



FEBRUARY 2025

COMMUNITY *Newsletter*



Get Involved in Budget Season!

Dear Rush-Henrietta Residents,

Budget season is in full swing and we want to make sure our community is informed before this year's vote Tuesday, May 20. I invite you to become more involved and learn about the budget process and eventual budget proposal in the weeks and months ahead.

The district's first budget proposal last spring fell short of approval by just 15 votes. Low turnout and misinformation were key factors in this unexpected outcome. That experience was difficult for our community. With that in mind, we are providing additional opportunities to learn more about the budget-development process and proposed 2025-2026 budget.

In October, I invited community members to attend two informational meetings about different aspects of the budget-development process. We also talked about the state rules school districts must follow when creating a spending plan. The district recorded one of these sessions and I encourage you to watch it at your earliest convenience. The video is available at rhnet.org/budgetinfo.

Our outreach efforts will continue in earnest. Soon, we will have new opportunities for you to learn more about the budget proposal being developed now. This work is being done with the input of stakeholders who serve as members of the Rush-Henrietta Budget Advisory Council. The council provides a way for stakeholders and myself to share the ideas and understandings necessary for the successful development of a budget that best represents community values. Please note the opportunities listed on the right side of the page.

Think of budget-related questions between now and the vote in May? We want to hear from you! Share your thoughts with us at rhnet.org/budgettalk. We will be happy to hear from you. Thank you for your interest!

Dr. Barbara Mullen
Superintendent

**Ask Your Budget
Questions Now!**



Winter Virtual Budget Information Sessions

6 to 7 p.m.
Thursday, February 13

6 to 7 p.m.
Wednesday, February 26

rhnet.org/virtualbudget

Spring In-Person Budget Information Sessions

6 to 7 p.m.
Rush United Methodist Church
Thursday, April 3

6 to 7 p.m.
Henrietta Public Library
Wednesday, April 23

6 to 7 p.m.
Guardian Angels Church
Thursday, May 1

Community Budget Forum

6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Wednesday, March 26
2034 Lehigh Station Road

**Public Hearings will be held
during Board of Education
meetings March 25 and May 6.**

**ROYAL
COMET**
Pride

R-H Works Supports Career and Technical Education

We believe in Career and Technical Education! You may remember that Rush-Henrietta hosted its first R-H Works Industry Breakfast last spring. More than 75 people attended the event, which brought business leaders together from throughout Monroe County. The goal was to have a thoughtful conversation about the skills and attributes that will be essential for the workforce of the future.

The momentum has continued this year! This summer, Thomas Felton Jr. joined our team. He serves as director of CTE. A 1990 Rush-Henrietta graduate, Mr. Felton is committed to building upon the strong foundation that already exists in our district. His work includes:

- expanding the scope of our approved CTE programs.
- creating more opportunities for internships and work-based learning experiences; and
- forging stronger partnerships with local businesses and community organizations.

Public education plays a critical role in preparing students for success. Whether students plan to attend college, enlist in the military, or enter the workforce after graduation, we want to ensure they have the skills needed to become the next generation of industry leaders.

“As a business located in Henrietta, I feel connected with the district and appreciate the opportunity to help shape the direction of these programs. Being on this committee resonates with my work in HR. I see applicants with a variety of skills, and I think it is important to help prepare students for their careers. If we can start at an earlier age to help them build the skills necessary to enter the workforce later, I think it will have a positive impact when our graduates eventually move on to their careers. I look forward to watching this program evolve and seeing the impact of this work.”

- Kim Brown, Human Resources Director, Konar Properties



Local business leaders joined us in January to learn more about creating partnerships with the district.

In January, the district met with R-H Works members to discuss how the CTE program aligns with our strategic plan, Vision 2037. Read more about the plan at rhnet.org/vision2037. Attendees also talked about how to strengthen partnerships with local businesses and higher education, as well as developing and expanding career pathways.

Our collective efforts will ensure that our students are prepared for the workforce and empowered to pursue their passions and dreams. With the support of business leaders, our district will continue to prepare students for their futures in significant ways.



R-H WORKS

Our second R-H Works Industry Breakfast will be held Friday, March 21.

If you are a local business leader who would like to attend, please contact Thomas Felton Jr. at tfelton@rhnet.org or 359-5228.



DECA Students Shine at Competition

In December, the Senior High School's DECA Club competed in the Region 10 Career Conference. DECA is an extracurricular club focused on building future leaders in the areas of marketing, management, and entrepreneurship. For competition, students are assigned to various business-related events which require completion of a 100-question test and a role play with a judge. More than 950 students from districts around Monroe County participated in the annual regional competition. The top five students in each event qualify to compete at the DECA New York State Career Conference in March. Congratulations to all our students who participated.

Join us in cheering on these students who qualified to move on to the state competition:

Kaylee Duda - Accounting Applications

Jacob Edick - Restaurant & Food Service Management

Eshaal Humayun - Principles of Marketing

Menal Khan - Marketing Communications

Katie Militello - Food Marketing Series

Parker Monette - Automotive Services Marketing

Dylan Savage - Accounting Applications

Educators Grove Celebrates Difference-Makers



A little rain couldn't dampen the celebration Saturday, October 26, as the new Educators Grove was officially dedicated. The groundbreaking ceremony took place onsite in Hoskins Park, a town park at Pinnacle and Winton roads, to honor those who have had a positive impact on the education of students in Rush-Henrietta.

The idea for the grove grew out of a reunion of former Rush-Henrietta theater members in 2019. The graduates wanted to honor those who have contributed to the theater program and who had significant impact on the education of thousands of students within the district.

The first two trees have been planted in honor of R-H teachers Bob Sagan and Paul Cimicata. Bob was an English teacher and long-time theater director, while Paul was a music teacher and musical director for the high school shows. Bob was present at the groundbreaking and thanked those involved for honoring him and for establishing a way to honor all those involved in educating students for the positive impact they can have.

More information on the Educators Grove may be found at rhnet.org/educatorsgrove.

Additional information on Bob Sagan and the history of the theater program in Rush-Henrietta can be found at rhnet.org/saganact1 and rhnet.org/saganact2.

Rush-Henrietta Spotlight Theatre performs "Once Upon a Mattress" March 27-29.
Visit rhnet.org/spotlight to buy tickets in mid-February.



One way Rush-Henrietta recognizes its employees is through the awarding of Comet Kudos certificates. Any member of our school community can nominate a district employee by visiting rhnet.org/cometkudos. Here is a representative sampling of those who were honored at our annual staff kickoff event. Congratulations to everyone who makes a difference for our students!

Shannon Ledwith, Crane Building Secretary

Shannon goes above and beyond each day. She makes kids smile and supports them so their day is off to a good start. Shannon cares about everyone. When parents come into the office she is understanding of their needs and makes sure they feel comfortable. Shannon ensures that everyone feels like they belong. - Brian Hill

Kim Weeks, Fyle Teacher

Mrs. Weeks worked tirelessly to ensure our daughter could participate in TV Tuesday. Students were to introduce the date, say the pledge, and talk about holidays. Knowing we are Jehovah's Witnesses, Mrs. Weeks acted as a phenomenal mediator between my husband and I to create a script that adhered to our religious beliefs and included our daughter. To have her teacher respectfully work to include her touched our hearts in so many ways. - Becky Knoebel

Jodi Antin, SHS Paraprofessional

This recognition is for going above and beyond her daily duties so that each student can be as successful as possible. - Adam Herb

Bruce Babcock, Vollmer Teacher

Thank you for helping our son have such an awesome year. He doesn't really express how he feels, but on the last day of school he came into the house upset. I was immediately concerned. I asked, "What was wrong? What happened?" His response to me was, "I am going to miss my teacher and class so much." You made a huge impact and we are so thankful. - Flores Family

Steve Desantis, SHS Building Custodian

Steve has been on a mission to be the best custodian in history. He has a positive attitude and treats his cleaners with respect. He is always willing to assist them if they have questions. He is willing to take on cleaners that need experience and training and work with them to improve their skills. He is part of the R-H family and is very proud of that. - Ken Nelson

Christine Cosentino, Roth Teacher

Ms. Cosentino is a wonderful teacher. She brings happiness to my day every time I stop by. - Earl Phillips Jr.

Francella Smith, SHS Teacher

Francella exemplifies what it means to build an inclusive environment. She has collaborated with special education teachers to specially design her instruction for students with extensive needs so they can participate in art class. Her work has directly contributed to the growth of student self advocacy, independence, and communication. Her work has made a positive difference in the lives of many students. - Dave Patt

Robert Armstrong, Bus Driver

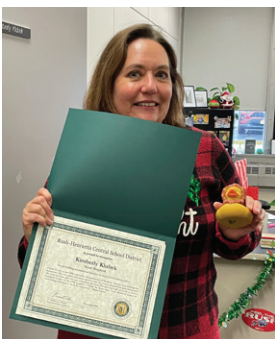
Robert is such a ray of sunshine when he comes to Leary! He makes sure to say good morning and afternoon every day and he makes us smile. Plus, his relationship with our Life Skills kids is one to admire. They all light up when they see him in our hallways. Thank you, Robert, for reminding us to enjoy each moment of every day. - Stephanie Stappenbeck

Stay in touch with Rush-Henrietta!

The new Beacon Brief is an every-so-often district communication that shines a light on exciting growth and innovation at R-H! The Beacon Brief is an email message with links to stories that provide relevant information regarding the district's work to support its Strategic Plan, Vision 2037. To subscribe, visit rhnet.org/beaconbrief.

Employees Receive Special Lion Duck Recognition

Rush-Henrietta created Comet Kudos as a way for families and staff members to nominate an employee who does outstanding work or goes above and beyond to help in a meaningful way. Knowing how important it is to recognize our outstanding employees, Superintendent Barbara Mullen has been visiting schools each month to honor some of our best. At each surprise stop, she presents a Comet Kudos certificate and a special token of appreciation—a lion duck! If you would like to make a Comet Kudos nomination, visit rhnet.org/cometkudos today.



Kimberly Klubek

Kimberly Klubek leads Rush-Henrietta's Universal Pre-K program. She was nominated for the district's Comet Kudos recognition by Maria Cilento of Expressive Beginnings Childcare. Maria writes: "I work for one of the UPK sites under the supervision of Kimberly. She has been nothing but supportive. The time and commitment she puts into the sites is indescribable and unmatched. She puts her heart and soul into everything she does. The kids and staff are lucky to have a wonderful leader in the UPK program. I speak for many when I say Kimberly makes an outstanding difference in the R-H community."

David Passero

David Passero is the principal of Sherman Elementary School. A parent, Jennifer Stonier, told us: "Mr. Passero has been wonderful at Sherman. My daughter and her friend arranged a meeting with him to pitch an idea to ask for donations for Golisano Children's Hospital around Christmas time. Not only did he welcome the meeting and made time to talk about it, he approved the idea and helped promote it." Mr. Passero helps students develop their voice and strives to foster a feeling of belonging.



Linda Garza

Linda Garza is the health aide in the nurse's office at Burger Junior High School. Linda was nominated for this honor by Burger Principal Greg Lane, who tells us she goes above and beyond as a health aide. A native Spanish speaker, Linda assists many Spanish-speaking families as they navigate the nuances of student registration, getting appropriate health records, and connecting with community resources. Linda's work is a powerful reminder that our district is made up of caring people from an incredible array of cultures and backgrounds.



RUSH-HENRIETTA

Student SPOTLIGHT



Looking Out for Others

We have some exciting news to share about one of our K-3 students! Principal Dina Stathopoulos tells us: "At Leary, we are thrilled to recognize Anurav Gurung from Mrs. Downer's class for exemplifying the values of kindness, compassion, and Leary Pride every day. Anurav has gone above and beyond to be a wonderful friend and helper to his peers." Mrs. Stathopoulos says Anurav is a consistent source of support and friendship for a fellow student, assisting him on and off the bus and including him during outdoor recess. Anurav also shares a special bond with another student, riding the bus with him each day and ensuring he gets safely to class every morning. This genuine kindness and consideration show how Anurav helps make our school community a better place. We are all proud of you!



Celebrating World Cultures

Four remarkable freshmen at Burger Junior High School were nominated for Student Spotlight honors. The teenagers are Jyotsana Rai, Soniya Dhakal, Guanjana Regmi, and Elena Soltan (shown in order). These students approached their principal last year and asked about starting a new tradition called Culture Day at their school. The objective is to recognize and celebrate the diverse cultures within our school community. Burger's second Culture Day was in December and was a big success. Great leadership skills all around!



Putting Perseverance into Motion

Marsjhiah Walker Barrett has not had an easy life but possesses incredible perseverance and resilience. Teachers describe her as a good student known for her curiosity and work ethic. She possesses a bubbly personality and shows kindness and empathy. She demonstrates great love and care for her family, particularly as a supportive big sister. Marsjhiah spreads kindness by giving warm greetings in the hallways. Marsjhiah has a heart for children and would like to serve them after graduating from high school, perhaps by pursuing a career in human services. Keep working hard, Marsjhiah. You can do so much good in this world!



Caring for our Community

We are thrilled to recognize Lee Dutt for demonstrating incredible growth and dedication during high school. This hardworking and respectful Webster Learning Center student makes positive contributions to the community. Lee shows immense compassion by providing haircuts to the homeless and distributing food to those in need. A counselor-in-training at Camp Stella Maris, Lee's leadership skills are useful in mentoring and supporting younger campers. Balancing a part-time job while excelling in academic studies and attending EMCC for cosmetology, Lee is a true portrait of dedication and perseverance. Keep up the amazing work!



BURGER STUDENTS CELEBRATE *Cultural Heritage*

The second annual Burger Junior High School Culture Day was held in December. The event is intended to give students and staff an opportunity to recognize, embrace, and celebrate their unique backgrounds. Students were encouraged to wear their culture's traditional clothing to school, marking a day dedicated to celebration and education. When we say you belong here in Rush-Henrietta, we mean it!





Karyn Stockmaster was wearing the red, white, and blue of the Buffalo Bills, but underneath her jersey is the green, gold, and black spirit of a Royal Comet. She was surprised one January morning to learn she was selected as Rush-Henrietta's 2025 Teacher of the Year! Her husband, Jason, and sons, Eli and Owen, were on hand for the exciting announcement.

Stockmaster teaches seventh-grade math at Burger Junior High School. It isn't an easy subject to

teach but she was made for this important work. "Karyn embodies the qualities every parent hopes their child will experience in an educator," says Burger Principal Greg Lane. "While math can often be a challenging subject for many, Karyn has a remarkable ability to instill confidence in her students, empowering them to tackle all the tasks she assigns."

Her enthusiasm and passion for teaching, combined with her unique ability to explain concepts, resonates with her students. Stockmaster understands their needs, which helps them grasp the material effectively. She has taught in Rush-Henrietta since 1997.

Stockmaster ensures that her students receive the support and

rigor necessary to achieve their individual academic goals. She also dedicates time after school to help them connect with their peers and our school community. In fact, she sponsors two Hang Out clubs to provide students with a safe space where they can socialize, play games, and unwind after school. The special time fosters a sense of community and connection within the school that positively influences students' perceptions about their educational environment.

"Karyn's dedication and natural rapport with her students make her one of the finest educators I have encountered," Lane says. "Her inspiring work impacts her students' learning experiences and positions her as a mentor and teacher leader within our school community."



R-H Names *Teacher of the Year*



Golden Apples



Miss Kristen Malecki was surprised with a Golden Apple Award from Channel 8! She was nominated by Kara Hochreiter, the parent of one of her students, who was moved to recognize the teacher because the start of school had been such a positive experience so far for her son. The Hochreiter family was thrilled when they found out their son would have Miss Malecki as his second-grade teacher because she had been their daughter's teacher a few years ago.



Mrs. Lindsay Titus has served Rush-Henrietta in several ways, but she brings one constant no matter which role she is playing: She cares deeply for children. Mrs. Titus, a special education teacher at Winslow Elementary School, was awarded Channel 8's Golden Apple Award. She received the nomination from LouAnn Black, a paraprofessional, who appreciates how dedicated

Mrs. Titus is to the children. LouAnn applauds Mrs. Titus' ability to adapt on the fly while teaching in their fast-paced classroom.

It is a coincidence that both of these educators are from Winslow Elementary, but they represent all of the good teachers found throughout each of our schools. Congratulations!

R-H Helping to Develop New Teachers



Katrina Grantham recently created and installed a sensory wall for students. With different activities like items to trace and a spot for wall-sitting, it helps support self-regulation.

Katrina Grantham didn't always want to be a teacher. After graduating from SUNY Brockport with a degree in math, she worked for several years as an actuary specializing in retirement benefits. When the pandemic kept her home helping her kindergartner navigate his schoolwork, she realized she found her calling. "I started helping teach a few other kids in the neighborhood, too," she says. "We called it the Grantham Institute and I absolutely loved it."

Grantham is pursuing a master's in education through the University of Rochester's Warner School of Education. As a fellow in the Monroe County Teacher Residency Consortium, she is partnering with a local school district as part of a full-academic-year residency program. An R-H grad who attended Sherman Elementary School, Grantham is

excited to be in a familiar location at Sherman for her residency. She is placed in a class for the year, working with the co-teachers on lesson planning, leading lessons, and providing extra support for students. One day each week she serves as a substitute teacher in the building, giving her a variety of important hands-on experiences.

"I appreciate all the opportunities the teachers I work with have given me," Grantham says. "I am encouraged by the way this school community has been intentionally built to be inclusive for all students. This residency allows me to see the value in what I am learning and how it is put into practice in a classroom."

Her co-teachers, Emily Van Scooter and Kim Bolzner, make sure she is involved in all aspects of leading a

classroom - from working with the students to meeting with families. "Having her in the classroom allows us greater flexibility to meet individual student needs. She also brings such great enthusiasm to her work - she has energized us," Van Scooter shares.

Rush-Henrietta is proud to participate in professional opportunities such as this, especially when they support our strategic plan's goal of Excellence for Every Student. You can read more by visiting the district website at rhnet.org/vision2037 and reading strategic plan Goal 1. By encouraging and supporting the next generation of teachers, we foster growth and collaboration among our teachers and staff. We are all lifelong learners and benefit by learning from others and incorporating new ideas into the classroom.

UPK Program Moving to Fyle, Winslow

Rush-Henrietta plans to relocate its Universal Pre-K program from Good Shepherd to two elementary schools effective September 2025. The Board of Education endorsed this change after much thoughtful consideration. This idea has been in the public arena for five years and plans were ramped up in earnest for the past year.

Good Shepherd has four UPK classrooms. Fyle and Winslow each will welcome two classrooms to their buildings in the fall. Principals look forward to greeting their new students! Both of these buildings have space to properly accommodate additional children. There are numerous benefits to moving the UPK program to these K-3 schools. Students in the UPK program at Fyle and Winslow will:

- have access to a school nurse.
- receive free breakfast and lunch.
- use bathrooms located within the classroom.
- be able to participate in specials such as P.E. and music.
- be better prepared to make the transition to kindergarten.



Teachers, parents, and administrators have met to discuss how to help ensure a successful transition of the UPK program to Fyle and Winslow. Additionally, internal meetings are being held to think through every aspect of this transition. A ThoughtExchange designed for parents of current and incoming UPK students was conducted in January to seek feedback and address concerns.

The district will consider relocating other programs housed at Good Shepherd in the future, as well. While the building has served Rush-Henrietta well for many years, it will cost millions of dollars to renovate the aging building to make it as safe and modern as our community deserves. We do not believe that pursuing that path is fiscally responsible. Please note that UPK programs housed at local child care centers will continue to operate without change.

Roth Junior High School is Rising!



Under the strong leadership of Principal Omar Hussain and his colleagues, Roth Junior High School is experiencing a year of incredible growth. In January, the Board of Education and district leaders enjoyed the opportunity to spend several hours visiting the school. They found an upbeat and positive atmosphere and saw students authentically engaged in their learning. We look forward to sharing more good news about Roth in the months to come!



Members of the Board of Education recently were at Roth Junior High School. Board members visit each school every year.



What Students Say About the Field...

"We never had a student section for girls soccer and playing on the turf under the lights brought a lot of students together."

Beren Gul

Girls Varsity Soccer Player

"Running down the field for the first kickoff, making the tackle, and looking up to see a packed crowd was amazing! After every touchdown, seeing the student section and energy along with the light show was something I have never seen at another high school event."

Ronin Walker

Junior Varsity Football Player

Werner Kleemann Field Named

An estimated 2,000 people gathered at Rush-Henrietta Senior High School this fall for the much-anticipated naming ceremony for the district's multipurpose field. The new field is named for longtime coach, athletic director, and administrator in Rush-Henrietta, the late Werner Kleemann. We were pleased to have his family and friends as part of the ceremony. In addition, hundreds of R-H alumni traveled from as far as California and Florida to be a part of the special evening. They did so to acknowledge the long-lasting and positive impact that Kleemann left on their lives.

The stands were jam-packed with Royal Comets and the scene was standing-room only! It was great to see so many students, both past and present, on hand. We look forward to many years of activities, games, and events taking place on the new field as future generations of athletes learn and adopt the phrase Kleemann liked to share: E=R (Effort = Results)! Many thanks to our R-H community for approving the creation of this field. As anyone who was in attendance for this special occasion will tell you, a new era in Rush-Henrietta has dawned!



Congratulations to Our Scholar-Athletes!

To qualify for Team Scholar-Athlete status, at least three-quarters of team members must have a GPA of 90 percent or higher for the first quarter. Congratulations to our Royal Comets for working hard on and off the field, and thank you, R-H community, for your support of them!

Seven R-H varsity fall sports teams earned Scholar-Athlete status through the New York State Public High School Athletic Association this fall. Those teams are:

Boys Cross Country ★ Girls Cross Country ★ Girls Golf
Girls Swimming ★ Girls Tennis ★ Boys Volleyball ★ Gymnastics



2034 Lehigh Station Road
Henrietta, NY 14467
(585) 359-5000
www.rhnet.org

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Henrietta, NY
Permit No. 2

2024-2025 Board of Education

Mr. Scott M. Adair, President
Mrs. Mai Abdullah, Vice President
Ms. Shiloh Arthmann
Mrs. Suzanne Bennett
Mrs. Laura P. Borate
Mrs. Kimberly DeLardge
Mrs. Rachel Sherman

Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Barbara A. Mullen

Published by the Office of Community Relations



RUSH-HENRIETTA IS HIRING!

Your hometown school district has many job opportunities! These are available on a full-time, part-time, and substitute basis (both school-year and full-year positions). Please review the list below and consider how working for Rush-Henrietta can make a difference for your family and ours!

- Bus Driver (paid training)
- Bus Monitor
- Cafeteria Monitor
- Cleaners
- Clerical Staff
- Day Care Aide
- Food Services Helper
- Teachers
- Teacher Aide
- Youth Assistant (security)

R-H also needs substitutes of all types to support our main offices, health offices, cafeterias, libraries, and classrooms! Visit rhnet.org/jobs for more information and to apply!

If you have questions, please contact Kristin Dioguardi, Director of Human Resources, at kdioguardi@rhnet.org.

Join
**OUR
TEAM!**