

Schools

New Century, New Look: A Learning Commons for 21st Century Learning

BY ALEX CULLEN,
SOUHEGAN HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR

Last Tuesday, Souhegan students came back to find their school a little different than before. Over the summer several changes have been made to the layout of the school. Offices have been moved around, and a few walls have been taken down leaving parts of the school utterly transformed.

One of the major changes is on the first floor where space was created to promote business connections and internship opportunities. These changes include a community service area where students can conference with outside experts, and a new school store which has moved across the hall and is in the process of expanding. Souhegan students are tasked with planning out what, exactly, this space will ultimately look like, but it will include a café as well as a section selling merchandise. The store serves as an internship for students who will meet with outside experts on design and marketing. Another change that occurred over the summer is that the greenhouse on the second floor was reclaimed to support a new Food Systems class.

"We wanted to create physical spaces that support the best teacher instruction and student learning," says Souhegan principal, Rob Scully. "As we evolve into a 21st century school we want to make sure our students have areas that promote collaboration and deeper inquiry."

The biggest of these changes, however, is the addition of the Learning Commons. The Learning Commons consists of two large adjoining spaces, with tables, couches



The Learning Commons and other new areas are designed to promote collaboration and deeper inquiry.

and comfortable chairs -- equipped with built-in charging stations -- to create a new study environment. One of these spaces is specifically designed for individual work. There are desks with dividers and tables for one-on-one help. This is the perfect place for students working on online courses, or those just looking for a quiet place to work without interruption.

Next to the quiet side of the Learning Commons is another space is specifically designed for group

work. The desks are on wheels and they are set up so that students can collaborate easily. It's a great place to work on group projects and study with others. Students are already beginning to use the space. "The learning center is great," says Molly Yeaton, a junior at Souhegan. "It's a nice place to study after school and get all the help I need."

Writing coordinator, Jeanne Sturges, has her desk set up in the Learning Commons, and is available for helping students with the

writing process. Jeanne loves the new look of the space, saying, "The design really reflects where learning is heading -- students learn online, collaboratively, quietly, and with teacher coaching." World Languages and Learning Commons teacher, Steve Goodwin adds that he is "excited to see what it evolves into."

"I've only been able to use it once so far, but it seems really nice," says Frances Darnell, another Souhegan Junior. "They definitely put a lot of work into it!"

Souhegan Reads!

BY ALEX MARESCO,
SOUHEGAN HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR

On Summer Reading day at Souhegan High School, we all gather in small groups with others who chose to read the same book over the summer. The culmination of this year's summer reading program at Souhegan High School was held on Monday, September 8th. The Summer Reading program gives students an opportunity to choose a book from a list handpicked by the Summer Reading committee at Souhegan. The books cover a wide variety of interests, hopefully leading to a good fit for everyone. Some people read the type of books they are familiar with and

others go outside of their comfort zone and try something different. Personally, I chose to read *The Boys in the Boat* by Daniel James Brown. This was a book about the United States crew team competing for gold in the 1936 Olympics held in Berlin. As a member of the crew team at Souhegan, I was immediately drawn to the story and found it to be incredibly moving. Without the list, I would never have been aware that this book even existed.

In our Summer Reading groups anything about the story can be discussed. The topics vary from general thoughts on the book to how these events relate to your life. My group was mostly filled with rowers; only a couple of non-rowers joined the group. One of our main discussion points was based on how the rowers versus the non-rowers interpreted the book. Rowers

were able to appreciate the difficulties that go into rowing a race. They understand both the physical and mental components of the race. It was extremely interesting to see this contrast between the two groups of people. One additional benefit to the non-rowers was that the rowers were able to clear up some of the more obscure references found in the book.

Summer reading is a fairly relaxed process where we are only asked to read the book and participate in the discussion. There is a clear recognition that summer is the time for relaxation and enjoyable reading. This prompts people to be able to read a book of their choice without it feeling too much like a school assignment. In true Souhegan spirit, the discussions are another opportunity for students to meet a diverse group united by a common interest.

Searching for Souhegan Alumni in the Military

Last year, Souhegan students in advisory sent holiday cards to graduates serving in the military. Cards and good wishes were sent to 28 alumni stationed around the globe. Please help us continue the tradition, send us the name and if possible the current address of the alumnus. Send to mpaul@sprise.com Thank you!

Air Force Cadet Sworn In



Ryan D'Auteuil, Souhegan High School class of 2013, was recently sworn in as a contracted United States Air Force Cadet while attending the University of North Dakota as a ROTC scholarship recipient. He was inducted into the Arnold Air Society and serves as squadron leader. Ryan is the son of Peter and Jennifer D'Auteuil of Amherst. He is serving in the Air Force ROTC Det 610 Eagle Wing II aerospace/defense.



Nashua West Rotary Awards Scholarships

AMHERST – Seven members of the Souhegan graduating class of 2014 received scholarships from the Nashua West Rotary Club. The club distributes scholarships in three categories. Jack Facey and Lauren Ostrowski received The Rotary Scholarship, awarded to seniors in the top decile of their class who display overall excellence in academics, extra-curricular activities and community involvement. Cassie Jacobs, Chase Horton, and Rishi Nair received The Suzie Fund Scholarship. This scholarship is awarded to seniors who have demonstrated ad-

mirable improvement in academic achievement and/or the ability to overcome some adversity during their high school years. Peyton Kent and Jenn Brisbois received The Interact Scholarship. The Interact Scholarship is awarded to seniors who display excellence in academic achievement, community involvement and extra-curricular activities. For the Interact Scholarship, special weight is given to financial need and community involvement. The recipients were honored at a luncheon held on June 10th at the Crown Plaza Hotel.

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