



The Connection

WATERFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WINTER/SPRING 2024

*Bringing the accomplishments and initiatives of the Waterford Public Schools to the Town, Community and beyond to create a **Connection** that will reinforce a strong commitment to coming together to educate the whole child.*

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School Security in WPS



At the February 22, 2024 Board of Education meeting, board members approved the addition of school security personnel in Waterford Public Schools. To complement the current model of two School Resource Officers, one at CLMS and one at WHS, the board moved to add a school resource officer and armed security officers beginning in the 2024-2025 school year.

In her opening statement, Board of Education Chairperson Pat Fedor recognized the extensive process that the Board participated in regarding school security personnel.

“Over the last year, Board of Education members have had lengthy discussions concerning school security, improvements being made, as well as the consideration of enhanced measures, one of them being the addition of security personnel at each of our schools similar to the SRO’s that are currently in place at the middle and high school. We have met as a Board several times in executive sessions (necessary when school security is being discussed). Many of those sessions included the Chief of Police who has provided us with invaluable information, answered our questions and provided us with guidance on school security matters.”


The process included:

- ◆ A [School Safety Forum](#) held on November 15, 2023 that was open to Waterford families and the community. This informative night included a presentation on school safety, the roles of school resources officers, and definitions of emergency situations and also recognized the partnership between the Waterford Police Department and the Waterford Public Schools.
- ◆ An email was sent to parents/guardians and staff on January 3, 2024 requesting input on the topic of adding school security personnel. The email outlined ways to submit feedback, including a designated school security email, written public comment, and also attendance at a special meeting to provide in-person public comment.
- ◆ A [Special Meeting](#) of the Board of Education was held on January 17, 2024 and allowed for the board to receive public comment from parents/guardians and the community on the topic of adding security personnel at each of the elementary schools. Superintendent Girard presented an overview of school security personnel, providing clarity on the difference between an SRO and ASO.
- ◆ Questions brought up at the Special Meeting were addressed in a Frequently Asked Questions document that was distributed district-wide on January 29, 2024.


Chairperson Fedor noted that “Board members came to this decision with various points of view, questions, concerns and opinions but with a very common objective: to do what was best for the students in Waterford. I am very proud of all of the members of this Board – they stayed focused on the topic, listened carefully, asked probing questions and worked collaboratively to reach consensus.” Click on the following link to view the February 22, 2024 Board of Education meeting - [BOE YouTube Channel](#)

Waterford Wonders

The Waterford Board of Education recognized students from Oswegatchie Elementary School and Quaker Hill Elementary School at the Board of Education meetings in the months of January and February respectively as Waterford Wonders.



**OSWEGATCHIE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**



Hector
Abreu

**WATERFORD
WONDERS**

Hector Abreu - *“Hector is an accomplished drummer and active member of our school band ensemble. He is a community athlete. He is a mentor and helper for our younger students. He takes time out of his day to assist our custodians in making sure our cafeteria is in tip-top shape. He always looks staff in the eye to say hello and thank you. He is routinely complimented by his bus driver for being a helper and a gentleman. I can count on him to be honest and to intervene as a problem solver amongst his peers.”* ~ Joseph Macrino, OSW Principal


Olurotimi “Ro” Onodipe - *“Ro truly loves his peers and staff. He fills others’ buckets each day with his smile and hugs. Ro’s positivity and humor is contagious. Ro has a very full schedule and works hard on his academics each day. Ro works hard to achieve his goals, he never gives up, and is always striving to do his best. He loves to laugh, and participates in class as often as he can. He is very proud of his accomplishments, and always asks if he can take his work home to show his parents. Ro is a member of the QH Safety Squad and helps out in PreK, and a valued member of the band and chorus. Mrs. Metivier notes: “Ro may be the most passionate chorus member to walk through the doors of Quaker Hill Elementary School. Whether it be in a rehearsal or concert, he sings with his whole heart each and every day.” He is dedicated, enthusiastic and embodies the essence of the ‘Waterford Wonder’.”* ~ Chris Discordia, QH Principal




**WATERFORD
WONDERS**



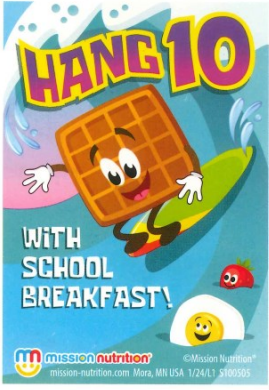

Juliana Oles - *“Juliana is a deserving recipient of the Waterford Wonders award for her leadership and kindness for all of her years here at QH! Juliana volunteers helping our Kindergarteners at recess as a member of our Safety Squad, and is a valued member of the Orchestra. Her teachers note that: Juliana is a hard-working, conscientious student who always shows high-quality work in what she produces daily in class. She is kind, polite, and respectful. I can always count on her to help out when needed. Juliana is an exemplary student. She puts forth tremendous effort and takes her learning seriously. She can often be found working on assignments during free time. Juliana has a positive attitude and includes others. She is kind and respectful to everyone. Juliana is a friend to everyone, showing kindness and positivity in her daily life. She participates with enthusiasm and shares her thoughts and ideas fearlessly. She is a quiet role model and source of support for her peers in an inclusive, welcoming manner.”* ~ Chris Discordia, QH Principal



**WATERFORD
WONDERS**

The Waterford Wonders program recognizes students for accomplishments in academics, exemplary character, going above and beyond and for being a good role model for their peers.

Congratulations to Hector, Ro, and Juliana for being selected as a Waterford Wonder!



Waterford Public Schools will celebrate National School Breakfast Week (NSBW) from March 4 - 8, 2024. This week is designed to highlight “the importance of a nutritious school breakfast in fueling students for success. This special observance during the first week of March celebrates the national School Breakfast Program and is designed to shine a spotlight on the critical role of breakfast in supporting student learning and development.” <https://schoolnutrition.org/event/2024-national-school-breakfast-week/>

Going along with the theme of *Surfs Up!*, the Waterford Food Services Department has planned special breakfast menus each day to get students excited and ready to start their day. Starting on Monday with “Wipe Out” and ending on Friday with “Aloha”, students will enjoy nutritious breakfast options. To help students “Ride the wave of excitement” during National

Breakfast Week, the Food Services Department has planned fun activities for students including Silly Scratch Offs and fun give aways. To view the menus, visit the Waterford Public Schools website at <https://www.waterfordschools.org/Parents & Family/FoodServices/Menu & Prices>.

WPS Director of School Dining and Nutrition Services, Dianne Houlihan, provided more information on the nutritional requirements for school breakfasts. “School breakfasts must meet the applicable recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and are designed to ensure that students enter the classroom well-nourished and ready to learn. The meal pattern for breakfast includes fruits (or vegetables), whole grain-rich foods and/or meats/meat alternates, and milk. Breakfasts are also limited in sodium, calories, saturated fats, and trans fats. At breakfast, schools must offer students all three required food components in at least the minimum required amounts. The components at breakfast are: whole grain or whole grain rich grains (with optional meats/meat alternates allowed); juice/fruit/vegetable; and milk. Under the mandated Offer Versus Serve program (OVS), a student must be offered at least four food items and must select at least three food items, one of which must be ½ cup of fruit or vegetables for OVS.”



Facts from Food Services - Did you know...

- Only food items and vendors approved by the State of Connecticut can be served in WPS. The Director of School Nutrition and Dining Services must reference the [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) outlined by the State of Connecticut prior to ordering supplies and menu planning.
- The Food Services Department partners with local farms to provide fresh vegetable options for students - <https://healthyplaneat.com/>
- School cafeterias hold taste tests for students to try new foods and recipes. i.e. CLMS just held a taste test for Sweet Potato Soup to see if it was a good menu option going forward.
- The cereal served in the WPS cafeterias is not the same cereal found in grocery stores. The cereal served in WPS is whole grain rich (WGR) , with less sugar and increased daily nutrients.
- Director of School Dining and Nutrition Services Dianne Houlihan placed second on the Food Network’s show “Chopped” in 2011 and was able to tour the country with the network and was even invited to the White House.
- School cafeteria staff create bulletin boards each month (on their own time) to encourage students to make healthy choices and live a nutritious lifestyle. Food Service staff also dress up and have shirts made to create a fun atmosphere for students.



High school students from Waterford, New London and Saint Bernard exhibited their artworks throughout the month of January at the Hygienic Art Galleries on Bank Street in New London. The students' beautiful talents on display at the gallery stand as a testament to their dedication to the arts throughout their years in the Waterford Public Schools.



WHS Senior Kla Key presented "Miraculous Pair", a painting in acrylic.



Whalers
Lancers
Saints



WHS Sophomore Jayden Campisi proudly presents his paper collage titled "Clownfish with Anemone".

HIGH SCHOOL
EXHIBITION



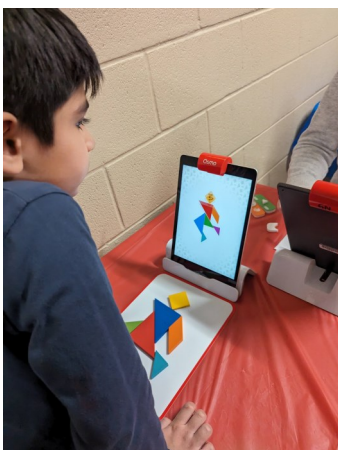
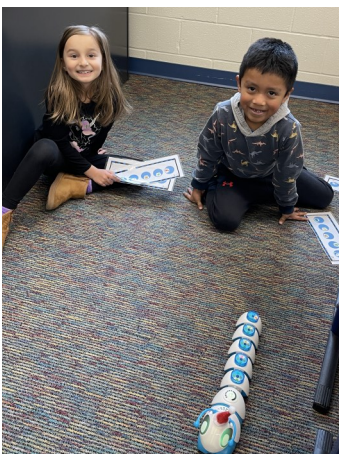
The Waterford High School Library in partnership with the WHS History Department, hosted a traveling exhibit from American Yad Vashem titled - *Besa: A Code of Honor - Muslim Albanians who Rescued Jews during the Holocaust*. This exhibit told the story of the "Righteous Among the Nations - non-Jews who risked their lives saving Jews during the Holocaust." The exhibit included portraits and writings about Muslim families in Albania who saved Jews during the Holocaust, converging between two seemingly opposed worlds. Over 150 WHS students from a variety of history classes attended the presentation and toured the exhibit.

Hour of Code at WPS

Students in grades PreK-5 in Waterford once again participated in the 2023-24 Hour of Code Event to celebrate Computer Science. The [Hour of Code](#) is a global movement introducing tens of millions of students worldwide to computer science, inspiring kids to learn more, breaking stereotypes, and leaving them feeling empowered. As a district we know that whatever field our students choose to go into as adults, their ability to succeed will increasingly depend on understanding how technology works. Our schools are making a statement that Waterford is ready to teach these foundational 21st-century skills.



During the Hour of Code, students participated in a one-hour introduction to computer science during the school day, designed to demystify code and show that anybody can learn the basics. Coding requires discipline, attention to detail, perseverance, the ability to predict an outcome and problem-solving skills. These are skills that are important for all of our students in Waterford to fully develop. *Article and photos by Laura McCue, Technology Specialist*





OSW - Liam Autrey



OSW - Rue Waddington



GN - Luna Cassar and Laymi De La Torre



QH - Corey Jones

Pictured with the winners - Stephen Dubicki, Fire Marshal; Spencer Bauch, Fire Investigator ; Kathleen Peterson, Community Safety Educator. Chief Michael Howley and Comfort dog, Ginger are pictured with the GN Finalists.

Waterford Public Schools' 4th and 5th grade classes participated in the 2024 CT Fire Prevention Poster Recognition Program coordinated through the Waterford Fire Marshal's Office.

The annual contest sponsored by the State of Connecticut Office of State Fire Marshal, State of CT Public Fire Education Association and the CT FAIR Plan attracts thousands of contestants from throughout the state. The theme, "Fire Prevention Everyone/Everyday", encourages 4th and 5th grade students to create their own unique artistic and colorful fire safety message and convey it in the form of a poster.

More than 250 Waterford students participated in this year's program. The winning 4th and 5th grade posters from each elementary school were sent to the Waterford Fire Marshal's office where a panel of Town Officials chose one 4th and 5th grade poster that was submitted to the statewide competition. Congratulations to our semi-finalists: Great Neck: Laymi De La Torre - 4th grade, Luna Cassar - 5th grade, Oswegatchie: Rue Waddington - 4th grade, Liam Autrey - 5th grade, and Quaker Hill: Corey Jones - 5th grade

Great Neck Elementary students Laymi De La Torre and Luna Cassar were selected as the finalists to represent Waterford in the state competition. Congratulations to Laymi De La Torre for being selected as a County Winner. Laymi and her family will attend an awards luncheon on April 19th. Thank you to the Waterford Fire Marshal's Office for partnering with Waterford Public Schools to educate our students on fire safety and to the Waterford Professional Firefighters Foundation for the generous awards and gift cards given to the semi-finalists and finalists.

Article and photos by Kathleen Peterson

WPS in the News

Check out "Waterford Public Schools in the News" for media interviews and local newscasts of the great things happening in the District and the schools.

⇒ The Day, February 16, 2024 - [Meet Waterford's student-led Unified cheerleading team](#)

⇒ The Day, January 18, 2024 - [Waterford Students Take on Global Issues](#)



⇒ Waterford Historical Society *The Crier*, Winter 2024 - [WHS Junior Henry Roenke Creates Computer-Related Database For the Historical Society as Capstone Project](#)



THE CRIER



OF THE WATERFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC., BOX 117 WATERFORD, CONNECTICUT 06385
 Winter, 2024
 Holly Anderson Camerota, Editor



United Community and Family Services (UCFS) has had a great school year so far! We have been very busy meeting the needs of the kids in the schools and doing our part to keep Waterford healthy! Be sure to call (860-822-2803) to schedule an appointment for any needs your child may have, including summer physicals for sports and camp, as we all know the rest of the school year will fly by! A big thank you for welcoming us and allowing us to take part in your many events. We will be participating in Girls on the Run again this year and look forward to seeing familiar and new faces. We have loved meeting everyone and look forward to continuing to grow in your community with you!

For those of you who are not aware, we have offices located in Waterford High School and Clark Lane Middle School which provide medical and behavioral health services during routine school hours. Any student enrolled in the Waterford School District is eligible to receive services at the High School or Middle School as long as an enrollment form is completed and signed by a parent or guardian.


Each School-Based Health Center is staffed by a medical provider (APRN or PA), a medical assistant, and a licensed behavioral health clinician. Services available are wide and varied and include sports physicals, routine well-child visits, immunizations, and sick visits as well as mental health counseling. These services are meant to support and augment a student's primary care provider, not take the place of the PCP. Contact and collaboration with the student's primary care provider is seen as an integral part of providing care within the school.

School-Based Health Centers play an important role in this country, providing care to students who otherwise would have difficulty accessing services. Parent work schedules, transportation, and doctor's backlog of appointments are often barriers to care. Students enrolled in School-Based Health Centers can be seen during school hours, reducing barriers to care.

Rebecca Richard, PA-C, is the medical provider located at the Waterford schools along with our medical assistant, Kelly Brown. Amber Naglie is the behavioral health clinician that serves the high school and Debra Abbey is our clinician located in Clark Lane.


Enrollment forms can be found online by typing <https://www.ucfs.org/services/school-based-health-centers/> and click the "SBHC Enrollment Form". We also have paper enrollment forms located at the schools within your nurses office and our offices. If you have any questions or would like to speak with our staff, please call 860-822-2803. We look forward to continuing to be a part of your community and meeting many more of you!

Article by Tiffany Cole, UCFS SBHC Practice Manager




Services Provided

- Yearly well-child examinations
- Vaccinations
- Sports physicals
- Acute care visits (e.g. sick visits, lacerations, injuries, etc.)
- Chronic care visits (e.g. asthma, ADHD, etc.)
- Mental Health Assessments
- Substance Abuse Screenings
- Counseling (individual, group, and family)




**SBHC
Online
Enrollment
Form**



**SBHC
Paper
Enrollment
Form**

Top 5 Reasons to use the School-Based Health Center

- Convenient same day appointment.
- Removes barriers to care such as lack of transportation.
- Decreases time away from the classroom which improves academic success.
- Improves student's achievement by taking care of behavioral health needs that can make learning difficult.
- Connects students and their families with insurance coverage.



Budget Update and Timeline

At the February 22, 2024 Board of Education meeting, the Superintendent's Recommended Budget was approved. The BOE approved budget as well as the Superintendent's presentations from the February 1 & 8 budget workshops can be found on the WPS website at <https://www.waterfordschools.org/our-district/departments/business-office/budget>.

2024-2025 Budget Timeline & Highlights

- February 22, 2024**
Board of Education approved the Board of Education Budget for FY25 at a 5.81% increase.
- March 20, 2024**
Board of Education presents budget to Town Board of Finance. Public Hearings on Town Budget as well as BOE Budget.
- March 25, 2024**
Town Board of Finance Final Action on Budget.
- May 6, 2024**
Board of Education presents budget to Representative Town Meeting. Public Hearings on Town Budget as well as BOE Budget.
- May 15, 2024**
Representative Town Meeting Annual Budget Meeting. Final Action on Budget

The Great Kindness Challenge

Students and staff from Clark Lane Middle School recently participated in the [Great Kindness Challenge](#), a program dedicated to encouraging kindness and gratitude throughout the school community and beyond. Held in conjunction with a school spirit week, the Great Kindness Challenge encouraged students to complete 20 or more kind acts throughout the week of February 5th. Click on the [CLMS Connects newsletter](#) for the full article on the Great Kindness Challenge.

The Great Kindness Challenge
Clark Lane Middle School Feb 5th- 9th

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>Team up with Kindness! Wear a favorite team sport jersey/apparel.</p> <p>Daily Challenge: Work as a team in a class!</p>	<p>Hat's off to Kindness! Wear a Hat.</p> <p>Daily Challenge: Help someone in need- i.e. see trash pick it up.</p>	<p>Kindness can Last a Lifetime! Dress like your 100.</p> <p>Daily Challenge: Give 10 compliments.</p> <p>100th DAY of SCHOOL!</p>	<p>Peace and Kindness! 70's Day! Wear Tie Dye or dress like it's the 70s</p> <p>Daily Challenge: Talk to someone you've never talked to before.</p>	<p>Dreaming of Kindness! PJ Day.</p> <p>Daily Challenge: Practice Self-care.</p>



Waterford Public Schools
Pat Fedor, Board of Education Chairperson
Thomas W. Giard III, Superintendent
 15 Rope Ferry Road
 Waterford, CT 06385
 Phone: 860-444-5852
 Fax: 860-444-5870
 Contact: Caroline Whittaker - Executive Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent
 E-mail: cwhittaker@waterfordschools.org

Stay Connected...

- ◆ **WPS Website - Visit** www.waterfordschools.org for up to date BOE, school and event information.
- ◆ **BOE meetings are held on the 4th Thursday of each month. For the complete schedule of meetings, go to the [BOE section](#) of the WPS Website.**
- ◆ **Download the [WPS App](#) to 'stay abreast' of all the happenings at our schools.**
- ◆ **Follow us on [Twitter](#) : [@WPS_CT](#) and [@WaterfordSuper](#)**

Waterford Public Schools is a community of learners that fosters and supports high aspirations, ensuring every student acquires the skills and knowledge necessary to be a responsible citizen, prepared to contribute and succeed in an ever-changing world.