

THE ADVOCATE

SPRINGFIELD HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELING OFFICE
885-7914 -- Follow us on Twitter at @CosmoCounselors

SEPTEMBER 2014

Welcome Back!

The summer of the Cosmos

The air is cooler, the mornings are crazier, and the counseling office seems to have a “revolving door”; the 2014-2015 school year is underway! As we kick-off the fall semester, the counselors would like to take the time to recognize a group of SHS students who did more than hang out on the beach (or hang out on Facebook) all summer. Each of these students stepped outside of their comfort zone and had an amazing summer experience. We couldn't be more proud to have them as a part of our school community.

Last June, Patrick Clancy (Class of 2015) was one of three junior boys nominated by our office to attend Vermont Boys State, a gathering of high schoolers from across the state that focuses on teamwork, civic education, public speaking, and leadership. In addition to

being an esteemed SHS representative, Patrick was selected as 1st Primary. This honor is awarded to two outstanding Vermont representatives and it gave Patrick the opportunity to represent our school and our state at Boys Nation in Washington, D.C. Patrick connected with many other remarkable young leaders from around the country, attended a variety of leadership and civic workshops, and was even “rubbing elbows” with state representatives and Senator Leahy!



Patrick Clancy, VT Boys Nation Representative

School-wide News & Events



Fall Open House on Sept. 24th at 6:15 at SHS. Families will have a chance to meet their student's teachers, hear about class expectations and register for Power School!

Senior College Planning Night on Oct. 7th at 6:30 in the SHS cafeteria. All students and parents are welcome!

PSAT testing offered for all 10th graders on Oct. 15th. 11th graders can test at cost (\$14)

VSAC Paying for College Night on Nov. 13th at 6:30 in the SHS cafeteria.

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"There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children." -Nelson Mandela

While Patrick was busy in the nation's capital working on a future career in politics, two other incoming seniors were making a good name for Vermonters in the beautiful country of Spain! After forming a strong friendship with Sara Nebreda-Pérez, a 2012-13 SHS exchange student, Lyndsie Cammarata and David Bryant were invited to spend their summer with Sara's family, traveling extensively throughout Madrid, Mojocar, and Santander. They were able to visit some amazing historical sites, including La Plaza Mayor (built in the 16th and 17th Centuries and still one of the world's most renowned social and commercial plazas), but they also had many interesting "real world" experiences. They befriended and conversed with local teenagers, they dined out at a variety of Spanish restaurants, and they were even able to visit Sara's home school. A favorite excursion involved traveling to Mojocar, where Lyndsie and David spent time on the beaches of the Mediterranean Sea and took the 40 minute walk to the town of Garrucha. Garrucha is considered a "touristy"

beach town and our students enjoyed the local shopping and the delicious Spanish ice cream! This is just a small glimpse into Lyndsie and

Traveling broadens your horizons; it opens your eyes to the world and the people in it. You can not only learn about other cultures by traveling, you learn about your own!"

-Lyndsie Cammarata, Class of 2015

David's adventure; if you have additional questions or interest in their travels, they are both happy to share stories with other students, staff and community members. In fact, one of their biggest "take-aways" from the trip was how valuable it can be to travel outside of your own country as a young person. Lyndsie and David's transatlantic friendship offered them a safe and supportive outlet to explore a new culture and they strongly encourage other SHS students to seek out similar opportunities!

Finally, we wanted to extend a huge congratulations to Elliot Thompson and Rebekah Ferreira (Class of 2016). These students took top honors in the field of *High School TV Production* at the Skills USA National Conference in Kansas City, Missouri this summer. They were awarded for their hard work and creativity with \$15,000 worth of gear and scholarships! Elliot and Rebekah had the chance to partake in the competition through their enrollment in the AVP Program at River Valley Technical Center.

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12th Grade

Post-secondary support

For many years, SHS counselors have guided senior students through the college application process during advisories. Counselors visited each advisory group multiple times over the course of September and October, talking to students about the Common Application, college visits, recommendation letters, Naviance, and other topics related to post-secondary planning. This fall, we want to try something new. Instead of forcing each 12th grader to sit through multiple lessons on the college process, we are offering a series of mini-workshops during the FLEX period. Two counselors will be in the cafeteria during FLEX every Tuesday and Thursday and will offer interactive workshops on each of the areas we previously covered in advisory. Senior students who are interested in getting a jumpstart on college planning should be sure to talk to their advisor about getting scheduled into these FLEX workshops and should also make an appointment for a Senior Meeting through Mrs. Allen in the Counseling Office!

11th Grade

Early College Program through CCV

Last year, the Community College of Vermont presented a new opportunity to high schools throughout the state that allows 12th graders to get an academic (and financial) jumpstart on their college education. Known as *EC*, this program allows rising Vermont seniors to spend their final year of high school at CCV earning college credits that count towards a high school diploma *and* towards an intended college degree. Best of all, *EC* is tuition free (not including textbook costs)! Students who are admitted into the program during 11th grade can enroll full time at any of CCV's 12 locations and will take 5 college level classes during both semesters of their senior year (totaling of 10 classes and 30+ credits). Although this program does not fit the goals of every student and some students worry about being disconnected from their peers if they spend their final year on a CCV campus, it is important to note that *EC* students are still permitted to participate in high school sports, clubs and other activities (senior trip, prom,

etc.). Students and families who are interested in gathering more information about the *EC* application process can speak to their school counselor or visit:

<https://apply.ccv.edu/highschool>

10th Grade

PSATs

An important opportunity that is offered to each SHS 10th grader is the chance to sit for the PSAT exam (at no cost to the student). This year, all 10th graders will take the exam on Wednesday, October 15th. For those unfamiliar with the exam, the PSAT is offered by College Board - the same organization that creates and administers the more common SAT college entrance exam - and it is actually considered a "preliminary" SAT. Students are exposed to a testing format and scoring rubric that mirrors that of the actual SAT, thereby giving students information about their "college-readiness" in the areas of critical reading, math problem-solving, and writing. Once results are in, students are able to review their scores, use study materials to boost their skills in areas of weakness, and better prepare for the

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upcoming SAT. SAT prep courses and practice test booklets can be expensive, but SHS students have some of affordable and accessible options. *MyRoad* is an individualized SAT prep tool that is included with the PSAT results. *MyRoad* is actually a feature of *My College QuickStart*, an online college and career planning tool that is only available to PSAT and SAT test takers. Along with their PSAT results, 10th graders will receive an alphanumeric code that is *only* tied to their name and their test results; students can then navigate to the *My College QuickStart* website (<https://quickstart.collegeboard.org>) and enter their unique code. Once connected to *My College QuickStart* and *MyRoad*, students are able to explore the college and career search features, take personality inventories, and use academic tools and practice questions that are designed to improve their individual test results. Additionally, the counselors recently ordered a set of official SAT prep books (with practice exams included). These books are open to everyone and students can make copies of sections that may be useful to their studying. Students and families can also purchase used SAT prep books online for a minimal cost or inquire

about the online VTVLC SAT Prep class.

9th Grade

Welcome!

As we say every fall: Welcome to our building and welcome to jungle that is high school! Some families may have had previous children come through our building and some may be experiencing SHS for the first time, but we hope every 9th grade family feels excited about the next four years. In the counseling office, 9th graders are in a unique situation in that they all have the same counselor, Mr. Jason Touchette. In his second year at SHS, and coming from a long tenure at a K-8 school and a strong background in alternative education, Mr. T has a great skill-set and a valuable outlook when it comes to working with students who are learning to adjust to a new place and new expectations. Over the next few weeks, Mr. T is looking to meet individually with every member of the Class of 2018 and make sure they are having a positive acclimation to our school. So, if your student gets called to our office and receives an appointment pass, tell them not to panic!

Another valuable piece of information for 9th grade families is that every SHS teacher offers a weekly after-school "help night". These

casual, small-group sessions give students an opportunity to catch up on missed work, get support on challenging skills and content areas, and have one-on-one access to their classroom teachers. If they haven't already, please encourage your student to ask teachers about their designated help nights and to use this extra support if they start to fall behind or feel overwhelmed. As counselors, we know that a positive first year of high school can have a tremendous impact on students' academic success. Thus, we want to be sure that our new students are comfortable seeking out help and are using all available resources to help them succeed.