



South Plainfield Middle School

2023-2024

Newsletter Committee

Melissa Cook
Elyse Phillips

Kelly Richkus
Michele Rodriguez

December 2023 NEWSLETTER

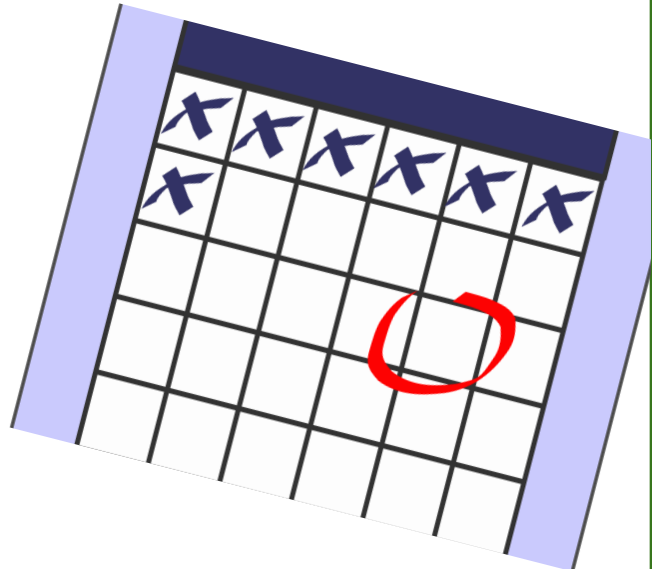
UPCOMING EVENTS!

December:

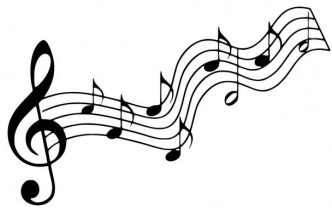
- 22 - Early Dismissal for Students and Staff (12:35 pm)
- 25 - Jan 1st - Winter Recess
School/Office Closed

January:

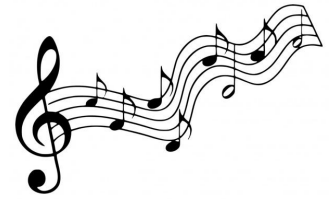
- 15 - School Closed - Martin Luther King Day



Happy Holidays
To You



It's Music To Our Ears.....



On December 14, the South Plainfield Middle School Music Department presented their annual Winter Concert. All groups had excellent performances and the music teachers are proud of the students' hard work.

The concert started with the Middle School Jazz Band. They played "The Pink Panther" and "Oye Como Va." These pieces featured solos by Jason Miller, Arusha Bakshi, Justin Zubieta and Diego Valdez-Mejia.

Next, the Orchestra performed three pieces: "Burst!," "Somewhere in My Memory," and "Beyond the Thunder." The Chamber Orchestra followed this with a performance of "Snow." The orchestra performed under the direction of Mrs. Sarah Livecchi.

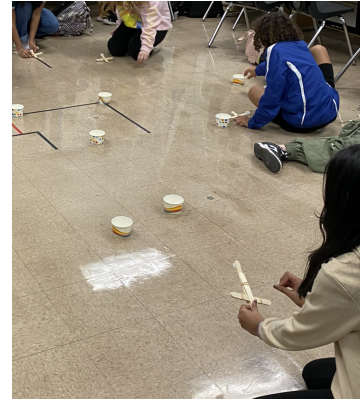
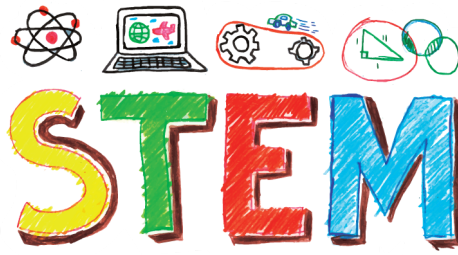
The Chorus and GEMS, under the direction of Mrs. Kate Haughwout, performed next. They were accompanied by Dave Shirley. The Gems are a select, audition-only choral group and they performed "Sing A Ding A Dong," "Bahana Haba'ah," and "Let it Be." The Concert Choir performed, "Aurora Borealis," "Once Upon a December," and "From Now On" from The Greatest Showman. Mr. Jay Buchanan and Blake Greco accompanied the choir on the last piece.

Finally, the Concert Band, under the direction of Mr. Andrew Veiss, performed. The first piece they played was "High Voltage," which featured some electronic sounds played by Andrew Patzwa. The last piece of the concert was the "African Bell Carol," which featured the percussion section of the band.

The music department is looking forward to their next performance, the 55th Annual District Festival, which will be at the High School Auditorium on March 7.

December 2023

Fun Times in STEM Club



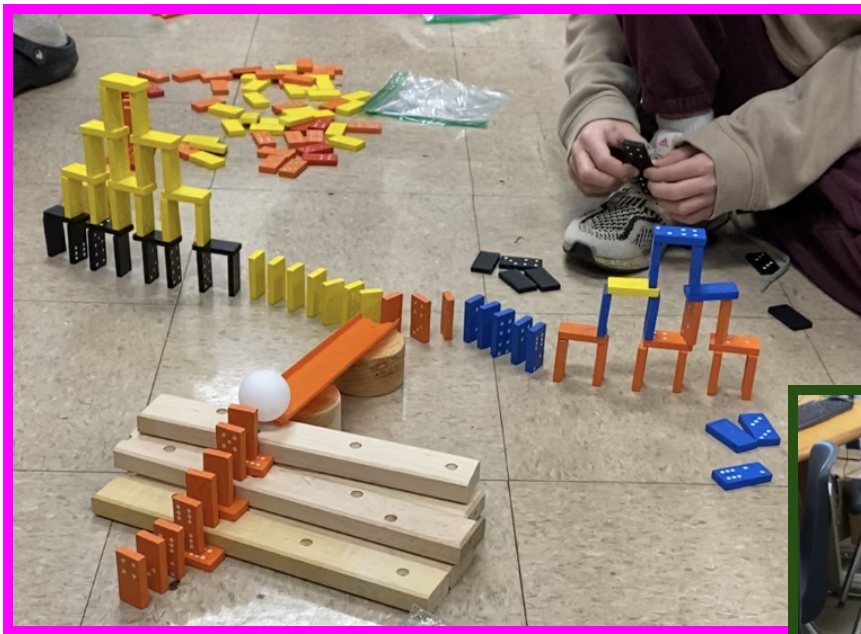
The STEM Club has been having fun working on engineering projects. Students have made catapults, Hexbug mazes, marble mazes, foam tube roller coasters, borax crystal icicles, and origami sculptures! It has been exciting to watch them create such elaborate projects.



December 2023

STEM Class

Eighth grade STEM class students had a blast engineering domino chains that demonstrated different types of energy transfers.



COUNSELING CORNER



Mrs. de Mello
7th Grade Counselor

Mrs. Mikaelian
8th Grade Counselor

Ms. Aziz
Student Assistance Counselor

Welcome to the Counseling Corner! If you did not get the chance to meet with your student's teachers at conferences or you have continuing academic concerns, please reach out by phone or email to schedule a time. Also, all students have switched to their second special if you would like information on that class or wish to speak with that teacher.

December ushers in the holidays, a time that can be very trying for some. JCK Foundation (<https://jckfoundation.org/our-story-main>) provided a timely presentation to our 7th graders regarding the importance of mental health. Presenters addressed the commonality of mental challenges and shared their personal stories of struggle and success. Students participated in an interactive workshop on mental health themes, particularly ones focused on how to talk about their own mental health with others.

We wish all our students and their families a happy and safe holiday. Take the chance to relax and enjoy the time off. See you next year!

Junior Journalist



The South Plainfield Middle School had their second junior journalist, Hishanth Gadhamseti!



Nurse's Nook



Hi, my name is Maureen McCarthy RN, and I am so excited to join the staff at South Plainfield Middle School. I live in Cranford, NJ, with 2 of my 3 children and my father. I was widowed in 2021 after a wonderful 26-year marriage. I am the mother of 3 boys. Billy is 27 and a plumber by trade, following in his dad's footsteps. Kevin is 24 and lives in Washington DC. He graduated from Rowan University with a double major in Disaster Preparedness & Emergency Management and Political Science. He works for the U.S. Senate. My youngest son, Ryan, is 16 and a sophomore at Union Catholic High School.

I studied nursing at Rutgers University College of Nursing in Newark and graduated with my Bachelor of Science in Nursing in June of 1990. I immediately started to work for Saint Barnabas Medical Center in Livingston. I worked on a Respiratory floor for 10 years and after I had my 2 oldest sons, I transferred to Postpartum and newborn nursery where I worked for 25 years. I feel that my 35 years of nursing experience will prove to be an asset to South Plainfield Middle School.

I look forward to meeting all of your children. I have an open-door policy. Please don't hesitate to call me if you need anything or want to discuss any aspect of your child's care.

Wishing you and your families a wonderful holiday season!

Physical Education



Bryan Escobar has been working so hard in Physical Education and because of this, he earned Student of the Month! Congratulations, Bryan!



Toys for Tigers!



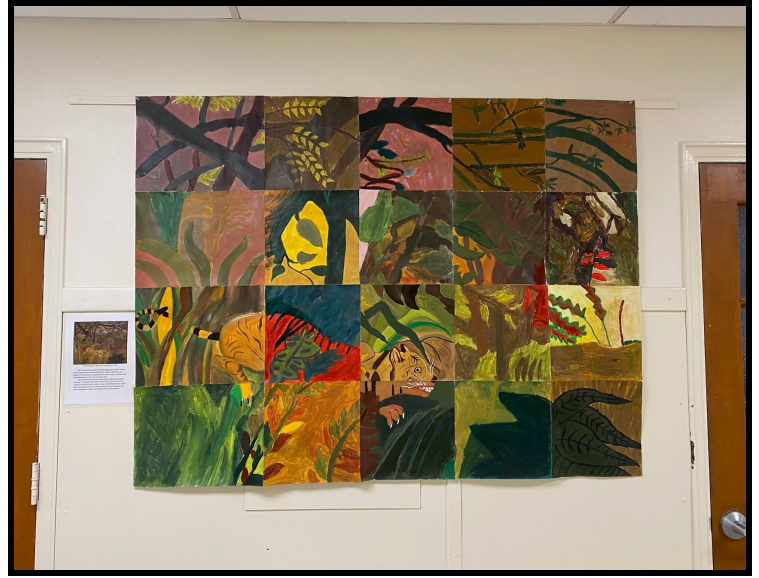
Pictured l to r: Joe Vitabile, Jack Gustafson, and Brody Rinaldi

The middle school Student Council showed their continued support for the annual toy drive organized by the SPHS athletic department. The toys collected will be donated to those in need in our community.

December 2023

Eighth Grade Art Class

Ms. Bednar's 8th grade art classes did a wonderful job painting murals that are now displayed in the hallway. Each student painted a piece of the picture in their own style. At the end of the project, they pasted them together, just like completing a puzzle. The collaborative paintings are inspired by the artists Vincent Van Gogh and Henri Rousseau.



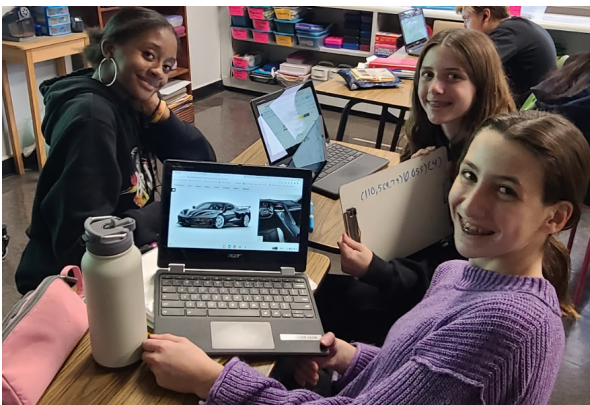
December 2023

Pre-Algebra Car Project

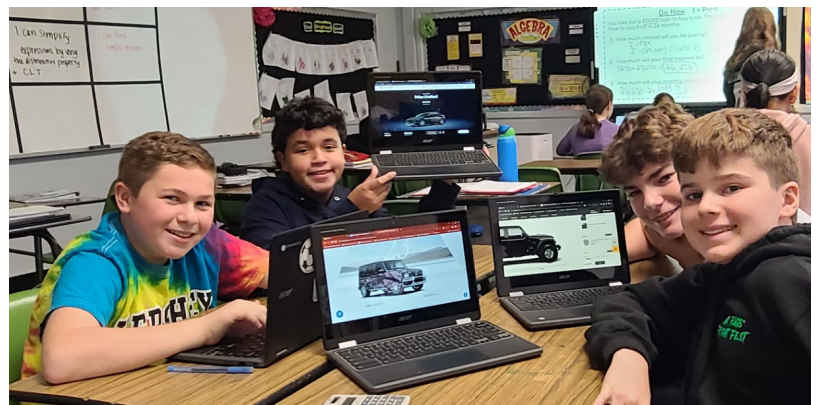
Students in Ms. Kousoulis's Pre-Algebra Classes are having fun showing off their dream cars while learning how to calculate tax, simple interest, and monthly payments.



Pictured: Param Shukla, Anthony LaBella, Nicholas Abbate, Jacob Dennis, Jayden Prasetyo



Pictured: Isabella Aniegbuna, Katelyn Stevens, Mackensie Lillia



Pictured: Blaise Bailes, Eddie Montanez, John Espin, Harrison Rogus



Pictured: Katelyn Stevens, Luke Richkus, Samantha Dosch, Kennedy Soto, Olivia Andrada

SPMS Cookie Exchange



Nothing brings people together like baked goods! On Tuesday December 12, the faculty had a cookie exchange party afterschool. It was a fabulous way to celebrate the holidays and ring in the New Year! Each guest brought cookies to swap and left with containers of their favorites!



December 2023

NJHS

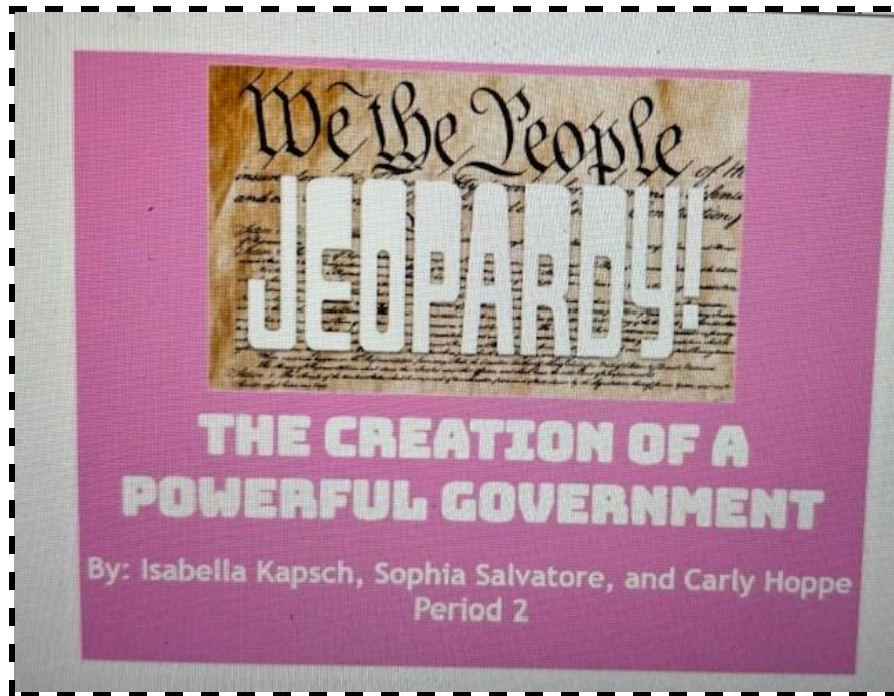
For December, the National Junior Honor Society was so excited to make holiday cards for our dedicated military members.



8th Grade U.S. History

Ms. Pinelli's 8th grade History classes took a new approach to learning about the USA Government. Groups created their own Jeopardy games, along with the final Jeopardy question.

The topics in the game included the Bill of Rights, three Branches of Government, and various other topics. When the students were done, they played each other's games. WHAT IS...A fun time was had by all?!

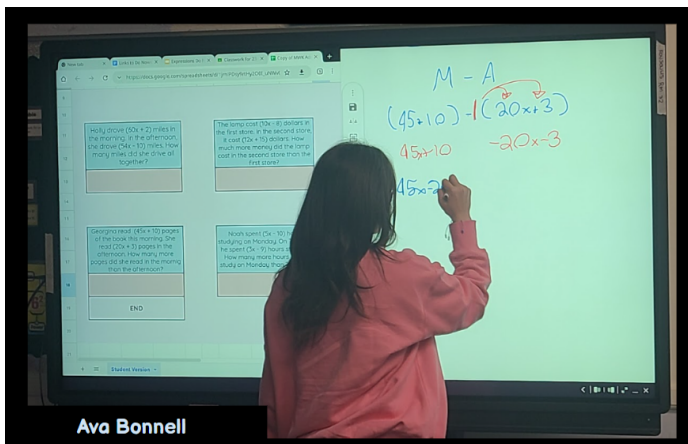
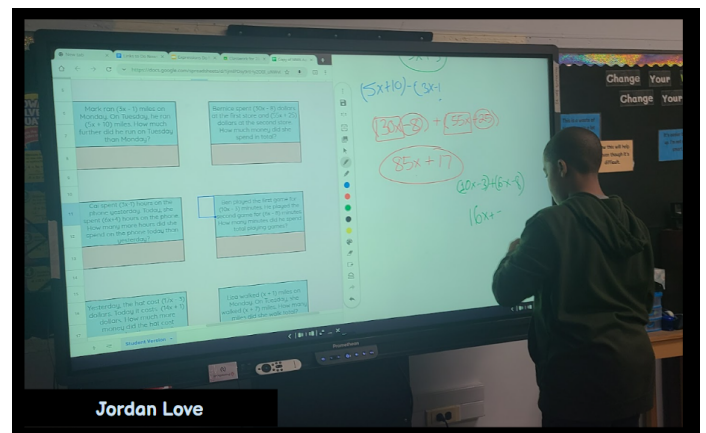
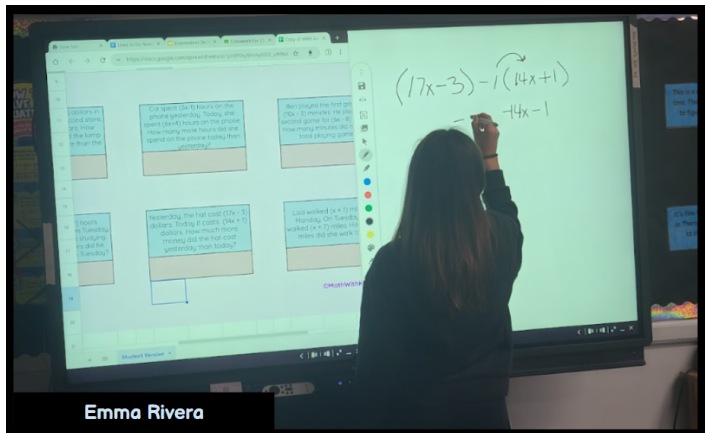


December 2023

Polar Linear Expressions



Students in Ms. Kousoulis's Math 7 Class enjoyed teaching "Adding and Subtracting Linear Expressions" to their classmates as a review.



December 2023



Ms. Guastella and the science club hosted a bake sale. The purpose is to raise money for the Science Club's exciting project: making our school courtyard a certified wildlife habitat! A certified wildlife habitat supports native plants, providing essential food and shelter for our local animals. We are passionate about creating a space that not only benefits our environment but also enhances the educational experience for our students.

ADMINISTRATION

908-754-4620



Main Office

- *Principal: Mr. Leo Whalen ext. 2610*
- *Administrative Assistant: Mrs. Lodato ext. 2601*
- *Assistant Principal: Mrs. Kelly Richkus ext. 2611*
- *Administrative Assistant: Ms. D' Addario ext. 2602*

Guidance

- *7th Grade Counselor: Mrs. Mikaelian ext. 2633*
- *8th Grade Counselor: Mrs. DeMello ext. 2632*
- *SAC: Ms. Aziz ext. 2634*
- *Administrative Assistant: Mrs. Giannakis ext. 2631*

School Nurse

- *Mrs. McCarthy: ext. 2620*
Please visit the new [nurse's page](#) on the middle school website