

CONNECTIONS

A Newsletter from the Somerville Public Schools – April 18, 2019

News & Notes



Keith Haring-Inspired Art Exploration at Next Wave/Full Circle

This month at Next Wave/Full Circle, students enrolled in Graphic and Activist Art classes focused their study on American graffiti artist and muralist Keith Haring. As NW/FC art teacher Lindsey Richard explains, Haring was a New York-based artist known for creating artwork that responded to social and political issues during his lifetime. The history and concept of activist art was explored, and there were discussions about how art can help create and connect communities. The vibrant Keith Haring-inspired artwork and mural have been installed as a bright and colorful way to lead students and teachers up the stairs and into the hallways of Next Wave/Full Circle.

Two SHS Teachers Recognized as Partners in Excellence by Mass Insight Education and Research

SHS English teachers Lindsay McCracken and Meagan DeLury Spinelli have received the Partners in Excellence teaching award from Mass Insight Education & Research for exemplary work in the organization's Advanced Placement STEM and English Program. Mass Insight's mission is to work with educators to help close student opportunity and achievement gaps and help drive students' college and career success through systems transformation. McCracken and Spinelli were two of only 29 Massachusetts Advanced Placement educators who were recognized for their outstanding contributions to student success during the 2017-2018 academic year. Colleagues, family members, Massachusetts legislators, and representatives of the business and philanthropic communities feted the distinguished educators at a celebration on Wednesday, April 10 in Worcester. Learn more about Mass Insight's work at www.massinsight.org.



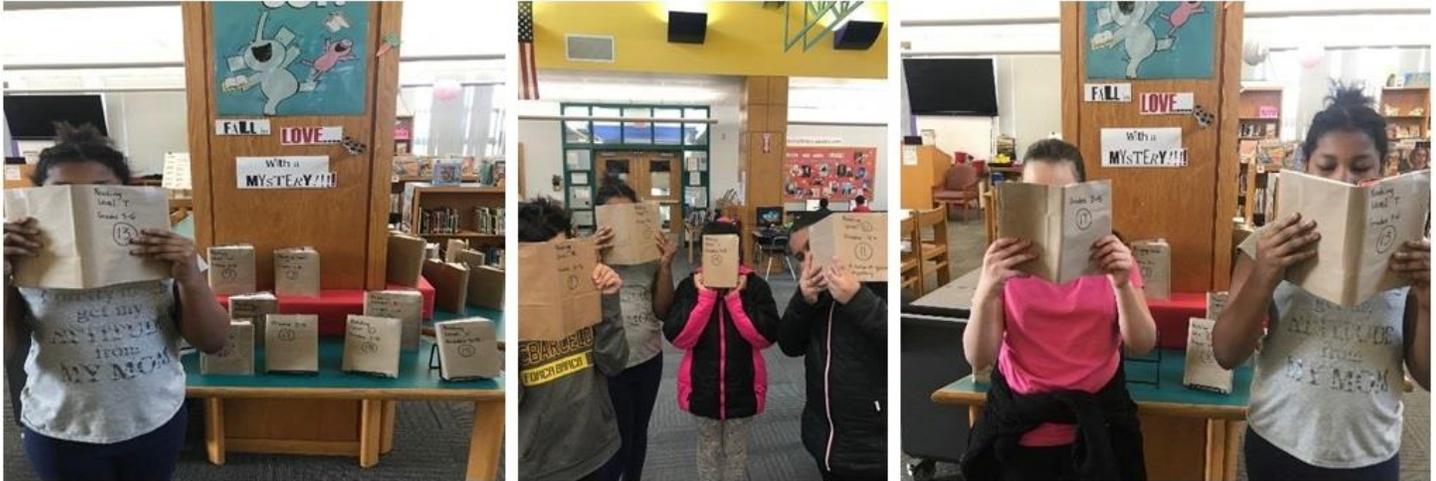
Library Project Inspires Healey Students to Judge a Book by More than Its Cover

Novels, shrouded in brown paper with only their grade range and reading level visible, added an aura of mystery for students who entered the Healey School library late last week. That is exactly what library assistant Wendy Whoriskey was aiming for, as she explains, "We wanted to interest kids in books that aren't currently popular but are well-written and exciting."

Under the banner "Fall in Love with a Mystery," Ms. Whoriskey concealed book covers to create intrigue and an aura of mystery so that students wouldn't simply "judge a book by its cover." She selected mystery series so that students could

have something more to read if they enjoy the book, and books across a range of reading levels so that as many kids as possible could participate.

What books were selected? For younger students, *The Boxcar Children*, *Nate the Great*, and *Lulu's Mysterious Mission* series were chosen. For middle readers, *A Series of Unfortunate Events* and the *Shredderman* series. And for older kids, *Chasing Vermeer* and *The Westing Game* were picked. How was this project received by the students? On just the first day, a half dozen titles were circulated.



Volunteering Helps Educators Stay Connected to Teaching and Learning

by Jen Capuano, SPS Volunteer Program Coordinator

Educator Rene Holtzman needs no convincing that volunteers working with students make a difference. As a veteran educator at the Albert F. Argenziano School, Ms. Holtzman has worked with many weekly community volunteers over the years, and witnessed the strides students make when paired for individualized reading support.



“I’m convinced that the number one reason for these students’ higher growth is the one-to-one intervention provided by volunteers. Our newcomer English language learners who spend extra time conversing and reading with an adult, particularly with an adult in their first language, show greater improvement over the school year. It’s the reason I say yes to volunteers working in my classroom.”

Rene also volunteers her own time to meet with newly referred volunteers, to ensure they have what they need and to share students’ learning goals. She insists that the extra work is worth it. “Volunteers working with students doesn’t involve a lot of extra time for me as an educator. We have volunteers who want to serve so I plan for it now. I try to make sure they’re engaging with students in

ways to help move them along.” Rene designates a place in her classroom solely for this intervention with a table set aside for 1:1 reading and conversation. Emerging readers are paired with volunteers for 1:1 weekly reading, usually for 20 minutes per session.

Developing yearlong relationships with community volunteers has been an added bonus to Rene’s daily teaching, and mutually rewarding for volunteers. One such community volunteer is Megan Breakwell Smith, a new mom who had moved into the Argenziano School neighborhood and was looking to volunteer in her new community. As an educator (MEd., K-2) Megan had been looking for ways to connect with early elementary grades students while transitioning to motherhood. “I missed teaching, so this was the perfect way to keep working as an educator and spend time with some wonderful students. I’ve learned so much from Rene, she’s an incredible teacher.”

Now in her second volunteer year (and recently a mom again), Megan's volunteering has allowed her to try out things she wasn't able to as a full-time educator. "The work I can do with students at the Argenziano School are things I seldom had time to do as a full-time teacher with a larger class. All the one-to-one interactions that are so essential I now get to do. I'm so grateful to be able to spend time this way."

SPS strives to connect educators with volunteers to enhance and enrich student learning. Please visit <http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/volunteers> for more spotlights and resources.

What's Happening

Earth Day Celebration April 22 – April 26

Earth Day is April 22 and Sustainability Champions at our schools will be promoting recycling and sustainable practices throughout the week. Through a Department of Environmental Protection grant, we have expanded classroom recycling efforts over the last two years and Earth Day will be a fun way to reinforce these efforts across the district. Schools will be showing short videos and reading stories about recycling, asking trivia questions over the morning announcements, and dressing in green to celebrate. Some schools will be participating in recycling electronic gadgets through [Eco-Cell](#) while the Energy Wizard may be making an appearance at other schools to check out who is leaving lights on and who is turning them off. For local events, check out the schedule for [SustainaVille Week](#) which starts on April 27th.

Somerville High School Students, Faculty Musicians to Host Benefit Concert

The SHS Orchestra, SHS Jazz trio, and faculty performers will host a benefit concert in support of the Somerville Homeless Coalition and Save Our Homes Walk Coalition. The concert will be held at the East Somerville Community School Auditorium on Thursday, April 25th, 7-8pm. The public is invited to join the celebration, enjoy great music, make a modest donation, and help make a difference in our community. For more information, please contact Matthew Caughey at mcaughey@shcinc.org.

Screen-Free Week – April 29 to May 5

Unplug during Screen Free Week 4/29-5/5! Did you know that Screen Free Week starts Monday, April 29? It's an opportunity to unplug, spend time with family, try some new activities, and get outdoors. There are many ways to participate. Visit www.somerville.k12.ma.us/sfw to learn more about celebrations around Somerville and ideas for making some device-free memories. Find out more about the national event at www.screenfree.org.

Upcoming School & District Events:

Visit www.somerville.k12.ma.us and click on the "calendar" link at the top of the page for a list of upcoming activities in our schools and in our District this month.

Monday-Friday, April 15-19: April Vacation (includes Patriots Day and Good Friday)

Monday, April 22, 8:30am: Student of the Quarter Celebration at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School (115 Sycamore St.)

Tuesday, April 23: WSNS K and 1st Grade Trip to Wheelock Family Theatre

Tuesday, April 23, 5:30-7:00pm: ESCS School Council Meeting (50 Cross St.)

Tuesday, April 23, 6:00-8:00pm: Serve & Inspire Volunteer Orientation at the Cummings School bldg. (42 Prescott St.)

Wednesday, April 24, 5:00-7:00pm: WHCIS Specialists Night at the Winter Hill Cafeteria/Gym (115 Sycamore St.)

Wednesday, April 24, 6:00-8:00pm: SHS School Improvement Council Meeting at the Somerville High School Library (81 Highland Ave.)

Thursday, April 25, 6:00-7:30pm: Somerville High School Parent-Teacher Conferences (81 Highland Ave.)

Thursday, April 25, 6:00-7:30pm: Argenziano Parent-Teacher Conferences (290 Washington St.)

Monday, April 29, 5:00-7:00pm: WSNS PTA Book Fair, Ice Cream Social, and PTA Meeting (177 Powder House Blvd.)

Tuesday, April 30, 6:00-7:30pm: East Somerville Community School Parent-Teacher Conferences (50 Cross St.)

Wednesday, May 1, 9:30-11:30am: 8th Annual Choral Festival at the SHS Auditorium (81 Highland Ave.)
Wednesday, May 1, 4:00-5:30pm: Healey School Site Council Meeting at the Healey Library (5 Meacham St.)
Thursday, May 2, 6:30-8:00pm: Spring String Fling at the SHS Auditorium (81 Highland Ave.)
Friday, May 3, 7:30-9:00am: Brown School Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast (201 Willow Ave.)
Friday, May 3, 8:00am: Cramer Coffee Collab at the Healey School Library (5 Meacham St.)

Upcoming School Committee Meetings:

Find the complete School Committee schedule, agendas and meeting minutes (as approved) online at www.somerville.k12.ma.us/school-committee.

Monday, April 22, 6:00-7:00pm: Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee Meeting at the City Council Chambers, City Hall (93 Highland Ave.)
Monday, April 22, 7:00-8:30pm: Regular School Committee Meeting at the City Council Chambers, City Hall (93 Highland Ave.)
Wednesday, April 24, 6:30-7:30pm: Finance and Facilities Meeting of the Whole at the Central Office Main Conference Room (8 Bonair St., 2nd floor)
Wednesday, April 24, 7:00-8:00pm: School Committee Meeting for Long Range Planning at the Central Office Main Conference Room (8 Bonair St., 2nd floor)
Thursday, April 25, 6:00-7:00pm: FY20 City Council and School Committee Joint Budget Meeting at the City Council Chambers, City Hall (93 Highland Ave.)

Somerville Family Learning Collaborative Workshops, Events, and Resources:

Find a complete list of SFLC events and workshops at www.somerville.k12.ma.us/families.

Film Screening: *No Small Matter* – Wednesday, May 1, 6:00-8:00pm @ Lesley’s University Hall, 2nd floor auditorium

Join us for a reception, screening and panel discussion of the documentary film *No Small Matter*, which explores the power of early childhood education and the challenges of families and early childhood educators in finding and providing high quality care for our children. Screening takes place at Lesley University, University Hall, 2nd floor auditorium (1815 Mass. Ave., Cambridge). This event is sponsored by the Somerville Partnership for Young Children, Cambridge B-3rd Grade, and Lesley University.

Sharing Our Stories – Thursday, May 9, 7:00-8:30pm @ the Cummings School Building, 42 Prescott St.

Sharing our Stories is a support group for families with young children who have special needs. Raising a child who does not always fit in can be challenging. This free, open-ended group will offer adults the opportunity to share joys, concerns, frustrations, questions, and resources about their experiences. Facilitated by Amy Bamforth, LICSW. Conversation in English; interpretation available upon request.

Looking Ahead:

Wednesday, May 8: Half-Day Wednesday for PK-8 Students (PK dismissal at 11:30am; K-8 dismissal at noon)
Wednesday, May 8, 5:00-6:30pm: WSNS School Council Meeting (177 Powder House Blvd.)
Wednesday, May 8, 6:00pm: CTE Senior Awards at Somerville High School (81 Highland Ave.)
Thursday, May 9, 6:30-8:30pm: All-City Middle Grades Concert at the SHS Auditorium (81 Highland Ave.)
Thursday, May 9, 7:00-8:30pm: Sharing Our Stories SFLC Support Group meeting at the Cummings School Building (42 Prescott St.)
Friday, May 10, 7:00-11:00pm: Somerville High School Senior Prom at the Cambridge Marriott

Community News & Events

Somerville’s 19th Annual Rabies Clinic. The Health & Human Services Department along with Somerville's Animal Control are pleased to announce the 19th Annual Rabies Clinic for your cats and dogs at a reduced rate of \$10. You will also have a chance to license your dog with the city's Clerks Department onsite. Saturday, April 27th, 10:00am-12:00pm at the Department of Public Works (One Franey Rd.). Please contact Kathy Teixeira at 617-625-6600 ext. 4324 if you have any questions.

Girls Leadership Development Summit. Cambridge YWCA is hosting Beyond All Limits: GOLD Summit, a girls’ leadership conference on May 4, 10:00am-5:00pm. The event is free and open to all students who identify as girls in grades 7-9 in Cambridge, Somerville, and Boston. Visit <https://ywcacam.org/gold/> for more information and to register.

Somerville Parks & Recreation. Visit <http://www.somervillerec.com/info/activities/default.aspx?type=activities> to learn all about the Somerville Parks & Recreation Department's current programming. Register today for a variety of programs including:

- Toddler Yoga Program. Children ages 1-5 years old will be taken on a "yoga adventure" using their imaginations to take them to faraway lands as they're guided through poses to represent all they encounter on their journeys – a lion, a bear, a scarecrow, a storm, a shark, a big boat! Program will take place on Tuesday, April 2-May 21 at the Cummings School building. To learn more and register for this program, visit: http://www.somervillerec.com/info/activities/program_details.aspx?ProgramID=29991
- Somerville NFL Flag Football League. Season runs April 7th through June 16th and games are played Sundays at Dilboy Stadium. Open to boys and girls in Grades 1-8. Cost is \$75 for Somerville residents and \$100 for non-residents. Four divisions are available: Freshman Division, Grades 1-2, 1:00-2:30pm; Jr. Varsity Division, Grades 3-4, 1:00-2:30pm; Varsity Division, Grades 5-6, 2:30-4:00pm; NCAA Division, Grades 7-8, 2:30-4:00pm. Register at http://www.somervillerec.com/info/activities/program_details.aspx?ProgramID=30072.
- Girls' Spring Basketball Clinic. Work on fundamentals and skill development including dribbling, shooting, passing, and more. Runs Thursdays, May 2-June 6 for girls in grades 3-8. Summer Basketball League to follow! Register at: https://www.somervillerec.com/info/activities/program_details.aspx?ProgramID=30073.

City & District Employment Opportunities

Consider joining a winning team! Current city and district opportunities include:

- [Housing Compliance Program Coordinator](#), OSPCD-Housing, City of Somerville
- [Kitchen Manager](#), Arts Council, City of Somerville
- [Pool Manager](#), Parks & Recreation Department, City of Somerville
- [Director of Finance and Administration](#), Department of Public Works, City of Somerville

Visit <https://www.somervillema.gov/jobs> for a complete listing of current open positions in the City of Somerville.

- [Payroll Manager](#), District Administrative Office, Somerville Public Schools
- [Somerville High School Summer School Director](#), Somerville High School, Somerville Public Schools
- [Assistant Director of Special Education](#), Special Education Department, Somerville Public Schools
- [2019 SPELL High School Summer Programs](#), Somerville High School, Somerville Public Schools

Visit <https://www.schoolspring.com/jobs/?employer=16902> for a complete listing of current open positions in the Somerville Public Schools.

Have something to share with the community? Send information to connections@k12.somerville.ma.us to share an event. Please note that we look for events and programs that support youth development. Include date, time and name of event, along with any additional pertinent information. Or, submit your event to <http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/calendar/submit>.

Our Commitment to the Whole Child

VISION: "We believe in developing the whole child — the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical potential of all students — by providing students with the skills, opportunities, and resources that will nurture innovative ideas, foster pride in diversity, inspire students to become lifelong learners and empower them to enrich their communities."