

NYSSD Circle



A Publication of the New York State School for the Deaf



***Rhianna Schwabrow
Winner of
2009-2010
Optimist Competition***

***2009-2010
3rd Issue***

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NYSSD Mission Statement

Our Mission is to provide a foundation of learning that will enable students to become independent, self-respecting, and contributing adults in a multi-cultural society.

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Rhianna Schwabrow poses with award won in the Optimist's Presentation Contest for the deaf and hard of hearing.



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The 2009-2010 school year has come to an end and it amazes me that I am saying those words. The time between September and June is always filled with wonderful events, but how fast it goes by surprises us all. Before we know it we are all preparing for graduation and our last newsletter for the year.

This year has presented itself with many hardships for New York State, for the United States and the entire world. Even in the presence of war, oil spills, Wall Street collapses, housing markets plummeting, unemployment at an all time high, threats of government shut downs and cuts to school aid, our students remain focused and our teachers and staff remain optimistic of what the future has to offer for everyone. Each day these students come to school they are transformed into a world that focuses on the good instead of the bad, it focuses on the possible instead of the non achievable, and it focuses on what we can do instead of what we can not do. These lessons that seem so simple and are so prevalent in schools all across the country, and certainly here at NYSSD, are lessons that society as a whole should take a look at. We have produced successful graduates with life long goals and college admissions letters. We have developed a pride in our underclassmen in what they need to do to accomplish graduation requirements and what they have to do to be successful citizens in the post secondary world of school or the work place.

We have so much to look back on and be proud of and that is brought to our attention each year when we watch our end of the year slide show. If you have not had an opportunity to attend Family Day, try to put it on your list for next year as the slide show is one special part of a very great day. The slide show represents the year and all that it had to offer. You often hear laughter and you see tears, as people realize, that for some, it has come to an end of a chapter at NYSSD.

It may be the end of a long-time home for Rhianna, Irick, Keith and Joseph, but NYSSD will always be their family. I encourage all seniors to stay in touch and visit when they can, as they will represent what we are all about and provide the fuel we need to keep going in our everyday mission. I wish you all a safe and exciting summer and look forward to seeing some students and staff over the summer. I also look forward to a new year with new challenges and new memories.

All the best,

Carriann Ray

Optimists' Presentation Contest for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Submitted by Jeri Bartscherer, Optimist Coach



On Friday, May 21st four students participated in the Optimists' Public Speaking Contest which was held at NYSSD for the second time! First timers Joseph Gardner, Kristi Kaye and Rhianna Schwabrow competed with Keith Grant, who participated once before. Students prepared a typed essay, entitled "Cyber Communication – Progress or Problem" and presented it. Each presentation was required to last between four to five minutes or it would be disqualified. This year students were exceptionally dedicated to this venture. Each student worked through a number of rough drafts to hone their presentation, we're talking 8-12 rough drafts and edited versions. In addition students practiced their presentations during special nighttime

practices!

And the winner is Rhianna Schwabrow! She will be the recipient of a \$2,500 scholarship towards her college education. All the contestants did a superb job. Joseph's presentation was timely starting with a quote from Google's CEO! Keith showed a flair for presentation and signed with passion. Kristi's essay touched many a heart. Rhianna won the prize with a truly sincere and almost professional presentation.

I am exceptionally proud of all of the contestants' hard work and poise during their presentations. All of the contestants emitted a confident attitude. Students also showed their sportsmanship by holding hands waiting

COVER STORY



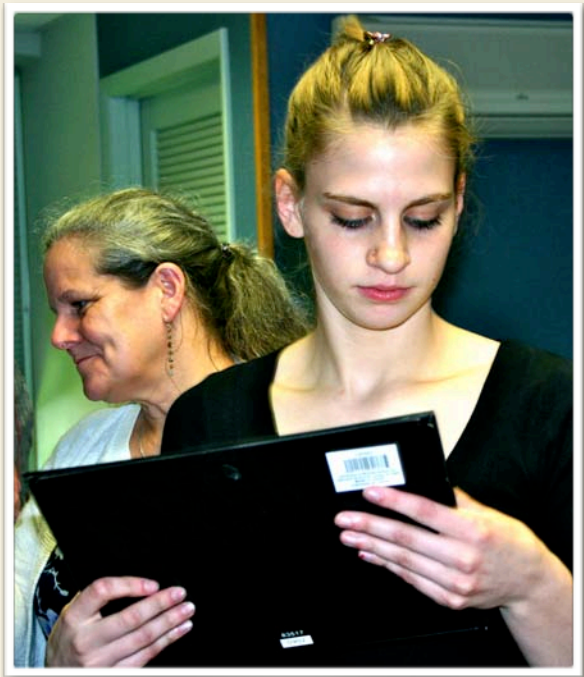
for the judges' announcement. A group hug was shared at the conclusion of the program.

I would like to thank all the staff who made this event so special – Vicky Stockton Allen & Roman Kazragis for practicing with students, Pat Miller for helping with the sound system, Harry Baran for videotaping the event, and all the dorm staff who practiced with the students – Beth Wenzel, Denise Arena, and Susan Sharpsteen. Thanks to the student council for providing funds for the judges' lunches, to Shari Reed & Kim Sacco for handling the details with the council and Dennis Ryan, Mike V. and Marty Gorski for working out practice times. Thanks to the kitchen staff for being so flexible, the cleaners – Joe Dessart, Lorraine Morgan, Colleen Price, Karol Snyder, Mike VanHatten for setting up the conference center, Colleen Price for taking such wonderful pictures, and Sue

Wallace for signing in visitors. Thank you to the business office for being on the look out and helping our visitors and families. It takes a village to run this contest!

Our three volunteer judges this year were all previous staff members at NYSSD, Ms. Cynthia Majka, Ms. LaDonna Richardson, and Mrs. Debbie Scerra. It was wonderful to see them and so kind that they volunteered their time for this event. I would be remiss if I did not thank all of our student participants' prior teachers. For without their hard work our students would not have been up to the task. So a huge thank you goes to all of our dedicated teaching staff at NYSSD ~ their efforts brought these students to this special moment in their lives!

Congratulations to Rhianna Schwabrow! Thank you to Keith, Joseph, and Kristi also. These students proudly demonstrated what our students can do when they put forth their best effort – a true representation of NYSSD at its best!



NYSSD Celebrates Its 135th Birthday!

Submitted by Erika Furbeck



The New York State School for the Deaf in Rome, New York had a week long birthday celebration, celebrating its 135th birthday!

The celebration kicked off Monday, March 22, 2010 with a Historical Celebration. We looked back at NYSSD's rich history and observed how the school became to be what it is today. On Tuesday, March 23rd, we had a Picture, Art, and Poetry Celebration. Students created various forms of art in honor of the celebration. Some of the artwork consisted of cards, timelines, and heartfelt letters giving thanks to our school. On Wednesday, March 24th we invited the public into NYSSD for a Tour Celebration. People from the community were able to come into our school and partake on a tour throughout the school, including our newly renovated

dormitories. We finished off the festivities on Thursday, March 25th, 2010 with a Proclamation Celebration.



The school was presented with a plaque that officially declared March 22 – March 26th, 2010, the New York State School for the Deaf 135th Birthday Celebration Week. The festivities were enjoyed by all and we look forward to celebrating many more years with student's families and staff who make NYSSD the wonderful place that it is.

History of NYSSD:

The first steps toward the organization of the school were taken in the summer of 1874 when Alphonso Johnson, a deaf man, a graduate of the New York Institution for the Deaf and a teacher for some time, came to Rome and proposed to establish a school. Dr. Thomas Gallaudet, son of Thomas H. Gallaudet, helped Mr. Johnson in getting a group of Rome Businessmen interested in establishing a school for the deaf. After eight months of planning, on March 22, 1875, the initial building, a rented two-story brick house, formally opened



Rome Mayor Brown

LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING AT NYSSD

with an attendance of four pupils. Mr. Johnson was both Principal and Teacher. The four students were from Clayton, Watertown and Rome. September 1, 1875, commenced what may be called the first academic year of school, then called the Central New York Institution for Deaf Mutes, with Mr. Johnson as Principal, one other instructor, and a board of fifteen trustees.

In 1931, the name of the school was changed to the Central New York School for the Deaf. The school later became a State facility on July 1, 1963, by the act of State Legislature, with powers that control transferred from the corporation to the jurisdiction of the State Education Department and the Board of Regents. At the same time, the name of the school was changed to the New York State School for the Deaf.

Plans were started in 1965 for the development of a new school campus. With a multi-million dollar appropriation from the State Legislature, construction was begun on the Lower School Building that was occupied in September of 1967. Facility development continued through 1975 and was completed with the construction of outdoor recreation and athletic areas.

NYSSD, now consisting of 17 acres, is one of the most beautiful and functional facilities for the education of deaf children and young people to be found anywhere in the country. The school program in its entirety is innovative and progressive, and with its staff of highly capable and talented men and women, the school will continue to provide quality educational services for those enrolled.



LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING AT NYSSD

Clean-up Day at NYSSD

Submitted by Gail Brett

To honor Earth Day that took place during our spring vacation, NYSSD held our eighth annual Clean-up Day on April 9, 2010. Teams of students, teachers, assistants, and dorm staff got together outside to clean up the grounds after the winter weather. Our maintenance staff provided garbage bags, rakes, brooms, and shovels to help us tidy up areas of the campus. Students around the campus fluffed mulch, pulled weeds, swept walkways, and raked leaves.

One of the main areas for cleaning was our patio area and Literature Garden, supervised by Pat Miller, our Librarian. The Literature Garden has lovely perennial flowers, as well as some annuals. Students and staff cleaned up the area surrounding it by pulling out leaves between bushes, sweeping the pavement bricks, and picking up sticks that had fallen over the winter.

Another challenge each year is the snack bar area outside of the dorm. The wind does a job all year blowing the dead leaves into this nook, and the debris is trapped until our hard-working students tackle the job.

The little ones worked in the Courtyard picking up leaves and sticks, while some of the older students worked with them to help. The best part of the day is all the cooperation going on, from young to old, staff with students, and students with students.

As a nice break our kitchen provided cookies and cold water. It was a time to come together and observe our hard work while enjoying each others' company.



Hammocks for Haiti

Submitted by Mike Ver Velde



The aftermath of the Haiti earthquake prompted an outpouring of assistance worldwide and just about everyone including students felt compelled to get involved. The question was how... this is where Hammocks for Haiti came in. One of the orphanages in Port-au-Prince was devastated and the director who founded the orphanage, Michigan native Mallery Thurlow, identified a specific need for sleeping shelters... namely Hammocks with bug nets. Not wanting to go through the boondoggle of trying to put in a request through the large charity organizations on the ground in Haiti because time was of essence, her solution showed how amazing things have a way of working out.

The internet can be an amazing tool. Her request went online, and a member of the Hammock Camping forum (which I am involved with) caught it, contacted her and in turn, started the "Hammocks for Haiti" campaign. Hammock campers

internationally from the Hammocks Forum website jumped aboard, involving their kids, church and school youth groups, and even ladies sewing groups. Figuring this was a tangible way for our students at NYSSD to participate in making a difference for the Haitian children at the orphanage, we jumped in!

I was able to obtain donated materials through this effort, and had several people including an interpreter at a School for the Deaf in Canada send us material. A number of our students (with the guidance of our dorm and teaching staff) got involved in learning how to sew simple gathered end hammocks to be used by the children of the Haiti Orphanage.

With the last stitch sewed, the final hammock end whipped up, we had a photo op with some students lying in our hammocks outside and everything was packed up and shipped to the Hammocks for Haiti contact in Michigan. We are hoping the situation in Haiti stabilizes enough where they can get a photograph of the children enjoying their new hammocks sent to us at NYSSD for framing!



LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING AT NYSSD

“Yes We Did” Fair

Submitted by Gail Brett



For the last several years our Character Education/Social Skills program has hosted a fair in the spring that ties in with our special themes. One year it was a Cultural Fair, when our theme was “Think Globally”. Students worked to make displays and presentations about various countries they were interested in or had studied. Another year, it was a Wellness Fair, when our theme was “Living Well”. Students and staff addressed many different aspects of healthy living, from mental and emotional health to exercise and healthy eating.

This year our theme has been “Yes We Can”, a take-off on President Obama’s election speech in which we were challenged to make a difference in the world.

During the school year we have explored ways to make a difference in our own lives and in other people’s lives. One of the ways we made a difference in others’ lives was for the school to adopt Heifer International as our charity for which to collect coins. Heifer helps people throughout the world by providing them with animals and crops so that they can become self-sufficient. When people benefit from Heifer they

also commit to helping others in their village by donating some offspring from their own animals. This way the gift is passed on so that many benefit from small initial resources.

During the hurricane disaster in Haiti our school also took up a collection to help those people in need. NYSSD students, families, and staff helped to make this possible.

Throughout the year classes have helped organizations like the Salvation Army and the Humane Society.

As important as these examples of helping others are, we recognize that there are other ways to improve the world, as well. This year our fair was entitled “Yes We Did”. Students and staff were encouraged to display their accomplishments in all areas of their lives, whether it was a craft or hobby that enriched their own life, or getting an “A” on a spelling test.

We all have accomplished things this year to make a difference, and May 14th was our chance to celebrate those accomplishments.



LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING AT NYSSD

Some of our displays included a Lego Robotics demonstration from the Robotics Club, a time-line of the Little Listeners school year events, a word and phrase book of new vocabulary, and Guitar and Handbell demonstrations. Students also had the opportunity to get on stage and explain what they have accomplished this year. Some of these stage presentations were planned ahead, but some brave souls stepped forward last minute, inspired by their peers' presentations. It was a very moving assembly and fair. We all benefited from helping each other celebrate our accomplishments.



Family Day

Submitted by Harry Baran



On June 11, 2010, The New York State School for the Deaf (NYSSD) hosted "Family Day". "Family Day" is an annual event in which students' families have the opportunity to visit the school and participate in a multitude of activities and programs with their sons and daughters. It is a time to be present for student awards, meet instructors and staff, and make new friends.

This year's "Family Day" began at 9 a.m. with registration followed by a book fair with educational booths parents could visit. An all-school play, "The Wizard of Oz", was performed by students, families, and staff. Student award ceremonies, local community service presentations, outdoor group games, a BBQ, and an end of the year slideshow recalling all of NYSSD's funniest and memorable moments for 2009-2010 rounded out a really great day!



Jamel Edwards, Sarah Davis, Kheemara McKnight, & Keith Grant

Ride For Missing Children

Submitted by Jeremy Roberts



On May 21, 2010 Coach Roberts and Erika Furbeck represented NYSSD in the Ride for Missing Children. Along with 460 riders, Coach Roberts and Erika rode 100 miles throughout Central New York spreading the message of personal safety and creating awareness for missing and exploited children. This year NYSSD raised \$1015.01 which will equal 4060 posters that will be sent out on missing children. Thank you to everyone for your support in "Making our children safer... One child at a time."



Coach Roberts and Erika Furbeck

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