



# Community Newsletter

Rush-Henrietta Central School District Winter 2008

## Community Helping to Shape Proposed Budget

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The Rush-Henrietta Central School District values the contributions of its residents, many of whom share their time and talent helping with the budget development process.

This year, community input is more important than ever. The district faces new fiscal challenges created by the Monroe County Legislature's decision to withhold a significant portion of sales tax revenue from the district beginning in January 2008.

In an effort to continue its fiscally responsible approach to providing a sound education for all students, Rush-Henrietta provides multiple opportunities for community input during the budget-building process. For example, the district is working with a number of community-minded citizens who help comprise the Budget Advisory Council (BAC). The council, which serves in an advisory capacity to the superintendent of schools, reviews all aspects of the budget and discusses the merits of new spending proposals. It began its work on the proposed 2008-2009 budget in November.

The Budget Advisory Council was formed in 1995 to provide for greater community involvement in the budget development process. The council works with district leaders to achieve a proposed budget that is educationally sound and fiscally responsible.

It provides a forum for stakeholders and the superintendent to share ideas and understandings necessary for the successful development of a budget that best represents the values of the Rush-Henrietta Central School District community.

The Budget Advisory Council is comprised of a diverse group of stakeholders in the community, including administrators, parents, and representatives from organizations in the school district. Residents, staff, students, teachers, and district union representatives also take part. In addition, the Board of Education, superintendent of schools, assistant superintendent for business and school operations, and the senior budget technician are ex-officio members of the council.

There are additional opportunities this school year for community members to participate in the budget process. Each year, the district schedules multiple events designed to gain input from residents during the budget-building process. These include the Community Budget Forum in February and public hearings in March, April, and May. We appreciate community involvement and its continued support of the Rush-Henrietta Central School District and the nearly 6,000 students it serves. Together, we are guiding student success ... one child at a time.

## Explaining Monroe County's Sales Tax Intercept

Effective January 2008, the Monroe County Legislature will withhold approximately 50 percent of the sales tax that the county is legally obligated to pay to local school districts. This action will have a significant impact on the Rush-Henrietta Central School District this school year. Here are the answers to several commonly asked questions.

### Q: What is the crux of Monroe County's sales tax intercept plan?

A: Monroe County has a problem covering the costs of Medicaid and other county expenses. In September 2007, the Monroe County Legislature approved a sales tax intercept plan, now called "the F.A.I.R. plan." This plan will take away approximately 50 percent of local sales tax revenue that the county is obligated to pay to Rush-Henrietta, and that Rush-Henrietta has budgeted for this year. This sales tax intercept plan alters the long-standing Morin-Ryan Act, a state law specifying how sales tax revenue is shared. We believe that this action is illegal.

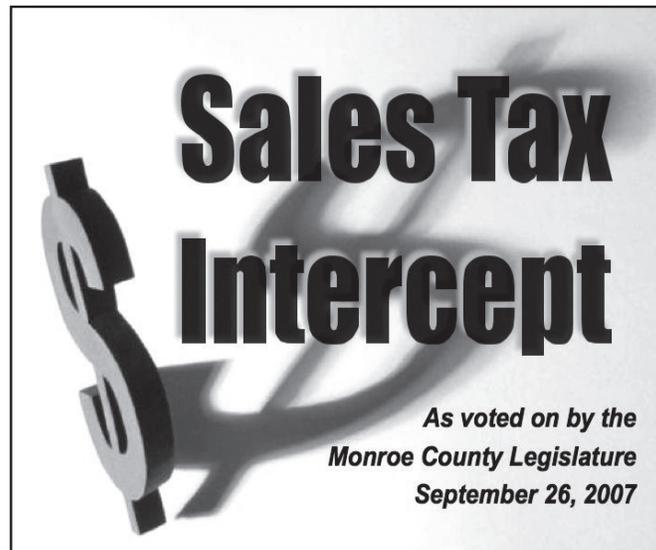
### Q: How much revenue does Rush-Henrietta stand to lose?

A: Rush-Henrietta will not receive nearly \$1 million of expected revenue this school year, and at least \$1.9 million of expected revenue next year. During the next decade, Rush-Henrietta stands to lose at least \$19 million in revenue. To maintain our programs and services, the district will need to raise taxes or decrease programs and services accordingly.

### Q: Why is the county saying Rush-Henrietta has extra state aid?

A: County leaders are attempting to justify their withholding of sales tax funds to schools by citing new state

aid for education. This year, Rush-Henrietta did receive extra state aid, but with the requirement that these funds be used in state-approved ways to improve academic achievement. This additional aid cannot be used to offset a reduction in sales tax revenue. The district's increase in state aid is tied to a Contract for Excellence, the governor's way to ensure that our increase in state aid is spent to improve educational outcomes, not to provide local tax relief. We have no choice about this.



### Q: Did county leaders ask for the advice and counsel of school officials?

A: No, they did not. We are disappointed that county officials acted unilaterally in proceeding with the intercept program. School districts weren't asked to be part of a community solution. For more than a year, local school superintendents made it clear that we were willing to work with Monroe County, but

we weren't invited to help.

### Q: What is Rush-Henrietta doing in response?

A: Boards of education from 22 school districts – including Rush-Henrietta – believe Monroe County is acting illegally, and that its attempt to revise the local sales tax revenue-sharing agreement violates state law. Each of these districts filed a joint lawsuit against Monroe County, and is sharing legal expenses. A judge sided with Monroe County in this lawsuit and local school districts plan to appeal his decision. To learn more or make your voice heard regarding the sales tax intercept plan, please contact your elected officials. In addition, residents are encouraged to take part in the Community Budget Forum in February and public hearings in March, April, and May. Everyone living and working in Rush-Henrietta is encouraged to pay special attention to this matter. Visit [www.rhnet.org/salestax](http://www.rhnet.org/salestax) for updates.



## Mass Messaging: A New Communication Tool

Attention parents and guardians of Rush-Henrietta students! Remember the phone calls you received from the school district this past fall inviting you to Rachel's Challenge and Parent University? Those calls were made to the homes of every student in the district using a rapid-notification system that delivers thousands of messages in minutes. It is useful in making community announcements and emergency notifications.

The Connect-ED system is now in use in the Rush-Henrietta Central School District. This technology allows school administrators to record, schedule, and send personalized voice messages to thousands of students and parents within minutes. In addition, the technology allows the district to track and confirm delivery of messages to ensure smooth communication. If a phone number is busy, the system will retry three times during the course of an hour. This tool builds on the concept of our E-News listservs, giving the district a more powerful way to quickly and reliably reach the entire school community by telephone. When fully implemented, this mass-messaging system will:

- allow the district to make **emergency notifications** en masse, ensuring that one consistent and accurate message is being delivered in a timely fashion to parents.
- give the district the ability to notify parents of school **attendance** issues regarding their children in a more timely fashion.
- allow the district to engage in **community outreach**, providing an efficient way to communicate with families about important district and school activities.
- help the district engage families by offering a **single-question survey** to help with planning or better gauge the pulse of the community on important topics.

Connect-ED requires no hardware, no software, and no additional phone lines. Phone messages are recorded only once, and then delivered to select audiences – or the entire school district population – as necessary.

Connect-ED has thousands of school district clients throughout the country and an excellent track record of privacy and reliability. During this school year, the district will use the mass-messaging system on a district level, determining proper procedures to ensure the system is used in the most efficient manner. To make the system as effective as possible, please update home, work, and cell phone numbers with your child's school as soon as any changes occur.

Rush-Henrietta looks forward to using this system to enhance home-school communication. There is more to share with you about Connect-ED, and we'll be doing that in the upcoming months. Please watch for more details about this exciting new tool.

### Connect-Ed Phone Call to Survey Parent Access to E-mail

In an effort to strengthen home-school communication, Rush-Henrietta continues to explore the use of electronic communications as an alternative to traditional mailings.

Your participation is key. The results of this survey are important in helping the district determine the feasibility of using more timely and cost-effective communication tools. Thank you for helping the district strengthen home-school communication.

Please see the back page of this newsletter for more information.

**We'll be calling  
Rush-Henrietta  
families on  
January 22!**





## District News Briefs

### R-H Singers Accept Carnegie Hall Invite

The Rush-Henrietta Singers will perform as part of the National Youth Choir at Carnegie Hall in New York City on April 20, 2008. Choir leaders submitted a CD demonstrating a wide range of repertoire and shared the group's impressive resume before being chosen. Under the direction and accompaniment of Mrs. Christine Sargent and Ms. Marilyn Haverly, the choir will select its own choral literature to perform in April. It's the latest in a long line of honors for the group. This year, the New York State School Music Association critiqued the R-H Singers and gave the group the Gold Award with distinction, the highest level of music recognized for high school choirs. That excellence is a reflection of the school district's outstanding and acclaimed music program. In 2005, the Grammy Foundation as a Grammy Signature School named the Senior High School. The following year, the American Music Conference also named Rush-Henrietta as one of the Best 100 Communities for Music Education in America.



*R-H Singers, a choir from the Senior High School, is heading to Carnegie Hall.*

### Parent University Workshops Online

Rush-Henrietta is pleased to make several workshops from Parent University available for online viewing. Visit [www.rhnet.org/videos](http://www.rhnet.org/videos) to view "Say No Today, Say Yes to the Future" and "Boundaries and Expectations for Middle Schoolers." Because of their size, these movies will not be viewable on a dial-up connection. Choose low-quality or high-quality video, depending on your Internet connection. Many people are viewing these movies using QuickTime version 7. These videos also are available in hard copy. Call the district reception desk at 359-5000 and arrange to borrow a VHS copy. Thank you for your continued support of the Rush-Henrietta Central School District.

### Winter Concerts, Art Show on Tap

Most of Rush-Henrietta's schools have presented winter concerts, but several opportunities remain to attend a show. For example, Leary's 4th Grade Strings Concert is at 7 p.m. Wednesday, January 23, and Winslow's 4th Grade Winter Concert is at 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, January 30. Perhaps you are more interested in artwork? Please join us from 4 to 6 p.m. Wednesday, January 16, for the opening of the District Art Show at the Ninth Grade Academy, 2000 Lehigh Station Road. The show, which will display art by students in grades 1-12, runs through February 10.

### Keeping Kids Safe on the Internet: Community Invited to Informational Meeting

Here's your chance to learn more about keeping your children safe on the Internet! Winslow Elementary School's Parent Teacher Organization (WPTO), in conjunction with the Rush-Henrietta Central School District, will present an informative Parent Education Program presentation regarding children and Internet safety. Mark your calendars for 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, January 23, in the Winslow cafeteria. Thomson Thomas, director of computer services, will share his insight on topics relating to Internet safety. Community members are invited to attend. Some portions of the presentation are not suitable for children. However, on-site care will be provided for school-age children. To learn more about this special presentation, call the Winslow main office at 359-5090.

*R-H Information is Only a Click Away!*



Visit the district's redesigned Web site for comprehensive information about Rush-Henrietta schools. Also, consider subscribing to one of the district's latest services, E-News, which provides brief e-mail notifications, announcements, and reminders about important meetings, activities, and issues. Visit [www.rhnet.org](http://www.rhnet.org) today!



## District News Briefs

### News from the Rush-Henrietta Education Foundation

Rush-Henrietta Education Foundation (RHEF) trustees are delighted to welcome a new student representative to the organization. Symphony Samuels, a junior, attended her first meeting in October. Senior Cassie DiMarino, another student representative, joined the foundation in 2006. As part of its efforts, RHEF is offering an easy way for parents and students to say thanks to a special teacher or staff member by making a contribution to the Rush-Henrietta Education Foundation in their honor. A printable donation form for the Honor a Special Teacher program is available at [www.rhef.org](http://www.rhef.org). Contributions can be made by credit card. RHEF continues to seek new members from the community. If you are interested in serving as a foundation trustee, please contact President Carol Malach at [edulutions@rochester.rr.com](mailto:edulutions@rochester.rr.com).

### Hall of Fame Welcomes First Inductees

A banking executive and a professor of microelectronic engineering are the first members of the Rush-Henrietta Alumni Hall of Fame. Bruce Smith, Ph.D., of Penfield, a member of the Class of 1977, is an expert in lithography and is Director for the Center of Nanolithography Research at Rochester Institute of Technology. Karen L. Hayden Davis, of Farmington, is a 1973 graduate. She is vice president and branch center director for ESL Federal Credit Union. Her parents,



Karen L. Hayden Davis and Bruce Smith, Ph.D., were named to the Rush-Henrietta Hall of Fame.

Jack and Beverly Hayden, represented her at the ceremony. Smith and Davis were inducted September 29, 2007, before the homecoming football game. The Hall of Fame is funded through the Rush-Henrietta Education Foundation.

### Winter Weather Notifications

For school closing information, tune to radio and TV stations in Rochester. The media is notified about closings by 6 a.m. School closings and notifications of early dismissal also are posted on the district Web site, [www.rhnet.org](http://www.rhnet.org). Please do not call the schools or transportation office. The R-H School Age Child Care Program (RHSACCP) is closed on days when school is closed due to weather.

### Fall Sports Teams, Athletes Fare Well

Although Rush-Henrietta's varsity football team was the high school's only championship team, having won the Section V AAA title, almost every varsity team was competitive and in contention for a championship. The district extends special congratulations to the varsity football team's Nate Delone, who was named AAA Offensive Player of the Year, and Joe Montesano, who was selected AAA Coach of the Year. In addition, the district is pleased to announce that Peter Dietz was Monroe County Division I Coach of the Year in boy's soccer, and that the girls' soccer team and boys' and girls' cross country teams won sportsmanship awards. Congratulations to all!

### Accessing Parent Alerts on the Web

Those who can access the Internet are encouraged to check the district Web site at [www.rhnet.org](http://www.rhnet.org) on a regular basis for parent alerts and notifications. As part of the district's ongoing efforts to enhance communication, information alerts have been created and added to the site. These alerts are activated to draw attention to announcements and/or emergency notifications, including school closings. When activated, these special messages can be viewed by clicking on the graphic, which will appear above News Room on the right-hand side of the district home page or in the middle of school home pages.



# Celebrating Academic Success

As we begin a new calendar year, it is important to report on past successes. Rush-Henrietta has good news to share from 2007 that is cause for celebration throughout the school community!

Many regular and special education students, along with students taking Advanced Placement (AP) and state exams, are experiencing higher levels of student achievement. Test results, while only one indicator of student success, show that the district's commitment to continuous improvement is resulting in higher levels of proficiency. Expectations for high levels of achievement by all students, along with planned collaborative efforts to support student learning at all levels, are resulting in measurable academic growth.

## Regular and Special Education Progress

### Grade 3 Math

In 2007, at 93 percent, Rush-Henrietta students had the third-highest passing rate on the Math 3 assessment in Monroe County.

### Grade 4 Science

In 2007, Rush-Henrietta regular and special education students attained the highest passing scores the district has achieved since 2002.

- In 2002, 82.4 percent of regular education students passed the Grade 4 Science exam. In 2007, 96.4 percent of regular education students passed the Grade 4 Science exam.
- In 2002, 53.7 percent of special education students passed the Grade 4 Science exam. In 2007, 75 percent of special education students passed the Grade 4 Science exam.

### Grade 8 ELA

In 2007, Rush-Henrietta students attained new levels of achievement on the New York State Grade 8 English Language Arts exam.

- In 2003, 61.9 percent of regular education students passed the Grade 8 ELA exam with a score of 3 or higher. In 2007, 70.5 percent of regular education students passed the grade 8 ELA exam with a score of 3 or higher.

- In 2003, 10.8 percent of special education students passed the Grade 8 ELA exam with a score of 3 or higher. In 2007, 20.5 percent of special education students passed the Grade 8 ELA exam with a score of 3 or higher.

## NYS English Regents

In 2007, Rush-Henrietta had the highest percentage of students passing the New York State English Regents exam in six years. In 2002, 79 percent of the students passed the exam. In 2007, 93 percent of students passed the exam.

## U.S. History and Government

In 2007, 94 percent of students passed the U.S. History and Government exam, which is the highest passing percentage the district has achieved in the past three years.



Rush-Henrietta is celebrating measurable academic growth among students.

## Advanced Placement (AP) Progress

Taking advantage of rigorous college-level AP courses while in high school often changes the course of a student's study and career path. Through these challenging courses, students enter a universe of knowledge that might be unexplored in high school. By taking AP courses that require a substantial commitment of time and effort, students have the opportunity to earn credit, or advanced standing, at most of the nation's colleges and universities. The district is proud to report that Rush-Henrietta students taking AP exams in 2007 ranked

among the highest of 12 Monroe County schools scoring 3 or higher in the following courses:

### AP Statistics

Rush-Henrietta had the highest percentage (97 percent) scoring 3 or greater.

### AP Macro Economics

Rush-Henrietta had the second-highest percentage (87 percent) scoring 3 or greater.

### AP Calculus AB

Rush-Henrietta had the third-highest percentage (92 percent) scoring 3 or greater.

### AP U.S. Government & Politics

Rush-Henrietta had the fourth-highest percentage (68 percent) scoring 3 or greater.

## Burger, Roth Renovations Moving Ahead

Renovations that will help Rush-Henrietta maintain its long-term ability to meet student requirements are underway at Burger and Roth middle schools. Voters approved the renovations in December 2005.

At Burger Middle School, construction crews will create a bus loop leading into a new main entrance foyer that will service the main office, nurse's office, and auditorium. The project also calls for the construction of a music wing, additional physical education space, an expanded library, more classroom space, student services suite, vice principal's area, guidance area, and renovated home and careers area. The plan also addresses important safety issues. Already, great signs of progress are evident from outside the school, and we are looking forward to completion of work on Burger Middle School sometime in Fall 2008.

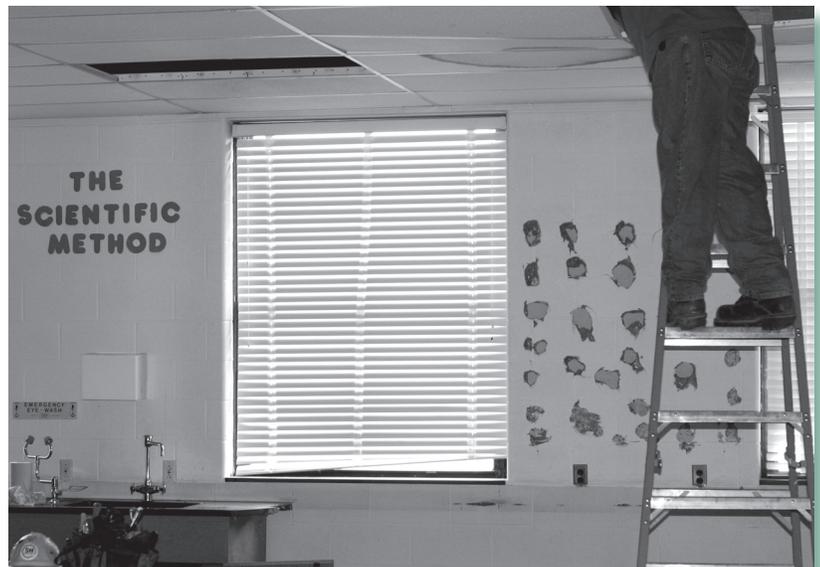
At Roth Middle School, construction crews have created a new general music room, chorus room, and keyboarding room, and are in the midst of significant classroom renovations that will allow the school to designate a part of the building as a sixth-grade wing. By next fall, Roth Middle School will lose its two-cafeteria system in favor of a single, more efficient cafeteria. Construction at Burger and Roth middle schools was scheduled to coincide appropriately with the school year to minimize classroom disruptions.

In 2008, as part of the approved projects, the Rush-Henrietta Central School District will pursue the reconfiguration of parking areas and traffic patterns at the Senior High School. The district's goal is to reduce congestion and improve safety for students, staff members, and community residents. The district also will proceed with work on the Parker Administration Building, which was among the projects approved by voters two years ago.

Updates regarding the district's improvement



A new addition near the existing bus loop is one of the many enhancements taking place at Burger Middle School. Rush-Henrietta voters approved the work in December 2005.



This past summer, several classrooms were renovated at Roth Middle School. Improvements will continue to be made to the school throughout much of 2008.

projects will be provided in this newsletter and on the district Web site at [www.rhnet.org](http://www.rhnet.org). For more information, contact Stanley Polmateer, director of facilities, at 585-359-5385 or [spolmateer@rhnet.org](mailto:spolmateer@rhnet.org). Thank you for your continued support of the Rush-Henrietta Central School District.



## District's Vision Plays Important Role

As we begin a new year, it is important to revisit the school district's Vision of Excellence, stressing the role that everyone in our school and community plays in bringing it to reality. By living our vision together, we send a compelling message about its importance.

The vision that the Rush-Henrietta Central School District Board of Education approved in 2006 is playing an important role in our schools on a daily basis. The vision statement was developed by a cross-section of Rush-Henrietta stakeholders. It reflects our underlying beliefs and hope for the future.

The Vision of Excellence says that the Rush-Henrietta Central School District will be a learning community characterized by the following interdependent values:

- Safe and caring learning environments
- An unwavering focus on student learning
- A culture of collaboration
- A commitment to continuous improvement

The district's vision statement sets the stage for collective change. It guides the work we do and helps to transform our schools and the district into high-performing teams that have an unwavering focus on student learning.

In an effort to build broader understanding of the collaborative efforts required to prepare students for success in a global community, we must continue to communicate and practice the interdependent values of the district's vision of excellence.

**Mission**  
To foster the intellectual and personal development of Rush-Henrietta's students and to prepare them for responsible citizenship, productive employment, and life-long learning in a global community.

**Vision of Excellence**  
The Rush-Henrietta Central School District will be a learning community characterized by the following interdependent values:

- Safe and caring learning environments**  
School settings provide physically and emotionally safe learning environments for students and staff. Classrooms and other work environments promote trust, encouragement, mutual respect, and an appreciation for diversity.
- An unwavering focus on student learning**  
Learning experiences are planned and implemented with an expectation for high levels of achievement by all students. This is accomplished by focusing on four fundamental questions:  
1. What do we want our students to know and be able to do?  
2. How will we know how well our students are learning?  
3. What will we do if our students are not learning at high levels of proficiency?  
4. How will we challenge our students already learning at high levels of proficiency?
- A culture of collaboration**  
Stakeholders work as partners to support student learning. This is accomplished by timely and responsive communication between and among stakeholders. Opportunities for planning and shared decision making are embraced.
- A commitment to continuous improvement**  
All stakeholders actively search for better ways to do their work. This is accomplished by reflective inquiry and ongoing professional growth. Individual and collective achievements are shared and celebrated as progress occurs.

**Stakeholders**  
The stakeholders of the Rush-Henrietta Central School District include: students, parents, teachers, administrators, support staff, alumni, the Board of Education, community residents, institutions of higher education, businesses, and the State Education Department.  
Board approved July 11, 2006

The Rush-Henrietta Central School District thanks each stakeholder for his or her continued support of our district and the nearly 6,000 students we serve.

## Collaborating for Student Success: High School Teacher Visits Sherman

In a school district that focuses on creating a culture of collaboration, students at Sherman Elementary School benefited when Chris Testa, a physics teacher from the Senior High School, recently shared with them a special lesson to enrich their study of magnets and electricity.

His November 2007 presentation focused on two ideas: that a wire carrying current feels a force in a magnetic field, which is how motors work, and that current can be produced by moving a wire through a magnetic field, which is how electric generators work. "I demonstrated some examples of these principles," Testa says. "These included a homemade electric motor, an electric generator, a magnet moving slowly down an aluminum tube, a thomson coil (electromagnet) levitating

some aluminum rings, an ammeter showing how motion of a magnet near a wire can produce a current, and more. "The kids really seemed to enjoy it. I could have stayed another hour answering questions. I have done these presentations a few times now and every time it gives me great satisfaction to see so many kids excited about science."

Jim Loughner, Math, Science, Technology Resource Teacher (MSTRT) at Sherman Elementary School, confirmed that the presentation was a hit. "We here at Sherman want to thank you for offering to do a presentation on magnets and electricity to support our fifth grade science unit of the same name. The children really enjoyed the activity and learned a great deal."

## Students Display Sense of Citizenship

The Rush-Henrietta Central School District strives to instill in each student a sense of good citizenship. In December, each school engaged in multiple service projects, and we'd like to share an example from each building.



Members of Fyle Elementary School's student council delivered more than 150 items to Wegmans Food Markets to support the Pirate Toy Fund.

- At Crane Elementary School, paper mittens were displayed on a giving tree. These mittens suggested items to buy or donate, and all items collected were given to local families through the Salvation Army.
- Students and staff members at Fyle Elementary School collected new toys for the Pirate Toy Fund. With adult supervision, eight student council members delivered the toys to a main collection area.
- At Leary Elementary School, students and staff members tended to the Leary Giving Tree. It was decorated with new hats, mittens, socks, and gently used books that will be donated to city families.
- Students from Marcy Mooney's kindergarten class at Sherman Elementary School rang bells for the Salvation Army for two hours near the food court entrance at The Marketplace mall.
- At Winslow Elementary School, students and staff members decorated the hat and mitten tree with new

hats, mittens, and socks that were given to children and families at Rochester's School No. 45.

- The Students Taking Action and Responsibility (STAR) Club at Burger Middle School sponsored a present drive for preschool children. The club also helped the National Junior Honor Society conduct a successful food drive.
- Roth Middle School hosted its National Junior Honor Society Senior Citizen Breakfast. Some 150 people from Rush and Henrietta were invited to enjoy a free breakfast and student entertainment.
- Students at the Ninth Grade Academy supported the work of Toys for Tots. Staff members helped a cause, too, pitching in to buy gift cards to benefit Ibero Day Care in Rochester.
- At the Senior High School, students taking Participation in Government class sent care packages to Ted Sargent, a teacher serving overseas in the military. To learn more, visit Mr. Sargent's classroom Web page at [www.rhnet.org](http://www.rhnet.org).

As we in Rush-Henrietta continue to focus on student learning, we're also doing our best to develop good citizens. During the season of giving, it was gratifying to see so many students serving others. We thank community members for their continued support of these and other efforts.



Brian Wirth, of CURE Childhood Cancer Association, thanks the students and staff members at Sherman Elementary School for their generosity.



## News From Around the District

### Kindergarten Registration

Children are eligible to enter kindergarten in September 2008 if they will be 5 years old on or before December 1, 2008. Parents are asked to register their children for 2008-2009 kindergarten classes at the district registration office in January, February, and March 2008, according to the below schedule. Registrations will take place at the Vollmer Building, 150 Telephone Road, West Henrietta and will be done by appointment only, from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. each day, with one evening per school scheduled from 6 to 8 p.m. The early kindergarten registration gives school officials time to plan for the screening and orientation programs for incoming kindergartners and their parents. For questions, or to make an appointment, please contact Pat Cahill, district registrar, at 359-7957.

School	Dates	Evening Date
Crane	March 12-26	March 20
Fyle	Jan. 22 to Feb. 1	January 31
Leary	Feb. 4-15	February 14
Sherman	Jan. 7-18	January 17
Winslow	Feb. 27 to March 12	March 6

### Alumni Council Invites Participation

The Rush-Henrietta Alumni Council (RHAC) is looking for volunteer graduates interested in serving as class contacts for classes that graduated in the 1970s and 1980s. A contact is needed for each class in both decades with the exception of 1979. Class contacts serve as links between the council and members of their respective graduating classes. Alumni interested in serving as a class contact should talk to President Joe Bellanca by writing to [cjbellanca@rochester.rr.com](mailto:cjbellanca@rochester.rr.com) or calling 359-5003. Some 3,900 Rush-Henrietta graduates have added contact information to the Alumni Center on the district Web site at [www.rhnet.org/alumni](http://www.rhnet.org/alumni). The council urges graduates to register. All alumni listed on the site receive two newsletters per year outlining council activities. The pages also help all graduates stay in touch with classmates who are living throughout the United States and in other parts of the world. Registrants can receive district e-mails with information of interest to all graduates and access reunion information posted online.

### Asthma-friendly Schools Initiative

The Regional Community Asthma Network of the Finger Lakes, through the American Lung Association, was awarded one of 10 nationwide Asthma-Friendly Schools' grants to

work with Rush-Henrietta to reduce the burden of asthma among students. The goal is to improve the asthma control of students through a comprehensive school asthma-management program with students, staff, families, teachers, administrators, bus drivers, school health professionals, and athletics staff members. This initiative will support school goals by keeping students with asthma healthy, in school, and ready to learn. Poorly controlled asthma can affect a child's educational success. Asthma is the leading cause of school absenteeism and hospitalizations among children. Schools can create a safe and healthy learning environment for students by becoming asthma friendly. To learn more about this initiative or to join a parent representative group for this project, please contact Jeanne Schwasman or Lea Theuer, school nurse teachers, at [jschwasman@rhnet.org](mailto:jschwasman@rhnet.org) or [ltheuer@rhnet.org](mailto:ltheuer@rhnet.org). The district welcomes your participation.

### Diversity Advisory Council Forges Ahead

Four years ago, the Rush-Henrietta Central School District made closing the achievement gap and diversity awareness top priorities. It established the Diversity Advisory Council, which now is called the Diversity Advisory Committee. The committee's responsibilities include:

- discussing and considering diversity issues as they relate to school culture, school climate, and cultural responsive education.
- sharing school improvement plans addressing closing achievement gaps.
- planning professional development sessions for diversity leaders.
- acting as an advisory committee to the superintendent on matters related to school, classroom, and community experiences and concerns.
- planning at least one annual Diversity Community Forum.

The committee meets monthly and develops a plan for quarterly staff development meetings for school diversity leaders throughout the school year. The gender gap has been identified as one of its primary focuses. A Diversity Community Forum is being planned for March. More information will be available on the district Web site at [www.rhnet.org](http://www.rhnet.org). The Diversity Advisory Committee is co-chaired by Beverly Burrell-Moore and Joanne Mattiucci. For more information, please call 359-5534.

## What You Need to Know About MRSA

While Rush-Henrietta has not experienced any Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) clusters or outbreaks, there has been much in the news about the illness.

Staphylococcus – more commonly referred to as “staph” – is a type of bacteria and one of the most common causes of skin infections. MRSA is a staph infection resistant to some antibiotics. Although it may be more difficult to treat, it is treatable. Staph, including MRSA, is usually spread through frequent skin-to-skin contact and, to a lesser degree, contamination of surfaces from an individual’s skin abscess or lesion. Preventive measures include:

- Thorough hand washing
- Maintaining a clean environment
- Not sharing personal items such as towels, razors, bar soap, and water bottles
- Student athletes washing towels and clothing after use and showering after participation

Students who have been diagnosed with MRSA generally are not excluded from school. However, they need to take medications as prescribed, have the area covered with a clean dressing, and practice good hygiene, especially if they are participating in sports.

If you or your child has a skin sore or rash that does not go away with usual care after a few days, please see your private healthcare provider. Not every bump or pimple requires medical evaluation, only those that worsen or do not respond to routine home treatment. Remember, seeking early medical treatment for skin infections is important.

The Rush-Henrietta Central School District continues to make every effort to provide safe and caring learning environments. We ask that parents help by encouraging the aforementioned preventive measures to ensure proper student hygiene. To learn more about MRSA, visit the New York State Department of Health at [www.health.state.ny.us](http://www.health.state.ny.us), or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

## Parent University 2007 Deemed Resounding Success

More than 250 people attended Rush-Henrietta’s Parent University November 3, 2007. They enjoyed a keynote address by a nationally known speaker and attended workshops on a variety of important topics designed for anyone interested in supporting student success. Michele Borba, Ed.D., a nationally known child development expert and author of 21 books, treated those in attendance to an informative and passionate keynote address. Among her main messages: Your children are watching your actions and listening to your words, even when you don’t realize it. Thanks to everyone who attended, as well as to those who helped organize the event. Parent University is offered as part of the Rush-Henrietta Central School District’s parent involvement initiative.



This Parent University workshop focused on the academic achievement of boys.

## *Rush-Henrietta* **Rush-Henrietta Central School District**

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## ***Connect-Ed Phone Call to Survey Parent Access to E-mail***

In an effort to strengthen home-school communication, Rush-Henrietta continues to explore the use of electronic communications as an alternative to traditional mailings.

As part of continuing efforts to determine the feasibility of communicating electronically, parents will be surveyed on Tuesday, January 22, 2008. All households that have students attending Rush-Henrietta schools will receive a Connect-Ed phone call in the form of a single-question survey starting at 6:45 p.m. January 22. You can answer the survey with the touch of a button. The district urges all parents of elementary and secondary students to respond to this call. The Connect-Ed service offers the opportunity to place a second call to homes that don't answer the first call, and the district will make a follow-up call to reach those parents at a later date.

Your participation is key. The results of this survey are important in helping the district determine the feasibility of using more timely and cost-effective communication tools. Thank you for helping the district strengthen home-school communication.

**We'll be calling  
Rush-Henrietta  
families on  
January 22!**

