



RPS News

Ridgefield Public Schools Newsletter | Ridgefield, CT | June 17, 2022

Thank You, RPS Retirees!

At this week's Board of Education meeting, RPS celebrated the 21 employees retiring this year. With a combined 401 years of service and an average of almost 20 years served, these outstanding employees will be sorely missed. Principals and district leaders honored the employees with heartfelt words and a book donated to a school library in the retiree's name. View a recording of the BOE meeting [here](#). Jeanne Deming, RHS Speech and Language Pathologist, is the longest-serving District employee of the group retiring after 31 years at RPS. Her words reflected what felt like a shared sentiment about the joy these employees got from their careers at RPS, "I absolutely loved my job. The more I did it, the more I loved it." Scotts Ridge English teacher Linda Haines expressed bittersweet



emotions about her decision to retire, laughing, "I love my job. I'm still not sure." Her husband reports the couple is off to Kenya, Africa, when school gets out and to Peru after that. Superintendent Da Silva feted Veterans Park Elementary Principal Ellen Tuckner with the words of her students: "Principal Tuckner looks for the good; she's funny; she connects with kids; she's patient, kind and thoughtful; she likes Dance parties and crazy hair day." Director of Personnel Karen Dewing noted that Patricia Hance Roche was the consummate professional, putting RPS before herself, and joked that she "literally touched the lives of everyone in the District because she fingerprinted everyone." Retirees are off to travel, sit on the beach, keep bees, golf, and spend more time with family. The full list of 2021-22 retirees is [here](#). Thank you, enjoy your much-deserved retirement, and please visit! See more news from the BOE meeting on page 2.

Calendar

June is PRIDE Month

[Local LGBTQ Events/Resources](#)

June 24

Tentative Last Day of School
Early Dismissal for Students

[RPS Calendar](#)

June 27

BOE Meeting
In Person and Streaming
90 East Ridge Road
[Link to Live/Recorded](#)

Congratulations, RHS Class of 2022, Graduating Today!

RPS Announces Paraeducator of the Year, Lisa Laber!

Lisa Laber is Ridgefield Public Schools Paraeducator of Year. RHS Principal Dr. Jacob Greenwood and staff surprised Ms. Laber with a breakfast announcement. Her colleagues and students in the RHS RISE (Ridgefield Intensive Special Education) classroom surrounded her with hugs and smiles. The Paraeducator of the Year award provides the District the opportunity to recognize the integral role paraeducators play in the Ridgefield Public Schools. “We truly couldn’t continue without our paraeducators,” said RPS Superintendent Dr. Susie Da Silva. “Day in and day out, these staff members bring integrity, care, expertise, and collaboration to our community.” Thank you, Lisa and all RPS Paraeducators! Please read the full press release and view more photos [here](#).



BOE Highlights (Continued): Students Perform, Staff Change, Interns

Monday’s Board of Education meeting was one of the best of the year. Select members of the ERMS sixth-grade chorus (Marin A., Lauren C. (soloist), Stella L., Olivia M., Aarna P., Jenna R., Angelina R., and Sophia V. led by ERMS teacher Rebecca Merrick) serenaded RPS retirees with a beautiful rendition of the Beatles song, “Blackbird.” Then, RHS students Maxfield B. and Natalie U. shared their original song. RPS announced the selection of veteran RPS music maestro Michael McNamara as Grades 6-12 Visual and Performing Arts Department Chair. Four senior interns described their enriching experiences and all they learned about work and life in this important rite of passage. View the full meeting including the moving student performances [here](#).



ERMS Is No Place for Hate

Congratulations to East Ridge Middle School for earning its first No Place for Hate designation! This year, ERMS student ambassadors spearheaded three schoolwide activities that promote empathy, kindness, and respect. The NPFH program empowers students to make their school a safe and inclusive space where all students feel valued, respected, and have a sense of belonging. Students and staff participated in various activities that address instances of bias, prejudice, bullying, etc., to support students in developing realistic action steps and the tools necessary to create a positive outcome for their school community. Thank you to the students and staff of ERMS for doing their part in making positive change!



Let’s Get Physicals!

To paraphrase Olivia Newton-John, “Let’s Get Physicals!” That was RHS Athletic Director Dane Street’s message to rising ninth-grade parents and all students hoping to play athletics at Ridgefield High School next year. In last week’s Tiger Tiger Talk podcast, Street explains that physicals are valid for 13 months and that summer can be the easiest time to schedule. Street also shares highlights from the Athletic Department’s spring season with host Dr. Wes DeSantis. Please listen [here](#).

SRMS Visual and Performing Arts Fest Is a Hit

The atmosphere at the Visual Performing Arts Fest last Friday at Scotts Ridge Middle School was electric. Performances by the combined Middle School Symphonic and Chamber Orchestras (conducted by Shane Peters) and the SRMS Jazz Band (directed by Andrew Clavi) provided the perfect accompaniment to gorgeous art displays curated by SRMS art teachers Christen Riegel and Tressa Ringkamp. Families purchased delicious picnics at the food trucks and carts. "We were excited to bring this event back for its second year!" said Peters, one of the event coordinators. "What began as a way to navigate performances and art shows during COVID evolved into a community-driven, collaborative event that will be around for years to come."



Liver Giver Becomes Bellee

Less than a week after the anniversary of donating 60% of her liver (see *RPS News*, June 3 for story), East Ridge sixth-grade teacher Maureen Tyra earned the distinction of being a [Ben's Bell's Bellee](#). The ERMS PTA nominated Tyra for this recognition writing, "She is one of the most caring individuals within the school and community. She spearheads the Student Council and GSA (All Genders and Sexualities Alliance) at the school and is a leader in the teacher community." The PTA letter recognized Tyra's role in the ERMS Veterans Day Assembly, food and blood drives, as well as the care that she has for all her students—making the time to check in when they are absent and always modeling kindness, gratitude, and service.

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Summer Fun...and Skills

The RPS curriculum team shared ideas for fun ways Grade K-8 families can engage with students during the summer break. Listen [here!](#)

Fourth Grade Visits Keeler!

Dressed in three-cornered hats, aprons, bonnets, and other colonial costumes, RPS elementary students headed to the [Keeler Tavern Museum](#) to relive Ridgefield's history. The photo right shows Ridgebury Elementary student Rocco M. all smiles in his colonial finery and wig. Subscribe to RPS Social Media to see more photos and post yours.



RHS Junior Wins Essay Contest

RHS business student and investment club president Corrie Vakil placed first in the nationwide InvestWrite essay competition. Read her prize-winning essay [here](#). Corrie won \$850 in prize money along with a banner, trophy, and plaque for her first-place finish. Read more about the competition [here](#). Invest in Corrie!



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