



HUDSONHighlights

Hands-on Science on the Hudson River

"Our students cheered when the first fish was caught," said third grade teacher Tani Quinion. "That was when I realized how meaningful this event was to them."

Mrs. Quinion was talking about "A Day in the Life of the Hudson River," an annual event that uses our local geography to engage students in hands-on science and support environmental research.

For the first time, third graders from Montgomery C. Smith Elementary School participated in the event and helped collect scientific data for the Department of Environmental Conservation. As in past years, Hudson High School students in Jim McDarby's Advanced Placement Environmental Science and Marine Science classes, as well as the Envirothon team, also took part in the research initiative.

On October 22nd, they joined thousands of other students gathered at more than 100 locations along the Hudson River to learn about the river's ecosystem and collect samples.

MCSES third graders used a casting net to catch and identify fish, measured the turbidity (clarity) of the water and used compasses to locate a river scene to sketch.

"The river is right here in their community, so making a connection with the river and learning about the natural phenomenon in their back yard was easy for them," Mrs. Quinion said about her students.

Before the field trip, Mrs. Quinion's class learned about the Hudson River from Samantha Moses, who teaches STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Math) at the elementary school. They learned about many aspects of the Hudson River from Ms. Moses, including the different types of fish and other organisms found in the river.

HHS students collected water samples and performed a variety of chemical tests to determine properties such as dissolved oxygen, pH, salinity and turbidity (or cloudiness). They most enjoyed seine netting, which required them to put on chest waders and enter the Hudson River to try and catch fish for identification.

"I really enjoy bringing my students to 'A Day in the Life' because it allows them to perform a hands-on scientific study of the river," said Mr. McDarby. "They can review material we've discussed in class, learn more about the ecology of the river and fully participate in the collection of data."

The data collected by students will be studied by the Department

of Environmental Conservation and compared with other areas so they can build a better understanding of how their piece of the river fits into the larger Hudson estuary ecosystem. The data collected allows the DEC to create a "snapshot" of the river ecosystem at a certain point in time.

"It was a great event," said Mrs. Quinion. "The kids were excited and had a lot of enthusiasm. We hope to include more third grade classes next year."



Mentoring Program Encourages Positive Choices

Think back to your time as a student or a new employee. There is a good chance you had a mentor to help guide you through the waters and figure out how to succeed. A quality mentor at school can help inspire student interest in education and attending school regularly.

The “Sohotra Squad” at Hudson Junior High School is a new mentoring program led by one of our School Resource Officers, Deputy Zach Sohotra from the Columbia County Sheriff’s Office. The group meets regularly, at least twice a week during study halls or lunches, to discuss behavioral goals and challenges.

“The primary goal of this program is to largely impact the students’ investments into their own educational experience,” explained Deputy Sohotra. “While improved academic performance could be a positive outcome, we’re more focused on improving their attitudes toward school, perceptions of law enforcement and rule following, their behavioral decisions and metacognition around those decisions, mindfulness, and presence within classes and school.”

Alwyn Lewis, a student in the Sohotra Squad, said he loves the mentoring group because Deputy Sohotra and others help him set goals to be better and they revisit those goals with him every week so he stays on track.

The Sohotra Squad also runs community circles to discuss their goals and challenges as a group. This gives students an opportunity to tell their stories and share their own perspectives without judgment.

“Students work together to identify different obstacles and barriers, as well as their own contributions to those obstacles and barriers, and subsequently determine which are controllable by them and which are not,” said Deputy Sohotra.

The structure of the Sohotra Squad is based on restorative practices, which means the mentors proactively build relationships and a sense of community to prevent conflict and negative behavior. The goals of this community building include conflict resolution, healing, decision making, problem solving, information sharing, relationship development and other support.

“Overall, I wanted to help kids identify ways that they could better themselves so that they are more self-sustainable throughout the remainder of their school experience, into their teenage years and then adulthood,” said Deputy Sohotra.

When time allows, Principal Derek Reardon and Tom Giosa, a Music teacher at HJHS, also serve as mentors for the Sohotra Squad.



Here are some facts about mentoring from Attendance Works:

- Students who meet regularly with their mentors are 52% less likely than their peers to skip a day of school.
- Students who meet regularly with their mentors are 37% less likely than their peers to skip a class.
- Students at-risk for not graduating were 36% more likely to aspire to enroll in and graduate from college if they had a mentor.
- Youth who had a mentor growing up are 55% more likely to later be enrolled in college.

Attendance Works is a national research initiative dedicated to reducing chronic absence and advancing student success in our nation's schools.



American Sign Language

More than 80 students are learning to speak with their hands in the new American Sign Language (ASL) courses at Hudson Junior/Senior High School. Students in Grades 8-12 can now choose between ASL and Spanish to satisfy the language credits required for graduation.

"Learning sign language is cool," shared 10th grade student Hallie DeLeslie. "I like that I'll be able to communicate with a broader range of people, specifically those who have hearing difficulties."

Hudson is one of three school districts in the Twin Counties to offer ASL as a language option.

"We are excited to add ASL to our World Languages Department this year," said Dr. Maria Lagana Suttmeier, Superintendent of Schools. "Learning ASL is a skill that students can use throughout their personal and professional lives. Not only do students learn a new form of communication, but they learn empathy and cultural awareness as well."



MCSES Introduces Sensory Hallways

Students are hopping, skipping and jumping their way down the hall using two interactive sensory hallways at Montgomery C. Smith Elementary School.

It's as simple as walking down a normal hallway, but along the way there are quick activities that encourage more movement and coordination. As students pass through the sensory hallways they can complete any or all of the activities, including a hopscotch board and wall push-ups.

The sensory paths help students get some energy out if they're feeling a little restless and need a quick break from class or if they finish their work early. Sensory hallways also add extra exercise throughout the day and help children develop motor skills like balance, hand-eye coordination and spatial awareness.

The sensory paths are located in the kindergarten and first grade hallways, and three more sensory hallways are planned for other locations.



NEW HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Mr. Robert LaCasse was appointed as the new principal at Hudson Senior High School by the Board of Education on October 21, 2019.

Mr. LaCasse, who served as the Associate Principal at HHS since 2014, replaced Dr. Antonio Abitabile as building principal after Dr. Abitabile began his new position as Superintendent of Schools at the Lansingburgh Central School District. Mr. LaCasse's first official day as Principal was November 25th.

Not only is Mr. LaCasse a graduate of Hudson High School, but he has worked in the district for 20 years. Prior to becoming an administrator, Mr. LaCasse taught Social Studies



Photo: Lance Wheeler

at the junior and senior high schools and high school Economics. He also coached Bluehawk football and baseball.



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Creative Career Luncheon Series



High school students learn about interesting career paths from community members and HHS alumni during the Creative Career Luncheon series held throughout the school year.

In October, students learned about finance careers from Mike Bucci (Class of 1979). As a Certified Public Accountant, Bucci talked about the various aspects of running an accounting firm, as well as career opportunities related to accounting, bookkeeping, business and finance.

Molly Kowee (Class of 2010) visited in December to speak with students about careers in broadcasting and journalism. As a newscaster for WHIO in Ohio, Kowee shared her insights on working in the news industry, the importance of good journalism, and the balance between flexibility and deadlines.

The Creative Career Luncheon series was started by community member John Freidman and coordinated by former principal Dr. Antonio Abitabile as a way to introduce students to career opportunities they may not have considered. Examples of previous career topics include: acupuncture, business technology, construction, design and manufacturing, production design, and welding. The lunches happen several times each school year and the next presentation will be from the National Propane Gas Association.

