

# The Buccaneer

Red Bank Regional High School / Student Newspaper / Nov. 22, 2022



## Has the SOURCE been saved?

BY IONA LESLIE

History is repeating itself at RBR: Two years ago, when the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF) attempted to rescind funding for programs like the SOURCE — the school’s much-loved and much-used counseling center — the resulting public outcry was so great that the DCF reversed course. Last month, the RBR community was rocked when lawmakers in the state’s capital announced a decision that would again result in the defunding and potential closure of the RBR institution. But as of just last week, a glimmer of hope has emerged.

So, after all the back and forth, where does the SOURCE stand? *The Buccaneer* aimed to find out.

SEE SOURCE, PAGE 6



EASY JACK PORTMAN / THE BUCCANEER  
SOURCE staffers (from left) Marisol Mondaca, Suzanne Keller and Stacy Liss, along with Riley the therapy dog, advocate for campus-based care as lawmakers waffle on how to fund youth services.

### HOW CAN YOU HELP?



In what the *New York Times* described as “one of its widest aerial attacks since the invasion began,” Russia last week bombarded six regions across Ukraine, resulting in widespread power outages in the Eastern European nation. “No power means no heat for Ukraine, and winter is quickly approaching,” noted RBR School Psychologist Suzanne Alvarado. Ms. Alvarado, who previously organized a springtime supply drive to benefit Ukrainians displaced by fighting, is now partnering with others in the Red Bank area to collect gently used or new, adult-sized, full-zip, polar fleece jackets on behalf of the Manalapan, N.J.-based nonprofit USA Stands with Ukraine. Jackets can be dropped at Ms. Alvarado’s office (123-B, Door #5) until Thanksgiving break.

### REFLECTION | John Moran

## Crisis in Ukraine comes to RBR

*On Oct. 18, RBR seniors attended a talk with members of a Red Bank family struggling to evacuate relatives from war-torn Ukraine. Here, one senior reflects on the poignant presentation.*

As a high school student, it’s hard to position yourself in the shoes of another. Despite our world being more connected than

SEE UKRAINE, PAGE 8



COURTESY OF RBR GUIDANCE  
William Blake, Madison Miller, Johanna Lopez, Kevin Lopez-Castro and Isabella Maddalena were some of the nearly 100 RBR seniors who were offered admission to area colleges and universities during RBR's Instant Decision Day earlier this month.

# These Bucs are college-bound!

COURTESY OF RBR GUIDANCE

And so are many of their peers, thanks to on-the-spot acceptances 97 RBR seniors received on Instant Decision Day, held Nov. 7 in the library.

Now in its 10th year, RBR Guidance Department — led by counselor Shalene McLaughlin — coordinates Instant Decision Day to streamline the often complicated and expensive process of applying to colleges. The program brings college admissions officers right here to campus; students who submit applications ahead of time can then complete their in-person interviews all at once. If admissions officers like what they see, they offer the RBR candidate an acceptance letter and — in many cases — merit scholarship award in the same conversation.

“It’s a great opportunity to expand exposure for students to interview with several schools” at once, Ms. McLaughlin noted, adding that this year marked the first time Instant Decision Day included out-of-state schools in addition to New Jersey colleges

and universities.

The schools that sent representatives to meet with senior prospects were as follows:

- Quinnipiac University (Hamden, Conn.)
- Ramapo College of New Jersey (Mahwah)
- Rider University (Lawrence, N.J.)
- New Jersey Institute of Technology (Newark)
- Georgian Court University (Lakewood, N.J.)
- Kutztown University (Kutztown, Pa.)
- Montclair University (Montclair, N.J.)
- Kean University (Union, N.J.)
- Fairleigh Dickinson Univ. (Florham, N.J.)
- Seton Hall University (South Orange, N.J.)

As of press time, Guidance was waiting to hear on about a dozen students’ pending admissions decisions, as well as merit scholarship totals offered by the participating schools. Last year, RBR seniors from the Class of 2022 were awarded \$1.96 million in scholarships on Instant Decision Day.



COURTESY OF RBR GUIDANCE  
RBR seniors (from left) Leah Portillo-Avalos, Edie Annecharico, Chris Vasquez, Avery Smith and Anthony Burden were all smiles after earning admission and, in some cases, scholarships to colleges and universities across the tri-state area.



# Actors prep Christmas classic for RBR stage

BY EASY JACK PORTMAN

Red Bank Regional High School is no stranger to performing classics for its fall play: Last year, Tennessee Williams' "A Streetcar Named Desire" lit up the stage; in the past, "The Crucible" by Arthur Miller and Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing" did as well. So when "A Christmas Carol," a Charles Dickens holiday staple, was announced for this semester, few were surprised — but plenty were excited! *The Buccaneer* got an exclusive interview with some of the cast and crew.

"I felt that it was timely," remarked Reuben Jackson, RBR's play director and theater teacher, when asked to explain the choice. "We live in a culture that has extreme wealth and prosperity, but our culture as a whole has a problem dealing with the poverty and the underclass and those less fortunate than themselves. I think that Dickens was speaking to that issue in the time he was living in as well as the future where we embrace some of the same elements as the time he was living in."

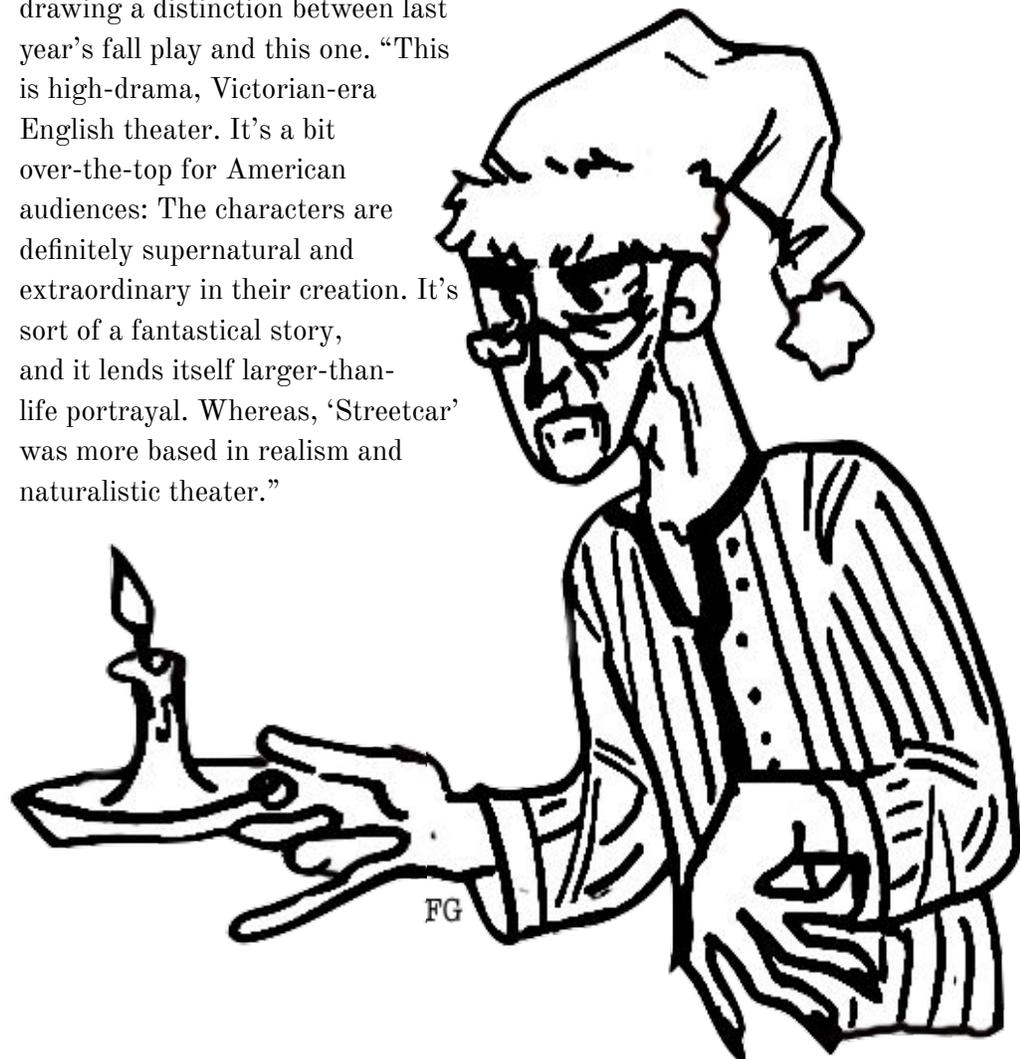
When asked about the directorial choice to go with a traditional staging of the Victorian-era play, Mr. Jackson was definitive: "I'm keeping it in the period, in 1843 when it was

written. Dickens speaks to the times without it being overly adapted to a trend or an unnecessary updating. It's a really terrific story that I think needs to be told, but it's done in such a way that it's not heavy-handed.

"This is definitely not based on the realism of Tennessee Williams," Mr. Jackson said, drawing a distinction between last year's fall play and this one. "This is high-drama, Victorian-era English theater. It's a bit over-the-top for American audiences: The characters are definitely supernatural and extraordinary in their creation. It's sort of a fantastical story, and it lends itself larger-than-life portrayal. Whereas, 'Streetcar' was more based in realism and naturalistic theater."

"When I first found out [about the selection of 'A Christmas Carol'], I was pretty excited," noted Dominick Sena, who will star in the lead role of Ebenezer Scrooge. "I was happy, because it's a show I know, and it's a pretty important one."

SEE CHRISTMAS CAROL, PAGE 5



# Culinary Club whips up winners!

BY VANESSA MATONE

Whether you nibbled hors d'oeuvres at 8th Grade Open House night or lapped up *arroz con leche* following last month's Hispanic Heritage Month assembly, you have the RBR Culinary Club to thank for bringing extra flavor to a slew of recent school events.

The Culinary Club's primary purpose is to teach students to cook and bake, but also how to run a business in the culinary world, explained James Enny, the chef who serves as the club's advisor and teaches

RBR's food classes. In practice, that means Culinary Club essentially has been playing the role of caterer for a number of high-profile RBR programs and performances, such as Back to School Night, 8th Grade Open House, and the Hispanic Heritage assembly.

"The Culinary Club is very hands-on," noted junior Freddy Munguia, a two-year veteran of the club.

When Culinary Club isn't prepping for a specific school event, members practice new recipes and enjoy them amongst themselves.

"The mini apple pies were my favorite to make," remarked Sofia Havard, a freshman and Culinary Club newcomer. Havard was referring, of course, to the cinnamon-flecked, bite-sized treats that were all the rage among guests at the parent-focused 8th Grade Open House night in October or September's Back to School Night.

Culinary Club cooks try to tailor their catering menus to each event; hence the *arroz con leche* for the Hispanic Heritage Month assembly and the more upscale treats (bacon-wrapped scallops, anyone?) at parent nights.

Members meet twice per month, as well as an hour or two prior to school events it's catering. Prior to the start of such an event, Culinary Club members can be seen setting up serving stations and putting finishing touches on dishes.

"My favorite part of Culinary Club is cooking because of the freedom," Havard noted, then added, "and it gives initiative."

The Culinary Club will keep busy in the month of December, with plans to cater the fall play and all VPA winter showcases. Upcoming recipes the club plans to test include cold-weather beverages — think hot chocolate, eggnog and hot apple cider — as well as a variety of holiday treats, including cookies,



CULINARY, FROM PAGE 4

## Buc cooks cater to RBR

flavored popcorn, and a variety of chocolate confections.

“I would like to make chocolate dip items and crêpes next,” Havard said.

“The Culinary Club should make beignets next,” Munguia added.

*Culinary club meets every other Wednesday after school in the RBR kitchen (behind the auditorium, near the preschool).*



TRINITY PHAM / THE BUCCANEER

Led by Chef James Enny (right), Culinary Club tests recipes and caters RBR events.

CHRISTMAS CAROL, FROM PAGE 3

## RBR stage gets ‘scrooged’ this winter

“I initially wanted to be Bob Cratchit — I kind of auditioned thinking I was gonna get that role,” the junior thespian continued.

“When I walked into the audition, I read for Scrooge. When I got the part, I was pretty ecstatic.”

Senior Madison Volpe, who will play all three of the ghosts who visit Ebenezer Scrooge, shared about the differences she was encountering in preparing for her role in “A Christmas Carol” as compared to previous RBR acting assignments.

“This is the first play I’ve been a part of,” Volpe quipped, noting she’s only done musicals at RBR.

“This one is a lot more technical with dialogue,” Volpe continued. “Especially for me, since I was in the ensemble [for the musical] last year, and I didn’t have any lines. So [the musical] revolved around my movement, but now it’s focusing on what I’m saying as well as what I’m doing.”

“I can’t compare the two or say

I like one more than the other, because they’re just so different,” Volpe added.

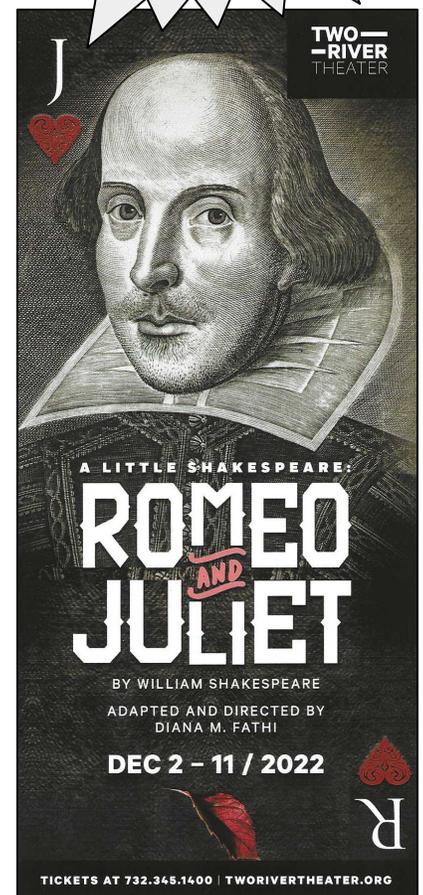
Volpe and Sena, both members of the RBR Academy of Visual and Performing Arts, explained their processes for getting into character.

“Me personally, I kinda use a method where I slow my breathing and take the mindset of that character,” Sena said before clarifying, “I try to become that character.”

“I take pieces of myself and put them into the character that I’m playing,” Volpe contrasted. “That goes for anything I’m doing, whether it’s a scene or a monologue in class or a production like this. I think that even if I haven’t experienced something that my character has, I can always work with what I know and apply similar situations.”

*“A Christmas Carol” will run from Dec. 1-4 in the RBR auditorium.*

Featuring  
five RBR  
performers!





SOURCE, FROM PAGE 1

## Backlash causes backtrack on SOURCE funding decision

### What is the SOURCE?

The SOURCE is RBR's School-Based Youth Services (SBYS) program. It is meant to provide mental health services to the students of RBR, but according to the dozens of students who visit its office next to The Pit each week — some of whom were interviewed for this story — the SOURCE does so much more.

Since its founding in 2000, the SOURCE has built strong relationships with the students, teachers and families of the community, according to SOURCE Supervisor Suzanne Keller. The SOURCE has created and run many clubs that are integral to RBR's identity. The Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) and the Dreamers Club were both initially run through the SOURCE. Today, the SOURCE coordinates the Teen Outreach Program (TOP), Boys to Men group, the Ridge Road Run, and many other clubs and programs.

The SOURCE also liaises with

non-school organizations to provide resources for low-income students, Ms. Keller noted.

Examples include a partnership with LensCrafters to supply eyeglasses, connections to food pantries, and access to scholarships. In the past, the SOURCE — which maintains an active fundraising arm and draws some funding from the school district itself — has been able to send RBR students to Brookdale Community College and even continued to support some after they secured associate's degrees.

### So is New Jersey defunding mental health services?

Not exactly. On Oct. 3, DCF announced a plan to *expand* resources for students statewide. To accomplish this, DCF said it would nix its SBYS grants and reallocate funds to a new program dubbed New Jersey Statewide Student Support Services (NJ4S).

NJ4S would implement a

“hub-and-spoke” model that would place command centers in each of New Jersey's 15 vicinages. (New Jersey's state court system is divided into 15 territories, called vicinages, which each cover between one and three counties. RBR is located within the Monmouth Vicinage, which consists only of Monmouth County and is based in Freehold.)

According to the rollout plan on the agency's website, DCF would staff the command centers, known as “hubs,” with administrative and mental health professionals, whose job it would be to build “spokes” out into the community to organizations that could provide a host of support services to students, from mental health care to language and transportation services to career readiness training to drug and alcohol prevention programs. Once their spokes are established, DCF's plan calls for the NJ4S hubs to

SEE SOURCE, PAGE 7

SOURCE, FROM PAGE 6

## Gov. Murphy: SOURCE will stay under revised NJ4S plan

coordinate with schools and local organizations like libraries and rec centers, to get services to kids.

“While it is commendable that Governor Murphy and DCF are working to strengthen mental health services for all New Jersey students, it is counterproductive to eliminate exemplary school-based programs, such as the SOURCE,” RBR Superintendent Louis Moore wrote in an open letter to RBR teachers and families on Oct. 6.

### What would NJ4S mean for RBR?

The Monmouth Superior Court Vicinage — which encompasses all of RBR’s sending districts — is based in Freehold. Organizations seeking to become the hub for their vicinage must submit a detailed proposal to DCF by Feb. 1, 2023. After the state agency reviews the proposals, names its 15 hubs, and awards NJ4S grant money to each one, DCF plans to have the hubs up and running for the 2023-2024 school year.

That means, in the space of about seven months, hubs must be created, professionals must be hired and trained, and hubs must establish both spokes and relationships with the schools, libraries and other delivery organization in their vicinages. All — or at least a substantial part — of this work is to be done by Sept. 23, 2023, according to the DCF timetable.

The NJ4S system would reduce the approximately 90 SBYS programs currently in operation to 15 hubs and move the locus of control for those services outside of schools, Ms. Keller pointed out. Those 15 hubs would serve approximately 1.3 million New Jersey public school students. The Freehold hub would theoretically assume responsibility for coordinating support services for about 97,000 students across Monmouth County’s 191 public schools.

Beyond potential issues of scale, Ms. Keller and other SBYS programs have been voicing concerns to state legislators about the jarring effect the NJ4

reorganization could have on students who are more familiar and comfortable with local SBYS programs.

Ms. Keller was quick to point out that she did not oppose the mission of NJ4S. But, she said, the creation of the hubs shouldn’t come at the expense of effective SBYS programs like the SOURCE. With fewer than 100 SBYS organizations founded since the program’s inception in the 1980s, Ms. Keller noted that most of New Jersey’s students don’t have access to an organization like the SOURCE. She suggested in a recent interview with *The Buccaneer* that the NJ4S program be piloted in an area of the state without a SBYS program. Once an effective hub is up and running, NJ4S could copy that model and set up hubs in other underserved parts of the state — without detracting from SBYS programs that already work.

“The SOURCE  
saves lives.”

– Allie Michalski, RBR senior

### How have lawmakers responded?

Members of the RBR community had a lot to say in the wake of the DCF’s announcement. Faced with a

funding cut that would spell the end of the SOURCE, Ms. Keller said many reached out to her about the issue, including other SBYS program directors and a senior analyst for the governor’s office.

At Ms. Keller and Dr. Moore’s urging, RBR faculty and families sent emails and made phone calls to state representatives, urging a revision or outright repeal of the NJ4S program.

Just last week, on Nov. 16, the governor’s office issued a statement pledging to keep SBYS grant money in its budget proposal for the 2024 fiscal year, which covers April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024.

RBR senior Allie Michalski, who says the SOURCE helped her discover an interest in social work, has written to several New Jersey publications, urging them to cover the DCF’s decisions and help publicize the potential implications of them.

When asked about the importance of having a program like the SOURCE available to RBR students, Michalski was blunt: “The SOURCE saves lives.”

UKRAINE, FROM PAGE 1

## Presentation highlights struggles of Ukrainians facing fighting, displacement

ever, our evolutionary tendencies toward egocentrism make true empathy — the capacity to be sensitive to the feelings of another without having had the same experiences — elusive. This doesn't mean we are incapable of this vital ability but rather, as members of the human race, that we need to actively *seek* empathy in order to achieve it.

In our current media environment, it's difficult to separate truth from half-truths. Voices and viewpoints are all around us, and at times, it can seem as if everyone is pushing an agenda on you. Even we intrepid and forever adventurous Buccaneers have deep political and economic differences within our population. Everyone forms an opinion based on his or her own knowledge of the world; that is why we need to *seek* the opinions of the unheard in order to truly understand a viewpoint different from our own.

The historical and geopolitical circumstances regarding Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 are complex and layered. It's nearly impossible to know the ramifications of any foreign war while the conflict rages. In our relative place of comfort and safety, it's hard to imagine the sound of air-strike sirens late at night warning an innocent population of imminent annihilation. That's why we must *seek* to see beyond the fog of war.

The RBR chapter of the National Honor Society (NHS), under the direction of advisor Andrew Forrest, invited Red Bank residents David and Nathalie Halbout and their niece, Maiia Dvorina, to give us RBR seniors a human perspective on the evolving and tragic war in Ukraine. Mr. Halbout served as keynote speaker, attempting to convey the horrors abroad. Supplemented with video clips, the presenters put out everything they had into trying to communicate the dire situation in Ukraine.

The harrowing story of how the Halbouts helped Maiia evacuate the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv — which has not seen ground combat, but has been under heavy



COURTESY OF ANDREW FORREST

Red Bank resident Nathalie Halbout (center) visited RBR last month with her niece, Maiia Dvokina (second from left), to share Maiia's experience as a Ukrainian refugee with RBR seniors like (from left) Michael Freeman, Kate Smigie and William Blake.

bombardment since the Russian invasion began — made us all witnesses to this war: We learned how crowded the train stations were as Ukrainians fled their country. We learned how the apartment complex adjacent to Maiia's was targeted and destroyed by a Russian missile. We learned how resistant the Ukrainian people are, fighting back to protect their homeland. We learned how Maiia was dealing with her new life in the United States. But most importantly, we learned how we can help (see sidebars).

In conjunction with the SOURCE, the NHS is collecting donations to fund the purchase of first aid kit for Ukrainians on the front lines of the war with Russia. Those kit will be assembled and mailed out in the coming weeks, according to Mr. Halbout.

In addition, RBR School Psychologist Suzanne Alvarado is collecting gently used or new, adult-sized, full-zip, polar fleece jackets on behalf of the Manalapan, N.J.-based nonprofit USA Stands with Ukraine.

At the end of the Mr. Halbout's presentation to the RBR senior class, I was able to pose a couple of questions to Mr. Halbout to gain greater insight into his perspective on the conflict. The following conversation has been edited for clarity and length.

SEE UKRAINE, PAGE 9

UKRAINE, FROM PAGE 8

## Red Bank couple, refugee niece share firsthand knowledge of war

**JM:** *Is the grassroots humanitarian effort to support Ukrainian refugees and fighters something uniquely Ukrainian, or does it represent an aspect of the wider human experience?*

**DH:** Although the community of the Ukrainian people is strong, the bigger picture is how the global community is helping out during this crisis.

**JM:** *How long has tension existed between Russia and Ukraine?*

**DH:** It all depends on perspective. Some may say the escalation of 2022, while others may say 2014 [when Russia invaded and annexed Ukraine’s

Crimean Peninsula]. While both points are true ... the conflict between the two groups has lasted centuries, from World War II to the 12th century.

Us RBR seniors bore witness to the ongoing crisis in Ukraine during Mr. Halbout’s presentation. It is now up to us and the global community to *seek* the truth. This world is ever-changing and confusing, but even if we are just high school students, we still must *seek* truth in the face of uncertainty.



### HOW CAN YOU HELP?

The SOURCE and the RBR National Honor Society, which was responsible for bringing the Halbouts to speak at RBR last month, are collecting funds to assemble first aid kits to donate to Ukrainians in active combat zones. A donation of \$110 will cover the cost of assembling and shipping a complete kit; smaller donations can be made to finance the purchase of individual items for the kits.

|  |      |
|--|------|
| COMBAT GAUZE: Sterile bandage treated with chemicals to quickly staunch bleeding.  | \$42 |
| CAT TOURNIQUET: Stops blood flow to an extremity following traumatic injury.   | \$30 |
| CHEST SEAL: The seal consists of two sticky pads that can be used to close a chest wound, thus allowing a victim to breathe until medical treatment is available.  | \$15 |
| EMERGENCY BANDAGES: Used to apply pressure to wounds and stop bleeding.  | \$7  |
| EMT SHEARS: Used to safely cut through shoes, clothing, seatbelts and other impediments to gain access to a wound without harming the patient.   | \$7  |
| MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS: These include but are not limited to gloves, alcohol pads, surgical tape, stretch gauze, sterile gauze sponges, permanent markers, and Coban wrap (a self-adherent elastic wrap that functions like tape, but sticks only to itself). | \$5  |
| UNCOMPRESSED GAUZE: Highly absorbent cotton gauze ideal for dressing wounds.   | \$4  |

Make donation checks payable to *The SOURCE @ RBR*, with “first aid kit for Ukraine” in the memo line.

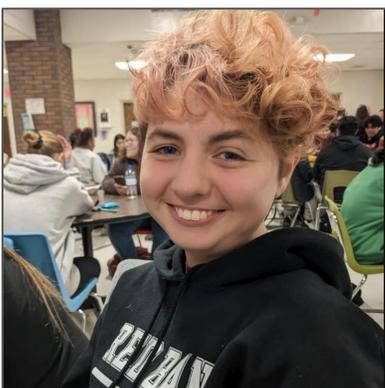
**BUC BEAT |** Voices from the halls of RBR

Q: What is your favorite Thanksgiving food?

**FRESHMEN**

“Green bean casserole, because I’ve grown up with it. It’s always been what my family’s brought to every Thanksgiving gathering.

— *Eliza Connelly*

**SOPHOMORES**

“Potatoes, because they go with everything!”

— *Ky Clark*

**JUNIORS**

“Sweet potatoes, because I like the marshmallows!”

— *Nico Piesco*

**SENIORS**

“I don’t like Thanksgiving food — this year, I’m probably going to eat shrimp!”

— *Rubi Bautista (left)*

“Mashed potatoes — with the skin part specifically!”

— *Hane Linares (right)*

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*The Buccaneer* staff meets after school on Thursdays in Room 242. The paper is always looking for students interested in writing, editing, layout design, photography and illustration. If you want to receive notifications about newspaper meetings and deadlines, join our Google Classroom (3vtuxok) and/or Remind thread (text “@bucpaper” to the number 81010). Any questions, ask a *Buccaneer* staff member or stop by Room 242.

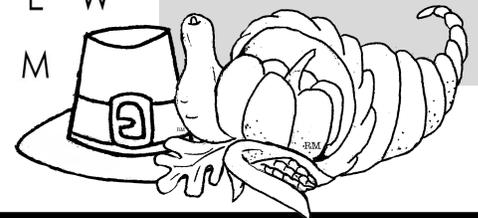
# 'TIS THE SEASON | Leonardo Morales-Pitalua



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 R H T G O M S F K K S X I G U I M

## WORD SEARCH

- Turkey
- Thanksgiving
- Apple pie
- Gravy
- Pumpkin
- Family
- Gratitude
- November
- Thursday
- Celebrate



## GROUP PROJECTS | Ash Pena-Martinez





COURTESY OF THE JUAREZ FAMILY

Members of the Calpulli Mexican Dance Company – including RBR senior Maria Juarez and junior Angel Velasco – regularly perform at Count Basie Center for the Arts in Red Bank. Student members of the troupe closed out RBR’s Hispanic Heritage Month assembly last month and (here) danced as part of Count Basie’s recent *Día de los Muertos* celebration.

## EXPLAINER

# Hispanic Heritage Month

National Hispanic Heritage Month is an American celebration that recognizes the contributions of Spanish-speakers to American society and culture. First observed in 1968, Hispanic Heritage Month – which began as a week-long celebration – now runs from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15, to cover the period during which many Latin American celebrate the anniversaries of their independence. In recent years, there has been an effort to rebrand Hispanic Heritage Month as Latin American or Latinx Heritage Month, in an effort to focus on the Spanish-speaking communities of Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean and distance the celebration from former colonizer Spain.

OPINION | JULIANNE STAUB

# Hispanic Heritage revisited: Did the assembly miss the mark?



*In response to building sentiment among students that RBR’s cultural assemblies were failing to represent the groups they were meant to celebrate, the Academy of Visual and Performing Arts held a two-day in-house “field trip” in March to grapple with issues of diversity and representation within the VPA. On Oct. 14, RBR student groups, led by the VPA, staged the annual Hispanic Heritage Month assembly. The Buccaneer solicited students’ thoughts about and reactions to the revised presentation.*

Per tradition, the 2022 Hispanic Heritage month assembly consisted largely of VPA student acts that showcased performers’ abilities and aimed to honor their peers’ heritage. These performances included

instrumental performances, dances and readings of poems and short stories scripted by Spanish-speaking

SEE HERITAGE, PAGE 13

HERITAGE, FROM PAGE 12

## Revamped Hispanic Heritage Month assembly showed improvement, room for more

celebrities and students. One such student was sophomore Sam Martinez. Sam, who uses they/them pronouns, helped open the show with a panel of bilingual speakers from the RBR Multicultural Club, then delivered a powerful spoken-word piece spoke about their struggles as a Latinx in America. As a Hispanic student, Sam said they appreciated the 2022 program's level of inclusivity, especially compared to last year's presentation.

"The inclusion of different kinds of culture was a nice touch to really value each part of Hispanic culture," Sam said following the assembly.

In particular, Sam pointed to the flag entrance, where non-VPA students recruited by the Multicultural Club and RBR's Spanish Honor Society paraded into the auditorium waving flags that represented Spanish-speaking nations from Mexico to Chile and everywhere in between. A couple of proud students hoisted a giant Argentinian flag, which made students feel seen and represented, Sam noted.

Sam particularly enjoyed the final performance of the assembly, by student members of a local Mexican dance company.

"The step dance showed authentic Mexican traditions from people who practiced and worked hard to represent themselves," Sam said.

Although Sam appreciated the

move toward more authentic representations, they were not without criticisms.

"The issue I had with the assembly was the way people in the VPA academies were required to participate," Sam said. "Hispanic Heritage Month is about people who make their culture known in America. Art and culture can't be forced. It's not a problem that non-Hispanics are in the assembly, but I wish those non-Hispanics were those who cared about the culture."

One student in the audience who requested anonymity because of sensitive issues of race and culture, said he also enjoyed the final dance performance, but he didn't feel his culture was represented.

"I think the music they played was not representative of my culture," the student said, adding that he would like to see assembly organizers reach out to students from a variety of Spanish-speaking backgrounds for future productions. "The Shakira music was embarrassing, as that isn't the traditional heritage that the assembly promised to share."

Going forward, Sam said, Multicultural Club will begin preparations for the 2023 assembly well ahead of time, to allow the club to recruit new members and collaborate with non-members who want to contribute to the assembly.

## EXPLAINER

### Day of the Dead

BY ROSA TOCHIHUITL-JUAREZ

Day of the Dead (*Día de los Muertos*) is a Mexican tradition that is observed on the first and second days of November. During that time, people honor their loved ones who have passed away, along with their ancestors – a stark contrast to Halloween which, although it is close to *Día de los Muertos* on the calendar, has a very different focus. Day of the Dead is a lively celebration that often sees Mexicans dancing and parading down city streets – or, sometimes, directly into graveyards! Celebrants set up altars (example below) at loved ones' gravesites. They fill the altars with the deceased's favorite dishes, the sweet baked good known as *pan de muerto* (literally, "bread of the dead"), and a glass of water or other beverage. Flowers called *cempasúchil*, or marigolds, are also featured on Day of the Dead altars, where their bright orange and yellow hues commemorate the joyful parts of the deceased's life.



# Bucs see the ‘signs’

COURTESY OF RBR ATHLETICS

Six RBR seniors signed letters of intent to continue their scholastic and sports careers at the collegiate level in 2023. The athletes and their families gathered with school officials at the Buccaneer mosaic on National Signing Day, Wednesday, Nov. 9, before the seniors — decked out in their new colors — inked commitments:

- Paige Kelly signed on to play lacrosse for the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, while teammate Molly Wood will take her talents to Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.
- Ryder Villani will play lacrosse for the University of Delaware’s next year, while teammate Henry Spencer will suit up for the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado.
- Nate Ruth will trade his Buccaneer baseball cap for the gold and green of Felician University, in Rutherford, N.J.
- Janey Wright will hit the tennis court for Marist College in Poughkeepsie, N.Y.



## WORLD LANGUAGE WELCOMES NEW HONOR SOCIETY MEMBERS

*L’homme qui sait deux langues en vaut deux* (the man who knows two languages is worth twice as much): So goes the motto of the RBR French Honor Society, which welcomed 23 new members to its ranks in a candlelit ceremony before faculty, family and friends in the auditorium on Thursday, Nov. 3. The same night saw the Spanish Honor Society swear in more than 30 new members, while RBR’s Italian Honor Society said *benvenuti* to 53 inductees. At the ceremony, new inductees committed themselves to the philanthropic and fellowship activities of their respective societies and took a moment outside the classroom to celebrate the cultures they’ve been studying. *“In classe, abbiamo imparato a parlare, leggere, scrivere e a capire la lingua italiana, tutto grazie alle nostre fantastiche professoressa,”* Italian Honor Society President Andrew Savko reminded the new inductees. *“In class, we learned to speak, read, write and understand the Italian language, all thanks to our fantastic teachers.”* Those skills, Savko noted, will serve inductees well beyond their time at RBR. *“Una lingua può costituire un forte legame fra persone di varie origini etniche e religiose – a language can constitute a strong tie between people of various ethnic and religious origins.”*



COURTESY OF NANCY RONAYNE  
RBR French Honor Society President Hane Linares (right) lit the flame of junior Cayla Lamegos-Outwin while classmate and fellow FHS inductee Emma Kilbride (left) looked on.

FOOTBALL, FROM PAGE 14

## Bucs look ahead to Thanksgiving game, recapturing trophy

touchdowns in regular-season play, and senior quarterback Pierce Olsen, who threw for over 1,300 yards and 15 touchdowns.

“It all started last year, just having a full year of experience under my belt,” Olsen said of his evolution as the Bucs’ signal-caller. “It allowed me to come into this season more calm and confident.

“My favorite part about running the offense is having all my boys around me,” Olsen continued, “I believe I have some of the best receivers in the Shore [Conference], and I get to throw to all of them.”

Olsen had various options this year, from junior Gunnar Eckerstrom, who amassed 598 total yards and nine touchdowns while splitting his time between wide receiver and running back, to senior wideout Ky’Yam Martin, who finished his senior campaign with 590 receiving yards and eight touchdowns; and senior wide receiver Lamar Hicks, one of the most versatile players in the Shore Conference this year, who was good for 15 touchdowns and 886 total yards.

After the first two games, the Buccaneer defense was lights-out. Through the final eight games of the season, the Bucs’ iron curtain gave up an average of just 10.5 points per game. Senior cornerback Brendan Laughlin was active in the backfield all season long, and junior defensive lineman Griffin Egan constantly put pressure on opposing quarterbacks.

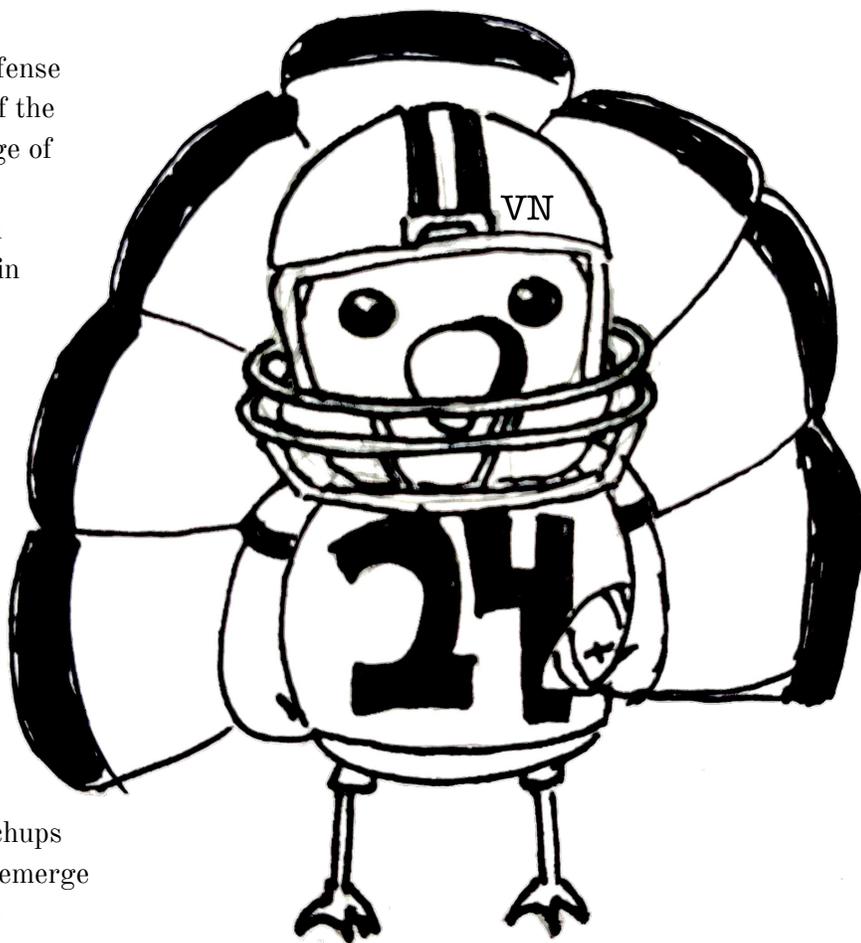
Despite finishing the regular season by taking four of their five final matchups, RBR did not qualify for the state playoffs, but the Bucs made the most of their invitation to compete in the inaugural NJSIAA Regional Invitational Tournament. New this year, the regional invitational tournament gave teams who didn’t make the playoff cut a chance to play for bragging rights within. RBR was one of 80 teams that took part in the new tournament, with schools bracketed into eight-team “super sections” that saw interesting matchups play out across the state. The top two teams to emerge from the two-game tournament faced off for the

NJSIAA Regional Invitational Tournament trophy in their section.

The Bucs took care of business, winning the South Group 4 tournament in dominant fashion. They posted lopsided victories in all three games: 42-7 against Princeton, 36-7 over Steinert, and they went 33-6 in the championship game against Brick Memorial.

The Bucs look to finish strong in their final appearance of the year, which happens to be the 99th anniversary of the RBR-Long Branch Thanksgiving Day rivalry. Kickoff is at 10 AM on RBR’s home turf, as the Bucs look to bring the Ty Lewis Memorial Trophy back to Red Bank.

“We rallied the troops and fought for a new goal, which was to win the regional invitational,” Senior center Hank Dal Pra summed up the 2022 season. “Now, we change gears and focus on bringing the [trophy] back to where it belongs.”





# 🏆 Volleyball, track, trainers all earn Principal's Cup nod

COURTESY OF RBR ATHLETICS

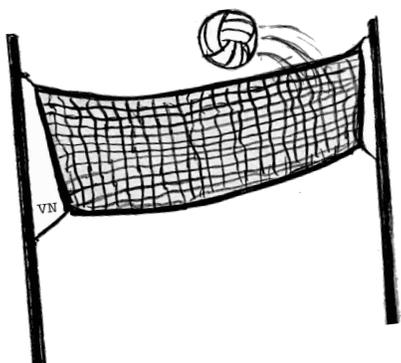
The Principal's Cup results for the 2021-2022 school year have been tabulated, and the recipients of the school award — which recognizes academic achievement by RBR athletes during the previous school year — are as follows:

- ❖ Best team GPA for the fall sports season: Volleyball (98.18, pictured below), the first win in program history.
- ❖ Best team GPA for the winter sports season: Student athletic trainers (97.82, top left)
- ❖ Best team GPA for the spring sports season: Girls' outdoor track (97.69, near left)

The boys' outdoor track team (pictured lower left) earned an honorable mention for notching the greatest increase in GPA between the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 campaigns. The runners boosted their team average from 91.81 to 95.82, a year-over-year increase of 4.4 percent.

Principal Julius Clark and Assistant Principal Robert Donohoe treated the winning athletes to a celebratory breakfast on Wednesday, Nov. 9, the day before the Teachers' Convention break.





# Bucs spike the ball on successful season

BY ROWAN MARTIN

RBR Girls' Volleyball Coach Allison Bowers ended her season not on the court but in an Italian restaurant in Shrewsbury.

"This was a great year for the growth of the program across the board," Coach Bowers told her squad, which gathered last week to close out the 2022 campaign with a banquet dinner. "On the varsity level, we looked like a completely different team at the end of the season — and all for the best. There was no question of our ability at the start, but it was incredible to see us embrace our potential — not just as individuals but as a unit. This was achieved through your hard work, dedication, and internalization of feedback."

As the team bid a heartfelt goodbye to six seniors — Sarah Blankley, Tessa Cannizzaro, Sarah Doughan, Daisy Hernandez-Paez, Shani Lynch and Ella McCourt — the Lady Bucs reflected on the highlights of their growth year.

The way Coach Bowers saw it, the team "defined expectations" by battling their way to the second round of the state tournament — a feat that hadn't been accomplished in over a decade.

on October twenty-ninth. In its Oct. 29 first-round match, the team squared off against Burlington

Township and gutted out a thrilling nail-biter of a victory. RBR took the first set 31-29 and the third 26-24, both times taking it to overtime and ultimately handing Coach Bowers her first state tournament win.

"Fought our hearts out," Coach Bowers said. "Showed our fight, intelligence and grit."

The Lady Bucs exited the tournament soon after, but the memory of that hard-fought victory still buoys their fearless leader:

"I left there all the way up on Cloud 9!" Coach Bowers told the squad.

The goal for 2023? Round two of the state tournament — or maybe even a championship crown. It will be a tall order, given the departure of a solid senior class, but outgoing captain Shani Lynch said the team was on a good trajectory.

"RBR volleyball has not only taught me how to play the sport, but also allowed me to build friendships that will last on and off the court," Lynch recently said to round out the season. "I can't thank Coach Bowers enough for taking the time to help develop me as a player as well as a person. A piece of my heart will forever stay with this program."



COURTESY OF ALLISON BOWERS

The RBR Girls' Volleyball team last week bid goodbye to six seniors at its end-of-season banquet at Corbo & Sons in Shrewsbury.

# Bucs football bounces back after slow start

BY TIM KELLY & EVAN SABO

Another year of RBR football is in the books, and while the Bucs don't have any fancy titles or championship wins to show for it, they pulled off a pretty impressive feat, flipping their record from a losing one (4-7) in the 2021-2022 campaign to a respectable 7-3 this year. As the season drew to a close, *The Buccaneer* sat down with the team to reflect on the turnaround.

Going into the year the Bucs' main goal was improvement, which required buy-in from every single one player. The team took pride in the high-intensity

practices they put themselves through to prepare for Friday nights under the lights.

"We do not think about those types of things," starting running back Jah'Cire Jones retorted when asked if the team set a preseason goal of making the playoffs or notching a certain number of wins. "Our expectations were to go hard every day in practice, so when game day came, we would be ready to give 110 percent."

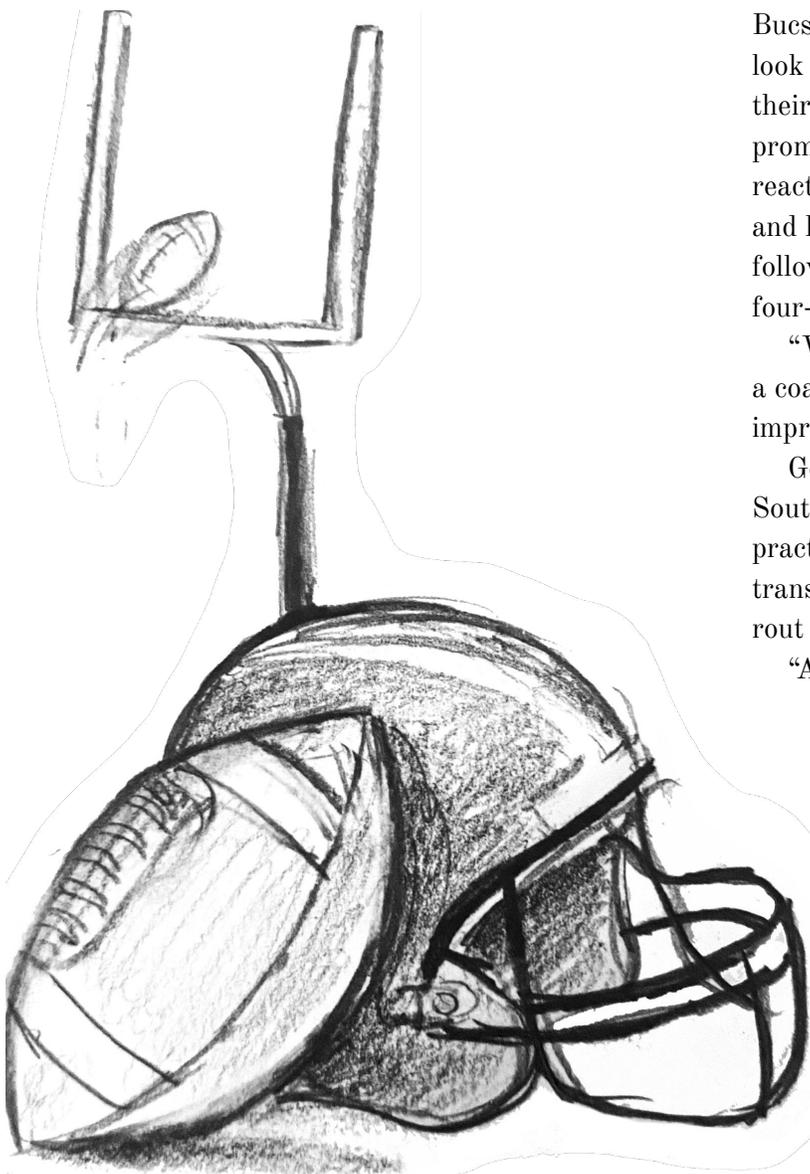
Constant, incremental improvement and a heavy focus on practice sessions were head coach Shane Fallon's twin targets in his second season with the Bucs. That slow-and-steady approach didn't always look like it was going to pay off. The Bucs dropped their first two games on the road, which might have prompted a dramatic, back-to-the-drawing-board reaction from a less seasoned staff, but Coach Fallon and his team stayed the course. The result? The Bucs followed up their lackluster start with a sparkling four-game win streak.

"We were disappointed starting off 0-2 ... but we as a coaching staff felt there was a lot of stuff we could improve on" Coach Fallon reflected recently.

Going into Week 3's matchup against Toms River South, Coach Fallon said his squad had its best practice in terms of focus and intensity, which translated to the Bucs' first win of the season, a 31-12 rout of the Indians.

"After we won that first game, the level of intensity of each practice ... just repeated itself through the entirety of the win streak," Coach Fallon noted. After felling Toms River South, the Bucs recorded decisive wins against Neptune, Holmdel and, most notably, Brick Township in a late-game comeback that came down to the final 2 minutes of play.

Credit for the Bucs' offensive success goes to Jones, who finished his junior campaign with 650 all-purpose yards and five





# Girls' soccer gobbles up the competition

BY CATIE MARRIN

As the fall sports season comes to an end, RBR Girls' Soccer Coach Ashley Rosenberg was full of pride as she reflected on the squad's 9-8 final record, noting she "just really proud of the team and how they've come out this season."

The season, she said, was highlighted by a handful of big wins against tough opponents, but the most memorable game was the girls' 2-1 Oct. 24 road win over St. John Vianney, which saw them crowned B North champions — the first division title in program history.

Forward and co-captain Ellie Lynch led the squad with an incredible senior season, finishing with 13 goals and four assists on the year.

Junior Laila Castell also had a standout season. Castell, who recently made a verbal commitment to play soccer for the Army West Point Black Knights, finished her junior campaign with eight goals complemented by seven assists.

"We all came together this season and this year," Lunch said recently. "I think that what we've done ... is really impressive."



COURTESY OF ASHLEY ROSENBERG

Senior Kelsey Peduto (center photo) flashed a sign of strength that carried the RBR girls' soccer team to the first divisional title in program history. Next year, coach Ashley Rosenberg (right photo, center) will have to make do without a talented senior corps that includes (from left) Peduto, Julia Nicolay, Lily Moraller, Marley Victor, Ellie Lynch and Emily Juco.



 **BOYS' BASKETBALL**

Boys basketball is back and looking to build on an impressive 15-11 finish to the 2021-2022 campaign. Following the graduation of many key players, the Bucs are looking to replenish their talent pool. A major change comes in the form of new head coach George Sourlis, who brings 30 years' experience and five state championship titles to his new post. Returning seniors Nick Valentino and Collin Teter are two key players to keep an eye on for the upcoming season.

**FIRST GAME = Thursday, Dec. 15 @ 6:30 PM  
Home vs. Long Branch**

 **GIRLS' BASKETBALL**

Coming off a very promising 2021-2022 season, the Lady Bucs are in a great position to do damage in the Shore Conference this year. With an offense led by senior Josie Munson, junior Camryn Gardner and sophomore Caroline Polloway, the girls look to make it seven straight winning seasons for the program.

**FIRST GAME = Thursday, Dec. 8 @ 5:15 PM  
Home vs. Long Branch**

 **ICE HOCKEY**

After a down year, the Bucs ice hockey team looks to improve on its 3-12-2 record from the 2021-2022 season. Nearly the entire team from last year is set to return, which will give the Bucs the upper hand in experience over their future opponents. Seniors Anthony Pinto, Henry Spencer and Shamus Murphy and sophomore Will Ogden are some players to keep an eye on as the hockey team strives to get back on track.

**FIRST GAME = Thursday, Dec. 8 @ 6:25 PM  
Home (Red Bank Armory) vs. Ocean**

 **SWIMMING**

The Bucs swim team is ready for another year of dominating the lanes throughout the Shore Conference. Both the boys' and the girls' teams are coming off winning seasons, and with the squads returning largely intact this year, the Bucs look to build on their success from 2021-2022. Swimmers to watch for this year include seniors Grace Porter, Vienna Eckerstrom, Nate Richards, and junior Luke Bardinas.

**FIRST MEET= Thursday, Dec. 21 @ 2:30 PM  
Rock sports club, Tinton Falls vs. RBC**



COURTESY OF AIDAN DONOGHUE  
Buc swimmers Katrina Phillips, Edie Annecharico, Isabella Lopez and Raegan Morton fueled up after a practice last year. The 2021-2022 campaign was a successful one for both the boys' and girls' squads.