

COMMUNITY CONNECTION



A Publication of the Cheektowaga Central School District

Midyear Issue 2025

Board of Education Seats

Two (2) Board of Education seats will be up for election in the Annual Budget Vote and School Board Election to be held on May 20. Cheektowaga Central School District residents interested in serving on the Board of Education must complete a nominating petition and submit it no later than April 21, 2025 to the District Clerk or designee in the district office located in the High School Building at 3600 Union Road, Cheektowaga, between the hours of 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Nominating petitions are available on the district website at cheektowagak12.org or at the district office between the hours of 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. At-large board seats carry a five-year term typically beginning July 1, pending special circumstances.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

BUDGET HEARING

Tuesday, May 13
at 6PM
in the Board Room

BUDGET VOTE

Tuesday, May 20
in the Board Room



LEARN MORE ON OUR WEBSITE:
CheektowagaK12.org/Budget

Message from the Superintendent

Dear Students, Staff, and Families,

As we enter the second half of the school year, it is an exciting time to reflect on the progress we've made together and look forward to the opportunities that lie ahead. All of us - students, staff, and families - have the power to shape the path ahead, and it starts with the commitment to take ownership of our growth and success.

In our district, we are committed to fostering an environment where everyone feels supported, inspired, and empowered. This commitment is embodied through our four cornerstones, which serve as the foundation for everything we do:

- Well-being
- Structure
- Relationships
- Engagement

These cornerstones not only guide our academic programs but also empower our students to reach their full potential in every area of their lives - whether that's in the classroom, on the stage, or on the playing field. We are excited to continue supporting our students as they achieve academic excellence, artistic expression, and athletic success.

We are also looking forward to our upcoming **STEAM Day**, where we will celebrate and explore Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics across the district. This event is a chance for students to engage in hands-on, interactive learning experiences that foster creativity, problem-solving, and critical thinking - skills that are essential in shaping their future.

Looking ahead, we are equally excited to celebrate the achievements of our graduating students. Graduation is a monumental milestone, and we are proud of all our students who are preparing to take the next step into their futures. Whether they are heading to college, entering the workforce, or pursuing other passions, we know they are equipped with the skills, knowledge, and resilience to succeed.

As we continue into the second half of this year, let's all commit to **Taking CHARGE of our future**. Together, we will build on our strengths and work toward a future full of endless possibilities.

Thank you for your dedication and partnership. We are excited for what lies ahead and all that we will accomplish together!

Scott Zipp
Superintendent of Schools



Mr. Scott Zipp,
Superintendent of
Schools

District STEAM Day

Get ready for an unforgettable day of family fun and learning. On Saturday, May 3, CCSD is "Charging Full STEAM Ahead," connecting character, curriculum, and community. Students from pre-K through 12th grade, along with their families, are invited to explore, compete, and create in an exciting celebration of innovation and curiosity.



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Are you a Middle School or High School parent/guardian who is looking for daily updates on your student's academic progress? Be sure to check your Parent Portal. If you need assistance, contact Laurie Ferry at lferry@ccsd-k12.net or 716-686-3618.



Please help keep school records current by letting us know about changes to information including your mailing address, work telephone number, babysitter's phone number, or home phone number. At times, it is extremely important for school personnel to reach parents, including in case of an emergency. To reach any building, phone 716-686-3600.



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We Value Your Input!

District & School Climate Survey Open March 14th – April 30th

Dear Parents & Guardians,

Your voice matters! We invite you to participate in our annual District & School Climate Survey, available from March 14th to April 30th. This survey provides an opportunity for you to share your thoughts on the school environment, communication, and overall student experience. Your feedback helps us create a positive and supportive learning space for all students. The survey is quick, confidential, and can be accessed online via the provided link. Thank you for your time and support in shaping our school community.

If you have any questions, please contact Laurie Ferry, Community Engagement Specialist, at lferry@ccsd-k12.net



Three and Four Year Old FULL-DAY Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program for the 2025-2026 School Year (Pending State Funding)

The Cheektowaga Central School District is proud to offer its Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program for the 2025-2026 school year starting in September. The program is open to district residents whose children will be three or four years of age on or before December 1, 2025. Students are selected by lottery to participate in the District's UPK Program. Parents are responsible for transporting their child to and from the program. Based on anticipated state funding, the district is accepting applications for the 2025-2026 UPK Program.

UPK Program Locations:

UPK 3 program:

Watch Me Grow Day Care Center,
2550 Union Road

UPK 4 program:

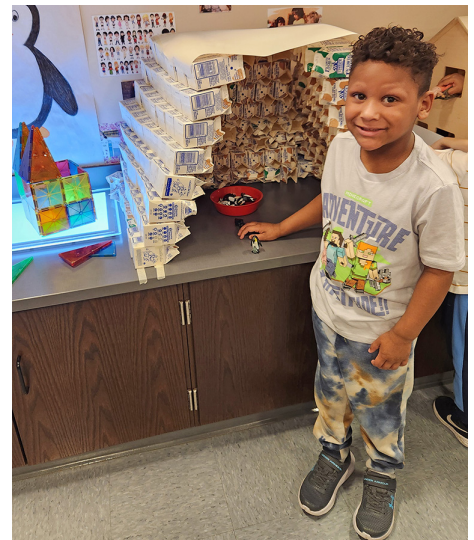
Union East Elementary, 3550 Union Road
Little Angels Day Care Center,
2645 Harlem Road

UPK registration begins March 3rd and must be completed by May 9th to be eligible for the UPK Lottery Draw. UPK registrations after the Lottery Draw will be ongoing. Once the program is filled, registered students will be added to the UPK program waitlist.

Please complete the online student registration to apply for the 2025- 2026 UPK Program. For more information regarding the UPK lottery, visit our website at cheektowagak12.org and click on the UPK tab. There you will find the UPK timeline with instructions on how to do our online registration. All required documents must be provided in order for the UPK registration to be complete.

The UPK lottery will be held May 20th at 1:00 pm and families will have the opportunity to view the lottery at Union East Elementary School.

For questions regarding the lottery draw, please contact Audra Cyrulik, at acyrulik@ccsd-k12.net or (716) 686-3621.



A Message from the Principal

As we embark on the second half of this school year, I want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible potential that lies ahead for our students, staff, and community. Our theme this year, “Be The Elite”, is not just a call to action but a mindset that challenges each of us to strive for greatness, embrace growth, and inspire others to do the same.



*Karin Cyganovich,
Cheektowaga
Central High School
Principal*

To “Be The Elite” means more than aiming for the top; it means fostering a culture of empowerment. When we empower each other, we create an environment where everyone feels valued, supported, and capable of achieving extraordinary things. Whether in the classroom, on the field, or in the community, each of us has the power to make an impact.

Students, as you dive into the challenges and opportunities of this semester, remember that your potential is limitless. Elite performance is not about perfection; it’s about giving your best effort every day and learning from every experience. Be a team player, as success is rarely achieved in isolation. Collaboration, communication, and a shared commitment to excellence are what propel us forward. By working together, we can overcome challenges and celebrate achievements.

As we move forward into this new semester, I encourage each of you to embrace the “Be The Elite” spirit in your own unique way. Empower those around you, dream without limits, and contribute to our collective success as team players.

Here’s to an inspiring and impactful second half of the year. Let’s make it one to remember!

Mrs. Cyganovich



Cheektowaga High School

Student Services

Student Services is always working to ensure our students meet their graduation requirements and plan for their futures. We are connected with many local organizations and believe that students can learn both inside and outside of the classroom. We have partnered with Be Your Own Hero to help students develop career readiness skills in the classroom, as well as through their culminating event, the Skilled Trades Fair, held at Buffalo RiverWorks. This event is always popular with our students.

We encourage junior and senior students to attend the fair and the NACAC College Fair at the Buffalo Convention Center to explore opportunities beyond high school. Students can also sign up for individual college campus visits in the fall and spring to schools in our area. Additionally, they can attend the WNY College Consortium, which brings more than 20 college and university representatives to our gym to provide valuable information.

We also hosted a presenter from Northland Workforce Training Center to speak with our 12th graders about sought-after trade training programs and the jobs they help students connect with. A follow-up trip to Northland’s facility is planned for spring for those who wish to apply. For students interested in the building trades or construction field, we took a trip in October to the Operating Engineers Training Center, where students gained hands-on experience operating heavy machinery and learned how to obtain employment in this field. There is also a Women in Construction event in the spring that highlights the importance of female representation in the construction industry.

In addition to postsecondary planning, we offer volunteer opportunities during the school day for students to earn community service hours toward their graduation requirement. Students can participate in Meals on Wheels of WNY or assist at Feedmore WNY Food Bank to give back to the community and recognize the importance of helping others.

Upcoming Event Dates

- NACAC College Fair - March 20, 2025
- Northland Workforce Training Center - Spring 2025
- Be Your Own Hero Skilled Trades Fair - April 8, 2025
- Various College Visits: Villa Maria College, Canisius University, Daemen University, Buffalo State University, SUNY Erie

Law Enforcement Field Trip to Cheektowaga Police Station

The Cheektowaga Law Enforcement class recently had the unique opportunity to visit the Cheektowaga Police Station and experience firsthand what it’s like behind the scenes of law enforcement operations. This field trip built on an in-class mock trial that students conducted prior to the visit. During the trial, students assumed roles of attorneys, witnesses, and jurors, engaging in the judicial process in a hands-on way. For many, this was their first exposure to courtroom procedures, making it an invaluable learning experience.

The visit to the police station was a natural extension of the activity. Students sat in the courtroom where real cases are heard, connecting their mock trial experience to an authentic courtroom setting. Walking through the station, they gained insights into law enforcement operations, from the dispatch center to the holding cells. The visit reinforced the connection between classroom learning and real-world law enforcement practices.



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Cheektowaga High School

Class of 2025 News

The Class of 2025 has been busy celebrating the culmination of 13 years as a Cheektowaga Charger. We have had many exciting events already and have several more in the upcoming months, with graduation being our final event. The days are long, but the years are short. Enjoy every minute!



On September 6, the Class of 2025 gathered at 5 a.m. to kick off their senior year by watching the sunrise, eating breakfast, writing letters to their future selves on graduation day, and reminiscing about their years at Central.



Senior dress-up was celebrated on Halloween. Our Union East students came over to parade through our senior class and show off their costumes. We finished the morning with a Trunk or Treat, where senior teachers, administration, and retired teachers handed out candy to the Class of 2025.



Homecoming was a fun week filled with spirit days, pep assemblies, and the Homecoming dance. Our King and Queen this year were Mohammad Ali Hassan and Carlee Gorney.



Prom will be held on June 6 at Classics V from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. Tickets will be on sale the first week of May. The senior breakfast will be held at the beginning of June. Details to follow.



Our parade of graduates will take place at the beginning of June, with details to follow. Graduation will be celebrated on June 26, 2025, at 6 p.m. on the Gerald Hickson Stadium field.



The Class of 2025 celebrated their many years at Central with a senior dinner catered by Carmine's. We also had a buffet of halal food. Senior poll winners were revealed, and a slideshow through the years was presented by Student Board Member Carlee Gorney.

Law Enforcement Field Trip

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We are fortunate at Cheektowaga to work closely with the Cheektowaga Police Department. Officers regularly visit our classroom to share their expertise, mentor students, and provide insights into their profession. This partnership has enriched our program and deepened students' appreciation for the hard work of law enforcement professionals.

The field trip was not just a learning experience; it reminded us of the unique opportunities our students have through this collaboration. We are grateful for the Cheektowaga Police Department's support and look forward to continuing to build these valuable connections.



Black History Month

Black History Month can be traced back to 1926, when it was founded by Carter G. Woodson, who created a week to encourage Black students to learn about their heritage. During the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, Black History Week was expanded into Black History Month. In 1976, President Ford officially designated February as Black History Month. February was chosen because it is the birth month of both Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass.

The theme for Black History Month 2025 is "African Americans and Labor." The theme specifically aims to recognize the role African Americans have played in the workforce, whether paid or unpaid. The focus can range from vocational studies and entrepreneurship to organized labor's role in fighting for economic and social justice, as well as government and public service.

2025 marks the 100th anniversary of the creation of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Maids by labor organizer and civil rights activist A. Philip Randolph, the first Black union to receive a charter in the American Federation of Labor. Martin Luther King Jr. incorporated issues outlined by Randolph's March on Washington Movement, such as economic justice, into the Poor People's Campaign, which he established in 1967 (Association for the Study of African American Life and History – ASALH).

Cheektowaga High School

History of Western New York Field Trips

History of Western New York students had two opportunities to explore the region this past semester.

In October, students explored downtown Buffalo's architecture on a walking tour. They began at Buffalo City Hall, learning about its art-deco style and Native American symbolism. Students walked to Niagara Square, where they observed the McKinley Monument, the Statler, and both the old and new courthouses. The tour continued to Old County Hall, where President McKinley lay in state after his death in 1901. The group then visited the Guaranty Building, known for how its architects incorporated nature into its design. Across the street stood St. Paul's Cathedral, built in 1907, where students toured its interior to admire its architecture. The final stops on the tour included the Ellicott Square Building and Hotel Lafayette.



In January, students braved the cold, ice, and snow to visit Niagara Falls. Their first stop was the Love Canal neighborhood, which has largely been abandoned since its construction on a toxic chemical site. The next stop was the Underground Railroad Museum, where students learned about the Cataract House's role in helping freedom seekers cross the border into Canada. Before returning to school, they visited the Falls to take in its breathtaking beauty.

If you are interested in learning more about the history of Western New York, see your guidance counselor when selecting courses for next year.



Music Department Highlights

The first 20 weeks of school were a busy and educationally fulfilling time for our Cheektowaga Central band and choral ensembles. In September, Mrs. Williams welcomed 65 beginning band students into our program. They learned how to properly assemble, hold, and create a sound on their new instruments. We are sure there were many interesting sounds coming from households across the Town of Cheektowaga. The high school band started the year off "leading the charge" by performing at the home football games and pep rally, debuting a few new songs to accompany our new school mascot name.

October and November were busy times for a wide variety of students. Mrs. Santoro-Mol and her middle school musical students rehearsed for their production of *Moana*, while our new middle school general music teacher, Mr. Magowan, led a large and enthusiastic

stage crew, where students learned how to build sets, run sound, and work as a team to manage the backstage area of the production. Our middle school and high school band and chorus members participated in a variety of honor ensembles, where they rehearsed and performed with advanced students from across WNY. These groups included the Buffalo State Honor Band and Chorus, NYSSMA JH Area All-State Band and Orchestra at Akron High School, and the NYSSMA HS Area All-State Band and Chorus at SUNY Fredonia.

Late November and December were filled with a variety of performances at all grade levels. The third- and fourth-grade choruses opened the Union East first trimester awards ceremonies by performing for parents and classmates. For third-grade students, this was their debut performance. A select group of fourth-graders were honored to be invited to

perform for the Cheektowaga Senior Center Tree Lighting ceremony, featuring Scarlett Jeswald performing on her clarinet. The Middle School musical production of *Moana* was a rousing success, with three performances in front of a packed house of parents, friends, and family. Every chorus and band in grades 5-12 spread holiday cheer throughout the month at their annual holiday concerts. The High School band and chorus welcomed back around 30 alumni to perform a piece with them, including two who graduated in the early '80s. It is always great to catch up and learn about the amazing things our graduates are accomplishing.

In January, high school musical director Mrs. McCormack and musical choral director Mr. Mowers began preparing students for the spring musical production of *Mamma Mia*.

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Cheektowaga High/Middle School

Music Department Highlights

Continued from page 6

Many band and chorus students in grades 5-12 have been preparing solos or chorus pieces to audition for various all-county honor festivals held in March, including chorus, band, and jazz ensemble. The students performed in front of a judge on a Saturday in January, and the judge provided valuable feedback to help the student musicians improve. Selections were posted in early February. This takes a lot of hard work and dedication, and Mr. Rydzik, Mr. Mowers, Mrs. Santoro-Mol, and Mr. Dolan are extremely proud of their students' perseverance. Meanwhile, our youngest fourth-grade band members are hard at work preparing for their first performance at their annual "Meet the Band" night in early February, where their parents get to sit next to their child and experience how a band rehearses.

The entire music department is looking forward to the many performances that will take place throughout the second half of the year. We would like to thank all the parents for their support of music education at Cheektowaga Central, and we look forward to seeing you at our concerts and productions.

Buffalo State HS Honor Band

Ian Lupejkis, alto sax
Jayden King, trumpet
Alexis Hoover, flute
Evan Thomas, clarinet

Buffalo State Honor Chorus

Ava Komasara
Jocelyn Munoz
Felicia Dorman
Conor Hunt
Kirkland Ngyuen
Clarice Pawli

NYSSMA JH Area All State

Lorelai, Thomas, bassoon, orchestra
Sophia Wojcicki, euphonium, band
YoAmy Paulino-Lopez,
baritone saxophone, band
Alexia Hoover, flute, first alternate band

NYSSMA HS Area All State

Ava Komasara, chorus
Jocelyn Munoz, chorus
Evan Thomas, clarinet, band

A Message from the Principal

As we embark on the second half of the school year, I want to take a moment to reflect on the progress we've made together and share some important information as we look ahead. The first part of the year has been filled with growth, learning, and achievements, and I'm excited for all that we will accomplish in the coming months.



Chris Salinas, Ed.D.,
Cheektowaga
Central Middle
School Principal

One key factor in ensuring continued success is attendance. Consistent attendance is essential for students to fully engage with their learning, build strong habits, and make steady academic progress. We encourage all families to make attendance a priority and ensure that students are arriving on time and ready to participate each day.

As spring approaches, we want to remind you of some important assessments on the horizon. The ELA New York State assessments are scheduled for April 8 and 9, the Math New York State assessments will take place on April 29 and 30, and the Science New York State assessment for 5th and 8th graders will be on May 13. These assessments provide valuable insights into student progress and help inform our instructional planning. We appreciate your support in helping your child prepare. Our teachers will be working closely with students in the classroom to ensure they feel confident and well-prepared for these assessments. We are committed to providing the support and guidance needed for each student to succeed.

Another valuable resource for staying connected with your child's academic progress is the Parent Portal. Through the Parent Portal, you can easily access your child's assignments, progress reports, and report cards. This is a great way to stay informed and engaged in your child's learning journey.

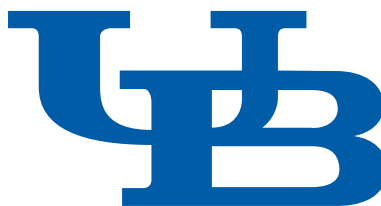
I want to take this opportunity to sincerely thank you for your continued partnership. Together, we are creating a supportive environment where every student can thrive. Thank you for your dedication and support. Let's make the second half of the school year a successful and memorable one!

Warm regards,
Chris Salinas Ed.D.

Read Stop Write Program: Literacy in the Middle School

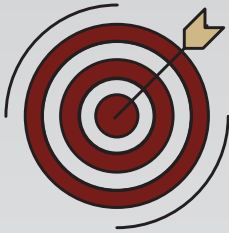
During the 2024-25 school year, professors from the University at Buffalo, including Dr. John Strong and Dr. Blythe Anderson, and Michigan State University, including Dr. Laura Tortorelli, have been collaborating with teachers to enhance literacy instruction for students in grades 4-9 at Union East Elementary, Central Middle, and Central High School. This initiative, called Read STOP Write, is designed to strengthen students' reading and writing skills.

Read STOP Write is an innovative approach that integrates foundational reading skills, comprehension, and writing instruction to help students engage with informational texts related to science and social studies topics, all aligned with grade-level standards. The project's ultimate goal is to boost students' reading achievement, focusing on reading fluency, comprehension, and a heightened motivation to read. Drs. Strong, Tortorelli, and Anderson have been working closely with teachers to support integrated literacy and content instruction, ensuring that students gain a deeper understanding of both reading and subject-specific content.



Putting Social-Emotional Learning into Action

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is a framework that helps students manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, show empathy for others, build healthy relationships, and make responsible decisions. It plays a crucial role in a student's overall development. CCMS counselors have the responsibility to ensure all students' access to this essential learning by equipping them with the tools they need to manage emotions, set goals, and make thoughtful decisions. SEL prepares students for success at school, at home, and in their everyday lives.



This month, Mrs. Goc worked with her 5th and 6th graders to reflect on past choices and set goals for the remainder of the school year. This activity allowed students to evaluate both the positive and negative choices they made earlier in the year, while also setting goals to improve as they prepare for the next grade level.

Mrs. Dudas is focusing on empathy with her 7th graders. Her primary goal is to teach students that empathy means putting yourself in someone else's shoes and showing care for others, even if they haven't experienced the same situation. Students who practice empathy are less likely to engage in bullying, which helps reduce bullying incidents in schools.

Mrs. Schu helped her 5th graders discover their unique learning styles by administering a learning styles quiz. Students then used this information to identify strategies that could help them study more effectively. Mrs. Schu's 8th-grade students are learning how to reduce defensiveness and embrace constructive criticism as a way to grow and improve.

By incorporating SEL into the classroom, our counselors are fostering a supportive, reflective, and empathetic environment where students can thrive both academically and personally.

Cheektowaga Middle School

Care Program in the Middle School

Villa Maria College and Cleveland Play House are excited to bring CARE classes to Cheektowaga Central Middle School. CARE (Compassionate Arts Remaking Education) is a theatre education program that integrates principles from social-emotional learning, trauma-informed care, and evidence-based literacy practices for students in grades K-12. By utilizing theatre techniques and exercises, the program helps students build empathy, deepen their understanding of themselves and others, and equips them with valuable life skills. CARE classes are made possible through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

Each cycle, the CARE program visits every STACK class once during the 6-day rotation. The program incorporates a variety of activities, such as ELA concepts, writing exercises, monologues, creative group work, games, and student presentations, to explore and better understand five core emotions. Over the course of the year, students will focus on fear, happiness, sadness, anger, and, of course, confidence. They will learn to recognize these emotions in themselves and others, while gaining techniques for communicating their feelings in a safe and effective way. The CARE program aims to enhance self-awareness, strengthen relationships between students and teachers, and contribute to improved academic progress.



Students of the Month

Cheektowaga Central Middle School would like to acknowledge and celebrate our students who demonstrate both academic excellence and leadership. The students that have been nominated exhibit the following qualities:

- High academic achievement
- Respectful towards adults and peers
- Diligent, completing all in-class and homework assignments

Two students per grade level are chosen each month and are honored in various ways in the district.

Please join us in congratulating the following students of the month:

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Cheektowaga Middle School

Students of the Month

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November

Fifth Grade



Valentina Pachon

Valentina is a passionate reader who enjoys fantasy novels, such as The Percy Jackson series. Valentina arrives at school each morning with a huge smile on her face and politely greets the Middle School Staff. Her teachers are proud of the quality of work she does in the classroom and maintains a high average for all classes.



Asher Ceu

Asher's teachers described him as patient, respectful, responsible, and putting forth full effort in all academic subjects. In addition to his dedication to school, Asher does enjoy spending time outdoors with friends and drawing.

Sixth Grade



Tristan Nguyen

Tristan's teachers praise his amazing work ethic in the classroom. His teachers notice that he always completes his homework with much thought and effort, he actively participates in class lessons, and he is willing to help his peers. When taking a break from homework, Tristan enjoys playing catch with friends outdoors or playing video games.



Amelia Fargino

As a talented artist, Amelia has plans to someday attend the University at Buffalo to earn a degree in art; she aspires to be a professional tattoo artist. These big dreams don't surprise her teachers as they describe Amelia as someone who is highly motivated and treats both peers and teachers with utmost respect and kindness.

Seventh Grade



Taylor Thurmond

Taylor's teachers are inspired by her commitment to earn the high grades required of her in honors courses. Taylor is not only highly involved in her education, but she also participates in the CCMS school musical and plans on joining the track team this spring.



Shafi Ahmed

Shafi's math honors teacher enthusiastically shared that his school work is of the highest quality, his questions are always insightful, and he is a model student. Shafi aspires to be an engineer in the future and enjoys playing soccer outdoors with friends.

Eighth Grade



Sophia Wojcicki

Sophia's teachers share that she is a shining example of excellence and character, consistently excelling in all her academic pursuits with remarkable dedication and intelligence. Not only has Sophia demonstrated academic proficiency, she also has a very impressive musical talent as she has been invited to All County for baritone, is taking on the role of Sarabi in the CCMS musical, and practices multiple musical instruments at home during her free time.



Charlie Sass

Charlie's teachers admire his strong work ethic and all agree that he has many qualities that make him an academic leader; he is hardworking, responsible, listens carefully to directions, and is respectful to all peers and adults here at CCMS. Charlie's passion is playing baseball and he enjoys collecting sports cards.

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Cheektowaga Middle School

Students of the Month

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December

Fifth Grade



Mackenzie Tresp

Mackenzie puts forth her best effort to earn the high grades she wishes to see. Mackenzie takes responsibility for her education by taking her classwork home to review each night and asks questions in class as needed. Mackenzie is a member of the CCMS Jazz Band and participates in gymnastics after school. Her dream is to become a doctor and be in the Olympics!



Camren Dean

Camren is a wonderful student who always tries his best and takes control of his education by asking questions when he doesn't understand something. Camren hopes to open a local convenience store in his neighborhood so the people in his community have nearby access to necessary items such as food.

Sixth Grade



Avaya Ayer

Avaya's math teacher notices how Avaya is a role model for her classmates as she always completes her homework and is more than willing to help her peers in class. Avaya is a member of the Art Club and aspires to be a nurse just like her mom.



Bryson Brown

Bryson's teacher reported that he has been earning high grades and excelling in all courses. Bryson is diligent when it comes to completing his classwork and homework, which is always completed and turned in on time. Bryson enjoys spending time with his dog and would like to become a professional racecar driver.

Seventh Grade



Landon Calire

Landon's teachers are impressed by the high grades he has been working to earn in all classes this school year. Landon is an avid reader of fantasy and science fiction books and is enthusiastic about the adventure books his class has been reading in ELA. He is proud of himself for completing The Lord of the Rings series. Landon also enjoys playing chess with family and friends.



Laiba Jaffri

Over the last two years, Laiba was selected by her art teacher to attend an "Art Challenge" competition at Villa Maria college. Her art teacher has noticed how incredibly talented Laiba is and despite this natural talent, Laiba is still excited and willing to learn something new each day. Not only does Laiba excel in the art field, but she works hard to maintain high grades in all classes and takes her education seriously knowing she wants to be successful in her future career.

Eighth Grade



Donevon Rembert-Mills

Donevon's teachers have reported that he is an extremely kind and respectful student who seems to always do the right thing while also keeping his grades a top priority. Donevon is on the CCMS Football and Wrestling teams. Donevon is working hard to balance grades and sports as he aspires to play for the NFL in the future.



Habiba Rahman

According to her teachers, Habiba makes it a priority to ace everything she does in school and is willing to do any extra credit to maintain her high grades. Habiba loves reading and crocheting. She even crochets head bands and bags as she dreams of starting a business selling them someday.

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Cheektowaga Middle School

Students of the Month

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January

Fifth Grade



Naya Ahmed

Naya sees herself as a creative individual as she enjoys art class, plays the violin after school, and is currently learning to crochet. Naya's teachers see her as a highly motivated, helpful to other students, and hard working individual. Naya is an active member of the International Club and Art Club here at CCMS.



Augustus Potozniak

Opening his own salon and barber shop is a career goal for Gus. As a 5th grader, he is already planning to enter the BOCES barbering program when he is in high school. His teachers have reported that his experiences and vocabulary are far beyond most students his age. Gus is currently a member of the CCMS Science Club and his favorite subject is science.

Sixth Grade



Muntaha Haidar

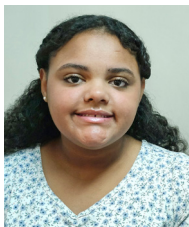
Inspired by her cousin, Muntaha dreams of becoming an architect based on her design and drawing skills. Though she is reserved by nature, her eagerness to learn and grow shines through in her work and interactions in the classroom. Muntaha actively seeks opportunities to expand her knowledge, volunteering to answer questions and engage with others when the chance arises.



Lucas Grochowski

Lucas's love for reading is reflected in his academic interests where he thrives in ELA and enjoys delving into the world of science. Lucas is also a member of the CCMS Book Club where he enjoys reading fictional books. His teachers have noticed his academic strengths and how he always makes a point to help clean up books and papers in the classroom.

Seventh Grade



Khloe Demosthene

As an Airlines Cheerleader and aspiring future orthodontist, Khloe knows a thing or two about motivation and hard work. Khloe's teachers noted that in addition to being highly respectful and hard working, she is earning some of the highest grades in her math class.



Kevin Airgood

Kevin's teachers would like to acknowledge that he is a true role model for how to be a great student as is evident through his academic achievements in all of his classes. Kevin also plays trumpet for the CCMS jazz band and his favorite class is Physical Education.

Eighth Grade



Camden Sanders

Camden is an aspiring actor with a passion for both acting and rollerskating. Currently, Camden is showcasing his talent in the local production of The Miracle Worker this March. Camden is always eager to participate in class activities and works hard to maintain his high grades. Camden's favorite subject is science.



Kaylee Ha

Kaylee is a multi-talented student with skills in both academics and arts. As an honors student, Kaylee excels in math and science and as a proficient musician, she plays the flute for the CCMS Jazz Band. Outside the classroom, Kaylee is an active athlete, playing volleyball here at CCMS.

A Message from the Principal

It is hard to believe that we are already halfway through the 2024-2025 school year. This year, we have focused on differentiated reading instruction throughout the building. All students are participating in an intervention aimed



*Melissa Mitchell,
Union East
Elementary School
Principal*

at building their skills as readers. As of our midyear testing, 50% of our students are achieving at or above grade level on the STAR assessment, an increase of 10% from the beginning of the school year. Kindergarten and second grade have shown the most growth, with 12% more students achieving at this level, which represents 65% of our kindergarten students! Our students are also assessed on their oral reading fluency, and each has grown in their fluency rate since September. We cannot wait to see how this improves throughout the second half of the school year.

In mathematics, our students are showing growth as well, with a 16% increase of students achieving at or above grade level at the midyear point. Our students are focused on building both their thinking skills and their understanding of mathematical concepts. As a staff, we have focused on the progression of skills across grade levels, being more cognizant of what students have learned in previous grades as well as what will be coming in subsequent years. This helps identify potential misconceptions and allows for a higher level of instruction. Our students are in good hands with the dedication of our teachers.

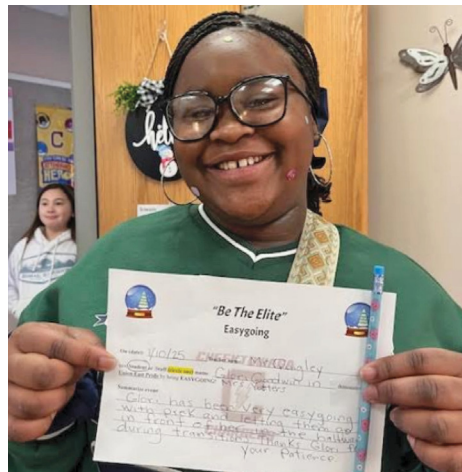
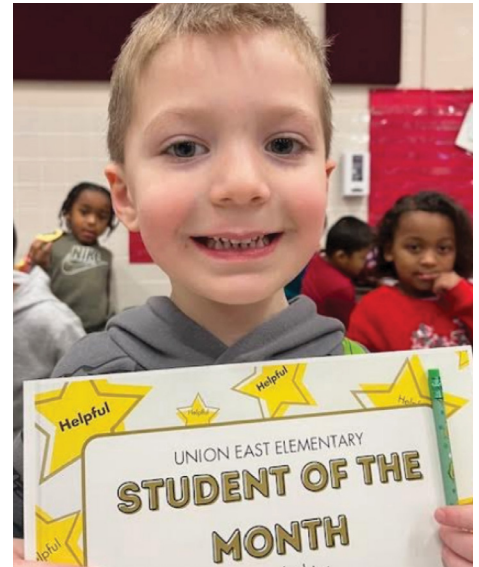
In addition, we are celebrating our ELITE students throughout the school building. Each morning, we recognize students for demonstrating the monthly trait in a specific manner. The recognized students are displayed on our positive referral board.

As the school year moves along, we are looking forward to our students' growth throughout the remainder of the second trimester and the final trimester of the school year. We will continue to focus on our growth as fluent readers and mathematicians!

Union East Elementary School

Project Positive: Positive Behavior Supports

Project Positive relaunched Union East's school store, which had its grand opening the week of Jan. 21, 2025, and was a huge success! Students earn points in ClassDojo for positive behavior and are then able to use their points as "money" to shop at the store! Our students are showcased daily through our school-wide Charger shout-outs, and monthly, with students of the month recognition at each grade level. Students earn incentives through our new Elite B-I-N-G-O initiative as well by demonstrating exceptional character through our trait of the month.

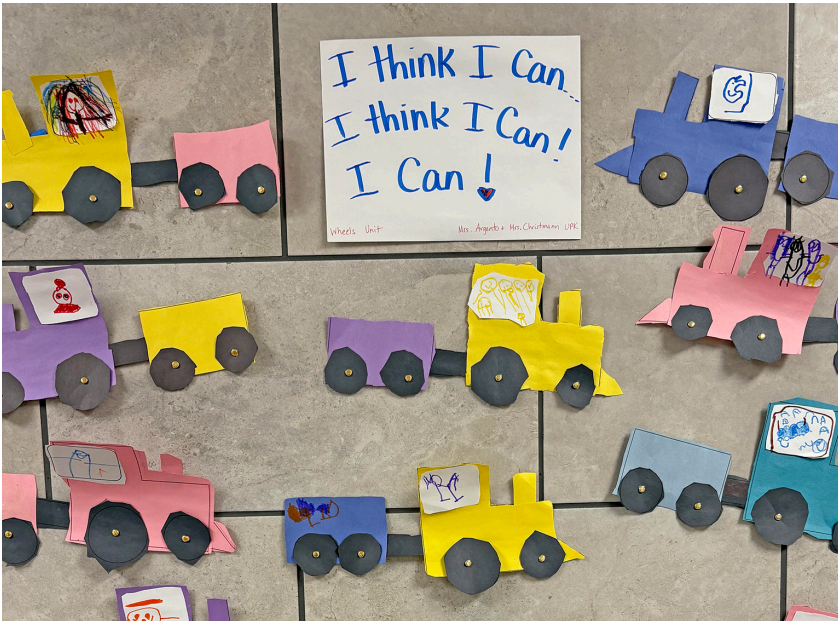


Elite B-I-N-G-O



School Store

Union East Elementary School



The students in Mrs. Argento's and Mrs. Christmann's UPK are learning about "Wheels." The students listened to the classic story "The Little Engine That Could" by Watty Piper and created a train craft with wheels that move.



Mrs. Miklas and Mrs. Riexinger's UPK students are having fun using our winter sensory bin. Students strengthen their fine motor skills by grabbing the hidden snowballs. As they find the snowballs, they count them to practice their math skills and learn 1:1 correspondence.



In November, Miss Nguyen's kindergarten class joyfully celebrated World Kindness Day.



UPK Gross Motor celebrated Lunar New Year with a festive parade.



Ms. Minotti's second graders attached a balloon to an Ozobot and linked paths to create a giant parade route.



Where art meets music! Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Platt's fourth graders created improvisational art inspired by Wassily Kandinsky.



UE Student Ambassadors showcased November's trait, Trustworthiness, by joining the Blue Balloon Challenge to support a peer with Type 1 Diabetes, raising awareness and sharing their story.

Cheektowaga Central Athletics

Winter Athletic Updates

ECIC Champions for Division 3

The varsity boys' basketball team finished the season with a league record of 9-1, overall 14-7. The team lost in the playoffs during the quarterfinal round in overtime to Pioneer 56-49. This is only the second time in our history that the team has won back to back Division titles (1962-63 and 1963-64).



The girls' varsity basketball team has returned to varsity play after a one-year pause at the JV level.

The girls' bowling team finished with a record of 8-2 and won their last four matches of the season behind a loaded team from Depew. The team had a great season of success and competed very well. With only one senior on the roster, the future looks bright for these Chargers.

Varsity wrestlers Mohammed Noor (junior, class of 2026) and Angelo Gonzales (junior, class of 2026) entered the Small School Championships; Noor finished in third place at 152 lbs., and Gonzalez at 285 lbs. lost in wrestle backs.



Cheektowaga Youth and Recreation

Now Hiring

Summer Jobs and Part-Time Year Round Jobs, Ages 16+

- **Camp Counselors:** Lead and support day campers in games, crafts, fieldtrips, and more.
- **Coaching Opportunities:** Coach in a youth leagues, sports clinics or instructional programs focusing on sports including soccer, basketball, volleyball, hockey and gymnastics.
- **Recreation Attendants:** Supervise youth participants during year-round programs and all summer at playground sites in crafts, recreational activities and summer fun.
- **Conservation Corps:** Maintain and improve trails and nature walks at Stiglmeier Park.
- **Bathhouse Attendants:** Taking care of pool upkeep and maintenance and help pool patrons.
- **Certified Lifeguards:** Teach swim lessons and guard at one of the three community pools.

Ways to Apply:

- Call (716) 897-7202
- Stop by the Cheektowaga Youth and Recreation Office at 275 Alexander Ave.
- Visit us online at tocny.org and click "Youth and Recreation"

Scan the QR code to access Winter and Spring activities available to the Cheektowaga Community. You can also view extracurricular activities for kids during the winter and spring months and camps that are available during the February and April school breaks.



Roswell Park Summer Student Volunteer Program

High school students from Buffalo and surrounding communities are encouraged to apply to the eight-week Roswell Park Summer Student Volunteer Program, running July 10 - September 1.

This invaluable opportunity will allow students to gain work-related experience, build a resume and explore the different aspects of the healthcare industry while making a difference in the overall care of patients at Roswell Park. Student volunteers will also be able to obtain community service hours. Application deadline is May 1.

More information on this year's program can be found at roswellpark.org/volunteer/summer-student-program. Questions can be directed to Ryan St. Louis at (716) 845-5708 or Ryan.St.Louis@Roswellpark.org or (716)-845-5708.

Now Hiring in Cheektowaga

Must be 16 years or older to apply.

- Applebee's
- McDonald's
- Auto Zone
- Panera Bread
- Dave & Busters
- Taco Bell

If you are interested in working at any of the above locations, please contact them directly to complete any application.

Cheektowaga Community Hub

Cheektowaga Community Hub offers supportive services that include, but are not limited to, employment and training opportunities, utility assistance, legal aid, healthcare, housing assistance (eviction/foreclosure) and counseling (mental wellness/substance recovery).

The Cheektowaga Community Hub operates the first and third Tuesday of each month from 10 a.m. to noon at 2145 Old Union in Cheektowaga. For more information contact CheektowagaHub@gmail.com or 716-710-9098.



Scan for a variety of resources available to the Cheektowaga community.

