

School Notebook

Mock Trial Team Ulster Champs!

On Wednesday, March 25th, the *Ellenville High School Mock Trial* team defeated New Paltz HS and became the Ulster County champs for the 2002-2003 year! The case was argued in the Supreme Court building in Kingston before Judge Kavanagh.

With this victory, the team, now 5-1, was scheduled to participate in the Regional competition on Saturday, April 26th at the Supreme Court building in White Plains. The winner of this all-day competition is to join the other regional winners to compete at the state tournament in May.

This year's team includes Samantha Dumond, Sarah Podber, Amanda Doolittle, Mariya Gusman, Taryka Chaulk, Will Mirrer, Sarah Coopersmith, and Richelle Blauvelt. The team is coached by Bruce Wentworth and Graham Vest.

Each year, students are given a case, written by lawyers, to argue. Students participate as witnesses, defense, and prosecution. Presentations are scored with a point system, with seven Ulster County high schools competing. County bar associations sponsor the *Mock Trial* program. ☆

School Arts Program "Vibrant"

Radio host and actress Kimberly Kay came to Ellenville March 17th, where she reminded students, parents, and faculty of the *Ellenville High School's Performing Arts Academy* of the importance of maintaining a vibrant arts program in our schools.

"Imagine what the world would be like without art, music, and poetry," said Kay. "I'm saddened when chorus, band, and drama programs are cut in favor of athletics." In athletics, there must be losers in order to have winners, but "there are no losers in arts programs."

Performing Arts Academy director Robert Oehme offered proof of the program's success, telling the audience the grade point average for the entire academy for the first semester was 90.02 with 17 students on the High Honor Roll and two absences in the first quarter.

"None of this could happen without you, the parents," Oehme said, noting that students who elect to participate must be in school by 7:15 AM.

Among the program's performance credits are the *Robert King Memorial* and the *Wise Choices Program* in the elementary school, but students perform each week for each other. Each semester, students are evaluated by a jury of three teachers to determine whether or not they should continue with the group.

Still in its first year, the program is already looking at expanding its scope. Oehme said college level courses in music theory could be offered next year, and yoga, fencing and other physical activities might be linked to physical education credits.

School grant writer Art Gould explains the purpose of the program as "providing students with the learning environment in which they can use their special talents – a whole new approach to education."

For more information, contact: Debbie Barbiani *Confidential Secretary to the Superintendent, Ellenville Central Schools, 647-0100.* ☆



Elementary students display the "check" that will be given to the Ronald McDonald House for the money collected in their building.

The Student Councils from the Ellenville Elementary, Middle, and High Schools sponsored a "Penny Drive." The funds are to be donated to the Albany chapter of the Ronald McDonald House in memory of Jamie Shaw, son of Scott Shaw, Elementary School Assistant Principal. Each building designed its own method of raising money: Elementary students brought loose change from home; the Middle School held a "Penny Clash"; and the High School collected donations. The Student Councils will travel to Albany in June to present the check. ☆



Ron Irwin, left, originator of the plan to donate the money to the Ronald McDonald House as a Service Learning Project, shows the Middle School check, with Lincoln Academy teacher Bill O'Donnell and class representatives of Lincoln Academy. The Academy "won" a pizza party for winning the Academy Contest of raising the most money for the project. (Mr. O'Donnell promised to cut and color his hair as an incentive for the students.) Lincoln Academy teachers Nick Fanelli, Dianne Krulick, and Larry Rand also encouraged the students to "do their best" in raising funds.

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