

# **WELLNESS COUNCIL**

## **REPORT**

**2016-2017**

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Wellness Council members, Wellness Facilitators, and district mental health staff jointly offer the recommendations listed below. All are supported by the annual report to follow. We firmly believe incorporating these recommendations into the short and long-term strategies for the district will promote healthy lifestyles and produce a positive learning environment for our entire school community.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- We continue to recommend support of district-wide wellness programming including opportunities for professional development, particularly those activities addressing the topics of asset development, social-emotional learning and mindfulness practices, resiliency and effective coping strategies, school connectedness, relationship building, as well as prevention of maladaptive, risk-taking behaviors.
- We continue to recommend that goal setting at all levels (i.e. Board of Education, Building Shared Decision-making plans) incorporate the asset-building model. Common language across the wider school community is critical to unified efforts to promote healthy lifestyles.
- We recommend the continued support of the Youth Wellness Program at current levels. It is essential that District resources be allocated to sustaining wellness efforts to include stipends for K-12 building-based wellness facilitator positions. Sufficient funds are also necessary to support the provision of high quality professional development and the adoption of a research-based social-emotional learning program.
- We recommend continued support for Link Crew and WEB activities at the high school and middle schools, respectively, to include ongoing training, materials and supplies, and the articulation of additional related efforts. Students have benefited from the mentoring provided by upper classmen, transitioning with greater ease to subsequent levels of instruction. Peer leaders have, similarly, benefitted through the development of leadership skills, self-confidence and self-efficacy. Facilitating connections to others within the school community, promoting healthy youth development and a sense of belonging, and creating a culture of compassion and caring serve as the main goals of these articulation programs.
- We recommend continued expansion of the Mindfulness work begun at the elementary and middle levels. Long-range planning efforts are underway to include ongoing staff development, capacity-building, and articulation of a complementary program for high school-aged students. The informational parent programs, in the infancy stages, are also supported as a means to allow for use of common language and reinforcement of these social-emotional skills beyond the classroom.
- We urge continued membership of District staff on the Amherst Task Force for Healthy Communities \* Healthy Youth, as well as collaboration with the Town of Amherst Youth Board and Recreation Department, local law enforcement and judiciary, as well as community

prevention, health and wellness agencies to promote the development of all children residing in the Town of Amherst.

- We recommend the continued administration and targeted use of the Search Survey. The purchase and analysis of interpretive reports will provide longitudinal data necessary to identify areas of intervention and student need. Results from the most recent administration have been reviewed at District and building levels to drive wellness programming.
- We recommend continued partnership with the Alberti Center for Bullying Prevention to include involvement in research-based projects when appropriate and commensurate with District initiatives.
- We recommend continued involvement with the Suicide Prevention Coalition of Erie County and the support of continued implementation of the Sources of Strength (SOS) program. The possibility of training for District staff to become turn-key trainers is in progress which would allow possible expansion of SOS to the middle school. It is important that the established commitment to the provision of high quality education for the entire school community remain a priority. Consideration should also be given to ensure that materials and supplies as needed to implement these programs or provide training are available.
- We recommend continued partnership with the Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (ECCPASA), the Amherst Police Department, Renaissance House and Kids Escaping Drugs (KEDs), to address the abuse of alcohol, over-the-counter and prescription medication, as well as illegal substances. Focus for the upcoming year is advised to remain on opioid abuse prevention. Similarly, we recommend the continued provision of general prevention programming for students, as well as continuation of the Required Parent Program parents/guardians as a vehicle for dialogue and partnership.
- We recommend support for targeted efforts to address marketing of tobacco products and e-Cigarettes to youth. Efforts to further educate youth about the dangers of these products remains critical as anecdotal reports continue to reflect misconceptions and data indicates increasing use.
- We recommend continued focus upon the issues of cyber citizenship and cyber safety. Instruction as offered in Family and Consumer Sciences, Health and Technology courses remain essential as efforts to provide students with greater skill in navigating social networks and communicating with one another in a responsible, respectful fashion remain of significant importance. Professional development for faculty and staff, along with the provision of information to parents through structured presentations and/or other types of communications should remain a priority.
- We remain committed to increases in mental health staffing, particularly in school counseling. Proposed regulations regarding the provision of school counselors at all instructional levels was

just adopted (May 2017) with an effective date of July 2017. As a result, the District will need to formulate a viable plan to respond to this mandate. In addition, to staffing at the elementary levels, it will be important, as part of this process, to also review the number of counselors available to students in grades 5-8, with consideration given to increased staffing. Finally, the need for a dedicated school social worker to the AIM program remains a recommendation of the Council. The changing needs of our students suggest that this is a vital service. As expressed by our current mental health staff, it is an unfortunate reality that children have experienced trauma and/or struggle with specific challenges that have a profound impact upon their day-to-day functioning. A myriad of influences put our youth at risk, culminating in greater need for mental health services than in the past. Children cannot learn effectively when they are struggling with anxiety, depression or feel emotionally vulnerable. Coordinated school-based services are essential. It will be important for all students to be made aware of the array of services and supports available at their school and that efforts to encourage access, referral and participation be explicit.

- The Council is aware that the District has been engaged in a multi-year review of the needs of middle level learners and feels that early intervention for “at-risk” students remains a key area of focus. Continued discussion and review of more personalized learning structures, alternative programming options and/or instructional approaches, as well as research-based, best practice models for re-engaging youth are encouraged.

We wish to express our appreciation to the Board of Education and the entire school community for sustained recognition of the importance of these efforts. We are grateful to the Board for their long-standing commitment to the social and emotional wellbeing of students in our District and for their tenacity in promoting asset development and robust wellness programming.

## **COUNCIL ON YOUTH WELLNESS MEMBERSHIP**

### **ADMINISTRATION:**

Dr. Anna Cieri, Assistant Superintendent  
Dr. Rosa D'Abate, Coordinator of Student Services  
Mr. Gary Collichio, Principal, North High School  
Mr. Jeff Jachlewski, Principal, Heim Middle  
Ms. Cathy Mihalic, Principal, Maple East Elementary  
Mr. Chris Mucica, Instructional Specialist

### **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

Carolyn Campbell, East  
Linda Curci, East  
William Elliott, East  
Andrew Kleinmann, East  
Ryan Scumaci, East  
Joshua Bloom, North  
Amy Francis, North  
Chaewon Kim, North  
Sara Siska, North  
Rachel Steinwachs, North  
Jacob Kantor, South  
Maureen O'Malley, South

### **PARENT & COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES**

Ms. Diane Colgan, Parent Representative  
Ms. Larry Goldsmith, Parent Representative  
Ms. Sally Yageric, ECCPASA, Community Representative  
Ms. Kathy Mobarak-Miller, Amherst Youth Board,  
Community Representative  
Mr. Thomas Lucia, Community Representative

### **YOUTH WELLNESS FACILITATORS**

Mr. Daniel Greiner, AIM Program  
Ms. Patricia Chown, Casey Middle  
Ms. Jacqueline Gregorie, Williamsville East  
Ms. Kathy Schiumo, Maple East

## DISTRICT YOUTH WELLNESS PROGRAMMING

The Wellness building-level committees provide educational programs to students that promote acquisition of internal and external developmental assets. The wellness facilitators provide the leadership and coordination for youth wellness activities at their respective buildings. Each facilitator also serves as the chairperson of the building level Wellness Committee, and participates in monthly meetings with the Assistant Superintendent for Exceptional Education and Student Services. The scope and breadth of the 2016-2017 wellness-based activities is impressive. It is recognized that these activities, along with other school programs, address all internal and external assets needed for healthy development (see Asset Charts which follow on pages 17 & 18, 25-27, 33-35).

The report to follow highlights both district-wide initiatives and building-level activities, and demonstrates the wellness programs' contribution to asset building.

The following individuals serve as wellness facilitators:

### BUILDING WELLNESS FACILITATORS

#### **ELEMENTARY**

Mary Carol Dearing, Country Parkway  
Laurie Colucci, Dodge  
Lisa Seaborn, Forest  
Diane Shantler, Maple East  
Kathy Schiumo, Maple East  
Nancy Fultz, Heim Elementary  
Barb Hogan, Maple West  
Cathy Kanaley, Maple West

#### **MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Carol Ann Collard, Casey  
Mary McBride, Casey  
Caroline Berger, Mill  
Karen Stelley, Mill  
Jaclyn Walker, Mill  
Keith Gordon, Heim  
Jennifer Moore, Heim  
Jane Lorenz, Transit  
Matt Rydelek, Transit  
Kim Styka, Transit

#### **HIGH SCHOOL**

Jacqueline Gregorie, East  
Cameron Townsend, East  
Lisa Arroyo, North  
Steve Ferenzy, North  
Mary Ferenzy, South  
Cheryl Goldstone, South  
Daniel Greiner, AIM

## DISTRICT-WIDE HIGHLIGHTS

The areas and topics highlighted in the pages to follow capture much more than the work of the wellness facilitators. Overall wellness, mental health and character education initiatives are represented to provide a broader picture of the supports provided to the students by District administration, faculty and staff.

Asset development activities remain at the heart of wellness initiatives at all levels. The District has a long-standing history of commitment to asset development as evidenced by the establishment of a Wellness Council, building wellness facilitators and building-based wellness teams. The Wellness Council is composed of community members, parents, high school students, instructional staff and administrators.

Research clearly reveals the correlation between meaningful relationships with adults and connections to school with decreases in violence, disciplinary referrals, and engagement in personally harmful activities. The program adopted by the District is evidence-based with well-established evidence that the greater the number of assets a student possesses, the fewer risk-taking behaviors the student evidences. Years of Search survey data indicates that assets have a profound impact upon resiliency, coping and social-emotional development.

In 1990, the Search Institute released “A framework of 40 Developmental Assets,” which identifies a set of skills, experiences, relationships, and behaviors that enable young people to develop into successful and contributing members of their community and society. Over the following two decades, the Developmental Assets framework and approach to youth development became the most frequently cited and widely utilized in the world, creating what Stanford University’s William Damon described as a “sea change” in adolescent development (Search Institute, <http://www.search-institute.org/research/developmental-assets>).

Data collected from Search Institute surveys of millions of children and youth from all backgrounds and situations has consistently demonstrated that the more Developmental Assets young people acquire, the better their chances of succeeding in school and becoming healthy, happy adults. Key research priorities of the Search Institute can be at: <http://www.search-institute.org/research/developmental-assets>.

Asset development is not a curriculum or a packaged program, but, rather, a set of strategies and research-based tools designed to promote positive youth development. Thorough daily interaction, children are provided with the experiences and supports needed to develop resiliency, solid coping mechanisms and strong resistance skills. The model emphasizes that the responsibility to facilitate the ability for students to acquire assets rests with the entire community, not just with those considered to have specific expertise.

As has been noted in prior reports and various presentations to the Board of Education, a host of areas serve as the focus of wellness programming efforts. The building highlights to follow will demonstrate the breadth and depth of activities ranging from **service learning projects** (e.g., fund



raising for a variety of charitable organizations; volunteerism) to **health and safety** (e.g., internet safety & social media communications; prevention of relational violence; substance use/abuse prevention, including prescription medications, over-the-counter, and tobacco-related products; suicide prevention) to **caring for others** (e.g., transition programs of LINK Crew and WEB; promotion of a positive school culture and connections to school; prevention of discrimination, bullying and harassment through participation in activities such as Band Against Bullying along with targeted building-based programs/presentations and interventions). The following offers details for only a few of the District-level initiatives:

## **Mindfulness**

The work surrounding mindfulness practices and social-emotional learning continued during the past school year. A compliment of staff from all elementary and middle schools have participated in the initial-level two-day training and many others have taken afterschool courses as offered. Mindfulness is “the awareness that arises by paying attention on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally” (Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Full Catastrophe Living*, 2013). The Inner Resilience Program (IRP), as founded by Linda Lantieri in the spring of 2002, remains the foundation of our efforts. IRP strategies are grounded in “contemplative neuroscience including the concept of neuroplasticity” and have been shown to help students further develop skills in the areas of behavioral self-regulation, attention, self-awareness, perspective-taking and concern for others.

The Collaborative for Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has identified five core competencies necessary for a successful, productive life. A meta-analysis\* of 213 studies of school-based K-12 universal Social Emotional Learning (SEL) programs revealed the following positive results: gains in social skills; “improved attitudes about self, others and school;” increases in displays of positive classroom behavior; and improved performance on standardized assessments (e.g., 11<sup>th</sup> percentile point gain). Similarly, fewer conduct problems, along with decreases in emotional distress, were also reported. Research has also revealed that SEL skills can be taught. In the classroom, this involves intentional and disciplined practices in which the “executive control” center of the brain is strengthened. Activities, including mindfulness practices, targets development in five core areas: self-management, self-awareness, social-awareness, responsible decision-making and problem-solving, and relationship skills.

\*Source: Durlak, J.A., Weissberg, R.P., Dymnicki, A.B., Taylor, R.D., & Shellinger, K. (2011). The impact of enhancing students’ social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*: 82 (1), 405-432.

While overlapping, an examination of each area separately provides a deeper understanding of the types of skills and/or behaviors included within each of the 5 competencies\*:

**Self-management:** impulse control, stress management, self-discipline, self-motivation, goal setting, organizational skills, grit.

**Self-awareness:** identifying emotions, accurate self-perception, recognizing strengths, sense of self-confidence, self-efficacy, mindset

**Social-awareness:** perspective-taking, empathy, appreciating diversity, respect for others.

*Responsible decision-making:* problem identification, situation analysis, problem-solving, evaluation, reflection, ethical responsibility.

*Relationship skills:* communication, social engagement, building relationships, working cooperatively, resolving conflicts, helping/seeking help.

\*Source: Schlinger, M. & Sanchez Smith, K. (2017). Social-Emotional Learning: A systemic approach that leads to student success. CASEL EdWeek Webinar.

Students at different grade levels have been exposed to mindful breathing and mindful movement exercises, gratitude journals, and peace corners. In addition, several buildings have prepared implementation team proposals to further extend professional development opportunities and build capacity. Presentations to colleagues at faculty meetings have also occurred, and a general overview for parents has been offered at various PTSA meetings. Recently, training specific to the IRP parent program was held in which 2 representatives per building participated in professional development. This 5-series companion program is designed to provide parents/guardians with information regarding child development, social-emotional learning, and mindfulness. We have begun to introduce this opportunity in a handful of schools, with expansion planned for 2017-18. Similarly, plans for an articulated train-the-trainer model to facilitate sustainability and the adoption of a systematic structure for bringing this work to the high school level will be at the forefront of next steps.

### **Effective Coping Strategies, Emotional Safety, Resiliency and Help Seeking**

The commitment to Sources of Strength (SOS) continues to expand. Increasing numbers of students have been trained as peer leaders at all three high schools. Positive, strength-based messaging campaigns have been designed and implemented. This national, best practices suicide prevention program is focused upon building socioecological protective influences among youth” and increasing feelings of competency and self-efficacy (SAMSHA National Registry of Evidence-based practices (<http://legacy.nreppadmin.net/ViewIntervention.aspx?id=248>)).

**Sources of Strength** employs the power of peer social networks to change peer group norms around coping practices and problem behaviors. More specifically, the activities “are designed to reduce the acceptability of suicide as a response to distress, increase the acceptability of seeking help, improve communication between youth and adults, and develop healthy coping attitudes among youth” (<http://legacy.nreppadmin.net/ViewIntervention.aspx?id=248>). The mission speaks to: ‘spreading hope, help and strength’ to all members of the school community, to ‘breaking the silence’ by acknowledging that reaching out to others is powerful; and to ‘focusing on stories of strength rather than stories of trauma.’ (<https://www.sourcesofstrength.org>). It is hoped that as a result of these presentations, and others made by District faculty/staff and/or invited guest speakers, students will either self-identify or be identified by their peers as having thoughts of suicide and needing supports.

Examples of the types of activities engaged in by youth and facilitated by adult advisors include: speaking to peers in health classes regarding sources of strength and accompanying preventative elements; video messaging; events in which students are asked to identify and voice the supports

they can access in times of distress in a manner commensurate with the SOS color wheel, and poster and flyer educational campaigns. By increasing help-seeking behaviors and facilitating connections between youth and caring adults, the program emphasizes resiliency and optimism. The mission “is to provide the highest quality evidence-based prevention for suicide, violence, bullying and substance abuse by training, supporting, and empowering both peer leaders and caring adults to impact their world through the power of connection, hope, help and strength” (<https://www.sourcesofstrength.org/discover>). Discussions are presently underway to investigate the viability of a train-the-trainer model to build capacity in those districts already involved with Sources of Strength, as well as facilitate the expansion of the program into other local school districts in both Erie and Niagara County. Should this meet with success, the District will be researching the possibility of implementing SOS at the middle school level in the coming year.

The partnership with the Suicide Prevention Coalition of Erie County has also been sustained, allowing for access to a wide array of programming and resource materials. Professional development in the *Lifelines* trilogy (prevention, intervention and post-vention) and a regional overview of best practices in prevention, specifically designed for building and district level Administration, was offered. In addition, SafeTALK was presented as an option for faculty members during the Superintendent’s Conference Day in March and several QPR (“Question, Persuade and Refer”) sessions have been offered.

Consistent with a focus upon emotional safety, a work group has been established to articulate elements important to the formulation of District protocols related to student gender identity. A review of existing New York State Guidance Documents, statistical data and best practice literature, as well as existing District practices was conducted. Complementing this analysis was a discussion of legal requirements and parameters. It is anticipated that a set of considerations for next steps will be developed to ensure all students in our schools are respected, accepted and supported.

### **SPECIFIC SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS**

Working in concert with articulated school improvement plans and shared decision making teams, the elementary wellness facilitators, school social workers, counselors, psychologists and other members of the school-based wellness committee build wellness programs around the Search Institute asset development framework. Assets are designed to help children succeed in all aspects of their lives. The facilitators, along with their colleagues, parents and administrators, develop initiatives based upon identified needs. Goals are established and data is obtained from multiple sources to determine efficacy. All wellness activities are child-centered, and each building plan is designed to specifically target the areas of focus of that school community.

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

At all six elementary schools, the Wellness Committees are unified in the promotion of prosocial behaviors. This includes kindness and respect toward others, good decision-making, caring, personal responsibility, and safety awareness. A sample of activities implemented by each school is shared below. These descriptions were submitted by the facilitators to represent the work of their building. While a multitude of initiatives can be found at every school, these brief narratives represent only those selected for emphasis. Most often, a new initiative is highlighted. Please refer to the comprehensive list (found in the appendix) for a full picture of the breadth and range of building-based activities.

### Country Parkway

During the 2016-17 school year, the Country Parkway Wellness Committee continues to pursue initiatives aimed at highlighting our **SOAR** theme. Unity Days alternate their focus on a different SOAR theme each month. SOAR stands for the following: S- Stand Up for Ourselves and Others; O – Outstanding Citizens; A – Academic Achievement; R – Respect.

On the first Unity Day, held in October, a local magician presented to all the students with an anti-bullying message, aligned with the building theme “Stand Up for Ourselves and Others”. On national Unity Day that same month, all students wore orange and signed an anti-bullying pledge stationed in the front entry. During red-ribbon week the halls were adorned with red ribbons and students playfully dressed each day of the week in a different drug-free theme.

Unity Day in November focused on behavior exemplifying “Outstanding Citizens” as we partnered with a group of volunteers - Fusion - to offer two student assemblies addressing the topic of “Honor”.

In December, classroom activities focused on individual goal setting and academic achievement, while in January, the Fusion team returned to offer two assemblies at Country Parkway, with “Knowledge” serving as the theme. Inspired by Martin Luther King Jr., and in keeping with the messages of Valentine’s Day, the months of January and February wellness-led initiatives highlighted respect, diversity and compassion. Led by our music teacher, all students K-4, gathered in the gym to sing “Let There Be Peace on Earth”. Individual “heart pledges” of kindness, created by the students, were later hung in our front hallway.

During March and April classroom activities focused on bringing the SOAR theme together. We are presently exploring the idea of awarding students “eagle feathers” for showing how they SOAR.

We will again emphasize the importance of “Respect for our Planet” as we continue to “grow our grove”. We are excited to be planting two more trees to our “Earth Day Grove” on Unity Day this May 19<sup>th</sup>. Nearly 13 trees will have been planted over the last 5 years!

Country Parkway staff continue to use dress down Fridays as an opportunity to collect donations for area charities. This year’s recipients have included the **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, the Alzheimer’s Association WNY Chapter, the Juvenile Diabetes Research**

**Foundation, Kids Escaping Drugs and the Megan Redenbacher Memorial Fund.** In addition, each grade level sponsors their own service learning project. Black Dog Second Chance Club, The Matt Urban Center, the District and local food pantries, the Boys and Girls Club, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Salvation Army and Coats for Kids were among the programs benefiting this year. As one example, the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade spearheaded a “Pennies for Patients” drive and collected over \$2,387 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society! The June Unity Day will highlight these diverse service efforts through a school-wide assembly.

### **Dodge Elementary**

The Dodge Wellness committee has continued to implement the wellness initiatives that have had the greatest impact upon our students. These programs include: Unity Days, PBIS parades, Country Fair wellness room, Red Ribbon week activities, Fusion shows, Wonderful Wednesdays, learning project. SOUPerbowl food drive, Thanksgiving baskets, and collecting toys, gift cards, clothing, and pajamas for needy families.

In October, on our first Unity Day, every student and staff member signed a banner to be bully-free. We continue to designate the first Tuesday of every month as Unity Day, symbolized by wearing orange to show that we are all united against bullying. Students also listen to books read by staff members, which reinforce themes of character education. PBIS tickets are distributed to students exemplifying these positive traits. This year we expanded the concept of Unity Day by asking that parents and children “Unite as a Family”. To promote this, Unity Day is homework free, to allow families time to engage in a family activity, such as playing a game together, going for a walk, or reading a book together. Throughout the year, various presentations were offered, all supportive of the selected character education themes.

In collaboration with the Wellness team, Dodge staff and students have remained focused upon character education, the development of assets, and helping others.

### **Forest Elementary**

Forest continued many of our traditional wellness activities this year and have introduced a few new initiatives. The wellness committee has teamed up with the building literacy committee to host a family night entitled “Reading Makes Your Brain Grow”. The night consisted of many different activities for families to participate in together such as yoga, guest authors, nutrition demonstrations, and more. Forest is also in the second year of embracing the concepts of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and mindful practices in many of our classrooms and throughout the school. This year, a parent component has been introduced to share with parents the benefits of SEL and mindfulness. While we are in the beginning stages, we are excited about all the notable things that are already happening! Also, we are holding our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Run Forest Run 5K with all proceeds benefitting the Food Bank of WNY. The Forest family remains committed to supporting one another and our school community through the many initiatives implemented.

### **Heim Elementary**

At Heim Elementary School, a concerted effort has been made to provide a myriad of opportunities for students to engage in wellness activities that promote a caring school climate, positive parent

involvement in school, service to others, promoting positive personal power and motivation to achieve goals.

The “**No Putdowns**” Program remains an important focus of character education and bullying prevention efforts at Heim. The school year began with two important community building events. The first was our “Building Community Day” which consisted of a mix of classroom and grade level ‘getting to know you’ and team building activities. The second was “Wellness Night” which brought students and families to Heim in the evening to participate in family oriented fun activities and begin the school year in a positive way. This event also served as a kick-off for one of the identified building wellness goals of “service to others”, as the school community collected food items for the District Food Pantry. Additional examples of “service to others” include; “Books for Kids,” Hats and Mittens for a women’s and children shelter, “Coats 4 kids,” Food Drive for the Food Bank, a Run-a-thon for JDRF and “Shoe Drive for Nicaragua.”

Unity Day activities were developed by grade level this year, each grade displaying their idea of a unified classroom, unified grade level and unified school. Some focused on highlighting the value of our differences and others focused on what we all have in common. Next year, we are planning a school-wide project. Disability awareness was celebrated in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade with an uplifting program by Martin Gregoire who volunteered his time to talk about life with Cerebral Palsy. He shared his successes and struggles and the value he finds in helping others though the charity he developed “Footsteps of WNY.” The charitable organization helps to purchase needed supplies and equipment not covered by insurance.

Lastly, another initiative, implemented to highlight the assets of promoting positive personal power and motivation to achieve goals, was the expansion of the Mentoring Program at Heim. Selected 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders were trained as to how to be a mentor and demonstrate a caring nature to both build relationships and use their talents to help younger students. Students are matched according to personal strengths and past challenges they have overcome, in the hopes of providing an opportunity to give back to others who are currently in need of similar supports. It is a winning combination for mentors and mentees.

### **Maple East**

A new initiative that the Maple East Wellness Committee implemented this year was a building wide Wellness Smorgasbord / Awareness Day during the school day. A Wellness Theme was integrated into the academic instructional blocks with general topics such as: mindfulness practices, exercise, nutrition, hygiene, stress management, and growth mindset. Some of the specific offerings included Go Noodle, designing a food plate, building a meal using the iPad, a presentation from the school nurse on germs and proper hand washing, making stress balls, participating in brain breaks, Zumba and/or classroom exercises, scholastic news articles about nutrition and Tangrams. In conjunction with Ms. Kathy Christopher and the school nutrition staff, students designed a healthy breakfast with one winner being chosen to have their meal served to the entire school. The student body participated in a group yoga class and colored a healthy choice placemat during lunch. Announcements and posters were created by students to publicize the event, and a video capturing the highlights of was made. It was a successful day where the

students were educated on how a wide variety of healthy activities can be fun and incorporated into many aspects of their school day.

### **Maple West**

This year Maple West has continued the Fusion Assembly programs. Approximately once per month students attend an assembly performed by the Fusion group. Through music, skits and games, each program emphasizes a distinct character education theme. This year's themes addressed the concepts of responsibility, knowledge, courage, forgiveness and humility. After presenting the "big idea," follow-up activities are implemented in classrooms and throughout the school. Students who demonstrate the target behavior are recognized with a "paw" on which their name is written. The "paws" are displayed in the hallway in celebration of these positive qualities. Morning announcements occur regularly to reinforce each theme. A student who demonstrates the character trait is selected from each classroom and presented with a certificate at the next scheduled assembly.

Lastly, Maple West remains committed to instilling in our students a sense of empathy for others by continuing our Kind Kids' Club. The activities in which the students participate revolve around making others feel special and important.

## External Assets and Supporting Activities

External Assets	Asset Name	Supporting Activities
<b>Support</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Family support</li> <li>2. Positive Family Communications</li> <li>3. Other Adult Relationships</li> <li>4. Caring neighborhood</li> <li>5. Caring school</li> <li>6. Parent involvement in school</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asset building booklets for all families</li> <li>• 3rd Grade Booster Club</li> <li>• Millard Fillmore Hospital Boo Boo Bear Clinic</li> <li>• Nursing Home Connection</li> <li>• Kids for character assembly programs</li> <li>• No Put Downs</li> <li>• Care club packets for new students</li> <li>• Kids Care Service Club</li> <li>• Daily announcements- Conflict resolution and Accountability</li> <li>• Wellness Brochure</li> <li>• Parent Letters</li> <li>• Asset Presentation at Kindergarten Orientation/PTA</li> <li>• Asset newsletters Distributed</li> </ul>
External Assets	Asset Name	Supporting Activities
<b>Empowerment</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Community values youth</li> <li>8. Youth as resources</li> <li>9. Service to others</li> <li>10. Safety</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New student groups for all grade levels</li> <li>• Kindergarten buddies</li> <li>• Community helper visits</li> <li>• Safe Homes Program</li> <li>• Child Safety /Stranger Danger Programs</li> <li>• Bike Safety</li> <li>• Birthday recognition</li> <li>• 2 Smart 2 Start</li> <li>• Fun 2B Fit</li> <li>• Tim Horton's Camp</li> </ul>
External Assets	Asset Name	Supporting Activities
<b>Boundaries And Expectations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Family boundaries</li> <li>12. School boundaries</li> <li>13. Neighborhood boundaries</li> <li>14. Adult role models</li> <li>15. Positive peer influence</li> <li>16. High expectations</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Code of character</li> <li>• Asset building parent evening</li> <li>• School pledge</li> <li>• Internet Safety</li> <li>• School contracts</li> </ul>
External Assets	Asset Name	Supporting Activities
<b>Constructive Use of Time</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17. Creative activities</li> <li>18. Youth programs</li> <li>19. Religious Community</li> <li>20. Time at home</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talent Show</li> <li>• Various after school clubs</li> <li>• Reading and game zone recess</li> <li>• Ice cream social, country fair, fun fair</li> <li>• Family Wellness Nights/Fair</li> <li>• Prime time reading</li> <li>• Intramural Programs</li> <li>• TV Turn Off Week</li> <li>• Successful Use of Agenda Mates</li> <li>• Study Skills Group</li> <li>• Student V-brick Announcements</li> <li>• School theater/musical Programs</li> </ul>



## Internal Assets and Supporting Activities

Internal Assets	Asset Name	Supporting Activities
<b>Commitment to Learning</b>	21. Achievement motivation 22. School engagement 23. Homework 24. Bonding to school 25. Reading for pleasure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual/monthly/weekly themes</li> <li>• Book donations for city schools</li> <li>• Too Smart to Start</li> <li>• Amherst Youth Board Parent program</li> </ul>
<b>Positive Values</b>	26. Caring 27. Equality and Social Justice 28. Integrity 29. Honesty 30. Responsibility 31. Restraint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Red Ribbon Week</li> <li>• Jog-a-thon</li> <li>• Giving Tree</li> <li>• Coats for Kids</li> <li>• Circle of Friends Gift bags (project to welcome new students)</li> <li>• Goodwill Jr. &amp; other service projects</li> <li>• ACES/Sunrise Exercises</li> <li>• Canned good drives (Food Bank, etc.)</li> <li>• Support for the military</li> <li>• Adopt-a-Family Clothing Drive</li> <li>• Children to Children Giving</li> <li>• Shoe Drive for Nicaragua</li> <li>• Trick or treat for UNICEF</li> </ul>
Internal Assets	Asset Name	Supporting Activities
<b>Social Competencies</b>	32. Planning and Decision-Making 33. Interpersonal Competence 34. Cultural Competence 35. Resistance Skills 36. Peaceful Conflict Resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict resolution</li> <li>• Bus buddies</li> <li>• No Putdowns</li> <li>• Social skills groups at every grade level</li> <li>• Multi-Cultural Lunch</li> <li>• Cultural Diversity Awareness</li> <li>• Friendship Groups</li> <li>• Mix it Up at Lunch</li> <li>• Safe Prom letters to high school seniors</li> <li>• Disability Awareness</li> <li>• Kids on the Block</li> </ul>

## Internal Assets and Supporting Activities

Internal Assets	Asset Name	Supporting Activities
<b>Positive Identity</b>	37. Personal Power 38. Self Esteem 39. Sense of Purpose 40. Positive View of Personal Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apple a Day Program</li> <li>• Special Friends/Primary Project</li> <li>• Banana Splits</li> <li>• Character education assemblies/displays</li> <li>• Citizen, Star or Student of the Week</li> <li>• Lunch with the principal</li> <li>• Integrating character education/asset building curricula</li> <li>• Student Wellness/Character Ed Committee</li> <li>• Kids Vote USA</li> <li>• Anxiety and Stress Management Groups</li> <li>• Life-Skills Curriculum</li> <li>• Mindfulness programming</li> <li>• Daily announcements- Conflict resolution and Accountability</li>   <li>• Parent Letters</li> <li>• Wellness Brochure</li> <li>• Asset Presentation at Kindergarten Orientation/PTA</li> <li>• Asset newsletters Distributed</li> </ul>

## MIDDLE SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

The Wellness program at each middle school is building-specific, but united in the focus upon the development of assets. All Wellness endeavors provide a comprehensive prevention and student support program. All activities and initiatives are directly connected to the 40 Developmental Asset Model and focus on service learning, youth leadership, and making good choices. Although only a sampling of wellness initiatives is highlighted in this report, additional information may be found in the tables immediately following the text.

### Casey Middle

Casey Middle School has once again started the year with a coordinated building wide theme of **“Let Your Light Shine”**. Our Shared Decision Making Team developed school wide goals to promote the asset of “service to others” as well as the many ways students share their talents in service to others. We started our year with a “Let Your Light Shine” pep rally and a school-wide barbeque lunch! We presented information to students to facilitate their understanding that they each have unique strengths and something wonderful to offer others. Opportunities were provided, at the grade and individual classroom level, for students to participate in service learning projects such as making tray decorations for Meals on Wheels, or collecting books and selling bracelets to raise funds for a local shelter. A staff charity luncheon was held and donations were made to “Friends of the Night” shelter. The Kind Club collected blankets for the SPCA, donated candy to active military, volunteered at the Buffalo Zoo, put a team together for the Breast Cancer walk and engaged in many other charitable activities.

The building **WEB** group has done an outstanding job getting the 8th grade Web leaders involved in various activities for their 5<sup>th</sup> grade “webbies”. In addition to the orientation/transitional activities, they have read books to them, made valentines for them, had a movie night with them, started a homework helper program for them, helped the fifth graders clean and organize their lockers and hosted a fun night involving bubble soccer.

Student government realized considerable success with a 7/8 grade Halloween Dance and Roller Skating party to promote school spirit, building unity and a sense of belonging. Similarly, Rachel’s Challenge/Leadership students experienced significant support for the orange-colored “All Friends Here” tee shirts that many staff members and students purchased and wore on Unity Day. These students led the way on **Unity Day**, October 20<sup>th</sup>, making morning announcements on the days preceding and on Unity Day targeting ways to build relationships and acceptance in our building. Age-appropriate videos were shown in homerooms, followed by guided discussion questions to facilitate open dialogue.

Rachel Challenge Club students also took charge of **Red Ribbon Week** and promoted, through the Wellness team, anti-alcohol/drug and anti-smoking/electronic cigarette messages. Informational statistics were presented to students, and discussions about positive, healthy activities as a deterrent to drug and alcohol use were held. We had a spirit week culminating in a day where

everyone wore red to show support for remaining drug-free. Representatives from the Face to Face Program from Kids Escaping Drugs shared a timely, powerful message with eighth graders.

In November/December the annual **"Fill the Fitness Room"** Canned Food and Toiletry Drive was held to benefit the Food Bank, with the toiletries going to the District Food Pantry. This was a very successful endeavor. In fact, former Buffalo Sabre Rob Ray made a video thanking students for their efforts and educating them as to the need to help the hungry right here in our own community.

Our entire staff participated in a building fundraiser to raise money for **Holiday Gifts for Families in Need**. A total of 18 Casey families were provided with gift certificates for food and other necessities. Similarly, the **Hospice Flower Sale** met with considerable success! Casey has been a leader in fundraising for Hospice several years in a row!

In February, **"Discovery Day"** (originally named Creativity Day) was held. This was and is our flagship event in which the entire student body participated in workshops designed to help them find their passion, explore healthy interests, learn positive coping mechanisms and discover potential career paths. It was an energizing day and so incredibly worthwhile. It is also a stress-free day marked by no trips to either the school nurse or the guidance office.

In April, the **Talent Show** provided another building-wide celebration, bringing faculty together with our students in a positive way. Yearlong **Yoga Classes** have also been offered to faculty and students, allowing for an opportunity to learn strategies of relaxation and focus.

In May, we have two big events scheduled. First, the **Heim/Casey 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Bash** was hosted by Casey this year. Eighth grade students from both schools came together, supported by the North Link Crew team, to socialize with peers and begin establishing relationships with what will become the Class of 2021. The event helps to ease the anxiety over the transition to high school and allows students to meet one another in a casual, non-threatening way. The students can choose to participate in a variety of activities (ping pong, Kan-Jam, etc.) and a DJ is on-site to lead the dance party.

Second, fundraising is underway for Roswell Park Cancer Institute as the building prepares to participate in **Bald for Bucks**. Many children and staff have committed to either shaving their head, cutting their hair, or chalking their hair to raise money for cancer research. The participants will write a personal essay articulating the reason they have chosen to participate (e.g., to support a family member, friend or neighbor or to help find a cure.) Not only do the students love engaging in the event, they are excited to be able to help their community.

"Shine Your Light" was the unifying theme of all initiatives this year. The importance of giving back was evident throughout the year, and many opportunities were provided to students to support personal discovery of what they have to offer in a safe, caring environment.

## Heim Middle

The Wellness Team at Heim Middle School has continued to focus programming upon the purposeful fostering of the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets. All initiatives were designed to promote a positive school climate and healthy lifestyle choices. A number of activities were initiated to achieve this goal, including several service learning projects. Events included WEB orientation for new fifth graders, a pet supply drive to support the SPCA, the **Snowman Challenge** to support JDRF, and a **Heim Gives Back** day, where the entire student body was involved in a variety of different community service projects.

Students at Heim Middle came together for **Unity Day** with each homeroom developing their own theme based upon the concept of unity. The specific idea formulated was then used as the focus for decorating a class flag, to be displayed by the homeroom teacher on Unity Day. A winning theme (e.g., *"Alone We Can Do So Little, Together We Can Do So Much"*), was placed on the main bulletin board and each student in the school designed "a person" to represent themselves upon which he/she recorded a single word that represented unity at Heim Middle. The board remained on display through March and provided a poignant focus for all students and staff in the building.

Students at Heim Middle School celebrated National **Red Ribbon Week** this year with a school-wide spirit week. Events throughout the week generated enthusiasm and school connectedness while reinforcing the important message of drug-free living. The culminating activity at the end of Red Ribbon Week was "Old Heim Days," consisting of a country fair for all Heim students. Eighth grade leadership students responsible for developing games that would be played at the fair. Students created the game, developed the rules, and ran the game at the event. They had to recruit other seventh and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to help staff their booth. The program also included healthy snacks, face painting and pumpkin decorating. The event was well attended, with more than half of the student body participating.

Another service-related activity for Heim Middle School students involved participation in the **Empty Bowls Project** coordinated by SUNY at Buffalo State. Students expressed their creativity through the creation of beautiful, handmade clay bowls. The bowls were then sold at the Burchfield Penney Art Center to raise funds for *Friends of the Night People* and the *Food Bank of WNY*.

A distinct highlight of Heim Middle wellness programming was participation in the **Snowman Challenge** to support JDRF. Four students in our building are affected by Type 1 Diabetes. Groups, each comprised of 2 to 5 students, volunteered to raise funds to support this worthwhile cause. On the day of the event, these students engaged in building either an outdoor snowman or an indoor, "unmeltable", snowman. Over \$7,000 was collected for Juvenile Diabetes. While these students were constructing the snowmen, the rest of building participated in "**Heim Gives Back Day**." Specifically, each homeroom took part in a service project benefiting the local community. As a result, students stitched 30 blankets to donate to Children's Hospital, created over 300

valentines for the VA, made tray favors and placemats for the local senior center and prepared over 200 bundles of pins, cookies, and valentines for Children's Hospital **Have a Heart** project.

In May, the fourth annual **Casey-Heim 8<sup>th</sup> grade Bash** was held. This year, Casey Middle School hosted. Students from both Casey and Heim came together for a night of dancing, games and various fun activities. The **North High School Link Crew** was on hand to help promote interaction between students from both schools, as they will be coming together as a 9<sup>th</sup> grade class next year. As was the case last year, the evening helped to increase a sense of unity across middle schools, with the intent of facilitating an easier transition to the high school.

Also in May, the Wellness Committee sponsored Heim's first Relax and Recharge Day. On this day, we ran a special schedule, and students selected six different activities/hobbies that they felt they may enjoy as a hobby or pastime. There were 40 different activities from which students could choose. Most the sessions were run by the faculty and staff at Heim Middle School. This day gave students the opportunity to make positive connections with adults through common interests, as well as explore new hobbies that they might enjoy.

In June, we will continue to support local charities through an annual charity *fun run* and activity evening. This year, Heim Middle School students had the opportunity to vote on the charity they wanted to support and **Pets Alive of WNY** was selected. Formerly the Buffalo Humane Society, this non-profit organization is devoted to animal welfare in the Western New York Region. Students and staff will come together for a two-mile run followed by dinner, music, and a wide variety of fun sports, games, and activities. We are hopeful the event will not only culminate in the donation of funds to an important organization, but will further promote school spirit and a strong sense of community at Heim Middle.

### **Mill Middle**

In keeping with the Mill Middle School goal of establishing and fostering an educational environment centered upon making connections, the Wellness team planned initiatives grounded by the 40 Developmental Assets. The following is a summary of accomplishments and ongoing initiatives.

Mill celebrated **Unity Day** in October with various events that promoted kindness and connectedness within the Mill community. During October, our initial activity included a Buffalo Bulls football game where students could make a tunnel for the players to run out onto the field. This event allowed our students, parents and staff to celebrate a local sports team while building camaraderie amongst ourselves. From there, we put a spotlight on Unity Day itself. For an entire week, promotional announcements were made and targeted discussions held which were specific to the concepts of unity, relationships and connectedness. Behaviors and active steps that can be taken to continue to promote Unity Day long into the future were highlighted, with a sincere emphasis on the value of being kind, inclusive, and respectful to all. All members of the school community were encouraged to wear orange on October 19<sup>th</sup> as a symbol of our commitment to this goal. Lastly, the PTSA sponsored a Color Run for all Mill students. While the day was cold and

rainy, students were not deterred from having a wonderful time experiencing another opportunity to build connections.

In November, we offered a **Family Wellness Night** with over 50 different vendors from around the area. The Buffalo Zoo brought their Zoomobile, resulting in considerable excitement. Families were also able to participate in African Drumming and line dancing. Vendors covered all areas of health and wellness (e.g., physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social, etc.). A wonderful time was had by all and we look forward to continuing this event each year. Attendees were also asked to bring non-perishable food items to contribute to the District food pantry, enabling the pantry to be fully stocked with desperately needed items.

**Bald 4 Bucks** was back this year, with tremendous success! Ninety-two students participated, shaving, cutting, or coloring their hair during the event. A goal of raising \$10,000 was set, but our students, parents, faculty, and school community far exceeded all expectations. To date, we have raised over \$50,000 making our two-year donation to Roswell Park over \$109,000!

Similarly, “**dress down**” events continue to be sponsored by the Building Wellness Team. These have become an established tradition at Mill, resulting in the provision of considerable support for a wide variety of worthwhile causes. As an example, proceeds from staff donations throughout the month of December went to providing gifts and necessities for needy families in our building. The recipients were grateful and appreciative of the efforts made by staff to provide them with some much-needed relief. These initiatives have allowed staff and students to engage in charitable giving and have provided opportunities for participants to recognize the personal benefits derived from engaging in service learning projects.

Additional **community service projects** were also organized at Mill. Specifically, students were involved in raising funds for Mason’s Mission, which builds playgrounds for special needs members of the community. This was done through a “Pasta Palooza” evening event.

Peer mentoring is also a very dynamic student activity. Web Crew leaders were extremely active, teaching classroom lessons, providing guidance to 5<sup>th</sup> graders, sponsoring cupcake wars, hosting a movie night, promoting body and mind wellness through a trashball tournament, and running a “fun on the field” day in June. Web Crew has done much to ease the transition of 4<sup>th</sup> graders, as well as facilitate self-confidence and leadership skills in upper classmen. The program is clearly consistent with the articulated goals of promoting an inclusive and caring school community.

Finally, Mill spent the year reaching out to parents to provide them with information surrounding the **40 Developmental Assets** in a very focused and intentional way. Concrete and practical suggestions, featured in the school newsletter, included ideas for ways in which families could build assets at home. We created a few different bulletin boards in our main hallway to highlight the developmental assets and send positive messages to our students, staff, and parents. One of the bulletin boards also displayed information about mindfulness practices which has been incorporated into our 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes, and will be expanded to other grade levels in the future.

Lastly, to round out this important initiative, Kathy Mobarek-Miller presented to all 8<sup>th</sup> grade health classes, defining developmental assets and providing examples of assets 'in action'.

### **Transit Middle School**

The phrase "Be Part of the Solution" continues to be the mantra heard throughout Transit Middle School as we promote activities centering upon kindness, service to others, and sense of community. As we strive to develop compassion in our study body, the focus of all efforts remains steadfast upon the positive outcomes of each initiative as opposed to the monetary aspect of a fundraising activity.

When we began our Wellness gatherings for students, approximately 30 seventh and eighth grade students showed a desire to become a member of the Building Wellness Committee. Students brainstormed and eventually decided upon various service-related projects that would later be implemented within the community. Discussions culminated in a decision to direct wellness efforts toward the following: visiting the Amberleigh Retirement Community at holiday time; recognizing area veterans, along with family members of our students and staff, that have served our country by making valentines, and later sponsoring a Pajama Day to collect for the inscription of two names of fallen vets on the Amherst Park Memorial - Blake Whipple and Billy Wilson - that had attended Williamsville schools; holding a canned food drive to support the City Mission and District food pantry; and finally, continuing our Transit tradition of holding an annual Community Day at the end of the school year (to be held on Friday, June 2nd). These initiatives are further described below.

A new initiative, "Valentine's for Vets" was sponsored throughout the month of February. The entire school participated in making Valentine's that were sent to our troops overseas and the local VA Hospital. We were fortunate to have a speaker, Jack O'Connor, come to one of our Wellness meetings and speak about the Buffalo Veterans Court. This local resource is making a difference in the lives of veterans once they return from deployment.

The Transit Wellness Committee also hosted a Pajama Day to raise funds to inscript the names of two former Williamsville students on the memorial wall at Amherst Veteran's Park. The names of Billy Wilson (graduate of North High School) and Blake Whipple (graduate of Transit Middle and East High School) will be added to the memorial wall this year in a ceremony to be held in August 2017.

Upon return from spring break, Wellness students encouraged members of the school community to "Be Part of the Solution" by contributing to a food drive to help replenish the shelves at the City Mission and the District food pantry.

For the third consecutive year, Transit students elected to visit a local Retirement Community, Amberleigh, to brighten the spirits of its residents and engage in a holiday celebration. This year's trip took place on December 16, 2016. Once again, our visit was met with great enthusiasm from both the residents and student participants alike. In preparation for the visit, students brainstormed ideas for activities and formed committees to realize the plans formulated. Activities



included many of the same as in the preceding year: BINGO, singing carols, conducting personal interviews, and decorating cookies. Students expressed a genuine sense of satisfaction knowing they had contributed positively to the Amberleigh community, bringing joy to the lives of many of the residents. We plan to visit again next year and in years to come, as we would like to make this a tradition. As a side note, one of the “Valentine’s for Vets” activities came about because of this event. Specifically, we had the honor of meeting a local veteran, presently residing at Amberleigh, who shared with us his experiences and the two purple hearts received during WWII. As a result, Amberleigh became one of the places to which Valentine’s Day cards were sent.

Finally, Transit’s annual "**Community Day**" is scheduled for Friday, June 2, 2017. The day will consist of a variety of events including the ninth Annual Jan Held Memorial Walk/Fun Run, carwash, art show, carnival games, community blood drive (organized in collaboration with UNYTS), kickball tournament, face painting, and a DJ. This year, as in prior years, we hope to make Community Day a free event to celebrate all that has been donated by the Transit Community throughout the year.

## External Assets and Supporting Activities

External Assets	Asset Name	Supporting Activities
Support	1. Family Support 3. Other Adult Relationships 5. Caring School 6. Parent Involvement in School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family Nights</li> <li>• School Spirit Projects</li> <li>• UNYTS Blood Drive</li> <li>• Community Day</li> <li>• Discovery Day</li> <li>• Student Mentoring by Faculty</li> <li>• Shamrock Volleyball Tournament</li> <li>• Faculty Chorus</li> <li>• Academic Intervention Team</li> <li>• Boot Camp</li> </ul>
External Assets	Asset Name	Supporting Activities
Empowerment	8. Youth as Resources 9. Service to Others 10. Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer Mentoring Programs</li> <li>• Recycling Project</li> <li>• Leadership and Wellness Groups</li> <li>• Clothing Drive</li> <li>• Peer Educator Program</li> <li>• Student-led Announcements/Committees</li> <li>• Internet Safety Programs</li> <li>• Supply Drive for Students in Need</li> <li>• SPCA/KIND Club/Mill Kids Care</li> <li>• Rachel's Challenge Activities</li> <li>• Student Ambassadors</li> <li>• Heim Gives Back</li> <li>• Kids Helping Community Club for 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• Food Drives</li> <li>• WEB</li> <li>• Nicaragua Supply Drive</li> <li>• Amberleigh Visit</li> <li>• Various Service to Other activities</li> </ul>

## External Assets and Supporting Activities

External Assets	Asset Name	Supporting Activities
Boundaries and Expectations	11. School Boundaries 14. Adult Role Models 15. Positive Peer Influence 16. High Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team Awards</li> <li>• Study Skills Programs</li> <li>• President's Award</li> <li>• Homework Club</li> <li>• Posting Merit &amp; Honor Roll Students</li> <li>• Field Days</li> <li>• School Opening Assembly and Picnic</li> <li>• WEB Crew</li> <li>• Wall of Positive Behavior</li> <li>• Discovery Day</li> </ul>
External Assets	Asset Name	Supporting Activities
Constructive Use of Time	17. Creative Activities 18. Youth Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Red Ribbon Week</li> <li>• Beautification of Building</li> <li>• Fundraising for Charities</li> <li>• Family Fun Night</li> <li>• Grade Level Character Development Days</li> <li>• School Dances</li> <li>• Fun Run</li> <li>• Spring Spirit Week</li> <li>• Goal-setting activities</li> <li>• Student Art Show-Amherst Museum</li> <li>• Discovery Day</li> <li>• Old Heim Days</li> <li>• Yoga</li> <li>• Mindfulness</li> <li>• Wellness Fair</li> <li>• Wild Wednesdays</li> <li>• JCC Ropes Camp</li> </ul>

## Internal Assets and Supporting Activities

Internal Assets	Asset Name	Supporting Activities
Commitment to Learning	1. Achievement motivation 2. School engagement 3. Homework 4. Bonding to school 5. Reading for pleasure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book Club</li> <li>• 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Transition Program</li> <li>• Silent Reading Time</li> <li>• Student Initiated Video Announcements</li> <li>• Study Skills Program</li> <li>• Homework Club</li> <li>• Peer Mentoring Program</li> <li>• Harkness Center Orientation</li> <li>• Reading Links</li> <li>• Pancakes with the Principal</li> <li>• Kudos</li> <li>• Student of the Month</li> <li>• Evening Study Skills Program</li> </ul>
Positive Values	26. Caring 27. Equality and Social Justice 28. Integrity 29. Honesty 30. Responsibility 31. Restraint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WEB Crew</li> <li>• Character Education Programs</li> <li>• Casey Community Cares</li> <li>• Bald for Bucks/ Pantene Beautiful Lengths</li> <li>• Snowman Challenge</li> <li>• Spirit of Giving Month</li> <li>• School Spirit Projects</li> <li>• Community Service Projects</li> <li>• Play/Variety/Talent Shows</li> <li>• Staff Fundraising Luncheon</li> <li>• Charitable donations from peer to peer holiday sales</li> <li>• Dress down days for staff</li> <li>• Spirit Days</li> <li>• Color Run</li> </ul>
Internal Assets	Asset Name	Supporting Activities
Social Competencies	32. Planning and Decision-Making 33. Interpersonal Competence 34. Cultural Competence 35. Resistance Skills 36. Peaceful Conflict Resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advisor/Advisee</li> <li>• Talent Show</li> <li>• Peer Educator Programs</li> <li>• Study Skills Program</li> <li>• National Foreign Language Week</li> <li>• District Art Show</li> <li>• Unity Day</li> <li>• UB Football Adopt-A-School</li> </ul>
Positive Identity	37. Personal Power 38. Self Esteem 39. Sense of Purpose 40. Positive View of Personal Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wellness Leadership Programs</li> <li>• 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Career Exploration</li> <li>• Wellness Assemblies</li> <li>• Red Ribbon Week</li> <li>• Community Service Programs</li> <li>• Positive Peer Relationship Presentations</li> <li>• Banana Splits</li> <li>• Character Education Assemblies/displays</li> <li>• Citizen, Star or Student of the Week</li> <li>• Lunch with the principal</li> <li>• Integrating character education/asset building curricula</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student Wellness/Character Ed Committee</li><li>• Anxiety and Stress Management Groups</li><li>• Daily Announcements</li><li>• Parent Letters</li><li>• Asset Awareness Programs</li><li>• Lunch Groups</li><li>• 6<sup>th</sup> grade girl empowerment group</li><li>• Girls on the Run</li><li>• Yoga</li><li>• Mindfulness</li></ul>
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## HIGH SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

Consistent with the elementary and middle school levels, the high school wellness facilitators and building-based teams implemented a wide range of initiatives to promote the development of assets and address student resiliency, healthy choices, prevention and positive decision-making.

### **Alternative Instructional Model (AIM)**

The AIM program continued the long-established focus upon service learning activities. The UNYTS Blood Drive in November, the City Mission visit and shelf-stocking in December, the DEC fish stocking in March and the Reinstein Woods cleanup were all well received. Students also raised funds for the City Mission and donations of non-perishables for the District Food Pantry.

In addition to the community service, several activities were initiated to facilitate connections to the AIM program. The program-wide Destroyer Golf outing in the fall and the Transit Lanes bowling day in December remain staples to help break down barriers between students and staff. The Buffalo Architectural walking tour and the walking tour of Niagara Falls continue to help seniors connect to Western New York. A trip to Forest Lawn and a group Painting Day have been added as innovative ways for students to connect to the area and to each other. The students also received a presentation from a representative of the TEAL Project. The presentation focused on creating positive relationships and identifying relationships that may not be as positive.

Overall there were many successful initiatives that helped promote the 40 Assets for Healthy Youth Development.

### **East High School**

Williamsville East kicked off the year planning for Unity Day, Bald for Bucks and the First Ever Pumpkin Painting evening, working with existing clubs in the building.

In addition to celebrating Unity Day with a group picture in the commons, students were encouraged to unite/interact with others with whom they are less familiar. With the help of guiding questions and/or starter topics for discussion, students conversed with one another with an emphasis on listening actively to each other's opinions, recognizing similarities and understanding differences.

**Bald for Bucks**, held in the commons afterschool hours, raised approximately \$1600. Plans are underway to repeat the event next year and each year thereafter. It is hoped that the publicity generated will encourage even more students to get involved in the future. As a student-led initiative, all aspects of implementation (from organizing the event to marketing and entertainment) were completed by East students with assistance from members of the wellness team.

As an additional effort to facilitate connections and build relationships, a pumpkin painting evening was initiated in collaboration with the Art Club at East. Students decorated individual pumpkins and enjoyed snacks and entertainment.

The building Wellness Committee combined efforts with various clubs within the school to help raise funds and collect necessities to benefit families in need around all the major holidays.

Sources of Strength continued to present in Health Education classes, to provide students with an understanding of help-seeking behaviors and the eight components of support that can assist students to stay safe through healthy decision making. Positive messaging campaigns are designed by the peer leaders encourage students to identify their source(s) of strength to which they can turn during difficult times. In the fall, all major local TV outlets were present to witness one of the major SOS activities in which balloons, filled with paint colors corresponding to each element of the color wheel, were thrown against a large board while pledging to 'break the silence.' The board was presented to the school and proudly displayed in the commons as a reminder to students to reach out to others.

The Required Parent program for all parents of incoming 8th grade students was a success in providing relevant information regarding current trends, approaches to prevention and best practices in intervention.

In addition, the Wellness Team has provided support to Link Crew, a group of trained student leaders that facilitate a smooth transition to high school, and has assisted in the implementation of "Carry the Torch" activities which recognize students who embody the qualities of Trust, Helping Others, Respect, Concern for others and Honesty. Similarly, support for the annual Cancer Walk, which raises funds for Roswell Park, and the Band against Bullying competition have also been provided.

Future events before the end of the year include our Annual Wellness Week and the Avoidance Awareness Program for all Graduating Seniors. Wellness Week will be held on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> and include the following:

April 19 -- Wellness Fair with different exhibits from various vendors;

April 20 -- Yoga Class Day and Therapy Dog visitation sponsored by Kaleida Health.

April 21 -- Stress Free Day organized by the Youth Leadership Class.

The Avoidance Awareness Program will be held in May and students will rotate between three presenters concentrating on topics of significant impact to both immediate and long-term decision making. Presenters for this year's program include: Stop DWI panel presentation offered by the Erie County Bar Association; Sandra LaRoche from 'It Happened to Alexa' Foundation; and Mary Travers-Murphy from the Family Justice Center to discuss healthy relations.

### **North High School**

Our first event of the year was the annual Club Expo. A poster contest was conducted in which each school club was charged with the task of capturing all pertinent meeting information for each club in the building. Mr. Collichio, Principal, voted for the winning poster and that club was awarded a pizza party. All entries were outstanding, ultimately making the selection process quite difficult. Submitted posters were subsequently hung on the walls outside both cafeterias to provide students with continued reminders of the various extracurricular opportunities available

at North. Engagement in school activities has been shown to be an effective means to promote connectedness, reduce violence and minimize disciplinary issues, so we felt that advertising all clubs would serve as a wonderful way to promote membership.

On October 19<sup>th</sup>, all members of the North school community were invited to participate in Unity Day and intentionally demonstrate their commitment against bullying. Announcements were made to explain the purpose of the day and the importance of wearing orange as a show of solidarity. Faculty, staff and students watched 'One Day,' a video that demonstrates "paying it forward" through acts of kindness. Students were then given a small piece of paper to fill out detailing an example of someone that had behaved kindly. These were to be delivered to the person cited. Recipients were instructed to place the note in the main office display case. While many notes accumulated in this display case, we found that most recipients wanted to post the notes somewhere where they could be seen by them daily.

In November, our third annual Volunteer Fair was held. Many members of the community participated, sharing information about their respective organizations and opportunities for students to connect with them. This program was very well attended!

In January, the building Wellness Team sponsored a boys' basketball game in which students were invited to attend to promote the sense of community within our school. Dr. Martzloff was invited to compete in our half time entertainment. He was happy to attend and even wore a Spartan jersey when he attempted 3 free throws. For every free throw he missed, 1 snow day would be earned. The crowd went wild when he missed every shot. Teachers also invited students to come out on the court during breaks in play to earn prizes.

Also during the month of January, the school sponsored a Maker's Fair in which students were invited to the library to apply their creativity while engaging in various hands-on activities. Student Council funded some of the jewelry making activities so that students could keep what they created. The event was a hit and was very well attended!

Continuing with a commitment to student health, a Wellness Fair was held on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. Participants included: Adoption Star, the Alberti Center, Amherst Police Department, Amherst YES, Amherst Youth Board, Buffalo Barre, Buffalo Centre, Crisis Services, ECCPASA, GLYS, Horizon Health Services, Excelsior represented by Paula Browning, Athletic trainer assigned to North, Platinum Fitness, Planned Parenthood, Starbridge Inc., and UNYTS. All contributors relayed exceptionally useful information to our students, and the turnout was exceptional.

Continuing with our Kindness theme, teachers were invited to select a student that inspires them and film the student's reaction at the time they are informed by the teacher of their selection. Many teachers participated and the video produced demonstrates that teachers care deeply about their students and are motivated by them. The video was shared with parents and their feedback was truly heartwarming. The faculty also viewed the video on April 3<sup>rd</sup> where the importance of making connections with students was highlighted.

All activities and learning experiences were designed to help students resist harmful behaviors, develop resiliency and the capacity to make good decisions, as well as "see" and experience Williamsville North as a warm and nurturing place where students and teachers care about each



other. Not only was the student body very willing to participate in each initiative or event, it is believed that all stated goals were successfully achieved.

### **South High School**

This year saw the return of the biannual **Volunteer Expo** which is offered every-other-year opposite the Wellness Fair. We were happy to secure some new organizations looking for student volunteers and they were pleased to see how many of our students signed up to volunteer at their facilities. The Expo was exceptionally well-attended with many of our teachers bringing their classrooms down to take part in the activities.

The South Wellness Team has been involved with the Williamsville District Food Pantry with one of our co-advisors overseeing the orders and correspondence on the pantry. This year, with the help of two of our district social workers who have picked up the collected food, our team has continued to support drives to help fill the pantry with non-perishable food items. National Honor Society students helped us hold an “Epic Beard Contest” with our male faculty members offering to grow a beard for two weeks. Students voted on the best beard. The winner could keep or shave off his beard, while the losers had to shave their beard in a style reflective of the wishes of the students. A homeroom food drive competition was also conducted, and breakfast provided to the top three homerooms bringing in the largest percentage of non-perishable food items. South students and staff contributed many well needed items. Members of the Wellness Team continue to promote the food pantry and have played a significant role in delivering food to needy families.

In the fall, the South Wellness Team planned Anti-Bullying Week, including the “wear orange” on National Unity Day. Each day, a message was sent to the faculty which included ideas to use in their classrooms to promote acts of kindness. On Wednesday of that week, on National Unity Day, the entire student body, along with our faculty and staff gathered on the South football field to share kind words with the person standing next to them. The students then proceeded to spell out the letters WSHS on the field for a panoramic picture and show of support for South “Unity.” After the event students, parents and faculty had the opportunity to purchase a copy of the print with proceeds being donated to charity.

Once again October saw the South Wellness Team plan a “Wellness Week,” kicked off by a 5K race, **“Billie’s on the Run”** held on Sunday, October 9<sup>th</sup>. The 5K race started and ended at South. After the race, various games and physical fitness activities were available to participating students and families, including the opportunity to partake in yoga demonstrations. Wellness Week also served as initiation for our weekly Wellness Wednesday Walks around the building. Participants meet before school on Wednesday morning and walk for 20 minutes before the school day begins.

Again, this year the Wellness Team also took part in **“Play Pink for a Cure”** to support breast cancer awareness. All athletic teams wore special pink t-shirts during the month of October to support the cause, while staff also joined in by wearing pink to support faculty members, family members and friends who have or are currently fighting breast cancer.

Our Wellness facilitators attended a conference this past fall titled: "Making a Difference: Healthy Changes in your School." Once again it was interesting to learn what other districts may be doing and to have the time to discuss with others what strategies are and are not be working. We came away knowing that we are ahead of many districts in terms of the wellness initiatives in which we are already proactively engaged.

The Wellness Team is extremely excited that our state of the art fitness center opened in the fall. After many years of planning and anticipation this long-term goal finally came to fruition. The fitness room is being utilized during physical education classes, and is open to faculty and students before and after school. The **Fitness Center** has now made it possible for ALL students to be able to have access to physical activity at school. We have been in contact with a local yoga instructor who has offered to provide suggestions as to how to best use the existing space to offer some yoga classes and are also researching additional workshops/classes that could be scheduled. The opportunity to plan activities, particularly for our students who are not involved in any sports teams, has been a wonderful addition to South High School. The support from the building, District and school community has been overwhelming and we look forward to adding a few finishing touches which will complete the entire room.

The Guidance/Counseling Office along with the Wellness Team have purchased adult coloring books and colored pencils for students who need a stress release during their day. The students have visited the Guidance Office before the school day begins and after completing one of the colored pictures are ready to take on the day. This activity has been particularly beneficial for students new to South in helping them make the adjustment to a new school.

We continue the wellness "**Tip of the Week**" which is posted every Wednesday on the WITS homepage and Wellness bulletin board outside our PE Office.

The Wellness committee continues to discuss recruiting additional students to be part of our building Wellness Team for next year. We feel this will allow more students to be involved in planning projects/events that promote healthy lifestyles, particularly with planning activities for our new fitness facility.

We will again offer students who are taking AP exams the opportunity to walk around the gym with us for 15 minutes prior to being seated for the exam. Research has shown that the mind can focus much more clearly when some physical activity is completed prior to sitting for a long exam.

As part of our Wellness Team meetings we have invited resources from the community to share information about their programs with the group. Horizons and Face to Face have visited this year, and arrangements for additional presentations before the end of the year are presently underway.

Finally, South will host our third "South Celebrates" event in June. The Wellness Team will take part in encouraging the different school clubs to select healthy foods and activities in which families can participate that evening.

## External Assets and Supporting Activities

External Assets	Asset Name	Supporting Activities
<b>Support</b>	1. Family support 2. Positive Family Communications 3. Other Adult Relationships 4. Caring neighborhood 5. Caring school 6. Parent involvement in school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reach Out Activities; Sources of Strength</li> <li>• Parent Presentations</li> <li>• Articles on positive family communications in the newsletters, different parent evening programs</li> <li>• New Student Welcome Programs, Newsletter articles, Invisible Mentoring of students by staff members</li> <li>• Mentoring program, volunteerism</li> <li>• Beautification Project, acts of service by various clubs, assemblies such as Cultural Diversity</li> <li>• Community Service Activities, SDM, PTSA supports the Wellness Fair and Volunteer Expo Individual meetings with students at academic risk</li> <li>• Link Crew</li> <li>• Stress Free Day</li> <li>• Life Lines (Suicide Prevention Program)</li> <li>• Safe Dates</li> </ul>
External Assets	Asset Name	Supporting Activities
<b>Empowerment</b>	7. Community values youth 8. Youth as resources 9. Service to others 10. Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer education programs, Leadership clubs</li> <li>• Service Club, Wellness Council</li> <li>• Clubs/Organizations, Interact, Amherst YES</li> <li>• Leadership training and camp</li> <li>• Family Groups/Team Building</li> <li>• SIHAC</li> <li>• Link Crew</li> <li>• Gay/Straight Alliance</li> <li>• Sources of Strength Peer Leaders</li> <li>• Volunteer Expo</li> <li>• Unity Day</li> </ul>
External Assets	Asset Name	Supporting Activities
<b>Boundaries and Expectations</b>	11. Family boundaries 12. School boundaries 13. Neighborhood boundaries 14. Adult role models 15. Positive peer influence 16. High Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety messages to parents re: proms, post H.S. life, Parent Programs; Safe homes</li> <li>• Staff In-services</li> <li>• Required Parent Program</li> <li>• Avoidance Awareness Program</li> <li>• Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Athletic Eligibility Policy</li> </ul>

## External Assets and Supporting Activities

External Assets	Asset Name	Supporting Activities
<b>Constructive Use of Time</b>	17. Creative activities 18. Youth programs 19. Religious Community 20. Time at Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freshman Transition programs</li> <li>• Peer education</li> <li>• Academic Intervention Team</li> <li>• Cultural awareness clubs</li> <li>• Participation in The Arts programs</li> <li>• Link Crew</li> <li>• After school clubs and Activities</li> <li>• Intermural &amp; Interscholastic Athletics</li> <li>• Music &amp; Art Programs</li> <li>• Theater Programs</li> <li>• Amherst YES</li> <li>• Amherst Youth Consortium</li> <li>• Amherst Drug Court</li> </ul>
External Assets	Asset Name	Supporting Activities
<b>Commitment to Learning</b>	21. Achievement motivation 22. School engagement 23. Homework 24. Bonding to school 25. Reading for pleasure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student tutoring program</li> <li>• Master Minds, Science Olympiad, DECA, FBLA</li> <li>• National Honor Society and other honors programs</li> <li>• Student of the month program</li> <li>• Student recognition program</li> <li>• Book club</li> <li>• WITS (classroom resources)</li> <li>• Painkillers kill educator's guide</li> <li>• Academic Intervention Programs</li> <li>• Cocoa &amp; Cram</li> </ul>

## Internal Assets and Supporting Activities

Internal Assets	Asset Name	Supporting Activities
<b>Positive Values</b>	26. Caring 27. Equality and Social Justice 28. Integrity 29. Honesty 30. Responsibility 31. Restraint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face to Face</li> <li>• Black history month</li> <li>• Cultural awareness assembly/club</li> <li>• Respect and Responsibility Contract</li> <li>• SADD/Red Ribbon Week</li> <li>• Texting Simulator</li> <li>• DUI simulator</li> <li>• Play for the Cure</li> <li>• Bald for Bucks/Locks for Love</li> <li>• Blood Drives-UNTYS/Red Cross</li> <li>• Band Against Bullying</li> <li>• Coffee House (Poetry/Reading)</li> <li>• Ride for Roswell</li> <li>• Strides for Breast Cancer</li> <li>• Wellness Walk</li> <li>• Kids Escaping Drugs Walk</li> <li>• Wellness Wednesday's</li> <li>• South Celebrates</li> <li>• Spartan Event of the Week</li> <li>• Canned Food Drive for District Food Bank</li> <li>• Personal Care Items for District Food Bank</li> <li>• Refugee Collection</li> <li>• School Supply Collection</li> </ul>
Internal Assets	Asset Name	Supporting Activities
<b>Social Competencies</b>	32. Planning and Decision - Making 33. Interpersonal Competence 34. Cultural Competence 35. Resistance Skills 36. Peaceful Conflict Resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer educators, transition programs</li> <li>• Student representation on Wellness Council and committee</li> <li>• Cultural Diversity Club</li> <li>• Senior Seminars</li> <li>• Link Crew</li> <li>• Student Ambassadors/Peer Shadowing Program</li> <li>• Student Council</li> <li>• Steering Committee</li> <li>• Social Media Awareness Program</li> <li>• "Out of the Blue"</li> <li>• School Newspapers/Publications</li> <li>• Freshmen Groups</li> <li>• Freshmen/New Student Night</li> <li>• Video Announcements</li> <li>• Stress Free Zone</li> <li>• Therapy Dogs</li> </ul>

**Internal Assets and Supporting Activities**

Internal Assets	Asset Name	Supporting Activities
<p><b>Positive Identity</b></p>	<p>37. Personal power            38. Self esteem            39. Sense of purpose            40. Positive view of personal future</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Officers/Team Captains</li> <li>• Monthly Departmental Awards</li> <li>• Quarterly Academic Recognition Awards</li> <li>• Student Wellness Facilitators</li> <li>• Avoidance Awareness Program</li> <li>• Awards Ceremonies/Scholarship Recognitions</li> <li>• Naviance</li> <li>• Sports Banquets</li> <li>• Leadership Opportunities</li> <li>• Volunteer Opportunities</li> </ul>