



Hastings-on-Hudson Public Schools

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Dear Hastings Community,

Ben Franklin is my muse today. He was known to say, “Man is a sociable being...” and “A thirst for knowledge [always guides me].” Connecting these phrases, today’s letter features the voices of others—a “sociable” step assuaging our “thirst for knowledge.” Put simply, we learn when listening to others. (I learned these “Franklinisms” on a recent family visit to the Benjamin Franklin Museum in Philadelphia—a visit, as you will see, with relevance to HHS juniors.)

Listening to the BOE Student Representatives

At the twice monthly BOE meetings, Gus Renzin (Senior) and Elianna Carvalho (Junior) give a report on behalf of the students. While it is a public presentation, and is part of the video record for each BOE meeting, I thought a reproduction of their latest report would expand our shared knowledge of what our oldest students value at this point in the school year. Here is what they reported on Tuesday evening (10.11.22).

Gus Renzin:

- First off, I want to congratulate Emma Leddy for being nominated as LOHUD’s player of the week. Captain of the Hastings Field Hockey team, Emma scored twice in Hastings’ 5-0 win over Albertus Magnus and made four assists against Bronxville. As of right now, the Field Hockey team is 9-2-1 and ranked first in the section.
- Hastings Girls Cross Country won the Woodlands Extravaganza meet. Hastings runners placed first in both the girls and boys races.
- Ms. Shandroff’s Science Research juniors are currently designing at-home experiments to hone skills that will be used over the summer in real research experiences. Right now, the largest number of seniors in Hastings High School History are finishing their research papers and are preparing to submit them to the Regeneron Science Talent Search, the nation’s largest science competition.
- Thanks to the guidance office, seniors and juniors have been lucky enough to participate in visits from a variety of colleges, universities, and other post high-school opportunities. Some highlights were presentations from Northwestern University, the U.S. Army, and SUNY-Binghamton.
- Project Share’s second midnight run of the year was a massive success. For the first time since Covid, significant numbers of freshmen made the trip down to New York City to distribute food. In preparation for the annual Thanksgiving Dinner for the homeless,

which will be held in the Cochran Gym. SHARE is fundraising aggressively and planning a schoolwide assembly for November 2nd at 11:00 a.m.

Elianna Carvalho:

- The school play is very soon: Friday and Saturday, October 21st and 22nd. Everyone is working hard and excited to be back on the stage without masks. We just had the set constructed yesterday and it looks really cool. I recommend checking it out if you pass the high school auditorium. Organized by the lovely Ms. Udice, the playbill for *The Outsiders* will include a bio and photo of every cast and crew member. This is a first. I definitely recommend that everyone come see it! It's going to be great!
- Senior Julien Amsellem was selected as New York State's Young Birder of the Year, and spent last weekend in Albany receiving his award.
- To add onto the sports update from Gus, although we did not win our last football home game this past Friday, we did make an impressive touchdown in the last few moments of the game. We honored the senior football players and Hudsonettes, giving them each a flower. It was exciting for all spectators to watch some real Friday night lights!
- Everyone's favorite early school year activity, Pictureday, was two weeks ago, for all high school students other than the seniors, who take theirs based on appointments. Picture day makeup is October 21st.
- On October 26th, juniors will be going on a history trip to Philadelphia (a trip that used to be an annual tradition before Covid). We will be seeing various historic landmarks, such as Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell.
- The Junior Formal is set for November 7th, and the student planning committee has already made plans for the decor, food, and activities—all under the theme Starlit City. Tickets are being sold and everyone seems very excited.
- Finally, Safe Rides is back! Safe rides is a free car service that runs in Hastings Friday and Saturdays from 10pm to 1am (funded by the Hastings Youth Council) and is designed to act as a reliable, local transportation that teens can use if they ever need a ride home on a weekend night. It was shut down because of Covid, but now it's back and the SADD club is enthusiastically making keychains with the safe ride number on it.

Visiting with HASP Students

Senior Miranda Mosco invited me to meet with her fellow HASP (Hastings Alternative School Program) students this week as part of their Guest Speaker series. Miranda asked me to share insights on, “my work, how I chose my work, what I have learned, how others helped me get to where I am, the hardest parts of what I do and how I persevered.” The “sociable being” that I am, insisted on a conversation, through which I shared the importance of blending head, heart and hand in what you do; giving thanks (an attitude of gratitude); admitting errors; being patient and forgiving yourself and others; and, relationships—being connected to peers and mentor(s). While the conversation was brief, I believe we connected on the centrality of having a mentor, and not being shy to open up to a peer or adult, in even the smallest of ways, to identify and secure a mentor. I hope we will keep talking, and HASP will keep feeding my “thirst for knowledge.”

Portrait of a Hastings Learner – Surveys Are Out – Provide Your Voice

Gus and Elianna regularly share their perspectives as student leaders. I also learned this week from HASP students. Well beyond me, Hastings has a “thirst for knowledge” from broad perspectives. That opportunity is before us with the surveys for the *Portrait of a Hastings Learner* (POHL).

The POHL survey process is designed to gather information from multiple sources. This allows for comparisons across various groups, including where any one group on average has a divergent view from other groups. I have heard that some parents and community members are not sure they have enough knowledge on what is occurring in classrooms and schools to answer certain questions on the survey. That gap in knowledge is an essential finding for us, and we want to capture it; as a result, survey respondents should answer as best they can, or leave a question blank. We will probe survey responses and dig into this issue of “not having enough knowledge to comment.” For now, please take a moment to lend your voice, share your perspective. As “sociable beings,” with a vital “thirst for knowledge,” we need broad input—from students, staff, teaching faculty, administrators, parents and community—as we develop the *Portrait* and set strategic priorities.

Below are links to the role-specific surveys for district personnel, parents/families and community members. (Student surveys for 5-12th grade have been distributed in classes.) If you have not yet completed your role-specific survey, please click on the link below and follow the path to your survey. The deadline is Thursday, October 20.

- [POHL Personnel Letter](#) (Link for all district employees.)
- [POHL Family Letter](#) (Link for all Hastings parents.)
- [POHL Community Letter](#) (Link for Hastings residents, without children in schools.)

Be well.

Bill

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