

# The Vestal Town Crier

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## VESTAL STATE OF EMERGENCY DECLARATION FOR PEIRCE HILL ROAD

A state of emergency is hereby declared in the town of Vestal effective at 1100 on 2/20/24.

This state of emergency has been declared due to a slope failure. Pierce Hill Road, between route 26 and Main Street is closed until emergency work is completed. This situation threatens public safety.

This state of emergency will remain in effect for thirty (30) days or until rescinded by a subsequent order. As the Chief Executive of the town of Vestal, I, Maria Sexton, exercise the authority given to me under Section 24 of the New York State Executive Law, to preserve the public safety and hereby render all required and available assistance vital to the security, well-being, and health of the citizens of this Municipality. I hereby direct all departments and agencies of the town of Vestal to take whatever steps necessary to protect life and property, public infrastructure, and provide such emergency assistance deemed necessary.

Signed,  
Maria Sexton  
Town Supervisor  
2/20/24



## Vestal High School Seniors Selected as National Merit Scholarship Program® Finalists

Three Vestal High School seniors, Ian Chung, Rayna Cui, and Mia Perfetti have qualified as finalists in the National Merit Scholarship Program® based on their outstanding academic achievement and commendable scores on their Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying tests (PSAT/NMSQT®). These three members of the Class of 2024 received Certificates of Merit and will be among only 15,000 finalists nationwide considered for approximately 7,100 Merit Scholarships.

“Congratulations to Ian, Rayna, and Mia! Being named a National Merit Finalist is a proud accomplishment for each of these students, and for Vestal High School,” said Christi Smith, the District’s Counseling and Guidance Department Chair. “They have been successful in their academic endeavors in some of our most challenging courses, and it is extremely gratifying to have our students recognized for their dedication and commitment to learning.”

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation is an independent, not-for-profit organization that conducts two academic competitions for recognition and college undergraduate scholarships.

For more information about the National Merit Scholarship Corporation and their programs, visit their website at [www.nationalmerit.org](http://www.nationalmerit.org).



## Skills USA Regional Winners

Three Vestal HS students score first, second, and third places in the SkillsUSA regional competition on February 9, 2024, at SUNY Morrisville. Daniel Skojec took first place in Food Prep, Anna Howell took second place in Food Prep, and Anne Coleman won third place in Photography!

They are eligible to compete in the NYS SkillsUSA championship, which is April 24 - 26, 2024, at the NYS Fair Grounds in Syracuse.



Photos courtesy of Regina Felice (Vestal Schools) & Steve Jensen (Broome-Tioga BOCES)



Daniel Skojec



Anne Coleman and Anna Howell

**VESTAL BOYS VARSITY BASKETBALL SENIORS! ON PAGE 4!**



**PET OF THE WEEK:**

**Lillie**



Hi! My name is Lillie & I will be 18 on April 1st! I'm so obsessed with my Mom. I like to drink fresh water from the faucet and love fresh tuna. I am the queen of the home and can be quite naughty.

Send in a photo of your pet with a short bio to: [kirsten@tiersnews.com](mailto:kirsten@tiersnews.com) to have your pet in the paper!



# VESTAL POLICE REPORT



## Vestal Fire Department Responses

vestalfire.com

by Walt Schlundt, Public Information Officer

- 02/13 08:23 Owego Road Electrical fire - smoke in house
- 02/14 01:36 Vestal Parkway E. Possible water condition
- 02/14 19:48 Vestal Parkway E. Commercial fire alarm
- 02/15 10:40 Vestal Parkway E. Waterflow/sprinkler alarm
- 02/15 12:46 Tracy Creek Road General fire alarm
- 02/15 21:52 Vestal Road Commercial fire alarm - panel activation
- 02/16 04:11 Vestal Parkway E. Water condition
- 02/16 16:47 Grand Avenue Carbon monoxide alarm
- 02/16 23:51 Echo Road Odor of gas in residence
- 02/17 07:01 Vestal Parkway E. Commercial fire alarm
- 02/17 09:03 Drexel Drive Smoke detector activation
- 02/17 15:01 Vestal Road Radiator smoking
- 02/17 17:43 East Access Road Fire alarm in lounge area
- 02/18 20:45 Bunn Hill Road Smoke detector activation
- 02/19 07:37 Tripp Lake Road Mutual aid to Silver Lake, PA for a two-alarm house fire
- 02/19 09:36 Vestal Parkway E. Possible fryer malfunction

Anthony Vetrino, 46, Binghamton, arrested for Petit Larceny for shoplifting from Wal-Mart.

Shannon Cullen, 40, Johnson City, arrested for Petit Larceny for shoplifting from Wal-Mart.

Kristina Roberts, 27, Endicott, arrested for Petit Larceny for shoplifting from Wal-Mart.

Erica Liburdi, 36, Binghamton, arrested for Driving While Intoxicated, Driving While Intoxicated-More than .08 BAC, Aggravated Driving While Intoxicated-More than .18 BAC, Refusal of Breath Test and Aggravated Unlicensed Operation 1 st Degree after a complaint .

James Kline, 27, Owego, arrested for Bail Jumping 3rd Degree for failing to appear in court on a scheduled court date or within 30 days thereafter.

Danny Butts Jr., 51, Deposit, arrested for Criminal Possession Controlled Substance 7th Degree, Obstructed License Plate, No Plate Lamps, and No Tail Lamps for possessing Meth during a traffic stop.

Sonya Courtney, 42, Richford NY, arrested for Petit Larceny for shoplifting from Wal-Mart.

Sue Garrett, 46, Binghamton, arrested for Petit Larceny and Burglary 3rd Degree for entering and shoplifting from Wal-Mart after previously being banned from the location.

Brielle Haberle, 26, Hallstead, PA arrested for Petit Larceny for shoplifting from Wal-Mart.

Suzanne Rink, 41, Vestal, arrested for Criminal Contempt 2nd Degree and Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance 7th Degree for violating a full stay away order of protection for being in a vehicle with the protected party and possessing Meth during a traffic stop.

Dana Buckingham, 46, Vestal, arrested for Aggravated Unlicensed Operation 3rd Degree, Unregistered Motor Vehicle and Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance 7th Degree for possessing Meth during a traffic stop.

Shanice Henderson, 35, Binghamton, arrested for Petit Larceny for shoplifting from Wal-Mart.

Timothy Wilson, 49, Binghamton, arrested for Criminal Possession of Stolen Property 4th Degree for possessing a stolen credit card and using it to make unauthorized transactions.

Anthony Clancey, 32, Binghamton, arrested for Driving While Ability Impaired By Drugs, Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance 7th Degree, Possession of a Controlled Substance Not in Original Container, Crossing Hazard Markings, Obstructed License Plate, and Moved from Lane Unsafely for possessing controlled substances after a complaint of persons using narcotics and driving through the parking lot during a subsequent traffic stop.

Shanika Maiden, 40, Binghamton, arrested for Bail Jumping 3rd Degree for failing to appear in court on a scheduled date or within 30 days thereafter.



# Calendar

**February 22-25**  
**VHS Production of High School Musical**  
**Friday, February 23rd**  
**VHS NHS Declaration of Interest Forms due**

**Saturday, February 24th**  
**VHS All-Nighter Fundraiser: Trivia Night**  
**Vestal Elks; 7PM**

**Monday, February 26th**  
**Sixth-Grade Information Night for Parents**  
**African Road Auditorium; 6PM**

**Friday, March 1st**  
**>BCMEA Festival II**  
**African Road Auditorium; 4PM**  
**>Early Release Day**

**Saturday, March 2nd**  
**BCMEA Festival II**  
**B.U. Anderson Center**



# FEBRUARY



## Vestal Town Crier

**NEWS/ADVERTISING DEADLINE**  
 The Vestal Town Crier goes to press on Wednesdays. Deadline for news and advertising is the Friday before the desired week of publication.

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES**  
 Subscription rates to The Vestal Town Crier are \$35 a year in Broome County, \$100 outside of Broome County, and papers are mailed every Thursday from Conklin.

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**  
 All letters to the editor are welcomed. All letters must be signed and include the phone number of the writer, to be used for verification of authenticity, not for publication. The editor reserves the right to refuse to publish letters which contain potentially libelous or erroneous statements. Also, letters endorsing political candidates are considered advertisements and should be prepaid as is all political advertising. No letters to the editor regarding political candidates will be accepted.

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# Underclassmen Lead Golden Bears to Sectional 4th Place Finish

By Hal Ehrhardt

Considering the season began with nearly half of the Vestal team being rookies to varsity swimming & diving, coaches Joe Shore and Sara Rostedt were pleased with their Class A Sectional results. Their 13 athletes who earned spots in Saturday's finals outscored the 8 who scored from Ithaca, despite Ithaca's top two athletes earning 4 gold medals. The Golden Bears finished 4th with 240 points ahead of Ithaca's 210. Horseheads captured 7 gold medals in route to another Class A Sectional title with 500 points over Corning's 451 and Union Endicott's 317. Rounding out the seven-team field was Elmira in 6th (155 pts.) and Binghamton 7th with 110 points. UE captured the most medals with 10, including 7 silvers, while Corning had 9 (gold in the diving) and Horseheads had 9 including two silvers. Vestal had a pair of bronze medals, while Ithaca had 5 total medals and Elmira earned one silver. Last year Vestal finished 5th (with only one medal) close behind Ithaca.

Ben Elie earned Vestal's first medal, a bronze in the diving, where he again broke 400 points to finish more than 100 pts ahead of 4th place. He also knocked a second off his 50 Free time to finish 5th. Logan Kim broke the minute barrier in the 100 Back to earn another bronze for the Golden Bears and also finished 7th in the 100 Fly. Senior Adi Banerjee swam his season best to finish 7th in the 100 Breast.

Underclassmen led the Golden Bears in all but one event. Junior Harrison Cappellett came from behind twice in the 500 Free to hit a career best and win the B final, finishing 9th, while freshman Finn Hynes (13th) also broke 6 minutes for the first time and sophomore Lucas Matt placed 15th. In the 200 Free Cappellett was 10th, Matt 14th and Hynes 15th. Freshman Sayum Singhal led the Bears in the 200 IM, placing 7th, with 7th grader David Cozma 12th and freshman Jayden Kim 14th. Another 7th

grader, Stephane Zhou, narrowly missed earning a spot in the B final. Singhal also hit a career best to score in the 100 Fly as did sophomore Luke Sobel.

Freshman Ben Hutchings joined Elie, a junior, to score with his career best in the 50 Free and then led three Golden Bears in the 100 Free as senior captains Adi Banerjee and Ocean Sun also scored. Both Cozma and freshman Michael Xue scored in the B final of the 100 Breast. Freshman Cameron Smith just missed scoring with his first time under 1:20 in the event. Others who did not score, but placed for the Golden Bears were senior Ian Chung, Zhou, Smith and sophomore Gavin Hantsch. Several newer swimmers earned key sectional experience by swimming exhibition in a couple of events, including: freshmen Ana Banerjee, Chris Issa; Derek Dai and Arsen Markevych; sophomore Daniel Li; and juniors Jonathan Zheng and Solomone Chen.

The Golden Bears just missed earning medals in the relays. Logan Kim, Banerjee, Hutchings and Elie finished 4th in the Medley relay, while Hutchings, Logan Kim, Cappellett and Adi Banerjee matched that in the 400 Free relay with both teams turning in season best times. The 200 Free team of Sun, Singhal, Cappellett and Elie finished 5th.

## It's a Boy! It's a Girl!



If bears had birthday parties, they'd all be in January and February. That's when winter dens across the country turn into nurseries as most pregnant bears give birth to cubs weighing in at less

than a pound that would easily fit into your hands. Human moms would probably envy a mother bear's ability to give birth to one, two, or three or more tiny cubs while half-asleep.

Even though cubs are born with their eyes closed, unable to hear or smell and weak and uncoordinated they instinctively find their mom's nipples and start nursing. Soon the den will be filled with mom's snores and the happy sounds of cubs humming and purring while they snuggle up to mom and their siblings and fill their tummies with a steady diet of rich, warm milk. Bear's milk has a fat content around 33%, so nursing cubs have no problem gaining weight.

Over the next several weeks, cubs will keep eating, sleeping and growing and eventually start cautiously exploring their winter quarters. As winter slowly gives way to spring, their eyes will open, their teeth will come in and the fine hair they're born with will be replaced by fur coats.



Photo of three cubs by Emily Carroll of Pennsylvania Game Commission  
Article courtesy of BearWise®

## Vestal Sectional Results (\* indicates best time in Prelims)

Medley Relay: 1st Horseheads (1:41.27); 4th L. Kim, Adi Banerjee, Hutchings, Elie (1:49.18\*); EXH: Chen, Dai, Sobel, Markevych;

200 Free: 1st Anderson (ITH 1:50.21); 10th Cappellett (2:05.18\*); 14th Matt (2:08.96\*); 15th Hynes (2:17.50\*); 18th Hantsch; EXH: Ana Banerjee;

200 IM: 1st Li (HH 1:55.33); 7th Singhal (2:23.24\*); 11th Cozma (2:32.95); 14th J. Kim (2:39.79); 17th Zhou; EXH: Smith;

50 Free: 1st TenEyck (HH 22.02); 5th Elie (23.37); 14th Hutchings (24.39\*); 17th Sun; 19th Chung; EXH: Xue; Issa; Zheng; Dai;

Diving (6): 1st Jardin-Reed (COR 589.20); 3rd Elie (402.50);

100 Fly: 1st Hwang-Geddes (ITH 53.343); 7th L. Kim (59.95); 10th Singhal (1:04.52\*); 13th Sobel (1:11.02);

100 Free: 1st TenEyck (HH 48.49); 10th Hutchings (53.90\*); 11th Adi Banerjee (54.56\*); 15th Sun (58.72); 18th Chung; EXH: Chen; Li; Issa; Markevych;

500 Free: 1st Anderson (ITH 4:56.66); 9th Cappellett (5:47.95); 13th Hynes (5:57.74\*); 15th Matt (6:01.06\*); 19th Hantsch;

200 Free Relay: 1st Horseheads (1:30.26); 5th Sun, Singhal, Cappellett, Elie (1:43.16); Prelim Team: Sun, Matt, Cappellett, Elie; EXH: Sobel, Hantsch, Issa, Hynes;

100 Back: 1st Hwang-Geddes (ITH 55.71); 3rd L. Kim (59.17); 17th J. Kim; 20th Li; 23rd Zhou; EXH: Ana Banerjee; Chen;

100 Breast: 1st Li (HH 58.89); 7th Adi Banerjee (1:08.95); 13th Cozma (1:14.38\*); 15th Xue (1:17.30); 17th Smith; EXH: Zheng; Dai;

400 Free Relay: 1st Horseheads (3:23.33); 4th Hutchings, L. Kim, Cappellett; Adi Banerjee (3:41.90); EXH: J. Kim, Sobel, Hantsch, Hynes;

The final meet of the season, for those who qualified, will be the New York State championships to be held March 1st and 2nd at Ithaca College. None of the Golden Bears qualified, but Section 4 should be well represented with top hopes being Corning's Brendan Jardin-Reed in the diving, and senior swimmers Shoonfon Li of Horseheads and a pair from Chenango Valley, Tyler Schultz and Amir Sadykov. Maine Endwell successfully defended its Class B title over Chenango Valley, while Watkins Glen took the Class C crown from Chenango Forks.

## What Can We Do To Keep Valuable Materials From Ending Up As Waste?

New York State has made great progress to increase sustainable materials management that protects communities and reduces impacts from climate change. But did you know that almost 80% of what's currently sent for disposal as trash still has value? What can we do to keep more valuable materials from ending up as waste?

New York State's recently released Solid Waste Management Plan Building the Circular Economy Through Sustainable Materials Management is a roadmap to reducing waste and advancing the transition to the circular economy. Circular economy solutions conserve natural resources, reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, and protect human health while supporting thriving communities and new job opportunities. You can check out this video about the plan on DEC's YouTube channel to learn more!

The Plan provides an overview and solutions to sustainable materials management in New York State, including a summary to help identify disproportionate burdens from waste management on communities. There are six focus areas with goals and actions to address different materials and issues of concern, so no matter your interest, you can easily navigate to different topics and data.

Working together, we can meet New York's waste management vision, where waste is reduced 85% by 2050 and we can work towards an equitable and inclusive circular economy, full of collaboration and innovation where responsible and resilient markets and communities thrive.



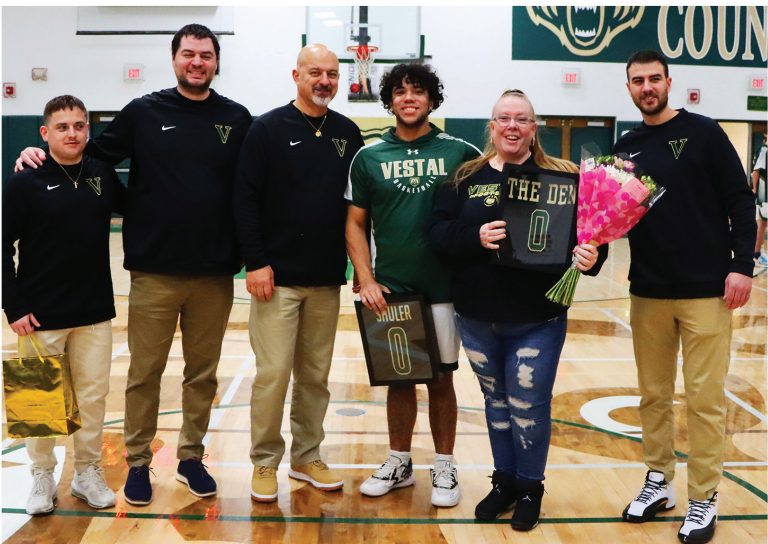
### Feb 27 - Life After A Stroke

/ STROKE SUPPORT GROUP for stroke survivors and caregivers.

Group will meet at the Vestal Library, 320 Vestal Pkwy E., Vestal, NY, 1:00 - 3:00. A time to laugh, cry, and support each other. For information call Sue (607) 754-3405.



# VESTAL BOYS VARSITY BASKETBALL SENIORS!



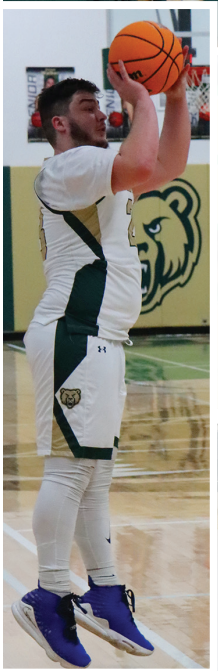




# VESTAL BOYS VARSITY BASKETBALL VS WINDSOR



Photos Courtesy Of Maryesther Whitebrink





# Vestal Scholars

## Vestal Alumni Named to President's List

**Coastal Carolina University**  
Colby Murdock of Vestal, NY

## Vestal Alumni Named to Fall 2023 Dean's List

### Buffalo State University

Kirsten Cherevko of Vestal, NY, is majoring in Art and Design.

Magdalene Restuccia of Vestal, NY, is majoring in Art Education (K-12).

Nicholas Zetzsche of Vestal, NY, is majoring in Chemistry.

### University at Buffalo

Angelina Consolazio of Apalachin, New York.

Zoe Keesler of Apalachin, New York.

Rutvi Dhamsania of Vestal, New York.

Mira Eisenberg of Vestal, New York.

Sophia Gotlinsky of Vestal, New York.

Josh Kilpatrick of Vestal, New York.

Erin Kim of Vestal, New York.

Tae Kyu Kim of Vestal, New York.

Ethan Mikeska of Vestal, New York.

Kyle Rosa of Vestal, New York.

Richard Zheng of Vestal, New York.

### Hartwick College

Ethan Benedict of Apalachin, NY

Tianna Wyskowski of Vestal, NY

### Drake University

Ava Evans, Vestal, NY, Education

### SUNY Delhi

Molly Ashworth of Apalachin, NY, who is pursuing a bachelor's in Nursing.

Devyn Dellapenta of Vestal, NY, who is pursuing a bachelor's in Nursing.

Andrew LaClair of Apalachin, NY, who is pursuing an associate in Veterinary Science Technology.

Stephen Seraydarian of Vestal, NY, who is pursuing an associate in Welding Technology.

Grace Thomas of Apalachin, NY, who is pursuing a bachelor's in Veterinary Technology.

### Cornell University

Ryan Cordi of Vestal, NY

## Look for Signs of Wildlife This Winter

Now is a great time to search for winter tracks (PDF) or other animal signs visible in the snow. It can be fun to be a detective and figure out what animals have been walking through your yard or across a trail. Maybe you will see missing bark where a white-tailed deer buck rubbed its antlers or an owl pellet on top of the snow. Here are a few tips to get you started:

Snow conditions can make a difference in a track's appearance—wet snow captures a print better than powdery snow.

Members in the dog family (coyote, fox, or dogs) will usually leave claw prints above the toes, while the cat family (bobcat, housecat) will not. You should see four toes on both front and back feet for both families.

Rodents, such as squirrels, chipmunks, mice, muskrats, and voles, usually have four toes on the front feet and five on the back. Claws may or may not be seen.

Bring a notebook, camera, or field guide with you.

Sometimes an animal's droppings, or scat, can help you identify it—a rabbit's looks like small balls of sawdust.

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## BROOME COUNTY LEGISLATORS

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Mark Whalen mark.whelen@broomecountyny.gov



## Otsiningo Park Visitors Warned to Protect Valuables in Vehicles Following Several Break-ins and Thefts

Otsiningo Park visitors are urged to protect their valuables after a series of "smash-and-grab" thefts from vehicles have taken place over the past several weeks.

Broome County Security has reported as many as 8 recent break-ins taking place during the day between 11:00am and 4:00pm.

Larceny suspects have smashed windows and grabbed wallets, purses and other valuables left in view on the seats of parked vehicles.

Broome County Sheriff's Office detectives are currently investigating several larcenies where valuables were stolen at the park, with thieves then utilizing IDs and other items found to withdraw thousands of dollars from the victim's bank accounts.

"We are urging all Otsiningo Park visitors to use extra caution after a series of recent thefts. Locking your doors isn't enough. Secure your valuables out of view or leave them home," said Broome County Security Director Brian Norris.

During the winter months and off-season, Broome County Security Patrols regularly patrol the park and will be increasing their presence considering the recent events.

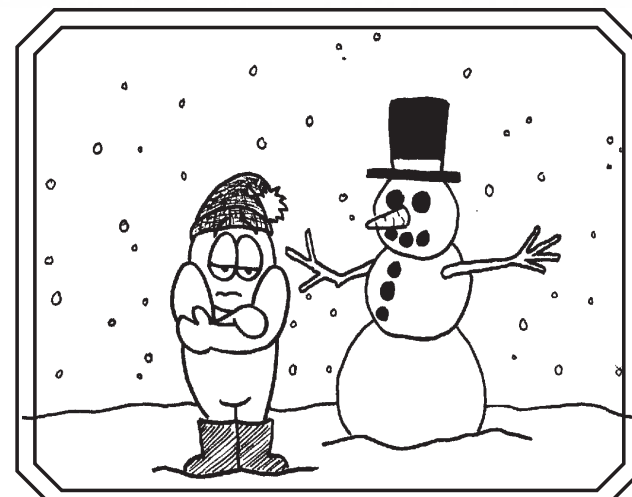
"Until the culprits are brought to justice, we're urging all park visitors to stay vigilant and protect your valuables," said Broome County Sheriff Fred Akshar. "If you witness any suspicious activity at Otsiningo Park, please don't hesitate to call the Sheriff's Office at 607-778-1911, but in an emergency, always dial 911."

## Interested in a Seasonal Job?



The holidays are one of the best times to get a new seasonal job in New York State. Whether you're looking for a part-time gig to give you a little more gift-giving cash, a second job to support your family, or you're looking for a fresh start in a new career field, there are so many seasonal jobs that are hiring right now.

To find seasonal jobs in your area, visit [seasonal.works.labor.ny.gov](http://seasonal.works.labor.ny.gov).





# Governor Hochul Announces \$100 Million in Grants for New After-School Program

**FY25 Executive Budget Plan Merges Advantage and Empire State After-School Programs into New Streamlined LEAPS Initiative**

**Program to Serve More than 40,000 Children in High-Need Areas in New York State**

Governor Kathy Hochul today announced that more than \$100 million in state grants – an increase of \$17.7 million over last year’s funding – will be made available to fund after-school programs across New York State. The new Learning and Enrichment After-School Program Supports grants will be distributed through the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, and are expected to provide services to more than 40,000 children in high-need areas.

“During the COVID-19 pandemic, many children and youth were disconnected from after-school programming and lost out on this critical means to receive academic support and build stronger social connections,” Governor Hochul said. “This funding will give young people another safe space to grow and express themselves and assure parents that their child’s learning and development isn’t confined to school hours.”

The Learning and Enrichment After-School Program Supports (LEAPS) initiative combines the existing Advantage and Empire State after-school programs into a single, streamlined program which will standardize funding and eligibility and reduce administrative burdens for providers. Approximately \$97.5 million in LEAPS after-school programs will serve youth from pre-k through high school. The combined after-school funding also includes a \$2.25 million pilot program to provide positive youth development opportunities and services to adolescents during out-of-school time, as well as \$1 million for a technical assistance provider.

Awards are expected to be announced in April 2024, with the LEAPS contracts beginning September 1st – in time for the start of the next school year.

New York State Office of Children and Family Services Acting Commissioner and Child Care Availability Task Force Co-Chair Suzanne Miles-Gustave said, “OCFS is both excited and committed to help lead Governor Hochul’s mission to increase the number of high-quality, affordable child care programs that New York’s families deserve. LEAPS grants offer an opportunity to reinvigorate existing after-school programs and fund new ones so that more school-age children have equitable access to these in-

valuable services. Research shows that young people who participate in these programs have higher school attendance, achieve greater academic success and are less likely to be at risk for exposure to harmful influences.”

The governor recently announced \$50 million in capital grants for the construction or expansion of child care centers and registered school-age child care programs and \$50 million in business tax credits for eligible businesses that create or expand infant and toddler child care seats for their employees directly or through a third-party. Those programs came on the heels of an expansion of the state Child Care Assistance Program in October 2023 that raised the income eligibility limit for child care assistance to the federal maximum – a move expected to help an additional 100,000 New York families.

LEAPS-funded programs will promote access to high-quality comprehensive after-school services with academic support and enrichment opportunities. The programs are also intended to mitigate ongoing impacts from the pandemic by expanding students’ access to social and emotional support services as well as offer mentorship and job- and life-skills training.

State-licensed school-age child care programs serving children in high-need school districts, and organizations interested in becoming a licensed provider, are eligible to apply for the grants. Information on applying for the grants can be found on the LEAPS page of the OCFS website.

## Kindergarten Classes Are Involved In A Sweet Project

Kindergarten classes at Clayton Avenue are collecting Valentine cards from all over the country. The idea started when Mrs. Gorman saw a postcard project that another school was doing in one of her teacher groups. Since Valentine’s Day was coming up, she adjusted it to this holiday and decided to see if the Kindergarten classes could collect Valentines from each of the 50 states!

The Kindergarten team asked their CAE families to create posts on Facebook asking people to send their students a little love, and to also share the post with family and friends. To date, all three classes (Mrs. Fendick, Ms. Young and Mrs. Gorman) have received over 100 Valentines and are now receiving cards from all over the world!

Mrs. Gorman said that they are using this project to practice a variety of academic skills... The students are practicing math skills by tallying the number of cards. They are identifying letters by finding states on their personal maps. Of course, their reading skills are getting a great workout as they identify sight words on the cards they receive.

In addition, many senders are including facts about the state and/or city in which they live, and so the Kindergartners have been learning about other areas of the country. In return, any school or class that sends them a Valentine is getting one back with information about our area, so that they can share a bit about Vestal with the rest of the country. **Photos on page 8!**

## Data Shows That Some Southern Tier School Districts Show A Decline In Student Enrollment

Preliminary data on New York State school enrollment for the current year has been released, indicating ongoing challenges in recovering from the pandemic-induced decline in enrollment.

According to the New York State Department of Education, most counties in the Southern Tier are experiencing a decrease in enrollment compared to the previous year.

In Broome County, schools are reporting a total loss of approximately 160 students. Chenango County districts have seen a decline of about 80 students, while Cortland County districts report a decrease of around 105 students. Additionally, Delaware County districts have lost approximately 50 students, and Tompkins County districts have seen a decline of around 80 students.

However, Tioga County stands out with an increase of 80 students in enrollment.

## Speaking On The House Floor, Rep. Molinaro Demands Release Of BU Student, Hostages Held By Hamas

Washington, DC – U.S. Rep. Marc Molinaro (NY-19) today spoke on the House Floor to demand the release of Omer Neutra, a Binghamton University student, and the over 130 innocent people being held hostage by Hamas terrorists. Last week, the Binghamton University community held a rally to show their support for Omer.

Rep. Molinaro’s remarks, as prepared for delivery, can be found below and viewed here:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to share the story of Omer Neutra, a Binghamton University student.

Omer is 22 years old. Omer’s friends and family describe him as a true American kid whose fun-loving personality shines the brightest when he’s cheering on his favorite team, the New York Knicks.

On October 7th, Omer was one of more than 240 men, women, children, and elderly who were brutally kidnapped by Hamas terrorists. He and 133 hostages are still held captive today, enduring unthinkable torture and trauma.

I demand that Hamas release Omer immediately, along with the remaining hostages. Those who have been released have shared horror stories of sexual abuse, children being forced to take drugs, and inhumane conditions. I will continue to stand with Israel as it works to eradicate Hamas and free the innocent people wrongfully held by this terrorist group.

It’s time to bring Omer home. It’s time to bring them all home.

I yield back.





# Kindergarten classes Receive Valentines From Across The U.S.!



Photos courtesy of Regina Felice and the Vestal Central School District



**VESTAL HIGH SCHOOL PRESENTS**

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# HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL



February 22, 23, 24 7PM  
February 25, 1 PM  
At VHS Auditorium  
Adults: \$10 Students & Seniors: \$8

