



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

Make My Day: Senator Murphy's Grant Gives Somers Living History Program a \$5,000 Boost

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Somers, NY - The students at Somers Middle School knew they were about to take an entertaining and educational trip back into time. The loud report from Revolutionary War period muskets and a patriotic tune played on fife and drums signaled that "Living History Day" had begun. Held at the Middle School on May 23rd, the 11th Annual American Heritage Living History Day presented living historians highlighting key moments in American history from the 17th to the 21st Centuries, particularly those moments that helped shape the nation.

The importance of students being able to learn from local history struck a chord with Senator Terrence Murphy, who recently secured a grant of \$5,000 to help fund the program. An honored guest, Senator Murphy joined Westchester County Legislator John Testa and Somers Town Supervisor Rick Morrissey to celebrate Living History Day with students and to talk with them about the significance of our vast historical heritage.

"It was a joy to provide a grant to support the program. Kids are very visual. Living History Day is a great opportunity for students to have one-on-one experiences with historians who have an extensive knowledge of our country's legacy," said Senator Murphy. "There's an old saying, 'Those that don't learn from history are doomed to repeat it.' These students are our future leaders in academics, the arts, and government. What they learn about our past will ultimately help our communities

move forward in the years that lie ahead."

Westchester County Legislator John Testa stated, "I enjoyed joining my many friends in living history who dedicate themselves to keeping history alive. Especially Bill Wienecke, who developed this experience for his students and is a leader in promoting and teaching about the people and events who made this country the greatest to ever exist. Having this important event as a lead up to Memorial Day is very fitting and gave a wonderful opportunity to honor our true heroes, our veterans. Congratulations to all involved in making Living History Day happen."

"Somers is a wonderful place to live and we do so because of our veterans who fought for the freedoms we enjoy today," said Somers Town Supervisor Rick Morrissey. "Bill Wienecke lives the role of General Washington and has been great at engaging the students and getting them interested in learning more about our heritage. I often tell our seventh graders how lucky they are, because while other seventh graders are sitting in a classroom, they get to have an interactive history lesson with re-enactors, equipment and artifacts that range from the Revolutionary War up to the present day."



Navy veteran James Francis Potanovic, who served in the submarine service from 1942-46, was honored at this year's event. Potanovic served on the U.S.S Archerfish, which is best known for sinking the Japanese aircraft carrier Shinano in November 1944. The Shinano was the largest warship ever sunk by a submarine.

Other attractions included re-enactments of soldier's lives during the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, portrayals of early American historical figures, World War I and II re-enactors, and visits by local veterans. Bill Wienecke, who taught history for more than 35 years, organized the event. Wienecke continued his time-honored tradition of dressing up as George Washington, topped off with a powdered wig. This year, he was joined by other reenactors representing President James Madison and Alexander Hamilton.