NEWS RELEASE from Cairo-Durham Central School District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Heading: Cairo-Durham High School Students Earn NYS Seal of Civic Readiness

CAIRO, N.Y. — Twenty Cairo-Durham High School students earned the New York State Seal of Civic Readiness this year. This is a statewide recognition awarded to students who demonstrate a high level of civic knowledge, skills, and engagement.

The Seal of Civic Readiness is added to a student's high school diploma and transcript. To earn the seal, students must fulfill the requirements in two core areas: Civic Knowledge and Civic Participation. Students demonstrate civic knowledge through coursework, assessments, and research. Civic participation is demonstrated through community service, approved extracurricular activities, and experiential learning.

Throughout their high school careers and participation in the Civic Readiness program, students developed and implemented projects designed to address community needs and promote civic engagement.

On June 4, 2026, five student groups presented their projects to classmates, teachers, counselors, and administrators.

The projects included:

- **Clothing Closet** - Lily Haugh, Madeline Gouza, Anna Palmieri, and Jacob Young
- **Bridges of Inclusion** - Isaias Romero, Ruth Romero, Emily Moon, Candace Vlasaty, Desiree Jenes, and Brenna Fabiano
- **Book Box** - Bridget Murphy, Jaide Wolf, and Alexandra Richers
- **Middle School Interact Club** - Zoe Vogel and Kaitlyn Russell
- **Middle School Backpack Buddies Program** - Gianna Lendin, Grace Snedeker, Nia DeRose, Maggie Felton, and Destiny Mauriello

The students' civic initiatives were also featured by the New York State Education Department during Civic Learning Week on March 10, 2026.

Social studies and Civic Readiness teacher, Shelly Gouza said, “I am beyond proud of the dedication, hard work, and compassion these students have demonstrated throughout the process of earning their NYS Seal of Civic Readiness. They stepped outside their comfort zones, overcame fears of asking for donations, stood out in the cold to support their causes, presented in front of large groups, and collaborated with students they had never met before—all because they were passionate about making a difference.

Their commitment, perseverance, and willingness to serve others have been truly inspiring. These students make me incredibly proud to be a Cairo-Durham teacher, and I am excited to see the positive impact they will continue to have on our community and beyond.”

Student Services Counselor Justin Karker added, “It is with great pride that I was able to attend the final presentations for the Seal of Civic Readiness. It is amazing to know that we have a teacher like Mrs. Gouza who guides these students in their efforts to make the school community around them a better place. You can see that each student took part and made a genuine effort to meet the objectives of the seal. I especially appreciate that the students are able to view their community through a different lens and grow from the experience.”

The Cairo-Durham Central School District congratulates all students who earned the New York State Seal of Civic Readiness and commends them for their dedication to civic engagement and making a positive impact in their school and community.

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Please see attached photos of the students

CONTACT

Daniela Carrillo, Communication Specialist
communications@cairodurham.org
Cairo-Durham District Office: Tues & Thurs
Ext. 25150