

Garden State Skating Club

Newsletter Produced by GSSC Junior Board

Star On Ice: Maren Vaclavik

By Francesca Olivieri

Maren Vaclavik is 13 years old and in the 8th grade. She lives in Holmdel, NJ and has been skating for 6 years. Maren took an interest in skating because of her older sister who also was skating at this time, and fell in love with it. One of Maren's favorite skating memories is the annual Holiday Show. She is coached by Adriana Ryan and Alicia Sprengel and her favorite skill to do on the ice is a camel spin. Her next skating goal is to land her axel. Something Maren enjoys most about skating is the people she is surrounded by. Outside of skating, she enjoys listening to various types of music and hanging out with her friends.

Congratulations on being our Star On Ice of this edition, Maren! Keep on working hard!



Welcome New GSSC Members

Sabella DelMaestro, Abbie Ferraro,
Emma Purcell, Tessa Rodd & Ella Toth

2021 - 2022 GSSC Junior Board

Junior Board Officers

Camryn Aprilante, Anna Merlino, & Noelle Zavattieri, Presidents Evelyn Jones & Jocelyn Xu, Vice Presidents
Syena Schaad, Secretary Lindsey Lissauer, Treasurer

Junior Board Chairs & Members

William Lissauer, Assistant to Membership Chair

Anna Merlino, Editor-in-Chief of Newsletter Francesca Olivieri, Assistant to Test Chair & Assistant to Editor-In-Chief of Newsletter
Sophia Newman, Hospitality Chair Maren Vaclavik, Community Service Chair

Beach Sweeps

By Anna Merlino

The Monmouth County Parks System is “committed to improving the quality of life of the citizens” by “providing open space, park and recreation areas, facilities, programs, and services” as stated on their website. Throughout the past year, Garden State Skating Club’s Junior Board has partnered with the Parks System by participating in three beach sweeps. Junior Board members gathered together alongside Monmouth County Parks System volunteers at Bayshore Waterfront Park and Popamora Point with trash bags, garbage grabbers, and gloves to pick up litter on the sand. The Junior Board was surprised at all of the garbage existing on the beaches, and it made a lasting impression on their interest in continuing to help keep the parks and beaches clean in the years to come. The Junior Board’s interest in other volunteer opportunities through the Parks System has also risen since we are now registered as an official volunteer group through the parks.



Nicole’s Heart Foundation

By Jocelyn Xu

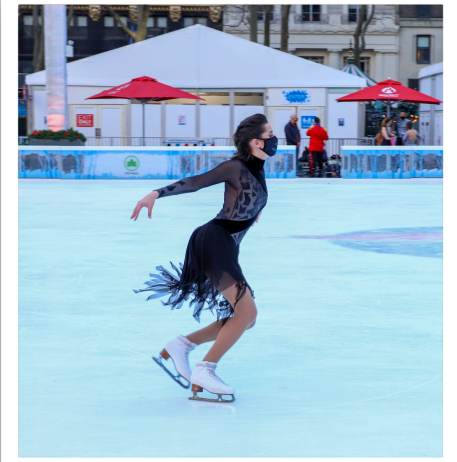
Nicole’s Heart Foundation is an organization dedicated to educating about and raising funds for cardiac screenings for high school athletes. The foundation is named in honor of Nicole, who had just graduated from high school when she tragically passed away after sudden cardiac arrest. This year, in support of their mission, Nicole’s Heart Foundation hosted their annual five-kilometer fundraiser virtually to circumvent the limits of the health pandemic.

Participants in the fundraiser were able to run, walk, or, in the case of our GSSC skaters, skate the 5k to support ongoing efforts for heart health. Our skaters were then awarded with certificates at the annual banquet, marking the successful conclusion of an event for a very worthy cause.



Get Up Awards

By Noelle Zavattieri



The “Get Up Champions” program honors and celebrates nominated skaters all over the nation for the passion they put into the sport of figure skating. The USFS website explains, “Our goal is to attract new skaters to the sport, grow our fan base and empower our members to take pride in who they are as figure skaters while making a positive difference in their communities.” The program has been successfully running for the past four consecutive years.



This year, Garden State Skating Club has nominated five skaters to be named Get Up Champions. The skaters are: Lindsey Lissauer, Anna Merlino, Francesca Olivieri, Charlize Rizzo, and Maren Vaclavik. These skaters have shown the grit, passion, and dedication that the Get Up award embodies. USFS will be honoring them with certificates and medals.

When asked how it feels to be honored with this nomination, Anna Merlino positively says, “In skating, falling can be hard, and a lot of times bring skaters down. Getting up is the most important part of skating. Through my own experiences, getting up with a good attitude when you fall or make mistakes can be motivating, influencing you to keep trying no matter how much you fail.”



Congratulations to these incredible skaters! Your hard work and determination has payed off!



Rink Information

By Maren Vaclavik

This year, due to many factors, our club has switched rinks several times since the pandemic started. Many years ago we were at the Middletown Ice Arena, and switched over to the Howell Arena. When we were finally allowed to go back to skating during the pandemic, we were back at Howell. We later went to Ocean Ice Palace only on Saturdays at first, but then it transitioned to almost full time. As we were nearing the Spring months, we switched back to Howell and added Jersey Shore Arena for days that the other two rinks were not available. Right around the end of Spring, Ocean Ice Palace sadly shut down after being run for 60 years. During the Summer, we were located at Jersey Shore majority of the time. Now, after all of the complicated switching around our club did with schedules, rinks, and covid procedures, we are now located back at Howell Ice Arena and Jersey Shore Arena!

Virtual Competitions

By Camryn Aprilante

This year because of Covid-19 many rinks were not able to hold their annually scheduled competitions. With many skaters eager to compete, a lot of these competitions became virtual. When participating in a virtual competition you could compete in any state but you did not have to travel there to compete. This was nice because it allowed skaters to compete against people from all over the country. Syena Schaad and I competed in the Central Carolina Virtual Skating Classic which was a virtual competition that took place in North Carolina. Another benefit of competing virtually was that you could re-do the video of your program as many times as you wanted until you had the best skate. This was nice but made the competition a lot more difficult because almost everyone would submit a video of a clean program. When you compete in real life you only have one chance to do your program which leaves very little room for error if you want to place. After your video was taken you had to submit it, then the panel of judges would judge it and you would get your results a few days later. I think competing virtually was a nice replacement for not being able to compete in person and it was a lot less stressful, but it was nowhere near as good of an experience as an in person competition. I hope for this upcoming season all competitions will be able to happen in person again.

Save The Date!

The Garden State Skating Club's Holiday Show is back after a year off from the pandemic. It is on Saturday, December 11th, from 12:00 - 2:30 PM at the Howell Ice Arena. It will be great to see GSSC skaters participate in this fun and festive holiday show!

GSSC Awards Banquet

By Evelyn Jones



This year the Garden State Staking Club hosted their annual awards banquet for the first time of the CoronaVirus pandemic. Prior to the event the club collected donations of gift baskets and gift cards for the raffle. Thank You to everyone that contributed. Dinner was served to kick off the member award ceremony. During the event ,awards were given out by Noelle Zavattieri, our Junior Board Club President. Congratulations to everyone who received an award and participated in the ceremony. To end the GSSC cake was cut and served. Thank you to parents and Junior board members for organizing this event.



Instagram Takeover

By Sophia Newman

All through summer, the GSSC board came together and dedicated their time to post on the club's Instagram why they love Ice skating. Whether it was their love for competition or doing laps with their friends. However, the board shared all their favorite skating moments with all their followers. They laughed at their spins falling or them landing their axles and pushing their limits. They included their off-ice workouts and tricks to get them through competitions. They also talked about their love for skating, their drive, and their passion. Not to mention the adorable dresses they wore from their first competition. If you haven't checked out the junior board breakout, don't miss out and go check it out. You can start following us @gardenstatesc.

2021 National Excel Festival

By Syena Schaad

Hi, my name is Syena Schaad, and this year I qualified to compete at the National Excel Series Finalist camp and competition, competing in the intermediate plus level. The National Excel Series Finalist camp and competition was held at the OBM Arena in Strongsville, Ohio.

The excel series Final is an invitation-only series in which the top skaters from each section qualified to compete. The level I competed in only the top six skaters in each section and the additional two highest scores nationally, qualified. To qualify you had to compete in at least two competitions and then submit your score. I competed in two virtual and one in-person competition. When I found out that I placed first in the Eastern Section I was extremely excited! I was so happy to be going to the Excel Nationals.

The day before I competed, I participated in the camp. I got to do an on-ice class with Shawn Rabbitt, Polina Edmunds, and Mirai Nagasu, and an off-ice dance class. After the classes, I went to an IJS seminar. The seminar was super informative and I learned a great amount of information. It was really cool because I got to meet competitors from all different parts of the country. Overall the day was a great experience.

On the day of the competition I competed early in the morning and was super nervous but excited. 19 skaters were competing in my group. After I skated my program I knew it wasn't my best skate but, I was proud of what I did. I placed fourth overall and was awarded a medal. Something really unique was that I was able to get my medal engraved with my name, the song, which was Harry Potter, and my level I competed. I was proud to represent the Garden State Skating Club as a finalist at the 2021 Excel National Festival. It was an experience that I'll never forget!

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

TESTS PASSED

Lindsey Lissauer:

Gold Dance Test 4/30/21
Viennese Waltz 4/30/21
Senior Solo Free Dance w/Honors 6/22/21

William Lissauer:

Silver Dance Test 4/7/21
Tango 4/7/21
American Waltz 4/7/21

Sophia Newman:

Preliminary Dance Test 8/12/21
Canasta Tango 8/12/21
Dutch Waltz 8/12/21
Rhythm Blues 8/12/21

Francesca Olivieri:

Juvenile Moves in the Field w/Honors and Distinction 9/30/21

Syena Schaad:

Senior Moves in the Field 3/25/21

Jocelyn Xu:

Solo Gold Dance Test 7/13/21
Solo Viennese Waltz 7/31/21
Solo Westminster Waltz 7/13/21
Solo Argentine Tango 7/13/21
Solo Quickstep 7/13/21

Noelle Zavattieri:

Novice Moves in the Field 5/25/21