learned many steps necessary to stay safe in the kitchen, while successfully completing his tasks. It has been great watching him grow and mature through the years and become the young man that he is.

-Jill Harkness, Special Education Assistant (Classroom)

RESIDENTIAL NEWS



The last three months have been busy for the students in the dorms. They enjoyed a lot of dancing at two big parties; the Mitten Party and the Christmas Party. Students were dressed in Halloween costumes for the Mitten Party, and we had a very special guest, Santa Claus himself, for the Christmas Party.

Over the past few weeks, students enjoyed going off campus for Christmas shopping and dinner outings. It's nice to see our students practicing their independent living skills while interacting with our local community.



Currently, there is a tight race going on in the NYSSB Bowling league between all four dorms. It is really too close to call right now, and there are just a few months left before the champion is crowned.

Students continue to enjoy going to the movies, playing bingo, and swimming on a regular basis. Coming up, many of the students will participate in Challenger Soccer. It should be a great time!

HEALTH CENTER NEWS

Review of the Student Illness and Return to School Policies:

Student Illness: It is the policy of the NYSSB Health Center to prevent illness whenever possible and to treat illnesses that do occur in compliance and accepted medical and nursing practices.

Students who present with a fever of ≥ 101.0 degrees F., >2 liquid or watery stools in a day, unexplained bouts of emesis, sore or reddened throat with fever or white plaques, reddened eyes with yellow or green drainage, unexplained or unusual rashes or lesions, high pitched, croupy cough or whooping sound after coughing, head lice or nits or other signs and symptoms of contagious illness, while at school will be isolated in the Health Center. If the illness occurs between Sunday and Wednesday morning, the student will be seen by the school's contracted physician. Parents or guardians will be expected to pick-up or arrange transportation home for students whose illnesses do not resolve in 24 hours.

Students who become ill with fevers greater than 101 degrees while at home must be fever free without the use of an antipyretic (Tylenol or Motrin) for 24 hours. Students who are ill with diarrhea or emesis must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school.

Student Return After ER Visit or Hospital Discharge: It is the policy of the NYSSB Health Center to provide a safe and seamless transition from inpatient hospital/ER care to care at the NYSSB, ensuring the safety and welfare of our students. **No student may be discharged directly to or into the care of the NYSSB from an inpatient hospitalization.**

Student's Parent/Guardian: Prior to the student's return to school, parents/guardians must provide the Health Center the following information to be reviewed by the Nurse Administrator or designee and the school physician to ensure the NYSSB are able to provide the care ordered:

- medical practitioner's note clearing the student for return to program with restrictions with a time frame noted (including gym, swimming, showering, PT, and OT)
- a copy of all discharge orders/instructions
- the discharge summary of the student's hospital stay
- operative report, if applicable.

Health Center Telephone #: (585) 343-5384 Ext. 358

Health Center Fax # : (585) 345-4055

EDUCATIONAL NEWS

Jackie Battaglia's Classroom

Jackie and her classroom assistants, Mark Herrmann and Diane VanSlyke, primary focus is habilitation and treatment. The students and staff have been very busy with their December themes! They started out the month learning about animals in the winter. Specifically, they learned how some animals migrate south to find warmer weather and food, some animals that stay through the winter have to adapt and they might grow a thicker fur coat to stay warm, and animals that hibernate through the winter by eating and storing food during the Fall to then go into a deep sleep through most of the cold winter months.

The class also explored the history of gingerbread and found some interesting facts about gingerbread. They made gingerbread playdough from a recipe found on the computer. The students' noses were working overtime smelling the spices, ginger, and cinnamon. The students used gingerbread men cookie cutters to make the dough into that shape and then let them dry overnight. They painted them brown and used yarn, buttons, glitter glue, and ribbon to decorate them. The gingerbread men are hanging on the tree attached to classroom door for the school wide door decorating contest – maybe they will win an award!!

This week has been all about Christmas trees. The students researched the history of Christmas trees to learn that it was a German tradition that was brought to the United States. Another fun fact was that trees used to be decorated with cookies, cakes, and candy before ornaments and stringing lights on the tree were ever even thought of. Students are in the process of painting pinecones green and decorating them with glitter, beads, and snow. This will be a project that students will take home to add to their own decorations!

The students are very excited that it is the last week before our winter break!! Of course they will have the Christmas music playing and probably squeeze in a classroom celebration!!

Wishing everyone Happy Holidays and a wonderful New Year from all of us in Jackie Battaglia's classroom!!



STAFF PROFILE INTERVIEW

Jacob Knight of Mrs. D'Angelo's class interviewed Lucy Sloan, retiring Senior Occupational Therapist

Jacob: How long have you been working here?

Mrs. Sloan: I have been working here for 25 years.

Jacob: Do you have kids? Tell me about them.

Mrs. Sloan: I have two girls. My oldest is Laura. She is a manager at a restaurant and is getting married next June. My younger daughter is Katy. She is a student at SUNY New Paltz and has two majors: Art Ed. and Fine Arts.

JACOB



Jacob: Do you have a husband? Tell me about him.

Mrs. Sloan: I am married to Peter Sloan who is a retired art teacher and is a volunteer at church, and likes to walk our dog, Missy.

Jacob: What do you like about being an occupational therapist?

Mrs. Sloan: I get really happy when a student learns a new skill.

Jacob: Why do you help people brush their teeth?

Mrs. Sloan: I want them to have nice breath and no cavities.

Jacob: Is working here fun?

Mrs. Sloan: Yes, a lot of fun. I love the students and staff.

Jacob: What are your plans for retirement?

Mrs. Sloan: I plan to 'rock' premature newborn babies at Sister's Hospital, do art work, become a master gardener and join church committees.



LUCY SLOAN

HAPPENINGS AROUND CAMPUS



Haunted House



HAPPENINGS AROUND CAMPUS



HOLIDAY SING-A-LONG

HAPPENINGS AROUND CAMPUS



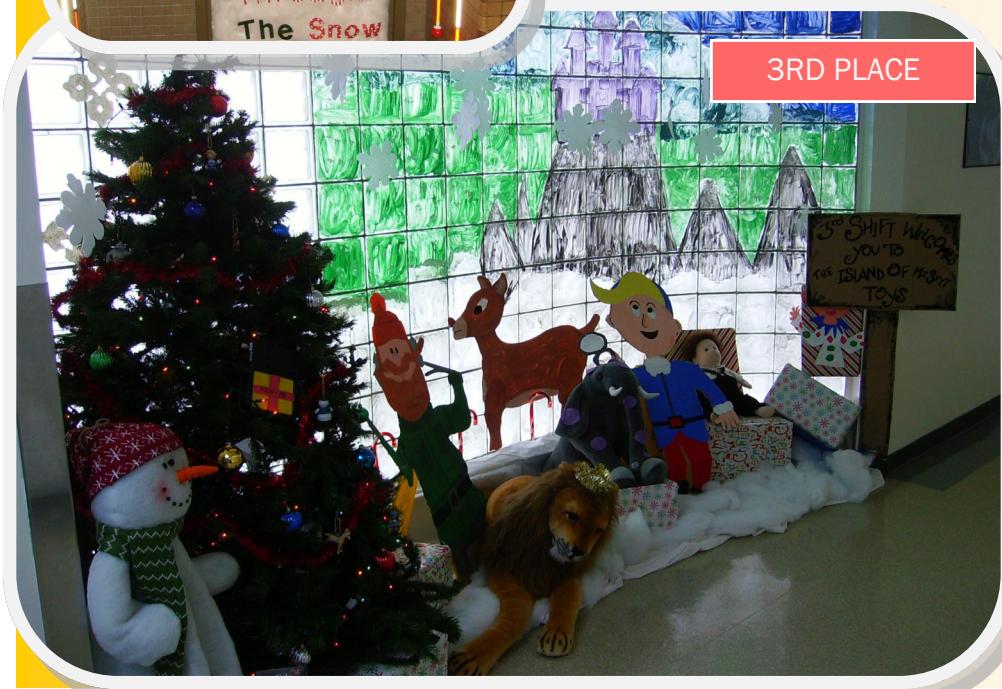
HOLIDAY SING-A-LONG



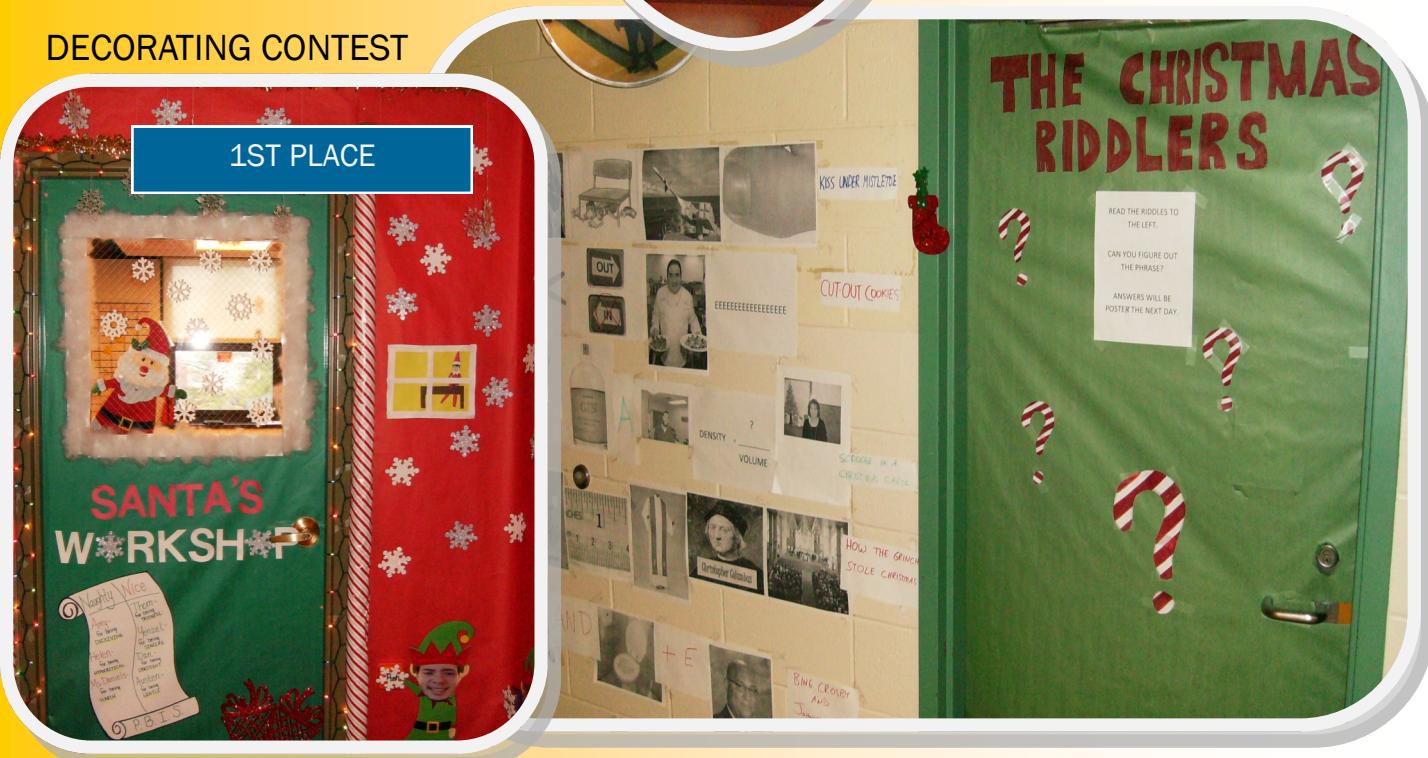
HAPPENINGS AROUND CAMPUS



DOOR
DECORATING CONTEST



HAPPENINGS AROUND CAMPUS



HAPPENINGS AROUND CAMPUS



HOLIDAY SHOWCASE PARTY & UGLY SWEATER CONTEST





NEW YORK-UPSTATE REGIONAL BRAILLE CHALLENGE

Batavia – January 28, 2017

Snow Date: February 18

Sponsored by New York State School for the Blind

2017 PERMISSION FORM

Must be signed by parental/legal guardian and returned by **January 6, 2017** to NYS School for the Blind, 2A Richmond Ave, Batavia, NY 14020, Attn: Christopher Wolske. Only contests submitted with a signed permission form attached will be eligible for the Braille Challenge® Finals at Braille Institute®.

Please print legal name clearly and fill out completely

* Required fields

* Last Name _____

* First Name _____

* Address _____ Apt. No. _____

* City _____ * State _____ * ZIP _____

* Birthdate _____ * Age _____ * Grade _____ * Telephone _____

* E-mail _____ Alternate phone _____

Adult attending with student

T-shirt size	Youth:	x-small	small	medium	large	XL	XXL	XXXL	□ TVI	□ Parent	□ Para
Adult		x-small	small	medium	large						

TO BE COMPLETED BY TEACHER OF THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED (Please fill out completely)

Name of Teacher of the Visually Impaired _____

Teacher's Email _____ Teacher's Phone _____

Regional Coordinator Name (if applicable) _____

Mark one:

Student Contest Level: App Grades 1–2 Fresh Grades 3–4 Soph EBAE Grades 5–6 Soph UEB Grades 7–9 JV Grades 7–9 Varsity Grades 10–12

At Grade Level **Or** Below Grade Level (BGL) *(If Apprentice BGL Contracted or Uncontracted)

*Students who take a contest below their academic grade level in school or who take the uncontracted Apprentice contest are not eligible to attend the Finals.

CONTENT RELEASE

I hereby give permission to New York State School for the Blind ("NYSSB") and Braille Institute of America, Inc. ("BIA"), for my child to participate in The Braille Challenge preliminary contest. I understand that if my child qualifies, he or she is eligible to attend The Braille Challenge final contest in Los Angeles on June 17, 2017.

PHOTOGRAPHIC RELEASE

I hereby authorize NYSSB and BIA to photograph, videotape, or otherwise record by visual, audio, electronic or manual means, the visual likeness and/or voice or other sounds created by the above named contestant (collectively "Reproductions"). NYSSB and BIA may use or permit to be used the Reproductions in any CD, DVD, exhibition, display, publication, solicitation or promotional or educational material or on any website including without limitation BIA's website, Facebook, or YouTube without compensation to the contestant, the contestant's heirs, successors or assigns.

Parent's Print Name _____ Signature _____