

October 2023



# South Plainfield Middle School

## 2023-2024

### Newsletter Committee

Melissa Cook  
Elyse Phillips

Michele Rodriguez  
Kelly Richkus

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## OCTOBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

### UPCOMING EVENTS!

#### October:

October 20- Early dismissal-pm teacher inservice

October 23-31- Red Ribbon Week

October 31-Halloween

#### November:

November 7 - School Closed - *Teacher inservice*

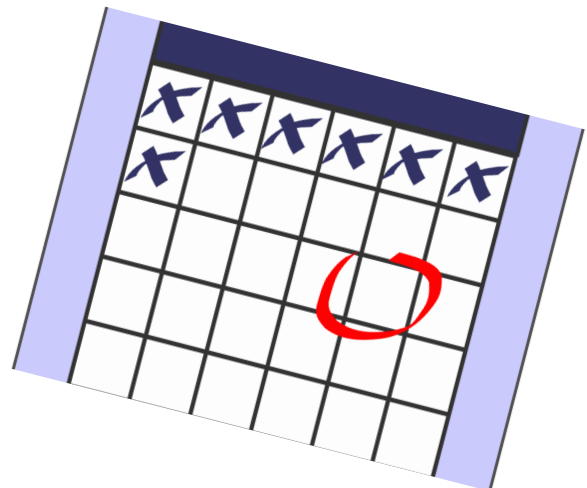
November 9-10 - School closed

November 13 - End of 1st Marking Period

November 20-21 - Early dismissal Parent/  
Teacher Conferences

November 22 - Early dismissal

November 23-24 - School Closed



## Hispanic American Poetry Slam

Ms. Salazar and Ms. Rendon began the celebration of Hispanic Heritage month with a variety of activities for their students. Weekly announcements started September 16 and ended on October 15. Students researched influential Hispanic Americans from all walks of life and created posters which were hung in the 7th grade hallway. The research evolved into creating exciting poetry about these influential Hispanic Americans and ended with a slam poetry event in the Information Center with the help of the librarian, Ms. Alongi. Ms. Rendon and Ms. Salazar have been encouraging students to volunteer at the South Plainfield Library for the annual National Hispanic celebration. This year, over twenty students are expected to volunteer in setting up, running and cleaning-up activities at the festival. Ms. Hansen, who heads all the town Library events, is making this year's celebration truly memorable. The middle school is currently practicing a folklore song titled 'Ojala que llueva Cafe' (Hope it rains coffee) about the harvest in the Dominican Republic and will have students dancing to the song. Many of our students will also read their poems.





# COUNSELING CORNER



Mrs. de Mello  
8th Grade Counselor

Mrs. Mikaelian  
7th Grade Counselor

Mrs. Aziz  
Student Assistance Counselor

Welcome to the Counseling Corner! In the month of September, the Middle School opened its doors to our new 7th grade class and our returning 8th graders. We've had a great start to the year. Mr. Whalen and Mrs. Richkus held grade-level meetings to set the tone for our year ahead. We bid a fond adieu to Ms. Tamborra as she begins a new job and a warm hello to Mrs. Aziz as she joins us as our Student Assistance Counselor.

October is National Bullying Prevention Month. On October 2nd we acknowledged World Day of Bullying Prevention. We kicked off a school-wide spirit week by wearing blue, the official color of World Bullying Prevention. We continued the theme by wearing our favorite sweats because "Respect is no sweat" and ended it by "Putting bullying to bed" and wearing pajamas. October 18th was our Anti-Bullying assembly with both grade levels. The assembly was fun and engaging, which delivered a powerful message.

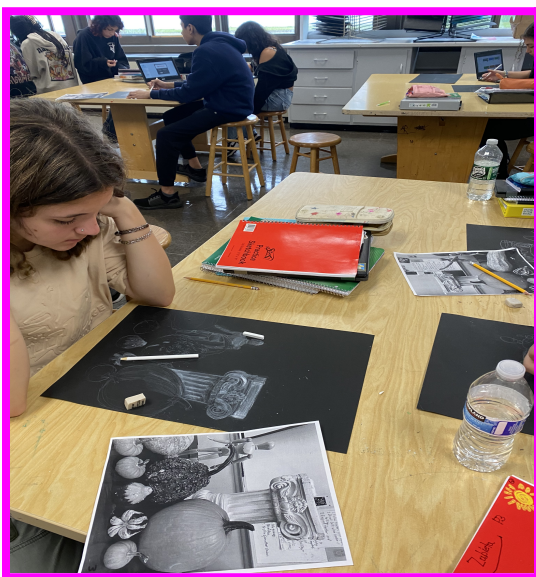
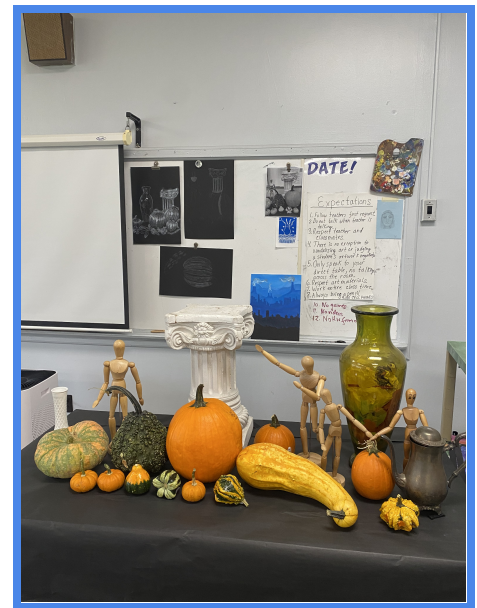
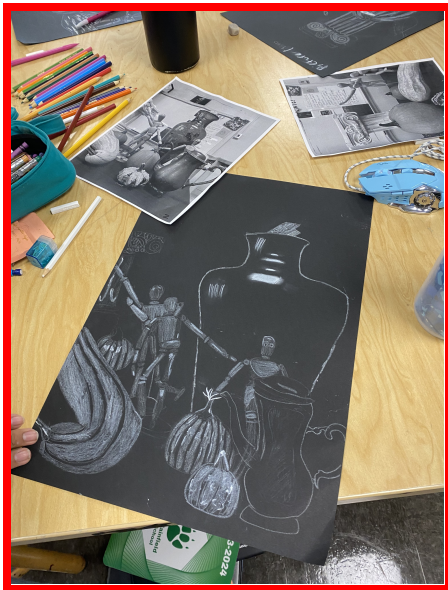
The Middlesex County Teen Arts program presented to our students this month. All students interested in the creative fields, such as writing, drawing, photography, acting, musical theater..., have the opportunity to audition for this gifted and talented program offered in the winter months at Middlesex County College. Students should see Mrs. Mikaelian for more information if they did not attend the presentation period 7 on Thursday, Oct. 12.

The Magnet Schools joined us for an informational session with interested 8th graders to discuss career studies in the various Middlesex County High Schools. Mrs. de Mello posted the information on her Google Classroom. She has invited students for career sessions to explore their opportunities and to start thinking about their high school career. Overall, we are having a productive transition into the new school year and are looking forward to the year ahead!

## In the SPMS Art Gallery....

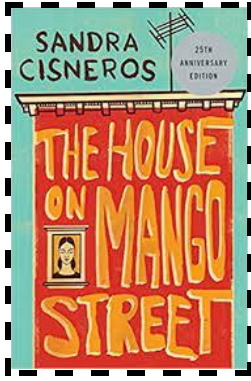


*The 8th grade art students are drawing an autumnal still life. They are using white colored pencil and white charcoal on black paper to focus on the highlights.*



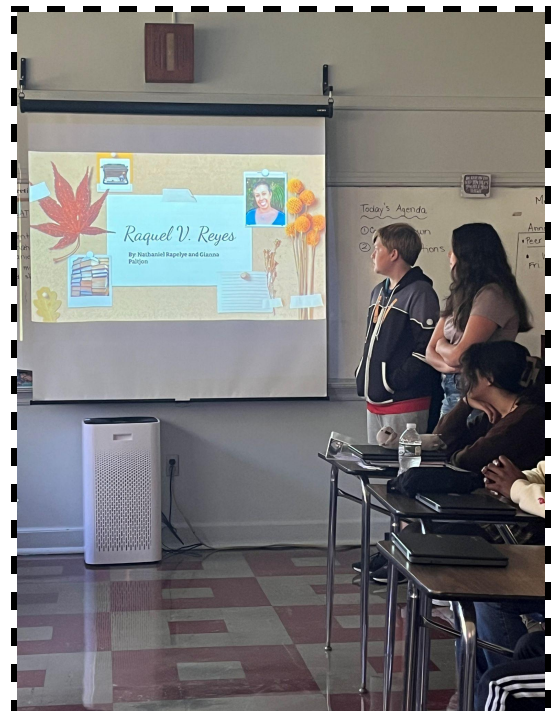
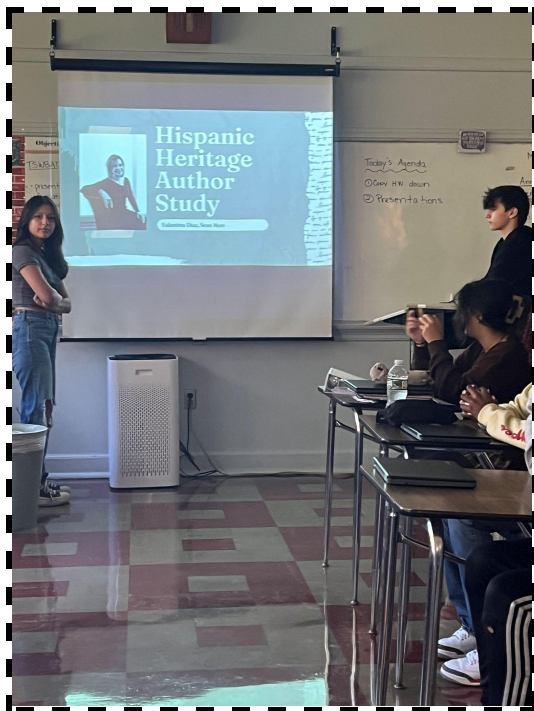
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## English Language Arts



In honor of National Hispanic Heritage month, the eighth grade ELA classes shone the spotlight on Hispanic-American authors,

such as Raquel V. Reyes, Sandra Cisneros, Pam Muñoz Ryan, and Juan Felipe Herrera. Each class teamed up to research and create slideshows celebrating the brilliance and accomplishments of these magnificent writers.





## Hispanic Heritage Month

On Saturday, October 7, 2023, SPMS participated in the Hispanic Heritage Month celebration sponsored by the South Plainfield Public Library. Our students showed their amazing talents as they sang, danced, and recited poetry. The air was filled with energy and excitement as the crowd of about 250 engaged in fun activities.

Our middle school students sang 'Ojala que llueva café en el campo' (I hope it rains coffee in the field) as six MS student dancers performed their much practiced special traditional dance to the song. The audience even participated in the chorus of the song. Another set included Spanish teachers, Ms. Rendon, Ms. Arriola, and Ms. Obando, as they danced to the music of four folkloric Hispanic music tunes, while Ms. Salazar was the MC for the occasion.

Our community pulled together to create a remarkable day for celebrating all Latin American cultures! We loved the awe on students' faces as they picked up traditional Latin American instruments to accompany rhythms of salsa, cumbia, and bachata; parents and children took exciting photos by the photo booth and worked on colorful Latin American themed crafts. It was an invaluable opportunity to learn about Latin culture - 26 countries, hundreds of facts, influential Hispanic Americans, and savor the empanadas, pupusas, tostones, and unique sweets!





# Nurse's Nook....

## ATTENTION WINTER SPORTS ATHLETES!!

- *Girls and Boys Basketball*
  - *Wrestling*
  - *Cheer*
- *A current Sports Physical Packet or Health History Update form must be on file in the Health Office.*
- *Students will not be allowed to try out or practice until this is done.*
- *Physical Forms are available in the Health office, on the school website or click [HERE](#)*

### **DUE DATES:**

**Wrestling-Monday October 16**

**Basketball and Cheer- Monday October 30**

*Not sure if an updated form is needed? Check with the nurse to see the date of your last sports physical:*

**Nurse Wollman: 908-754-4620, ext 2620 or [swollman@spboe.org](mailto:swollman@spboe.org)**

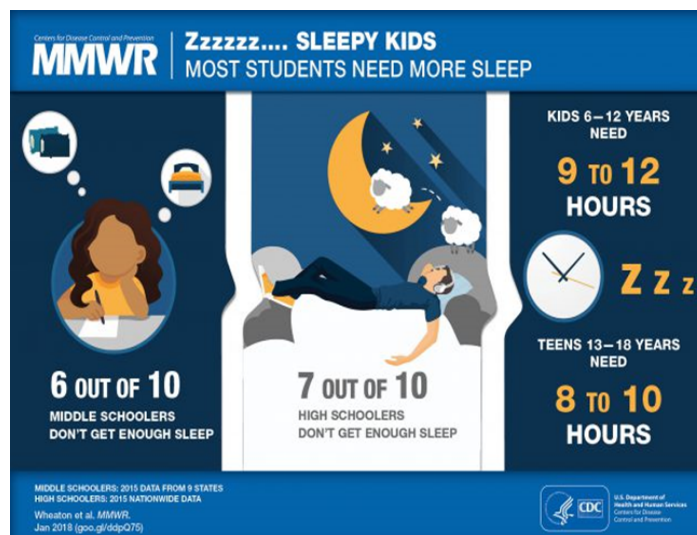


## Nurse's Nook....

As we head back into the school year and start establishing a daily schedule, it's crucial to remember the importance of **SLEEP** for your children. See the following advice from the CDC:

### What can parents do?

- Set a regular bed time and rise time (even on weekends).
- Dim the lighting: adolescents who are exposed to more light (such as from electronics) in the evening are less likely to get enough sleep.
  - Implement a media curfew: technology use (phones, video games, computers) may contribute to late bedtimes. Consider banning technology after a certain time and/or removing devices from the bedroom



## Creativity in Ms. Pinelli's History Class

*To celebrate Hispanic History month, the students in Ms. Pinelli's History classes wrote rap songs. Their songs were about famous Hispanic Americans. The students picked out a person, researched, then wrote an original rap. Below are some examples of them:*

### Off Broadway

By: Ann Bhagwandat

Parents straight from Puerto Rico, Luis and Luz  
But he grew up in the heights  
For days and nights  
All he did was write and write  
As everyone was tucked in  
Hopefully everything will turn out right  
He gets it from his father  
He was born January 16th 1980  
To winning awards and having a baby  
After trillions people and billions of shows  
He still brings up struggles

Honestly he brings us songs full of honesty  
That's desperate in this economy  
Tony after Tony  
Grammy after grammy  
They say it's dumb

**But I beg for differ  
look at the bigger picture!**

### The Queen of Tejano

Zak Balram

Selena Quintanilla left a mark on the world  
Born in Lake Jackson, she's a Texas girl  
April 17, 1961  
That was when she was born, under the rising sun  
Her childhood was of fluidity, she performed in a band  
Her parents always supported her, that was their plan  
Selena's sister played the drums, her brother played bass guitar  
In only a couple of years she'd be a famous star  
When she was fifteen, she won a music award  
They called her Queen of Tejano, she wasn't some nameless bard  
Selena signed a contract, became a wealthy singer  
She released albums, hit number one, her influence lingered  
Opened up two boutiques with some priceless clothes  
She was murdered in cold blood, **now the curtains are closed.**

## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Art

Students in Mrs. McLaughlin's 7<sup>th</sup> grade art class kicked off the new school year with some identity profiles. They began by working together to make silhouettes of their heads and then went on to add symbolic images that represented different parts of their identities. Not only did they have the opportunity to learn about each other, but they also had the opportunity to make new friends. Way to go 7<sup>th</sup> grade artists!



### Artwork

*Top Row (L to R): Tanish Sachdeva, Christian Adedoyin, Angie Ronzo, Sophie Farfan*

*Bottom Row (L to R): Kruti Patel, Julianna Russoniello, Ashley Alvarado, Jayleen Ramirez Hernandez*



## School Violence Awareness Week

*On October 18th, we held our Anti-Bullying assembly with both the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Corey Jones, a former high school and college basketball player as well as a motivational speaker, presented a fun and engaging assembly. Students participated in basketball activities and some students even won prizes. While engaging in a fun filled assembly, our presenter delivered a powerful message of support, inclusion, and never giving up.*



## ***South Plainfield Middle School***

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

### ***School Nurse***

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