



Annual Report & Newsletter



A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As the year draws to a close we at SOAR want to take the opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude to you—our donors, instructors, volunteers, and community members. Together, we've accomplished so much and are looking forward to more great things to come.

During the 2023-2024 school year, SOAR successfully conducted 47 workshops, engaging a total of over 100 participants per term. These workshops served as platforms for sparking creativity and promoting learning among the students at Salisbury Central School. Last year, SOAR provided \$3,900 in financial aid demonstrating our commitment to serving all children regardless of a family's ability to pay. Moreover, SOAR played a vital role in facilitating 14 teacher mini-grants helping to support programs such as Nature's Classroom, the eighth grade Washington D.C. trip, and Roaring Brook Nature Center. This past year also marked the initiation of our inaugural summer camp session which we plan to continue in the future.

More recently, the highlight of this fall was the captivating performance of *Matilda Jr.* at the prestigious Hotchkiss Black Box theater. The show featured the extraordinary talents of 39 young performers and drew a large crowd of supportive families, demonstrating the remarkable impact of SOAR in our community.

In the pages that follow you'll find some behind-the-scenes photos capturing the smiling, studious faces of our students and hear from a few of our instructors. We hope their words and images help show just how special SOAR is! Thank you, as always, for your continued interest, involvement, and support.

Sincerely,
Lauren Brown, Executive Director
Elizabeth Schaufelberger, Board Chair

INSIDE THE WORKSHOPS



Summer Camp 2024



Flying Cloud Institute



Upsculpt



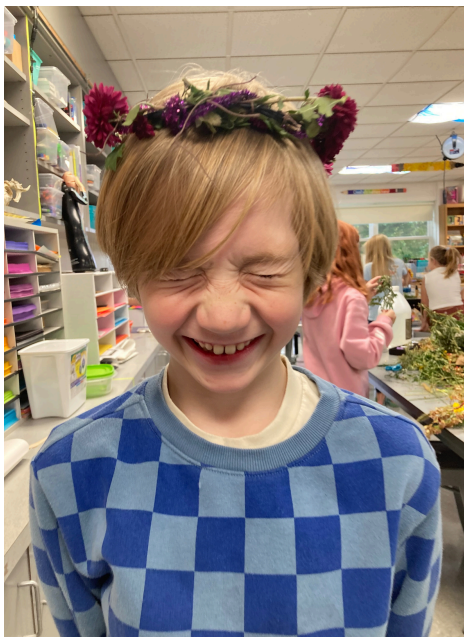
Lego Engineering: Animal Adventures



Cheerleading



Clay Play



Adornments & Alchemy



Blues & Beyond



Lego Engineering: Minecraft



Summer Camp



Abstract Art



Clay Sculpture



Needle Arts



Art in Motion

2023-2024

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- The Salisbury Central School Education Enrichment Endowment Fund of Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation
- Ian MacTaggart Trust
- Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation
- Northwest Community Bank Foundation

THE POWER OF THEATER EDUCATION

BY DARCY BOYNTON

SOAR BOARD MEMBER AND CO-DIRECTOR OF SOAR MUSICALS

While many think of theater as an extracurricular activity, we at SOAR believe that theater is an essential part of a well-rounded education. Theater teaches a wide variety of important skills such as strong communication, teamwork, creativity, and problem-solving. These skills not only benefit them on stage but also in their personal and future professional lives. For example, when a theater student becomes a character, they are honing their empathy and compassion. In learning to see the world through another's eyes, in adopting a new perspective, they in turn expand their worldview.

Theater is also a deeply collaborative artform, a true team sport. The immediacy of live theater requires quick thinking, adaptability, and flexibility. An actor's most important job is to support their cast mates and to make their scene partners feel safe so that everyone can do their best work. A transformative experience that not only entertains but also educates and empowers individuals to become more empathetic and open-minded global citizens.

Theater connects us to our past, to the ancient art of storytelling that is so profoundly and uniquely human. Theater builds confidence, creates community, and encourages creativity. Perhaps most importantly, theater teaches us to prioritize joy and play — we learn so much in that free, playful space. SOAR has built a robust theater program, and we hope to keep expanding it in the years to come so that all SCS students can benefit from the incredible impact of theater education.



INSTRUCTOR SPOTLIGHT

Instructors are the heart and soul of the SOAR program. Each one comes with a different background and connection to the community.



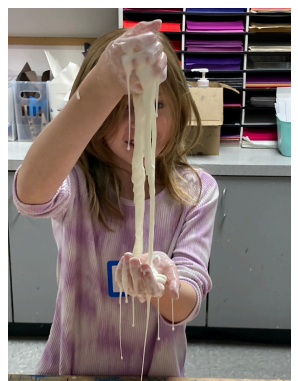
Jeremy Boviard - I am the General Manager of The Moviehouse and have lived in the area for the last eight years. For the past two years, I have taught the Fall horror films class. I really do enjoy working with kids, and their energy and enthusiasm is pretty infectious and encouraging. Helping them realize their visions and just having fun doing that make it a quality experience. The genuine excitement they had seeing their final films last year, in a theater at The Moviehouse no less, was a special moment.



Jessica DeCarlo - I am a new shop owner (Rosemary Rose Finery) in Salisbury this year. I also teach herbal education classes locally. This was my first year being part of SOAR. I taught a class called Adornments & Alchemy which was a combination of jewelry art and herbal crafting. The kids are incredible. I love seeing them be so creative and excited to make new things. I also really love the art classroom. It is so spacious and well kept. My favorite moment was when we were all making fragrances and I told the class they could “name their scent.” They started coming up with wonderful names and started to decorate the fragrance bottles with ribbons. I didn’t plan on the extra decorating. They did that on their own and the outcome was so special.



Letitia Garcia-Tripp - I have taught Messy Science since the Winter of 2018. My husband and I have been teaching at HVRHS since the late 90s and I have lived in Region One for 14 years. My daughter is a HVRHS class of 2022 graduate and my son is a member of the class of 2026. I love the enthusiasm and excitement that the kids bring to class each day; it is infectious!





Seek Originate Aim Reach

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