

Southern Dutchess News

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Fishkill, East Fishkill, Wappingers Falls, Town of Wappinger, Town and City of Poughkeepsie

September 6-12, 2023

BCSD, WCSD superintendents offer messages to students as new school year begins District leaders discuss improvements, communication

By Kristine Coulter

The Beacon City School District (BCSD) and Wappingers Central School District (WCSD) staff and administrations are welcoming students back this week. Beacon City School District Superintendent Dr. Matthew Landahl and Wappingers Central School District Superintendent Dr. Dwight Bonk answered questions from Southern Dutchess News about the upcoming 2023-2024 school year. The superintendents also offered their back-to-school messages for students and parents/guardians.

WCSD makes 'capital improvements to infrastructure' of 15 schools,

"During the course of the summer, the District had various summer school programs that involved nearly 1,000 of our 10,350 (K-12) students that proved to be very successful by providing additional and necessary academic intervention services and enrichment, as well as much needed emotional support for our students that will be beneficial in transitioning into the 2023-24 school year," said Bonk. "We are very grateful to the entire WCSD community for the support of our budget. The approval of the school budget has enabled the District to enhance our academic program and provide the necessary mental health and school safety support for a safe school environment, which allows our students the opportunity to reach their full potential."

The District has made necessary capital improvements to the infrastructure of its 15 school buildings and grounds, stated Bonk. "We continue our collaboration in the area of school safety and mental health services with Dutchess County



The Beacon City School District 2023-24 school year began for students on September 5. The Wappingers Central School District started September 6.

-Courtesy photo

Executive William O'Neil, Dutchess County Sheriff Kirk Imperati, Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and Community Health, Dutchess County Department of Emergency Services, the New York State Police, local municipal officials, and law enforcement partners that serve our District from the Town of

East Fishkill, Town of Fishkill, Village of Fishkill, Town of Poughkeepsie, Town of Wappinger, and the Village of Wappingers Falls. We are pleased to report that we will continue to have an increased police presence at our 10

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New COVID-19 variant detected in NYC wastewater

By Kate Goldsmith

Last week, a new, closely monitored strain of COVID-19 was detected in New York City wastewater, according to the New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH), which conducts wastewater analysis across the state. Health officials say it's likely that the variant, BA.2.86, is circulating in the City.

Previous to its arrival in New York, BA.2.86 had been found in cases in Israel, Denmark, South Africa, Michigan and Virginia. It has been designated a Variant Under Monitoring (VUM) by the World Health Organization (WHO). It appears to be the most genetically different strain since the original Omicron variant, which is significant because mutations may allow the virus to evade prior immunity, the DOH said in a press release.

Reacting to reports of the new variant, along with an increase in reported cases and hospitalizations this summer, Gov. Kathy Hochul recently announced new steps the State of New York is taking to protect individuals from COVID-19.

"While New Yorkers might want to be done with COVID-19, COVID-19 isn't done with us," Hochul said. "...I strongly urge everyone to take appropriate precautions to protect themselves and their communities. To keep New Yorkers safe, my administration will continue to monitor this situation, share information on the new boosters as soon as it's available, and continue to make N-95 masks available statewide."

An updated COVID-19 vaccine tailored to guard against certain variants is expected to arrive in pharmacies and doctors' offices this Fall. Hochul encourages New Yorkers to monitor the CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/>) and the DOH (<https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/>) websites frequently for information on updated COVID-19 vaccine administration recommendations.

Hospitalizations low in Dutchess

In Dutchess County, the seven-day average of reported cases was up over 19 percent as of Aug. 28.

"As we've seen over the past few years, that while COVID is ever present, there are times when case numbers increase or spike. In recent weeks, there has been an increase in cases both nationally and locally," said Livia Santiago-Rosado, MD,

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Town of Poughkeepsie teams up with Habitat for Humanity for 9/11 community project

By Kristine Coulter

"Habitat for Humanity of Dutchess does an annual project on 9/11 to honor those who have served. Habitat for Humanity contacted Town of Poughkeepsie Supervisor, Jay Baisley, and together planned for the 2023 Habitat Day of Service in honor of 9/11 to be at Fairview Park. The project will consist of revitalizing the veteran's memorial and other improvements to the park," explained Janet McHugh, who is the recreation director for the Town of Poughkeepsie.

So, what do people need to know if they want to volunteer?

Anyone who wants to volunteer may contact Habitat of Humanity of Dutchess at 845-297-0806 or email Volunteers@habitatdutchess.org.

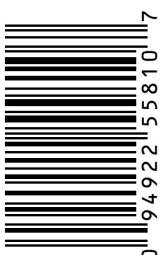


The Town of Poughkeepsie will be working with Habitat for Humanity of Dutchess County on a community service project to commemorate 9/11.

-Courtesy photo

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Your News



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150 students complete requirements in Summer Youth Employment Program

More than 150 young participants with various backgrounds and interests on August 16 completed the Department of Community and Family Services' (DCFS) weeks-long Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), which empowers the youth and prepares them for success by providing invaluable real-world work experience and skill development, laying a strong foundation for their future careers. Wednesday's SYEP graduation was coordinated by the Dutchess County Workforce Investment Board (DCWIB) and held at Dutchess BOCES in Salt Point.

The annual SYEP provides qualified students, ages 14 to 20 and whose families qualify for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), a 6-8 week-long course, which includes summer job placement, designed to help them prepare for future, permanent employment.

County Executive William F.X. O'Neil said, "Dutchess County can be immensely proud of today's graduates and the dedication they've shown throughout the Summer Youth Employment Program. These young people have demonstrated an eagerness to learn and the determination to excel in the professional world. As they move forward, they carry with them

the experience, knowledge and confidence that will undoubtedly propel them toward brighter futures."

Students who took part in the SYEP received job placements accompanied by mentorship – ranging in industry, skill level and geographic location – and worked an average of 20 hours per week at one of more than a dozen businesses throughout Dutchess County, including Discovery Children's Museum, Hidden Hollow Farm, Gennie's Soul Food Restaurant, Community Music Space and Taste Budd's Café. Training coincided with the students' employment throughout July and August, giving them the chance to learn skills, go back and apply those skills on the job, and then gather again to discuss which were successful. Through the WIB's partnerships with local businesses, organizations and government agencies, participants were immersed in a diverse range of industries, including technology, healthcare, hospitality and more – exposure which not only helped participants discover their passions, but also paved the way for potential career paths.

Training topics included:

- problem-solving;
- teamwork;
- verbal and non-verbal communication;
- stress management;
- fundamental fiscal management concepts; and
- goal setting and employment strategies.

DCWIB Executive Director Louise McLoughlin said, "The Dutchess County Workforce Investment Board proudly partners with the Department of Community & Family Services to offer this impactful program, which makes a difference in so many young people's lives. Wednesday's graduates have learned critical lifelong skills this summer, and we hope they'll continue to hone those skills as they prepare for their post-school life."

The SYEP offered participants more than just work experience. Wednesday's graduation, for example, included workshops and seminars designed to enhance essential skills, including communication, teamwork, problem-solving and financial literacy. Local business owners and experts in their respective fields led Wednesday's sessions, aimed to provide the young people with a holistic development experience, and County Executive O'Neil shared his personal story, detailing his journey from military service and success in the private sector to his leadership roles in County government.

Through their participation in the program, hard work and dedication, the graduates of the 2023 Dutchess County SYEP



County Executive William F.X. O'Neil offers remarks to the SYEP participants and shares with them his experience from success in the private sector to public sector leadership.

- Courtesy photos

are now better prepared to transition into higher education or the workforce. They have gained practical skills, expanded their networks and fostered a strong sense of responsibility and professionalism.

DCFS directed \$535,230 to the DCWIB for the 2023 Summer Youth Employment Program from the federally funded TANF program. SYEP's goal is for the young participants to enjoy a positive work experience while giving them an opportunity to be productive, explore career options and earn a certificate that confirms their readiness for entry-level work, as defined by employers across the country.

BCSD, WCSD superintendents offer messages to students

Continued from cover

elementary schools throughout each school day, as well as School Resource Officers at Van Wyck Junior High School, Wappingers Junior High School, John Jay High School, and Roy C. Ketcham High School," he said. The superintendent continued, "The District has also secured a new and enhanced (VMS) Visitor Management System, which will be utilized at all of our buildings to continue to ensure that all visitors meet the safety criteria to do such. In the area of student mental health services, programmatic changes have been made to enhance services for all students."

The District has hired Wilson Castro, said Bonk, who previously served as an assistant principal at John Jay High School, as the new principal of Van Wyck Junior High School.

"Dr. Donna Moss will also serve as Interim Principal at Sheafe Road Elementary School to begin the school year. The District will begin the search for a principal in the early fall," he said.

Bonk noted, "Wappingers Central School District will continue to expand our regular curricular offerings, especial-

ly in the areas of career and technical education, and provide a myriad of extra-curricular programs for our students to become active participants in their school. We are also grateful for the support that we have received from our business community in establishing School-Business Partnerships, which have provided our students with pertinent career exploration experiences that have given them knowledge regarding the types of employment opportunities that are available in our region and the skills necessary to obtain them. In closing, we look forward to the return of our 10,350 students and a most productive and rewarding school year for all!"

BCSD community can expect 'increased communication'

"Parents and the community can expect increased communication and more opportunities for students in the district. We are implementing our new strategic plan this year and we are very excited to share updates on our progress with the community. We have planned for increased clubs and extracurricular opportunities for students this year and increased opportunities for parent and community engagement," said Landahl.

South Avenue Elementary School has a new principal, Kelly Amendola. Amendola, said Landahl, began a few weeks ago in the BCSD. "She was an assistant principal in Newburgh [Enlarged City School District] for the last three years and before that, she was a middle school science teacher in the Bronx for nine years. She is very excited to get this school year started!" he noted.

"My message to the students is to use this upcoming school year to make new friends and try new activities. The beginning of the school year is a great time to meet new people and sign up for new activities that are available to you. Every member of the school district can't wait to see you, get to know you, and help you learn and grow this year. Ask any of us if you need help with anything. Have a great year!" said Landahl.

You are invited to a free event BREAKFAST WITH THE CANDIDATES MEET AND GREET

- Tommy Zurhellen for County Executive
- Anthony Parisi for District Attorney
- Kenya Gadsden for County Clerk
- Jim Rogers for Family Court Judge
- Robin Licari for Wappinger Town Supervisor
- Kathleen Dailey for County Legislature
- Heather O'Dell, Wappinger Town Council
- Fritz Zernike for County Legislature



When: Saturday, September 23
Time: 9:00 AM
Location: River Valey Arts Center
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 Wappingers Falls

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Two new Nuvance Health-GoHealth Urgent care centers open in Wappingers Falls, Kingston

Two Nuvance Health urgent care centers reopened this month under a new partnership with Nuvance Health, Northwell Health and GoHealth Urgent Care. The two new Nuvance Health-GoHealth Urgent care centers provide New York's Hudson Valley with elevated levels of in-person and virtual care, including a convenient "save your spot" tool.

Nuvance Health-GoHealth plans to meaningfully expand the network in Hudson Valley and Fairfield County, Conn. throughout 2023 and beyond.

"When you or someone in your family gets sick or hurt, it is crucial to be seen quickly by a trusted provider," said Kreshnik Jusufi, Director of Operations, Nuvance Health-GoHealth Urgent Care. "We are proud to provide New York's Hudson Valley with convenient access to urgent care that is directly connected to the expertise and deep community roots of Nuvance Health and Northwell Health. We look forward to caring for patients in our communities and ensuring the health and wellness of residents."

The new Nuvance Health-GoHealth Urgent Care centers are located at:

Kingston
1240 Ulster Ave., Kingston
Reopened on August 2,

Wappingers Falls
1530 Route 9, Wappingers Falls
Reopened on August 3

Nuvance Health-GoHealth centers offer patients aged six months and older a wide

array of services for non-life-threatening conditions, including flu, fever, earaches, insect bites, sprains, simple fractures, eye injuries and cuts requiring stitches. The centers also provide X-ray services, onsite lab and COVID-19 testing. The centers are open every day, including holidays. Regular hours are Monday through Sunday, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Nuvance Health-GoHealth's centrally located centers and virtual platform will provide convenient access to care. Nuvance Health providers deliver and lead patient care, and they can seamlessly refer patients to primary and specialty care providers in Nuvance Health's robust network when needed.

Nuvance Health-GoHealth combines the community and clinical expertise of Northwell Health and Nuvance Health. Northwell Health, through its urgent care professional corporation (PC), is responsible for all clinical operations across the Nuvance Health-GoHealth network, including the employment of providers, care delivery and quality. Northwell Health will maintain operations for the Northwell Health-GoHealth Urgent Care centers in the New York City metropolitan area and surrounding boroughs and counties.

Patients seeking care can walk into any center or use Nuvance Health-GoHealth's new online "save-a-spot" tool, which allows patients to save time by securing their spot in line, checking in and completing registration before arriving.

For details about all Nuvance Health-GoHealth locations or to save a spot online, visit www.gohealthuc.com/nuvancehealth.

Wappingers Falls Rotary donates school supplies to Wappingers Central School District



Todd Bowen, president of the Rotary Club of Wappingers Falls (right), stands by Wappingers Central School District Superintendent Dr. Dwight Bonk in front of the school supplies Rotarians collected for local students.

-Courtesy photo

By Kristine Coulter

The Rotary Club of Wappingers Falls held a School Supply Drive recently. The drive is to provide supplies for the new school year to students who need them.

"The Rotary Club of Wappingers Falls used to host this School Supply Drive years ago but then stopped due to it not being a need. As Club President, I felt like it was important to bring it back to make sure every student has the school supplies they need to have a successful school year especially in the times we live in," explained Todd Bowen, who is president of the Wappingers Falls Rotary Club.

The drive was held during the summer vacation.

"We had three drop off locations, Wappinger Town Hall, Wappingers Falls Village Hall and Trustco Bank in Fishkill. Trustco Bank in Fishkill

donated 50 drawstring backpacks and insulated lunch bags to our school supply drive. Each bag also contained school supplies," he said.

Asked what Rotarians hope for the students for the coming school year, Bowen responded, "The Wappingers Falls Rotarians hope much success for all of the students. We are proud to give school supplies to the three Wappingers Central School District elementary schools and we are excited to begin our Students of the Month program again in October."

The Student of the Month program recognizes one student a month from Roy C. Ketcham High School, Wappingers Junior High School, Myers Corners, Sheafe Road and Evans elementary school.

"We think it is very important to highlight students' achievements in their academic career," Bowen said.

Join us this Saturday, September 9th from 1:00-4:00 for the 1st Annual Eastdale Village Sidewalk Sale



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