



# THE BLUE DEVIL NEWS

The Student-Produced Newsletter of West Haven High School

## September Topics

- Gov. Ned Lamont visits to celebrate WHHS' win in the FAFSA Completion Challenge
- Our New Teacher Round Up will tell you who has joined our staff this year
- Congratulations to the library for being chosen as a **Rainbow Library**
- The school welcomes a new band director, **Donata Lupacchino**
- The **Unified Sports Team** brings students together
- Learn more about our new student-produced [morning news show](#)

### Important Dates to Remember

October 21: Virtual Parent Visiting Day; 9am-noon and 6pm-8pm

## CT Governor Visits for FAFSA Award Celebration

*By Nevaeh Lugo, Class of 2023*



*Gov. Ned Lamont (right) visits with school officials and students.*

Gov. Ned Lamont and other state officials made a visit to West Haven High School in celebration of the school's win in the governor's first FAFSA Completion Challenge. The school took home both the Governor's and Commissioner's Award for the large high school category.

Governor Lamont created the challenge to increase the percentage of seniors filling out their FAFSA forms.

The FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) form determines the amount of financial aid available to each student who fills it out. Governor Lamont was worried that with the lack of students filling out their FAFSA forms, they were missing out on thousands of dollars in aid that could have been put toward their college education.

“I hate the fact that some kids think that [college] is not for them, and I think we gotta do a better job reaching out to them.” Lamont said.

During the round table discussion, *The Rostrum* asked Lamont why it was so important for him, personally, to get more minorities into college.

“It is so sad if somebody, at the end of the day, feels like ‘I couldn’t go to college because I couldn’t afford it,’” Lamont responded, “because we can make it at no cost.”

Lamont touched on the fact that teachers, staff, and other adults and administrators are more than willing to help simplify and make the process as easy as possible for any student to understand. He argued that FAFSA forms are worth the approximately two hour fill-out time and that it really is important for students to get as much aid as possible for their college education.

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### Welcome New Teachers!



Our school has welcomed over a dozen new staff members this year.

Charlestone Gourdet, CTE Asst. Outreach Erin Lenihan, Literacy Tutor	Krzysztof Lasocki, Science Jonathan Lopez, Social Studies
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Ed Moran, Lab Tutor	Donata Lupacchino, Band
Richard "Monte" Reynolds, Outreach Worker	Filomena Malangone, World Language
Mariam Alajjan, English	Jessica Moriarty, Phys. Ed
Kim Athan, World Language	Olivia Quagliani, School Counseling
Erika Betancur, World Language	Caitlin Ripa, English
Rob Bleggi, School Counseling	Tim Shea, SPED
Mariam Boutros, ELL	Lindsay Smolka, World Language
Michelle Callahan, Reading Specialist	Tracy Stratton, Fine Arts
Sean Carroll, English	Tianna Thomas, ELL
Jennifer Demaio, SPED	Rosa Ziou

### School Library Earns LGBT Distinction



The West Haven High School Library was chosen as a Rainbow Library by GLSEN, an American education organization working to end discrimination, harassment, and bullying based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. The group also works to prompt LGBT cultural inclusion and

awareness in K-12 schools. School Librarian Jillian Woychowski applied for this grant program and received the books pictured.

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### **School Welcomes New Band Director**

*By Adriana Beams and Yamilette Romero, Class of 2022*



The West Haven Blue Devil Band has welcomed a new director this year, Donata Lupacchino.

Ms. Lupacchino is in charge of directing the band in the marching and concert seasons. Performances include shows at home football games during halftime and seasonal concerts, as well as a number of community events, such as parades.

“It offers a lot of spirit to West Haven High School,” she said.

The 2021-22 field show is called “Fire and Water,” featuring music by Lizzo, Ellie Goulding, and Katy Perry. The music selection is by Ms. Lupacchino herself, specifically chosen to showcase fire and water.

Later in the year, the band will also have a couple of concerts, most likely outdoors.

Ms. Lupacchino has had the spirit of a Blue Devil ever since six years ago, when she substituted long-term for the previous band director, Cassandra Marcella.

She said her high school experience inspired her to begin teaching.

“When I was in high school, I was involved in band, and it was a really, really fun thing I did... I was very passionate about it,” Ms. Lupacchino said.

Ms. Lupacchino said the band offers a great opportunity to learn how to play instruments and be with friends. Anyone interested in joining the band can stop by and see her in the auditorium to sign up.

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## Unified Sports Brings Students Together

*By Takiya Awwal, Class of 2023*



The Unified Sports Team, a group where students with and without disabilities come together, needs volunteers and participants. The team plays soccer in the fall, basketball in the winter, and track and field in the spring.

“We get to go to these really big tournaments with tons and tons of schools here in Connecticut, and we always end the tournaments with a pizza party,” Unified Sports Coach Anya Farber said. “So it’s a good time all around.”

Practices are on Tuesdays from 1:45 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. All students involved are provided transportation home. Like all other sports, this team has to follow mask mandates. When outside and safely social distancing, the masks may be removed, but when indoors they must be worn.

To play on the team, students can go to PowerSchool and fill out the “Athletics Registration Form.” Those who are willing to volunteer can email Ms. Farber ([anya.farber@whschools.org](mailto:anya.farber@whschools.org)) or the other coach, Camdyn Morgillo ([camdyn.morgillo@whschools.org](mailto:camdyn.morgillo@whschools.org)).

Ms. Farber said volunteers will get community service hours, but a whole lot more from the experience.

“I think you are having more fun than you realize while you’re participating and you’re getting the volunteer hours on top of everything else, plus the pizza,” Ms. Farber said.

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## Student News Show Takes Over Homeroom

*By Komma Wilson, Class of 2022*



*A peek inside our school's brand-new studio and control room.*

Each morning this year, as students flock to their homerooms, they probably have noticed a broadcast chattering away in the background. This is *Rostrum TV*, West Haven High School's very own news show.

These daily videos, which can be found on [whhsnews.com](http://whhsnews.com), feature occasionally quirky editing and give viewers insight into what's going on around the school, including club information, important announcements, and interviews with teachers and students alike.

Students in Jennifer Cummings' Advanced Digital Media and Journalism classes grind their time away to produce the daily show. They also hone their writing skills by producing this newsletter you're reading. We asked Ms. Cummings to share information on how her team gets things on the air and to let parents know how their child can get involved.

*Tell us about [Rostrum TV](#).*

Rostrum TV is our school's new daily morning show. Each day our class gathers news about school clubs, sports, college visits and more and puts all that together for our morning broadcast. Our show also features fun montages of students and interviews with interesting people in our school community.

*How can a student get involved in Rostrum TV?*

The first step is to sign up for our school's Digital Media and Journalism class. Students who do well in that full-year class will be invited to sign up for our Advanced Digital Media and Journalism class, which produces the news show. But students who are very eager to start right away can join our school news

club (Google Classroom code yl7iuzp). We also accept some student-created content done outside of class. Students can email [whhsrostrum@gmail.com](mailto:whhsrostrum@gmail.com) to submit photos, announcements or videos to our show.

*What is it like in your classroom?*

Our class operates as a fully functioning newsroom. We usually start class by meeting to figure out what we need to accomplish that day. From there students will be anchoring the news, operating the camera and audio equipment, setting up interviews, writing stories and so much more. We are just a few weeks in and already my students have such a strong team mentality, it's been so fun to watch.

*Is there anything else you want people to know?*

I like to tell my students I don't want to push them out of their comfort zones, I want to broaden their comfort zones. At the beginning of this year I had a few students who didn't want to go on camera, now they're anchoring the news. This is a great class for people who want to improve their communication skills and get more confidence in all kinds of social settings.