



# THE GEORGIAN REPORT



St. George's Church Schenectady, NY

May 2009

## ANNUAL PARISH MEETING



*Social Time*

*Hearty Brunch*

*Business Meeting*

# OUTREACH



The SICM (Schenectady Inner City Mission) Food Pantry box, at the rear of the church, is a repository for nonperishable foods to help feed the hungry in our city. Special items are requested each month; baby formula (Enfamil with iron) is always needed. Monetary gifts are helpful, as SICM can purchase items for 16-cents per pound from the Regional Food Bank. This month, we delivered 78-pounds of food to the SICM. Food Program.

Georgians will again be onboard to work with the SICM Summer Lunch Program for one week this summer at another host site.

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If you have unused cell phones taking up space in your home, donate them to the YWCA for their battered women project. Place them in the SICM Food Pantry box and they will be separated from the food. To date, ten cell phones have been donated and delivered to the YWCA.

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Forty-three residents of the four Mohawk Opportunities group homes, a nonprofit organization providing services to those with a diagnosed psychiatric disorder and support to individuals who are HIV/IDS positive, were recipients of Valentine's treat bags. This was a joint collaboration between our Outreach Ministry (Alice Polumbo) and Christian Education Ministry (Barbara Wengrovius.)

Alice did the legwork (contacting and collating) while Barb's Sunday School children decorated bags which contained various cheer-you-up and personal care items, i.e., Chap Stick, travel-size hand cream, shampoo and conditioner, post-it notes, small notepads and stretchy mittens. Thanks to Georgian generosity, 150 items were donated and made it possible to place at least three items into each bag. Two "thank you" notes were sent by the recipients and posted on the Bulletin Board in the Great Hall.

Between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday, our Lenten project was collecting new undergarments (all sizes) for adults and children. Because of health regulations, only items with sales tags were accepted.



Although no mens items were received for Conifer Park, we delivered undergarments - boys and girls to Things Of My Very Own and womens to Deacon Pat Jones at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church.

Providing undergarments is an ongoing need of organizations serving "at need/at risk" populations, as many come into this care in an abrupt way without being able to gather up these basic necessities.

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St. George's has established an ongoing relationship with the Lighthouse program of Bethesda House, an interfaith ministry and daytime support group for the homeless, poor and disadvantage in our community. Since February, we have been providing a set of meals (breakfast and dinner) for one weekend day per month for 9 residents and 1 staff. This was the brainstorm of Jim Wingate, liaison for this ministry. Also on the committee are Jane and Bob Moran, Amy Machold, and Lynn and Bob Paska.

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If you have any ideas of how St. George's can support other local nonprofit organizations, please contact Outreach Chairman Alice Polumbo.

# A GEORGIAN EASTER



Palm Sunday begins the Holy Week observance with our celebratory march, palms proudly carried, from the Great Hall to the church, re-enacting Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

Emotions run high and the mood darkens as the Gospel tells the story of Jesus' ensuing trial and ultimate death upon the cross. We are blessed to have Dr. Charles Stamm on contrabass, supporting the organ in Bach's *Komm, suBer Tod* (Come, Sweet Death) during communion.

The Maundy Thursday liturgy re-presents Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet in the upper room prior to The Last Supper and before he was betrayed by Judas on the Mount of Olives. Like no other act, this simple washing of feet conveys to us the servanthood ministry of Jesus. The word Maundy is derived from the Latin "*maundatum*" (command). Jesus commands each of us to do the same.

The watch is held at the Altar of Repose in the Lady Chapel, beautifully decorated with flowers and the light of many candles. "*Could you not watch with me one hour?*" said Jesus to his disciples as he prayed in the garden of Gethsemane. Now it falls to each of us to watch with Him for that hour. He is there on the altar in the sacrament of bread, His Body. And so we sit and we pray and we watch. Offering a single hour from our lives to be with Him. What peace and what joy we have, as we carry the watch throughout the night.

Good Friday fills us with sorrow. Jesus has offered himself and died on the cross for us. The church is somber, quiet and bare. The High Altar has been stripped. All crucifixes have been removed or

veiled in black. Communion is offered from the reserved sacrament that had been consecrated the previous day, as Jesus is not with us today. Sorry and loss overwhelm us. The liturgy concludes with the missal being slammed down on the altar and the sacred ministers scattering. Chaos and grief!

Pro-Anaphora begins Holy Saturday morning. The Ordinary of the Mass is said - through the Gospel, but no more. We are reminded that it is not yet time; Jesus has not yet been raised. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered to all, as we confess our sins and spiritually prepare ourselves for the glory that is to come.

The Easter Vigil starts in darkness and gives a foretaste of what is to come. The lighting and blessing of the New Fire reflects the radiance of the Risen Christ dispelling the Liturgy of Baptism. This year with a baptism of William Finnigan Gross, the beautiful son of Stockade neighbors, Amber and Nathan, calling each of us to renew our baptismal covenant with God. The Litany of the Saints asks intercessions from those blessed martyrs and saints upon whom Christianity was founded. Finally, the First Mass of The Resurrection - a Solemn High Mass bursts forth in light and music with the Gloria in Excelsis. Christ is Risen!

Our traditional festive reception provides a time of fellowship and relaxation after a long Lent and Holy Week. Good food abounds, thanks to Amy Machold, Chris Henry and Mike Thiessen and many parishioners. Many candles, much happiness and a beautiful setting - this is a celebration in St. George's style.

Finally, Easter Day - the Day of The Resurrection. The mighty Moeller organ springs to life with "*Hail thee, festival day...*" and "*Jesus Christ is Risen today, Alleluia.*" We are off with a joyful celebration of Christ's glory, pulling out all the stops. The processions are grand; the choir is brilliant; the congregation is full of love and gladness. The second Mass of the Resurrection - *Alleluia, Christ is Risen! The Lord is Risen indeed, Alleluia!*

david kennison / lynn paska

# EPISCOPAL EDUCATION

## Scripture, Tradition & Reason

It is often said that the cornerstones of our faith, the sources of authority in Anglicanism, are like a three-legged stool, standing in scripture, tradition and reason. These three sources uphold each other in a dynamic way. This is distinguished from Roman Catholicism which often emphasizes tradition first, and certain Protestant churches that emphasize scripture above all else. Our Anglican stool will topple if any one overbalances the other. Each of the three sources of authority must be perceived and interpreted in light of the other two.

**Scripture** - is the normative source for God's revelation and the source for all Christian teaching and reflection. Scripture is the word of God contained in the Old and New Testaments. The 39 books of the Old Testament contain the story of God's love from Creation up to the birth of his son, Jesus Christ. They contain God's laws as He gave them to the Hebrew people. The New Testament contains Christ's teachings, the accounts of his life as told by his followers, and the beginning of his church. It is written in 27 books. Within an Episcopal service, Scripture is read in the lessons, the Gospel (the teachings of Jesus), the Psalms (poems from the Old Testament) and other prayers. Additionally, two-thirds of our guide to worship, the Book of Common Prayer, comes directly from the Old and New Testaments.

**Tradition** - passes down from generation to generation the church's ongoing experience of God's presence and activity. We are not Christians in isolation but are part of a living faith that spans 2,000 years. Tradition is the embodiment of our experience as Christians throughout the centuries. The heart of our tradition is expressed through the Bible, the Creeds (statements of faith, written in first centuries of the church's existence), the Sacraments (the Lord's Supper and Baptism), and the ordained ministry passed on by Christ to his Church. Our tradition is expressed with many voices, among which are a variety of worship styles, languages,

cultures, architecture and music. Our tradition encourages this diversity. We seek to value the life and story each person can bring to the community of faith. Each person's offering is woven into the life of the whole, making it stronger and more beautiful.

**Reason** - is understood to include the human capacity to discern the truth in both rational and intuitive ways. It is not limited to logic as such. It takes into account and includes experience. Each one of us, with God's help, makes a decision about how we use tradition and Scripture in our lives. A personal relationship with God allows us to realize and celebrate our lives to the fullest. The gift of reason, as a complement to Scripture and tradition, leads us to seek answers to our own questions and to grow spiritually. Being active in a community of faith strengthens us to carry our faith into the world. Weaving scripture, tradition and reason together, we strengthen our faith and grow as children of God.

*Compiled from The Episcopal Church & the Diocese of Texas*



## VISITATIONS

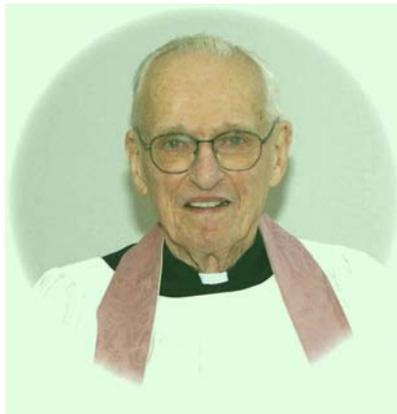
Regent Street is a quiet residential area in Niskayuna that is home to Ed and Barbara Gillette. A former Professor of Mathematics at Union College, Ed served on the Associate Vestry at St.

George's. The piano in their living room gives a clue to Barbara's love of music. In addition to being a homemaker for their sons, she gave piano lessons and played the organ at several local churches. Stephen (California) and Michael (New Jersey) live too far away for casual visits but keep in close contact with their parents, as do four grandchildren.

Ed and Barbara, both 90+, have fond memories of St. George's, especially their membership in the Georgians. They feel that Pastoral Care visits "allows us to keep in touch with the church; find out what's new; and that is very nice." Anyone who has been a part of a visit to the Gillette's would say that "very nice" applies to this lovely couple as well.

jim wingate

**CLERGY**



**Fr. Delos Wampler**



**Bishop David Ball**

*As we have worked to discern God's choice for the 18th Rector of St. George's, we owe enormous gratitude to a network of dedicated clergy who have supported us. Their weekly celebration of the Holy Eucharist, combined with excellent preaching and counsel, has enriched our lives tremendously. They are forever a part of the St. George's story. To them goes our heartfelt appreciation and thanks.*



**Fr. Peter Schofield**



**Fr. William Hinrichs**

**APPRECIATION**



**Fr. Mark Diebel**



**Fr. Kyle Grennon**

# CHRISTMAS AT ST. GEORGE'S

Many hardy parishioners braved snow and slippery conditions on December 21st to help decorate St. George's for Christmas. We started with stacks of wreaths and pine roping delivered to the church by Bob Paska. Gerald Cooper organized Mike Todt, Dan Machold, David Kennison and Steve Adams in building the creche and placing the figures. Jennafer and Erin Thiessen, Stephanie and Kathleen Todt, Taylor Adams and Shannon Hughes dragged out candle poles and candles for the pews, and Jon Pearson and Gene DeLong made everything straight and secure. Joy Adams, Wendy Madalone, Joni Adams, Connie Todt, Sandee Hughes, Joan Pearson, Barb Wengrovius and Judy DeLong organized window wreaths, candles, and greens, and conducted the annual discussion of bows (final decision: no bows this year.) Jeff Wengrovius added to the mood by practicing Christmas Eve music, and all celebrated with an authentic Thiessen lunch of hotdogs and chili.

These were our visible preparations, yet planning for this joyful celebration began months earlier when Jeff Wengrovius and the choir chose and rehearsed Christmas music, and as David Kennison marshaled greeters, lectors, and acolytes for our beautiful Christmas Eve mass, conducted this year by Father Wampler. In addition to organists Ildiko, Aniko and Jeff, guest organist Brian Hoffman returned to conduct the choir and play. Amy Machold, Chris Henry and Mike Thiessen presented a festive reception afterwards, serving hearty food and drink. Reverence, beauty, pageantry, celestial music, excellent refreshments, and joyful fellowship blended for our traditional St. George's Christmas.

*joan pearson*



*St. George's exhibit in the 2008 Festival of Trees at the Schenectady County Historical Society created by Barbara Wengrovius' Christian Education classes.*

## WHITE DRAGON SALE



Our Annual White Dragon Sale netted \$1,181.63 after expenses. Thanks to all who contributed items. Rosemary Pannone and her "crew" - Richard Pannone, Alice Pumbo, Barbara Wengrovius, Rick Forshaw, Chris Henry, Mike, Erin & Jennafer Thiessen, and Bob, Kali Rose & JJ Moran (among others) - helped sort and tag "stuff" donated. The Vestry voted to direct these funds towards refurbishing the room at the rear of the Great Hall - for a quiet place to sit, read, have a meeting, conduct bible study, and serve a multitude of purposes.

*Wesley Rose  
1949-2009*



### IN MEMORIAM

*Rest in Peace*

*You are missed by your church family.*



*Deborah Todt  
1957-2009*

# SALUTING ST. GEORGE'S VOLUNTEERS

Being a Georgian is more than just being part of a congregation. Day after day, week after week, month after month - our parishioners step up to the plate and volunteer in ways which are astounding. This issue, we especially recognize four members of our parish family who have gone "above and beyond" their call to service in different areas of expertise.



**Jack Ericson** is a skilled, artistic woodworker (a sampling of his work: the bells in the priests' sacristy.) For decades, the altar in the All Soul's Chapel had been covered by a frontal, which was removed during the floor project. Because the altar with its beautiful carvings was too low for a usable height, Jack accepted the challenge of making a base to match the wood and elevate the altar. Taking careful measurements, Jack went to his workshop and fabricated the base the altar stands on today. This outstanding job will evermore be known as *the base that Jack built*.

**Rick Forshaw** is in real estate. When he "signed up" to assist Mike Todt with our rectory remodeling project, he did not envision heading up a Rectory Decorating Committee consisting of 4 members on a good day and as many as 8 on a bad one - mostly women - all with diverse but definite ideas on appliances/cabinets/colors/countertops/fixtures/flooring. Other men would have caved under the pressure but Rick worked up the schematics, listened politely, gave gentle suggestions, and guided the group in making cohesive decorating decisions regarding the home of our next rector.



**Sandee Hughes** is an art teacher. When a volunteer was needed to clean/polish a cross found in the church attic (circa late 1800's-early 1900's) identified through old photos as having been on our high altar, Sandee raised her hand because, "It was something I could do at home." She bought a recommended brass cleaner and soft cloth at a trusted hardware store, and worked on the cross one section at a time, using Q-tips for the tiny intricate areas. The cross is now displayed on the portable altar to the left of the pulpit. Our lesson from Sandee is how "elbow grease" can restore beauty to a badly tarnished object d'art.

**Tom Madelone** is a world-class welder. When St. George's was plunged into "no heat" status on one of the coldest Sundays in January because of a leak in the huge cast iron boiler, a professional company was called in and made the situation worse by snapping off all the bolts; bolted themselves; and left us "in the cold," literally and figuratively. David Kennison sent an S.O.S. to Tom and assisted him in repairing the boiler and restoring heat to the church the following Saturday. Grateful Georgians said a warm prayer for Tom that Sunday from their warm pews.



## - SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT -

In this issue, I'd like to review our rector search process and tell you a little about Fr. Paul Frederick Blanch, whom God has called to be the 18th Rector of *St. George's*.

Fr. Paul came to us early in our search process, as our third candidate in mid-July 2008. The Holy Spirit must have been guiding his hand, as he was not looking to leave his current position, where he is Vicar of the United Benefice of Meir Heath and Normacot, a position that has him as Vicar of *St. Francis*, Meir Heath and of *Holy Evangelists*, Normacot, as well as overseeing a full-time primary church school, *St. Matthews*, Rough Close, all in the beautiful Midlands of England, proximate to Stoke-on-Trent. Here was a very busy priest, indeed.

As Fr. Paul relates, he happened to be looking at The Episcopal Church website one Sunday evening when he noticed that *St. George's* was searching for a rector. It would have been easy to dismiss this and move on, but he said the name *St. George's* almost leaped off the page at him for some strange reason. He had never heard of *St. George's* or Schenectady, but immediately went to our website and was astounded at what he saw. Fr. Paul called to his wife Maggie and together they somehow knew that this was a position to be investigated further. Fr. Paul phoned the church office the next morning, speaking with Donna and then with me, immediately emailing his CV and following it up with a large package of supporting documents for courier.

Everything looked outstanding upon first review. Born in Durham under the shadow of that City's great Norman cathedral, Fr. Paul was raised in a committed, active Anglican family whose daily life was immersed in the life of the local church and parish. He studied for the priesthood at *Chichester Theological College* in West Sussex, and has a degree in Theology from *Durham University*. He served for six years at *Derby Cathedral* in a lay capacity, served as curate in *St. Philip Chaddesen* and moved on to be parish priest of two villages in the Wear Valley. He has also been Rector of two churches in Edinburgh, Scotland, as well as a part-time Prison Chaplain at *Edinburgh Prison* for four years. It was then on to East Anglia and rector of *St. Mary of the Assumption*, Ufford, and thence to his present position. If you are on the internet, look at his website at <http://www.churches.lichfield.anglican.org/stoke/meirheath>.

What happened next was truly astounding. Having not been to England for a decade, I suddenly had a business trip develop to Derby, 20-minutes drive from Meir Heath. God's guiding hand was at work here. I was able to spend portions of 4 days with Fr. Paul and Maggie, attend Mass at his churches and solemn Evensong and Benediction on Sunday. The congregation was welcoming and full of spirit and Fr. Paul's preaching was outstanding (using our theme of *We Are The Church*.) It was quite clear that he is well-loved in his parish and has built a solid and active community. Everything was done with distinction.

It gets better. Fr. Paul and Maggie, having already planned a summer holiday in the US two weeks hence, decided to spend a week in Schenectady with us at *St.*

*George's*. The Vestry had a social time with them, as well as a formal interview and time with diocesan deployment. Those of you who were at *St. George's* on 24 August had the pleasure of Fr. Paul celebrating Mass at the High Altar and preaching an excellent sermon on Jesus Christ. Then it was time for their departure. We went forward with fond memories, but still a long road ahead of us in our search.

We had 19 excellent candidates. All on their own journey of faith, each compelled for a variety of reasons to inquire whether *St. George's* would be right for them. The Vestry spent long hours and days, reading, digesting and discussing each one. Not wanting to play favorites or jump to conclusions, we dug in and investigated each. All candidates walked through the same narrow door and were greeted equally. Warm thoughts of Fr. Paul's and Maggie's visit might easily have faded away. But, they did not.

We set a firm deadline of 14 December for our decision. After noonday prayer, we began in earnest, individually speaking at length about our views of the remaining candidates. The Holy Spirit was truly amongst us, as there was great peace and warm camaraderie in the room. We understood the importance of discerning God's will as well as the difficulty that lay in such a task. No one was rushed; everyone had complete freedom to speak their mind without interruption. The occasional quips/laughs served to cement us, and we diligently stuck to our task.

God the Holy Spirit kept bringing us back to Fr. Paul. Of all the candidates, he was the one that truly demonstrated a calling from God. Not only in the accumulating coincidences of our sudden beginning and subsequent times together, but Fr. Paul was resolute through the twists and turns of fate, that *St. George's* was the place he wished to be. God was calling him and God was calling to us. In the end, all we had to do was open ourselves and listen.

The result was unanimous - God called Fr. Paul Blanch to be the 18th Rector of *St. George's*. Each Vestry member came to this conclusion on their own, without convincing, arm-twisting or disagreement of any kind. Just the humbling power of our God in our hearts and on our lips. The Vestry was united in this call.

Soon, I trust that each of you will see what we have seen in Fr. Paul - an orthodox, yet forward-thinking priest; one who loves God with all his heart and is willing to follow His call, even at significant personal cost; a literate and thoughtful preacher; a team-player that will work with the laity, not rule over them; a warm and engaging man. If ever there was a sign from God, this was it.

And what will Fr. Paul see in us? A parish full of spirit and love, a congregation who enjoy good, traditional liturgy and sacred music, a people who are forward-thinking and living their lives in today's world. The right rector will have their hearts, and with those hearts, will have their support in almost everything.

God the Holy Spirit is at work amongst us. May His will be done. God bless you all.

*With great affection, david*

**- JUNIOR WARDEN'S REPORT -**

The renovation of the Rectory is nearing completion, and we will soon have a home we can proudly offer to the Rector of St. George's well into the future. As those of you who toured the building prior to the start of construction know, a significant amount of work was needed. Bellamy and Sons Construction of Scotia were the contractors selected; they are doing a tremendous job.

The electrical, plumbing, and security systems throughout the building have all been repaired, and a fresh coat of paint is on the walls.

On the 1st floor, the kitchen has been gutted and rebuilt. A wall that was out of square was realigned with the rest of the room. The closet off the kitchen was enlarged. The ceiling in the dining room was lowered in one section to accommodate plumbing in a 2nd floor bathroom. Electric heaters in the den were replaced with a steam radiator.

On the 2nd floor, the rear bedroom has been completely renewed. The 6-foot ceiling has been raised and the beams exposed to create an amazing room. The cramped rear full bath has been reconfigured. The worn fixtures in the two front bathrooms have been replaced.

The central room that once dominated the basement floor plan has been removed, opening the space up and creating a much more usable space. The laundry area has been relocated to a more practical location.

In the coming weeks, things will be wrapping up and we will have opportunities for everyone to tour the building and see the transformation!

*mike todt*

**- TREASURER'S REPORT -**

During the first three months of 2009, I have been pleased to note a definite increase in pledge receipts. For the first Quarter of 2009, our pledge income of \$27,815 was 11.5% above what we received during the same period in 2008. This is the best percentage increase I can remember seeing during the past ten years, so I extend the Vestry's gratitude to all parishioners who have helped to make this happen.

We have several significant cross-currents affecting the parish finances at present. Work on rectory refurbishment, with 3 & 1/2 new bathrooms, a new kitchen and general overhaul of the house, has been significant as we expect to spend close to \$300,000 on the project. Funds for the rectory project have come from the General Endowment and the residual from Fr. Kirby's Charitable Remainder Trust, which allowed us to replace the church's floor last summer.

General economic conditions have impacted our investment accounts. Although we have invested in a relatively conservative fashion, we have experienced a drop in the account values. We hope to see the markets begin a recovery, and that we can avoid substantial spending from our investments while such a recovery unfolds.

Please keep St. George's in mind whenever you do any estate planning. You can name the church in your will, or we can help you establish a charitable remainder trust that can provide you with an income for life and then direct the residual to the parish after your death.

*jon pearson*

***SPRING IN THE GARDENS***

This spring, according to Rosemary Pannone, the Garden Committee's projects include: revitalization of the bed directly in front of the church. The Rhododendrons will be getting a much-needed severe pruning and cut back *before* bloom so their growth can be directed to new shoots rather than flowers this year.

The area around the Rhodys will be rototilled and planted with other shade-loving plants to create an appropriate garden frame for our beautiful church.

The front lawn will continue to be worked on; new beds will be created and planted behind the newly refurbished fence.

The Memorial Garden, which has only been minimally maintained, will be restored. The Children's Garden (begun last year) will be finished. New beds and badly-needed seating will be added.

Keep an eye on the big bed just outside the patio doors that was planted in the fall.

With many opportunities to assist, people are always needed to water new plantings. As Rosemary reminds us, "A garden is music for the soul."



**St. George's Episcopal Church**  
 30 North Ferry Street  
 Schenectady, New York 12305  
 Telephone (518) 374-3163  
[www.stgeorgesschenectady.org](http://www.stgeorgesschenectady.org)

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*The Georgian Report*

**Editor:** Lynn Paska

**Layout:** Bob Paska

**Contributors:**

- Johnnie Angus
- Nancy Angus
- David Kennison
- Joan Pearson
- Jonathan Pearson
- Rosemary Pannone
- Alice Polumbo
- Michael Todt
- James Wingate

*The Vestry*

- Christopher Henry
- Joyce Kapusta
- David Kennison, Sr. Warden
- Daniel Machold
- Rosemary Pannone
- Marilyn (Lynn) Paska
- Alice Polumbo
- Aileen Smith-Caruso, Clerk
- Michael Thiessen
- Michael Todt, Jr. Warden
- Barbara Wengrovius

*Office Staff*

- Donna Vrooman  
Administrative Assistant
- Jonathan Pearson IV  
Treasurer
- Robert Paska  
Financial Secretary
- Gerald Cooper  
Sexton

**GEORGIAN YOUNG ADULT NEWS**

Stephanie Todt was recognized at the Capital District YMCA's 22nd Annual Award Breakfast on March 19th. She was one of 39 students nominated from the 11 Schenectady County High Schools.

“Each year, the Glenville and Schenectady branches of the Capital District YMCA honor a local high school student and a teacher for contributions to their school and community. Although only one is chosen to receive the Outstanding Student and Outstanding Educator Award, all nominees are recognized for the exceptional contributions they have made and the impact they have had on their peers.”

Stephanie's nomination resulted from her academic record and her years of volunteer work, both at Sunnyview and as a leader in several school clubs.