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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

OCTOBER

I CAN'T GET ENOUGH of October. The crisp air, the school year in full swing, apples, pumpkins, festivals, and of course, Halloween to wrap it all up. I just love this month. Growing up in Florida, I was partial to spring, but now that I live in the Northeast, fall holds a special place for me. My husband's birthday is in October, and we were married in October—so maybe that's another reason why it feels like the sweetest season of all.

So this month, it's no wonder this issue is packed with everyday magic. From the whirring of sewing machines at the Chappaqua Library, where teens are discovering the joy of creating something with their own hands, to a cockapoo named Buffy who keeps her family laughing through every season. We spotlight local students who are stepping up to fight food insecurity; we sit down with Chris Gentile of Eye Gallery of Chappaqua, whose

boutique has been helping families see clearly and stylishly for nearly two decades. And we celebrate the work of Chappaqua resident Brandon Shenkman at the Jacob Burns Film Center, where storytelling is shaping the way future generations connect with the world.

The creativity, compassion, resilience, and connection in these stories show me that community thrives when we celebrate our neighbors, invest in the next generation, and support local initiatives.

As always, I encourage you to support our advertising sponsors—their commitment keeps *Stroll Chappaqua* landing in your mailboxes each month. When you shop, dine, or call on their services, you're not just supporting a business; you're sustaining our local fabric. Welcome our newest supporters: Mete Bajraktari of King Street Contrators, Michelle Adams of Quantum Healing & Wellness, and Nikki Cannon of Butter & Bow.

Wishing you a joyful October, full of pumpkins, cozy sweaters, and plenty of community spirit(s)!

Joyfully,

Stacy

Stacy Ciaravella

Publisher,
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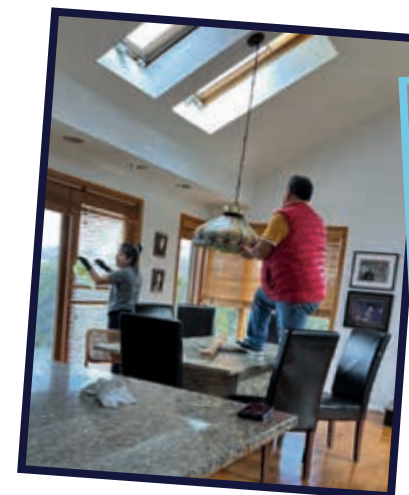
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From the moment you step inside, the home exudes warmth and sophistication. The front-facing living room, anchored by a wood-burning fireplace, welcomes gatherings both large and small. The gourmet kitchen, thoughtfully designed for the passionate home chef, boasts stone countertops, custom cabinetry with pull-out shelving, a center island with prep sink, and high-end appliances by Thermador, Sub-Zero, and Viking.

Entertaining is effortless here. A dramatic formal dining room with its own fireplace opens onto dual patios through



From the moment
you step inside,
the home exudes warmth
and sophistication.



French doors, offering seamless indoor-outdoor living. Guests can linger over alfresco meals by the built-in grill or relax in the expansive family room, bathed in natural light from walls of windows.

Private quarters on the main level include a spacious guest suite with ensuite bath, along with a serene primary suite. The king-sized retreat offers a sitting/dressing area, a spa-worthy bath, and French doors leading to a patio and swim spa—the perfect spot for morning coffee or evening relaxation.

Upstairs, a wide lounge connects two additional bedrooms that share a Jack-and-Jill bath, while the finished lower level adds generous recreation space, a full bath, laundry room, and access to a three-car garage equipped with an electric car charger. Thoughtful details—such as a whole-house generator, alarm system, and abundant storage—underscore both comfort and peace of mind.

Framed by mature trees and manicured lawns, this distinctive home combines character, convenience, and modern amenities in one of Chappaqua's most desirable neighborhoods. At 56 Annandale Drive, every day feels like a celebration of home.

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SEW EXCITED TO LEARN: The Chappaqua Library Teen Zone's New Sewing Program

ZOYA NABEEL

If you walk into the Chappaqua Library on a Wednesday afternoon, you will hear the whirring of brand-new sewing machines. If you follow that sound, it will take you to the Teen Zone, where students are being taught the principles of sewing as they create pillows, zippered bags, and pajama pants. In this room, Shannon Moraes, a Chappaqua local and an avid seamstress, teaches kids from 5th to 12th grade the building blocks of sewing.

Ms. Moraes, who has been sewing since she was 6 years old, believes that her responsibility as a crafter is to pass the torch to young people who will learn skills that will last them a lifetime. “There should be a future generation of sewers,” she shared with me, “and a lot of times all they need is a really basic start to sort of light the fire and get interested in sewing.” To carry out

this sentiment, Ms. Moraes starts her classes with a breakdown of the sewing machine, including references that simplify a machine that can otherwise seem overwhelming to first-time users. She explains that threading the needle is like flossing one’s teeth and that pressing down on the foot pedal is like driving a car.

This year, the Chappaqua Library received a grant to purchase sewing machines for use in their classes and by patrons. Cathy Paulsen, Teen Librarian, and fellow librarian Amy Berger wrote a grant, which was sponsored by State Senator Pete Harckham, to provide the library with the new machines. They purchased the machines from Pins and Needles, a local sewing shop in Mt. Kisco, where owner Lisa Alfonzetti connected them with machines that would provide a seamless learning

experience for Chappaqua teens. Ms. Paulsen expressed that, “the library is very fortunate to have received the funds to buy new sewing machines. The teens are very excited, and we have a lot of kids signing up to take the classes.” So many that the class fills up weekly, with many individuals joining the waitlist and hoping that a spot will open.

I was given the opportunity to attend one of the sessions, where I spoke with teens and gained insight into their experiences with this program. Sasha, who was working on completing a zippered bag when I met her, explained that “it’s very easy ‘cause she [Shannon Moraes] helped me a lot and it was fun ‘cause I got to make what I wanted to.” As she highlighted, sewing can help people express their individuality through the clothes they wear and the accessories they choose. When Ms. Moraes demonstrated how to make a patchwork pillow, the same technique could be applied to create a patchwork shirt or a pair of pants. The skills learned in the Teen Zone are indispensable.

CONTINUED ►



“
When I look at
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The Chappaqua Library is the heart of this town, most notably because of its ability to provide services for the entire family. The addition of sewing machines at the library will not only be beneficial for teens, but also for adults who are looking to learn new ways to mend their clothes. To promote collaboration, librarian Amy Berger will host a series of classes called “Visible Mending: Repairing is Caring,” which introduces darning, patching, embroidery, and other forms of mending that utilize a sewing machine.

When I look at these programs, I see an opportunity to foster generational connections around arts and crafts, particularly in the skill of sewing. At last week’s class, I met two sisters who were eager to attend the library’s lessons. The older sister mentioned that her younger sister had wanted to sew for the longest time; however, she did not have the skills to teach her. When she stumbled upon the classes, she felt much relief knowing that she could support her sister in learning an art that had always seemed like an out-of-reach dream. Nearing the end of the class, she told me that her sister’s utmost goal is to sew her own prom dress. I could almost picture her getting ready for her senior prom in a dress that she designed and created, and one that her sister was so proud to see come to fruition.

Sewing unlocks a new facet of an individual, the creative side that they never knew they possessed, and with the help of the Chappaqua Library Teen Zone and Shannon Moraes, a new generation of artisans is emerging. I can’t wait to see what they’ll create.

End Note: If you are interested in signing up for the Chappaqua Library Teen Zone’s sewing classes, reach out to Cathy Paulsen at cpaulsen@chappaqualibrary.org to find out more information about future classes.



Zoya Nabeel is a rising senior at Horace Greeley High School and has been working at the Chappaqua Library since she was a sophomore. She learned to sew from Ms. Moraes’ classes at the library and is elated to see more individuals beginning the craft. In her free time, Zoya loves to crochet, listen to music, and spend time with her family.

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BRANDON SHENKMAN

OPENING PHOTOS BY DONNA MUELLER
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LYNDA SHENKMAN

I don't know exactly what my great-grandfather, Jacob Burns, felt when he emigrated from Russia to Washington, D.C., in 1911. He was still young, and I imagine he carried with him a mixture of confusion and fear - confusion at leaving behind the only life he had known, and fear of the people who drove him away simply because of his religion.

What I do know is the remarkable life he built once he arrived in America. As a boy, he delivered film reels to local theaters on his bicycle, often staying behind to secretly watch those same movies. That early connection to film, and to story, became one of the threads of his life, even as he grew up to pursue



With Ron Howard, Director, Mary Jo Ziesel, JBFC Executive Director. Taken at the Spring 2025 culminating screening and reception for Director's Cut: Documentary Filmmaking Fellowship.



Cassidy McKenna, New Lens Award Recipient, Detroit Hamell, New Lens Award Recipient, Brandon Shenkman, Director of Education. Taken at the Fall 2024 JBFC Film and Community Celebration (gala).



Spring 2025 culminating screening and reception for Director's Cut: Documentary Filmmaking Fellowship.



Brandon Shenkman, Director of Education, Tristan Rodriguez, Instructor for Director's Cut: Emerging Screenwriter Fellowship - Spanish Language Cohort, Christine Coleman, Manager of Education Administration. Taken at the Fall 2024 culminating event and reception for Director's Cut: Emerging Screenwriter.

other ambitions. He became a lawyer, founded a pharmaceutical company with his brother, and, most notably, established himself as a philanthropist who supported the arts and culture, contributing to institutions like Channel 13 and the Metropolitan Opera.

There are many stories I've been told about him, passed down like tumbled stones. The details slightly shift with time, polished smooth, but always solid, recognizable. I never had the chance to hear them firsthand - he died when I was seven years old. But stories like these remind me of the power narratives hold. They connect us not only to those we know intimately, but also to those we never met and to people with whom we may share nothing in common.

That belief has shaped my own life. For the past thirteen years, I've worked at the Jacob Burns Film Center, which fittingly bears my great-grandfather's name. I began as a teaching assistant and later became a camp director, curriculum designer, and now serve as Director of Education. My career has been guided by a fascination with the

stories we tell - how they take shape, the forms they assume, and how they help us make sense of the complexities and contradictions of life.

At The Burns, our education programs are designed with this same purpose in mind. We strive to transform passive scrollers into active viewers, young people whose curiosity and critical thinking skills will prepare them to navigate the ever-shifting media landscape. Just as importantly, we aim to equip them with the tools to become engaged citizens of the twenty-first century - individuals capable of contributing their own voices and stories in thoughtful, creative, and impactful ways.

This mission feels personal to me, not only through my work but also through my family. My children, ages

five and thirteen, attend Roaring Brook Elementary and Bell Middle School. My wife tutors students at Horace Greeley and beyond. Through them, I see the strengths of our community: its diversity, its acceptance, its passion. But I also see its divisions.

As we look ahead into an uncertain future, with communication evolving at light speed beneath our fingertips, I believe empathy remains our secret weapon. The stories we choose to tell and to surround ourselves with will help define who we are as a society. Like my great-grandfather's journey from Russia more than a century ago, which, frankly, might not feel so out of place today, these stories remind me that even in times of fear and change, we have the power to build, to share, and most importantly, to connect.

“The stories we choose to tell and to surround ourselves with will help define who we are as a society.”

BRANDON SHENKMAN

is proud to be the Director of Education at the Jacob Burns Film Center, a role he has held for the past two years. With a deep-rooted passion for visual media in all its forms, he has spent his career designing engaging educational experiences that empower students to share their stories through film. Prior to his current role, he served as camp director, curriculum designer, manager of after-school programs, and a senior faculty member at the Jacob Burns Film Center. Brandon graduated from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 2008 with a degree in Electronic Media, Arts, and Communication. A proud father of two young boys, in his (limited) free time, he codes, creates digital music, plays guitar, and enjoys reading sci-fi and horror. A dedicated advocate for innovative learning, he is also proud to be recognized as a NYSEC Collaborator of Excellence.

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EYE GALLERY OF CHAPPAQUA

At Stroll Chappaqua, we take pride in celebrating the people and businesses who make our community shine. This month, we're thrilled to feature Chris Gentile, licensed optometrist and owner of Eye Gallery of Chappaqua. Through Chris's Sponsor Spotlight, we gain insight into Chris's journey in town, his dedication to personalized vision care, and the numerous ways he continues to support and invest in the community.

For nearly two decades, Chris and Eye Gallery of Chappaqua have been trusted names in vision care and luxury eyewear. More than just an optical boutique, Eye Gallery has become a cornerstone of the community, known for its exceptional service, curated designer collections, and dedication to personal relationships. Chris reinforces Eye Gallery's reputation as a brand families can count on, year after year.

Tell us about you and your family.

My name is Chris Gentile, licensed optometrist and owner of Eye Gallery Chappaqua. I grew up on Long Island and now live in Manhattan with my wife and our two children. My children

love visiting Chappaqua, particularly during special events like the renowned Chappaqua Book Festival, where they've gotten to meet authors and see firsthand what makes this community so special.

What is your business? Why did you start it?

Eye Gallery of Chappaqua is a luxury optical boutique specializing in high-end designer eyewear and personalized vision care. As a licensed optometrist, I provide comprehensive eyewear services from frame selection and contact lens fitting to lens customization. I started this business 18 years ago because I saw an opportunity to bring something special to Chappaqua. I wanted to create an environment where customers could find designer frames like Oliver Peoples and Chanel, paired with the kind of personalized service and expertise that makes choosing eyewear an enjoyable experience rather than a chore.

The business has grown rapidly over the past several years, a testament to how much this community values quality eyewear and personal service. When we reached maximum capacity in

our original space, we knew it was time to expand. About a year ago, we moved to our current location at 39 King Street, which has allowed us to better serve our community with an even more welcoming space. After nearly two decades in Chappaqua, I'm proud that we've become a trusted part of families' lives, helping them see clearly while looking their best.

What is unique about your business?

At Eye Gallery, we carry brands you won't find everywhere, from iconic names like Oliver Peoples and Chanel to coveted independent designers like Press Eyewear, Eva Masaki, Barton Perreira, Native Ken, and Salt Optics. But what truly sets us apart are the relationships. Three of my team members, Celine, Lisa, and Alyssa, have been with us for nearly 15 years. Our newer team members, Dana, Joann, Maria, and Gabby have seamlessly joined our family culture. When clients walk in, they're greeted by people who remember their preferences, their families, and their stories.

Given your business expertise and the nature of your work, what advice can you offer to the residents?

Invest in quality eyewear. It's something you wear every day and one of the first things people notice about you. But beyond that, please don't skip your annual eye exams. I've seen too many cases where we caught serious eye conditions early simply because someone came in for a routine checkup. Your eyes deserve the same attention you give to the rest of your health.

What do you like to do when you are not working?

I still love the hunt for great live music at small Manhattan venues. Food is my other weakness. My wife and I have been working our way through family-friendly spots from Manhattan up to Westchester. But my favorite moments are watching both my kids discover what makes them light up, whether it's their fascination with how everything works or just insisting on 'helping' with dinner.

What would you like to share with the community?

I'm incredibly grateful for how Chappaqua has embraced us over these 18 years. Chappaqua's strength lies in its network of independent businesses supporting each other. When I shop locally, I'm not just making purchases, I'm participating in the local economy that keeps our downtown vibrant and distinct from cookie-cutter suburban retail strips. After 18 years here, I've seen how this community rallies around businesses that invest in personalized service and local relationships.



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Meet Buffy

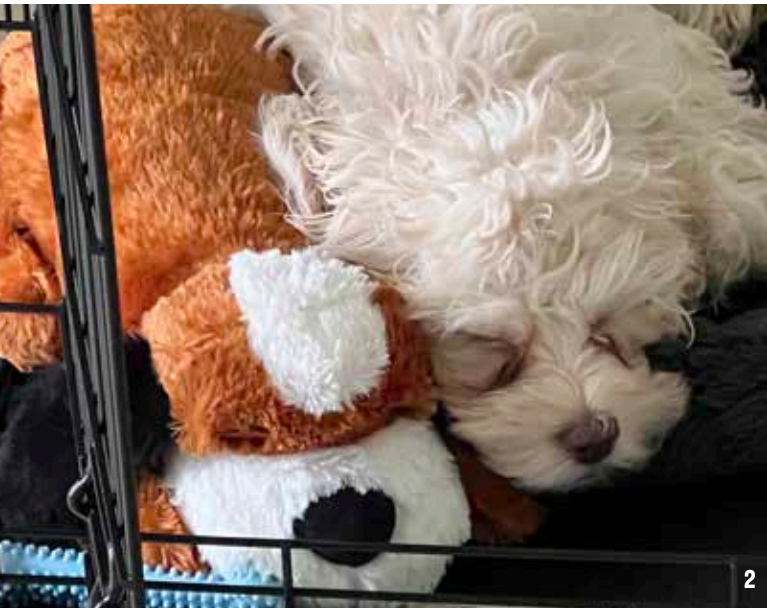
BY VICKI FEINER

We thought we were content being dogless for 10 years until we took a walk in Gedney Park and fell in love with a dog being walked by a man we did not know.... We stopped him - “What kind of dog is this?” (cockapoo) and “where did you get her?” (up the Taconic at Mulberry Farms.). So, up the Taconic we went and came home with Buffy - the only name we agreed upon. (#1 holding her)

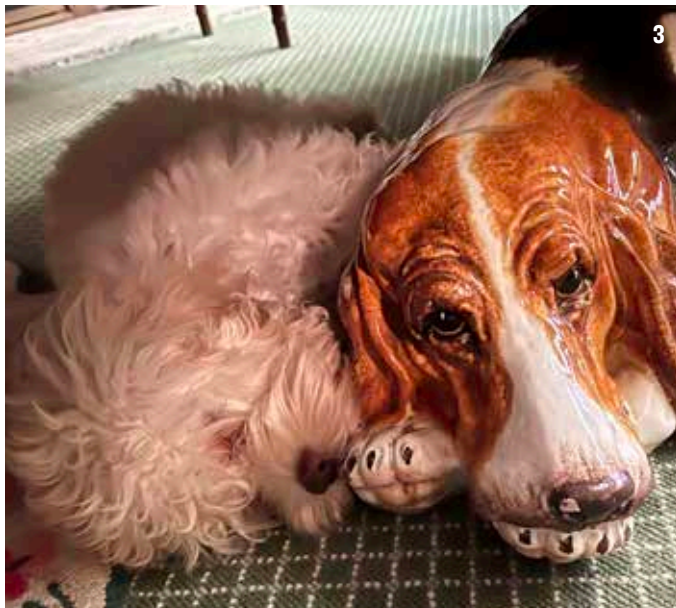
We couldn’t love her more. Our previous dogs (Golden, mutt, Wheaten) had been outdoor dogs because in those days there were no threats from coyotes, bears and/or wildcats. But Buffy is small and now there are coyotes, bears and bobcats so she is never alone outside, as the others had been. She’s a part of our lives in every room. She loves cozying up to people and other dogs, be they cloth (2) and/or ceramic (3). She loves all the seasons - winter (4) and summer (5). She loves to play outside during the day (6) and night (7). Sometimes we don’t know what she has gotten into (8). She keeps us active, laughing, and loving all day long until we all collapse into bed at night (9)!



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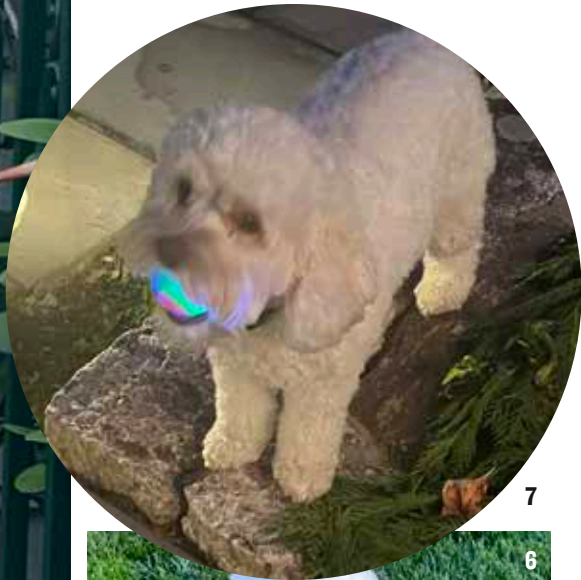
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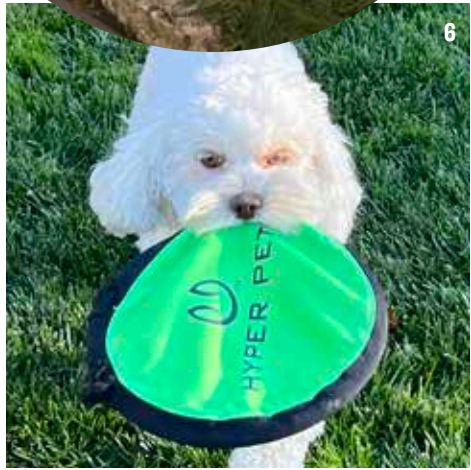
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LEADERSHIP IN ACTION: Horace Greeley Students Grow Chappaqua's Role in Supporting The Pantry

SAC Leaders Abby Busell (Horace Greeley) and Liz Tobar (Fox Lane) with Advisor/Board member of SAC Graeme Banks

At Horace Greeley, students are stepping up in a big way. Through The Pantry's Student Action Council, Chappaqua teens are leading food drives, building awareness, and proving that service matters. Their efforts connect classrooms to the community—and show how local youth can make a difference..

GRAEME BANKS

IN 2022, GRAEME BANKS, then a rising senior at Fox Lane High School, proposed a simple idea: give students in the local community real responsibility in the fight against food insecurity.

"We had to have skin in the game. If you want students to get engaged – and stay engaged – you need to give them a purpose, a job, a responsibility in this fight to do the right thing. That's what this is all about: giving students

the platform to raise awareness and understanding about food insecurity in our community"

The goal of this program, the Student Action Council (SAC), was to move beyond just volunteering occasionally. It was to create official partnerships with schools and students, and to build a concrete plan for recruiting youth into The Pantry. That meant recruiting peers, planning

food drives, attending and promoting community events, and creating and presenting projects to The Pantry.

(The Pantry, a nonprofit whose mission is to nourish neighbors in need, is located in Mount Kisco and has been providing nutritious food to approximately 700 families from 21 local communities (more than 2,000 individuals) every week).

After graduating, Banks didn't step away; he stepped up, becoming The Pantry's Advisor for SAC, growing the program, and later serving as Interim SAC Youth Volunteer Coordinator.

"It's an incredible honor," Banks said. "Since my first year piloting it at Fox Lane, we have expanded to four more schools – Byram Hills, Horace Greeley, Horace Mann, and The Harvey School."

That growth came quickly. The SAC expanded to Horace Greeley High School

in Chappaqua under the leadership of then-rising sophomore Abby Busell.

"What I love most about The Pantry is how it brings people together," Busell says. "It's not just about food, it's about connection and community, and it's very heartwarming to see support in action."

Community ties run deep here. Youth involvement in Chappaqua is no stranger to The Pantry – most notably through "Pack the Pantry for Everyone," a student-organized 3-on-3 basketball tournament at Robert E. Bell Middle School. Jared Saiontz, founder of "Pack the Pantry for Everyone" said: As someone born with 26 anaphylactic food allergies, it means so much to me that The Pantry was willing to adopt my food allergy protocols and actively provide allergen-safe food for any client that need it." Chappaqua students have also hosted food drives at Bobos, created bilingual cookbooks for the website, and attended fundraising events as junior committee members.

Now entering its fourth year, the council has chapters at Fox Lane, Horace Greeley, Horace Mann, Byram Hills, and The Harvey School – and are looking to expand. Each chapter is led by a student who recruits classmates, organizes food drives, hosts writing contests, attends monthly SAC volunteer nights, and develops awareness projects presented to The Pantry.

"The work of the SAC is not to be flashy or show off to college recruiters – it's to give back to the community and instill service in our local youth," Banks stated.

Some of the strongest proof of concept comes from those who have stayed the course. Elizabeth "Liz" Tobar joined as a Fox Lane freshman in the pilot year and now, as a senior, helps lead the school's team.

"It's a great way to give back," she says – an understated summary for a commitment that has spanned most of her high school career.

Behind the scenes, the program is also building a future boardroom. Mary Ellen D'Andrea, The Pantry's Development and Communications Manager, views the council as a pipeline: students learn how a nonprofit operates, how initiatives are built, and how governance works, all while committing themselves to the common

"It's not just about food, it's about connection and community, and it's very heartwarming to see support in action."

good. The hope is that today's SAC members will return as committee members, committee chairs, and maybe even board members.

There are challenges, of course. Teen schedules are crowded, and enthusiasm can fade as the year progresses. Banks understands that – he's been in their shoes. The council addresses this by elevating responsibility, giving students visible roles – whether in recruitment, research, or community involvement – measurable goals, and a voice in how campaigns are run.

The results speak for themselves: steady turnout, cross-school collaboration, and projects that directly help the community. Banks's role, and that of the student leaders he mentors, is to make the work visible and inviting. Together, they have turned volunteerism into an opportunity – a platform where students can fight the fight and feel they are making a difference.

Because they are.

For families, neighbors, educators, or students looking to help, Banks encourages them to reach out. Students can join a school chapter, start one where they are, or plug into program goals.

To learn more about The Pantry and its Student Action Council visit thepantryny.org or email Graeme Banks at sac@thepantryny.org.



SAC Leaders Abby Busell (Horace Greeley) and Liz Tobar (Fox Lane)



Advisor for SAC Graeme Banks



Graeme Banks is a Advisor for SAC, Educator, and former Interim SAC Youth Volunteer Coordinator at The Pantry. A Fox Lane (Bedford, NY) graduate, Banks is a staunch advocate for education and volunteerism.






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