



# THE STANHOPE CHARGER

Your District Newsletter

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 1

WINTER 2023

## FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK

Steven Hagemann, Superintendent 973-347-0008 x4102 shagemann@stanhopeschools.org

### UPCOMING EVENTS

*All dates are tentative.  
Check school website for most  
current information.*

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- Now Open—Online Kindergarten Registration
- February 7—Home & School Assoc. Meeting
- February 8—Dine to Donate at Sal's Pizzeria
- February 15—Board of Education Meeting
- February 17-21—Presidents Day/Winter Break School Closed
- February 27-March 3—Read Across America
- **March 1—**  
12:15 PM Early Dismissal  
- Parent Teacher Conferences  
1:00 PM to 3:00 PM & 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM  
- Kindergarten Registration, 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM & 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM By appointment
- **March 2—**  
12:15 PM Early Dismissal  
- Parent Teacher Conferences  
6:00 PM to 8:00 PM  
- Kindergarten Registration  
6:00 PM to 8:00 PM  
By appointment
- **March 3—**  
12:15 PM Early Dismissal
- March 8—Home & School Association Meeting
- March 10—Career Day
- March 14—Home & School Association Meeting
- March 15—Board of Education Meeting
- March 16—Snow Date for Career Day
- March 23—Spelling Bee

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To say that we've been busy at the Stanhope School District is an understatement! It's been a while since we've put out a newsletter, so I wanted to take this opportunity to share some of our accomplishments, wish farewell to our retired staff and welcome our new staff.

Last month, the Board of Education (BOE) approved a new Strategic Plan which was developed with the help of the New Jersey School Boards Association in the summer of 2022. Parents, staff, administration, BOE members and others from the community gathered on three separate evenings to identify strengths and weaknesses within our school and district, and worked to develop a shared vision for the next three to five years. The turnout was overwhelmingly positive and I look forward to leading our district towards the achievement of these goals.

In December, the district also successfully passed a bond referendum, which sought voter approval for the funding of important facilities projects at our school. These projects include a new roof, STEM lab, updated technology infrastructure, HVAC throughout the building, a new science lab,

blacktop resurfacing on our outdoor basketball courts, restroom renovations and a new boiler. Several projects are tentatively scheduled for completion in the summer of 2023, with most remaining projects to be completed in the summer of 2024.

I'd like to congratulate Mrs. Susan Davis, Mrs. Kerri Nehlsen and Mr. Jim Scheer on their retirements following the 2021/22 school year, and Mr. Roger Hedden for his retirement in December! Mrs. Davis dedicated 50 years of service as a first grade teacher to this school and community, and she was recognized at last spring's Arbor Day ceremony, where a tree was planted in her honor. I'd also like to welcome our new teachers, Mrs. Melissa Kallish (first grade), Mrs. Hannah Tobal (speech) and Mrs. Tammy Simeone (special education). During the school year, we also hired Mrs. Marylu Costanzo as our Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant (LDTC), Mr. Bryan Nicholais and Mr. DaSean Sears as an evening custodians and Ms. Neli Vorobyov, who will begin on February 15 as our newest speech pathologist, shared with Lenape Valley Regional High School.

Lastly, I'd like to sincerely thank Mrs. Cynthia Percarpio and Mr. Jonathan Clauson for their long-term commitment and service to the Board of education. Mrs. Percarpio served on the BOE for nine years, and Mr. Clauson for nearly seven years. You will be greatly missed! We also welcome Mr. Matthew Vilardo and Mr. Tom Valle to the Board and look forward to continued support for our students, staff and programs. As a reminder, all BOE meetings are being streamed live at [www.stanhopeschools.org/youtube](http://www.stanhopeschools.org/youtube).

Best wishes for a happy and healthy 2023, and thank you to our community for their continued support of our school and district!

**#WEAREVRS**

## IGNITE A WINTER THEMED LITERARY ADVENTURE!!!

Alicia L. Finklea-DiCataldo, Principal 973-347-0008 x4106 afinklea-dicataldo@stanhopeschools.org

By Mrs. Alicia DiCataldo

The winter weather has been light in terms of snow filled skies, but the overcast days seem to continue to march on. A great way to forgo the cloudiness is to jump into a good book. The following recommendations are an excellent way to get started until those sunny, warm spring days have returned again. So, grab a mug of hot cocoa, add those extra marshmallows and snuggle in with a winter themed book this month. Whether enjoyed as a nightly family read-aloud or as a solo read in a cozy corner, I am hopeful that this book list will warm the heart, provide a smile and ignite a literary adventure!



### Lower & Upper Elementary:

There Was a Cold Lady Who Swallowed Some Snow!, Lucille Colandro

The Magic of Friendship Snow, Andi Cann

Snowmen at Night, Caralyn Buehner

A Loud Winter's Nap, Katy Hudson

Marshall Mellow, JJ Landis

Polar Bears Past Bedtime, Magic Tree House, Mary Pope Osborne

Winter of the Ice Wizard, Magic Tree House, Mary Pope Osborne

The Adventures of Balto, Pat Chargot

Mr. Popper's Penguins, Florence and Richard Atwater

The Polar Bears Explorers Club, Alex Bell

Moominland Winter, Tove Jansson

The Very, Very Far North, Dan Bar-el

### Tween & Middle School:

The Great Hibernation, Tara Dairman

The Evil Wizard Smallbone, Delia Sherman

Icefall, Matthew J. Kirby

Frost Heart, Jamie Littler



Blizzard! The Storm that Changed America, Jim Murphy

Journey of the Pale Bear, Susan Fletcher

Survivor Diaries: Avalanche!, Terry Lynn Johnson

The Arctic Code, Matthew J. Kirby

Julie of the Wolves, Jean Craighead George

GreenGlass House, Kate Milford

The Winter Room, Gary Paulsen

Dog Driven, Terry Lynn Johnson

Resources:

<https://www.maryhannawilson.com/winter-themed-chapter-books/>

<https://www.funearlylearning.com/favorite-winter-snow-books/>

## CAUGHT SMILING

Preschool teacher Debra McNear and Guidance Counselor Assunta Coppola

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## FROM OUR BUSINESS OFFICE

Debi LeBrun, 973-347-0008 x4107 dlebrun@stanhopeschools.org

Dear community members,

THANK YOU for your overwhelming support of the Stanhope School District's referendum on December 13th. With the passage of the referendum, the Valley Road School will continue to be an amazing district for your children to thrive. We are so proud to be a part of a community who believes in the value of providing an innovative and well-rounded educational experience for our students in well-maintained facilities. We are already underway with the process. We

have held a few meetings with the architect to begin the groundwork. Contractors have come through after



school day hours to spec the building for the new roof, bathroom and faculty room upgrades. The STEM lab plans are constantly being looked over

while we continue to research the most creative and resourceful way to move forward. The hope is to begin the construction as soon as school is out in June. Again, thank you for being a supportive member of the Valley Road School family. If you ever have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to give me a call or stop in—my door is always open.

With you in education,

Debi LeBrun School Business Administrator/Board Secretary

## KEEPING IT HEALTHY: Grab 'n' Go Snacks for School

Jessica Frank, RN, BSN, School Nurse 973-347-0008 ext, 4110 jfrank@stanhopeschools.org

When you live a busy lifestyle, schedules can leave you wondering what to give your child when you haven't prepared a meal. Preparing ahead of time can help with those last-minute moments. However, many snacks today are high in refined carbs and sugar, which can leave you feeling unsatisfied and hungry. Picking foods and snacks that are high in protein can help satisfy hunger longer.

Here are some quick "grab n' go" high protein snacks to consider the next time you're at the store and wanting to stock up at home for those last-minute mornings. While many snacks can be unhealthy, there are plenty of healthy and portable options that you can enjoy even when you're "crunched" for time.

**MANY SNACKS TODAY ARE HIGH IN REFINED CARBS AND SUGAR, WHICH CAN LEAVE YOU FEELING UNSATISFIED AND HUNGRY.**

- ◆ Pretzel Crisps with Peanut butter or chocolate hazelnut butter
- ◆ Mini Peanut Butter - Crackers (there's a cheese version too)
- ◆ Mini Jerky Sticks/Jerky/Pepperoni sticks or slices



- ◆ Roasted and lightly salted nuts/Trail Mix
- ◆ Lunch meat/cold cuts (roll the meat slices for easy eating)
- ◆ Cheese sticks
- ◆ Greek Yogurt (mix with berries and/or granola)
- ◆ Hard boiled eggs
- ◆ Tuna and crackers
- ◆ Protein Bars

- ◆ Apple with Peanut Butter(dip into peanut butter snack cups)
- ◆ Pumpkin Seeds/Sunflower Seeds
- ◆ Peanut Butter Celery Sticks
- ◆ Hummus and Veggies
- ◆ Cottage Cheese (mix with fresh fruit or canned fruit)
- ◆ Cheesy Popcorn
- ◆ Fruit and Nut bars (choose the low sugar option)
- ◆ Protein shakes
- ◆ Nut Butter
- ◆ Homemade granola

For more information on healthy snack ideas please go to <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/healthy-snacks-for-kids>

If you have any questions or concerns please contact me at 973-347-0008 ext. 4110 jfrank@stanhopeschools.org

**#WEAREVRS**

## ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE!

By Mrs. Terry Snyder, Middle School ELA Teacher

Thespians unite! The 8th grade will be reading and acting out William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in February and March during language arts classes. Fairies, transformations, and magic flowers will set the Thames on fire! Well, maybe just the Musconetcong. You never know...there may be a budding Oscar Award-winning actor hidden in our 8th graders.

This unit is always so much fun; the students really enjoy the confusion of the young people in love, the pranks of Puck, the silliness of the tradesmen,

and being transformed into a donkey.

Just like the audience in the time of the Bard at the Globe Theater, we will have to use our imaginations to transform my classroom into the palace of the Duke of Athens and the woods outside of Athens. Be on the look out for pictures posted on the school's social media pages!



## GUIDANCE CORNER: New Year, Better Me

Assunta Coppola, Guidance Counselor 973-347-0008 ext, 4108 acoppola@stanhopeschools.org

Most of us fall into the habit of saying “New Year, New Me,” then once the ball drops we tell ourselves that we are going to completely change in this new year. We then create a list of goals and resolutions. We achieve some of the goals, but most of the time our goals are unrealistic, which results in us giving up on them. However, this year I’m encouraging my family, friends, and students to put their focus on themselves. After coming out of the pandemic I feel most people have forgotten to put themselves first. I invite you to call this year “New Year, *Better Me*.” I am going to share with you some goals that could help you as an individual and as a family become better versions of yourselves. First, make a goal to give yourself time. Time for yourself is so important, because when you take care of yourself, you are now able to take care of the others that rely on you.

Other suggestions include: read a new book every month, go to bed an extra 30 minutes earlier, treat yourself to a massage or pedicure, do something that you know will make you feel good about yourself. I understand we worry about our kids,

sports, their homework, etc., but if they see us taking care of ourselves they will learn from that and be inspired to want to take care of themselves.

Putting yourself first doesn't mean you're selfish, it's called self care. Some things you can do with your children are watch a show or a movie together, this gives you and your children time to relax. For example, I started to watch *Fuller House* with my own children. I enjoy taking this time to sit there with them and relax and laugh together. While your kids are at a sporting event take that time to walk and get your steps in. Working out helps you to release endorphins which helps your overall mood, energy level, and stress levels. Educate yourself on nutrition, fitness, water intake, etc., as doing the research will help you to better understand what you need to

do in order to achieve your goals. Dishes, laundry, and your never ending to do list will get done eventually. Every morning and night write in a journal in lieu of scrolling through your phone. Use this time to write what comes to your mind and to reflect on your day. Writing, rather than typing, helps reduce stress. Create a 2023 vision board with your family. This is a cool activity that I did with my children. We got magazines and cut out pictures to help us visualize what we want our 2023 year to look like as a family. We then created one for each of ourselves to help establish personal goals.

Be a *better* version of yourself— No need to be a *New You*. You are enough and people around you love you for who you are. Always remember you're doing a great job and at times we don't give ourselves enough credit. We are our children's role models and if we don't better ourselves who do they have to look up to? So relax, breathe, and be a better you.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at [acoppola@stanhopeschools.org](mailto:acoppola@stanhopeschools.org).

# 2023

## PRESCHOOL HAS A THRIVING POST OFFICE!

By Mrs. Deborah McNear

"I got mail!" This has become a phrase heard throughout the school as the preschool class has discovered the joy of sending drawings and pictures to other classes and staff in the building. The Post Office is just one of several learning centers in the preschool classroom. The centers change throughout the year, and gives students opportunities to have fun while learning about the world around them. (Pictured are Connor Campanile and Maeve Egan)



## IT'S ELEMENTARY: Fourth Grade Anti-Drug Poster Winners

Mrs. Lisa Benedetto

The Center for Prevention and Counseling challenges students each year to create posters with their public announcement depicting their anti-drug. All students created their own posters and their public announcements were all on display in the VRS hallway. The posters selected as the top winners were Leah, Genesis, and Nataasha. Congratulations to all students for choosing a healthy lifestyle and sharing their ideas!



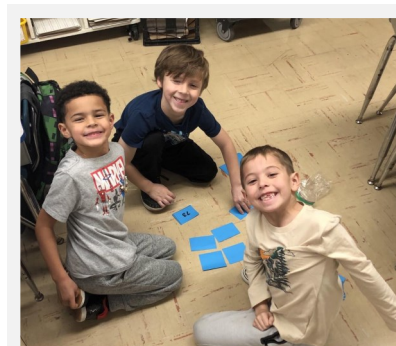
Pictured left to right: Poster winners Leah Buck, Genesis Ponce, Nataasha Bhagaloo

## IT'S ELEMENTARY: First Grade Fun

By Miss Maggie Reilly,  
Mrs. Melissa Kalish

First Grade classes teamed up to practice their knowledge of place value and expanded form. Students enjoyed joining with students from the opposite class, and playing Place Value Memory together! In Science, students put their knowledge to the test, and competed as teams in a game of "Race to the Moon Trivia". Students joined forces again to team up with friends from the

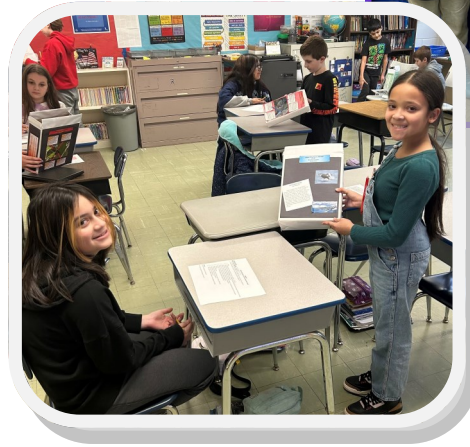
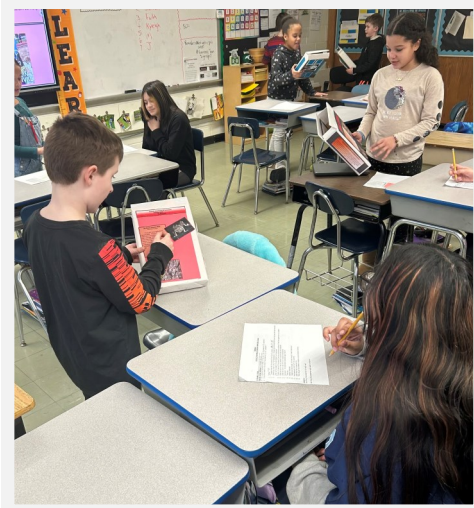
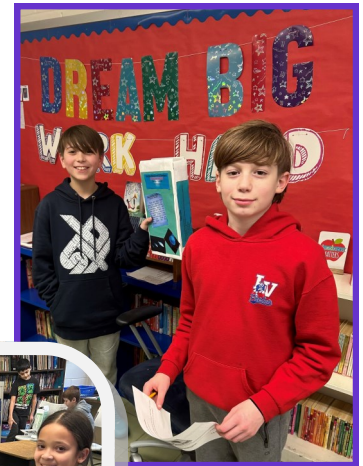
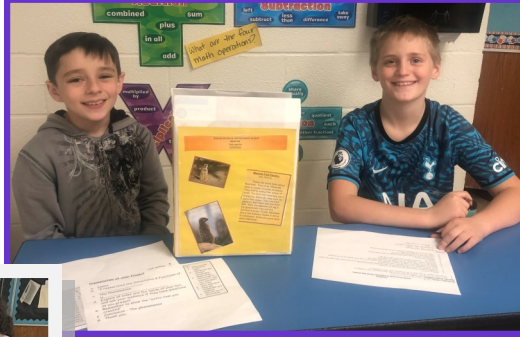
opposite class. First graders have loved working cooperatively to show what they know!



## IT'S ELEMENTARY: Fourth Grade Mini Science Expo

By Mrs. Lisa Benedetto,  
Mr. Richard Shahpazian

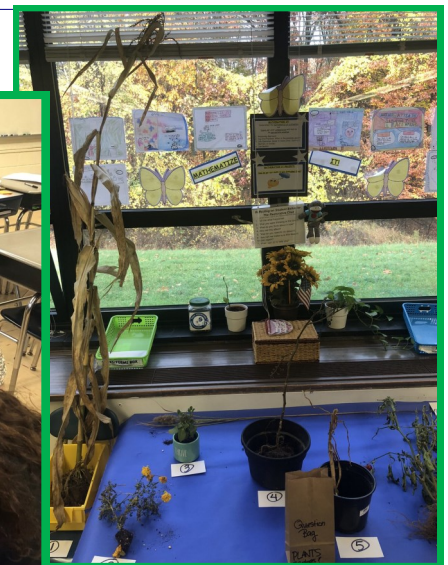
4th graders present their Animal Structures & Functions projects to 5th graders who in turn coached them about their presentation skills.



## IT'S ELEMENTARY: Investigating the Structures of Plants

Mrs. Lisa Benedetto

Fourth Graders investigated the structures of plants to identify them. Then, they proved through research, modeling, and observing plants what the functions were of each structure. Their conclusions proved the phenomenon that plants have internal and external structures that serve various functions in growth, survival, behavior, and reproduction!



## GO CHARGERS!!!

**Mrs. Elizabeth Ettinger, Varsity Coach**

Girls basketball worked very hard this year. We were able to have the 5th grade join us this year as well. We are looking forward to a great season next year!

Thanks to JV Coach Brenda Fromme.



The 2022-23 Boys Basketball Team had one of the best seasons in school history, with an 8-2 regular season record on Varsity and a 4-3 record on JV. A total of 21 out of 22 players scored points. The Varsity had a perfect 5-0 record, beating teams such as Andover, Netcong and for the first time in over 15 years, Byram. Congratulations to all student-athletes for galloping towards excellence and a job well done! Thanks to Head Coach Bill McNeir and JV Coach Kenny Ramirez!

## HONOR ROLL: MARKING PERIOD 1

### High Honor Roll

#### *Sixth Grade*

Brayden Light, Tabitha Mueller, Angelina Robles, Alena Twam

#### *Seventh Grade*

Charlotte Herold, Dylan Kelly

#### *Eighth Grade*

Jasper Balogh, Raymond Fromme, Michael Kmec, Asli Komurcu, Jake Palermo, Brooklyn Rose Perez, Daniel Recalde

### Honor Roll

#### *Sixth Grade*

Abigail Andrews, Kennedy Baadshaug, Amy Dessalines, Isabella Diodonet, Claire Frank, John Gullota, Morgan Kopich, Jack Lang, Kylie McDonald, Kaitlyn O'Connor, Sina Ozbay, Joshua Perry, Kathleen Proano, Tess Roth, Isaiah Sanchez, Shane Shemenski, Demi Small, Sienna Zapata

#### *Seventh Grade*

Analia Baca, Leo Castellana, Daniella Ciampa, Dominic Lalama, Jayden Padmore, Donovan Vergano

### *Eighth Grade*

Mykaela Castillo, Zoey De Oliveira, Noah DeKnight, Bella Garcia, Christian Kominek, Erico Magat, Jackson McDonald, Tyler Perry, Matthew Rowan, Carly Villani

**CONGRATULATIONS!  
Well Done!**

**Keep up the good work.**

**#WEAREVRS**



## HONOR ROLL: MARKING PERIOD 2

### High Honor Roll

#### *Sixth Grade*

Claire Frank, Brayden Light, Kylie McDonald, Kaitlyn O'Connor, Joshua Perry, Angelina Robles

#### *Seventh Grade*

Analia Baca, Charlotte Herold, Dylan Kelly

#### *Eighth Grade*

Raymond Fromme, Michael Kmec, Jake Palermo, Daniel Recalde

### Honor Roll

#### *Sixth Grade*

Abigail Andrews, Ayden Bruner, Kaigen Faessinger, John Gullota, Morgan Kopich, Tabitha Mueller, Sina Ozbay, Emily Perry, Kathleen Proano, Tess Roth, Demi Small, Sienna Zapata

#### *Seventh Grade*

Leo Castellana, Daniella Ciampa, Dominic Errichetti, Linda Fromme, Dominic Lalama, Emilija Milanovic, Tyler Smith-Christie, Christopher Thornton, Donovan Vergano, Andres Villa Bonilla

### *Eighth Grade*

Jasper Balogh, Aaron Cahill, Mykaela Castillo, Wytte Conklin, Zoey De Oliveira, Noah DeKnight, Bella Garcia, Christian Kominek, Asli Komurcu, Cameron Kopich, Erico Magat, Jackson McDonald, Cameron Mueller, Brooklyn Rose Perez, Tyler Perry, Anjali Portillo, Matthew Rowan, Carly Villani

**CONGRATULATIONS!  
Good Job Chargers!**

**#WEAREVRS**



## SILLY STUFF... (OR "FILLER")

### *WHERE'S WINTER?*

By Cathy Yonki

Where is Winter? It's the beginning of February, and Winter is in hibernation! Where are the crisp cold days under brilliant blue skies? They are hiding somewhere in the 40s disguised as GLOOM!

Where are the ice-skaters and hockey players on the pond? The cross coun-

try skiers on the trail? They're out biking and hiking; ditching their down parkas for fleece jackets!

Don't get me wrong—I'll complain about days in the teens just as much as the next Northerner. But how can I appreciate Spring if we've never had Winter? Perhaps I should file a "Missing Season's Report":

**MISSING: WINTER!** Last seen on

or about March of 2022, wearing a carpet of white, with trees bejeweled with ice. If found, please return to Northwest New Jersey before March 1st for just a few days!

**NO QUESTIONS ASKED!!!**

*(Disclaimer: The author takes no responsibility for jinxing us with any future snow storms)*

**MISSING**



# Did You Sign up for Career Day Yet?—Friday, March 10, 2023

By Cathy Yonki

**Career Day 2022 is in the books, but it's worth looking back at last year's event!** Students enjoyed visiting presenters showcasing careers in fitness, athletics, sales, law enforcement, the US Postal Service, retail and much more.

Particularly popular were presenters who were also Valley Road School alumni, Armando Taddei and Emily Taddei, each representing their chosen careers in professional sports and marketing, respectively. Mr. Taddei is an equipment manager for the New York Jets, and Ms. Taddei is a marketing specialist for Western Pest Control. They each engaged our students with demonstrations and information about their chosen careers.

**So, what do you do?** Wouldn't you like to come to your child's school and share some insight as to how our stu-

dents can consider a vocation, trade or career path similar to yours?

**This year's event will be held on Friday, March 10 from 11:45 AM to 2:30 PM.** (Snow date is Thursday, March 16).

The format for the event will be like a "job fair" and will be held in the school gymnasium, with the **entire student body visiting the fair throughout the day.** For those interested in representing a career, job or vocation, we will send you some tips for creating a career booth/kiosk for the program when you sign up. You do not have to be a public speaker to participate, you just need to be willing to tell students who visit your booth about what you do for a living and how they can do it too!

As an incentive, we will be having a pizza party for students in the home-

room that recruits the most presenters for the event.

**Here's how you can sign up to present your job/career:**

Please let us know at your earliest possible convenience if you would like to participate as a presenter by providing the requested information below and bring it to the Main Office, or email the information to Cathy Yonki, [cyonki@stanhopeschools.org](mailto:cyonki@stanhopeschools.org).

- **Name of Presenter Participant: Your Student(s)' name (s)**
- **Homeroom Teacher(s)**
- **Career Path to be Presented**
- **Presenter contact information:**  
 email:  
 phone:

*Pictured below: Emily Taddei talks to students about her role in marketing. Right: Armando Taddei shows excited students official NFL jerseys and helmets from the New York Jets!*



*Superintendent Hagemann, pictured above, poses with a helmet from his favorite NFL Football Team, J-E-T-S, JETS JETS JETS!*

*Pictured left: VRS Cafeteria aide, "Mr. George" as he is known to students, explains that to be an umpire, you "gotta love it when they Boo!"*

## 2022 VETERANS RECOGNITION PROGRAM LIVESTREAMED

DID YOU KNOW that for the first time, the annual Veterans Recognition Program at Valley Road was livestreamed on the school's YouTube channel.? This enabled parents and family members to attend the event "virtually." The livestream was facilitated and meticulously produced by the school's Broadcast & Social Media Coordinator, Nick Lalama.

GREAT JOB MR. LALAMA!

Photo credits, Nick Lalama



Top right, veterans stand to be recognized.

Keynote Speaker, Mr. Joseph Balogh, pictured right, speaks to the assembly about his military service.

His grandson, Jasper, and fellow class officer Brooklyn Rose Perez, below, also address the assembly.

Lower right, Girl Scouts present the colors just before the Pledge of Allegiance.



## 100TH DAY CHALLENGE—Dine To Donate At Sal's Wed., 2/8

By Mrs. Karen Henry

The 100th Day of School is coming in February, so it's time for the VRS 100th Day Challenge. "What's that?" you ask. VRS is partnering up with schools throughout Sussex County to help the nonprofit organization "Connect for Community" collect personal hygiene items to support up to 40 local food pantries. Throughout the month of February, we will be collecting personal hygiene items such as deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, combs/brushes, shampoo/conditioner, paper towels, wrapped rolls of toilet paper, tissues, dishwashing liquid, body soap, and laundry detergent. Did you know people receiving government assistance can not buy these personal hygiene items with SNAP funds (formerly known as food stamps)?

The VRS 100th Day Challenge is this - how many of the listed items can we collect 100 of? We are asking anyone who is able to donate any of these items to bring them in and put them in the collection bins set up in the front entry hallway of the school. The collection bins will be there throughout the month of February.

**DINE TO DONATE EVENT—  
Wednesday, February 8**

In order to boost our totals, a Dine to Donate event will be held at Sal's Pizzeria, 81 Route 183, Stanhope on Wednesday, February 8 from 4 to 8 pm. Some of the VRS teachers and staff will be working at the event, so make plans to eat

out or order in that night. A portion of all sales, dine-in, take-out, and delivery, will be donated to our VRS 100th Day Challenge. The proceeds from the Dine to Donate will be used to purchase items that we are low on, so that we get closer to the goal of collecting 100 of each item.



**WOW! “WeAreVRS” really does mean, Values, Respect, Service!**

## STANHOPE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Stanhope, NJ 07874

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Fax: 973-347-8368



Steven T. Hagemann, Superintendent  
Alicia L. Finklea-DiCataldo, Principal  
Debi LeBrun, Business Administrator/Board  
Secretary

Creating Stanhope's Future...  
One Child At A Time!

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Follow us on Twitter  
& Instagram:  
@StanhopeVRS

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BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS

7:00 PM

Regularly the Third Wednesday of the  
Month (check school calendar for updates)

## CONGRATULATIONS MRS. SUSAN DAVIS!

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Above: Details of the dedication plaque commemorating Mrs. Davis' 50 years of Teaching in Stanhope.

Right: Mrs. Davis "planting" the Pink Dogwood tree outside her classroom.

The Arbor Day Tree planting was in honor of Mrs. Davis' retirement.

