

The STANDARD

SUMMER 2025

A PUBLICATION OF THE DEER PARK UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT



Graduating Class of 2025 LOOKS FORWARD TO THE FUTURE

The Deer Park High School Class of 2025 celebrated the milestone event of graduation on June 26. As Al Centamore Football Field filled with Board of Education members, administrators, staff, families and friends, the soon-to-be graduates processed onto the field in their maroon and white caps and gowns, smiling and looking forward to the future.

To open the ceremony, Student Council President Gloria Min led the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by Nathalie Martillo performing a beautiful rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner."

After a warm welcome from Principal Charles Cobb, senior class advisers Julissa Larkin and Anne McCormack reminded students to always remember their home and to be curious, resilient and lead with kindness.

Senior Class President Tonika Sikder addressed her peers, recalling high school memories and lessons.

"This is a moment to remember everything it took to

get to this point," Sikder said in her heartfelt speech. "We learned a lot during our time here; some academic and some not. But what matters most is we learned how to persevere and grow."

"Standing here with each of you, I reflect on our journey and I am reminded of our achievements," Class of 2025 salutatorian Adib Shaikh said. "We were given the gift of education, and you should never stop striving for more. Do something greater, stay humble and be the generation that turns privilege into purpose."

Valedictorian Reza Zorakhsh spoke about half cadences, noting how graduation is itself a half cadence – a suspenseful pause before moving forward. He reminded his peers that their many late-night study sessions and preparations for presentations were all half cadences essential in shaping their future.

An annual tradition continued as the valedictorian from a decade prior, Sabrina Grunseich, offered words of wisdom.

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She reminded the graduates that on their journey toward achieving their dreams, they should find time for their hobbies and be sure to always listen to their hearts.

“Some of you grew up here, some of you came from other towns, some from other countries,” Superintendent of Schools James Cummings said. “But no matter where you came from, you made it, and you made it together. This is a moment where all your stories intersect for one moment in time. You’ve been part of a community that believes in you and no matter where you go, that will never change. When life gets challenging – and it will – remember the people who helped you along the way, and always know you have a place to come home to.”

Closing the ceremony, Cobb proudly addressed the Class of 2025. He recognized seniors who participated in the junior firefighter program and those who will be joining

different branches of the military. Cobb congratulated all students and reminded them to reflect on their achievements, honor their journeys and continue to grow, learn and pursue their dreams.

Finally, the moment arrived that the Class of 2025 had been anticipating, the awarding of diplomas. As each name was called, the graduates received their diplomas and enthusiastically shook hands with members of the Board of Education. They were then instructed to turn their tassels, marking their official transition from Deer Park High School students to proud alumni. As their caps flew into the air, all those assembled cheered, wishing the grads endless success on the journey ahead.



MEET DEER PARK'S 2025 *Valedictorian & Salutatorian*



Valedictorian
Reza Zorakhsh



Salutatorian
Adib Shaikh

Deer Park High School's Class of 2025 valedictorian and salutatorian were Reza Zorakhsh and Adib Shaikh, respectively.

Zorakhsh, a National Merit Scholarship Finalist and AP Scholar with Distinction, graduated with a weighted GPA of 110.53. He served as president of the National Honor Society and Spanish Honor Society, co-captain of the Math Team and Science Olympiad, and captain of the varsity track team. As part of Deer Park's DECA team, he earned a silver medal at New York DECA's 65th annual State Career Conference.

Shaikh, an AP Scholar with Distinction, graduated with a weighted GPA of 109.20. He served as president of the STEM Club, executive vice president of DECA, treasurer of the Spanish Honor Society and Red Cross Club; was a member of the National Honor Society, Math Honor Society, Science Honor Society, New York DECA Honor Society, Muslim Student Association and Social Issues Club; and earned the New York State Seal of Biliteracy.

Rounding out the top 10 ranked students were Shubat Alam (third), Matthew Flores (fourth), Valerie Ponte (fifth), Gloria Min (sixth), Lissha Varghese (seventh), Utku Uysal (eighth), Hassan Rehman (ninth) and Naeil Alim (10th).

"To our valedictorian, salutatorian and the other top eight students of the Class of 2025, you have been an exemplary example of hard work, true grit and personal success," Board of Education President Donna Marie Elliott said. "You have been an important part of life in Deer Park, navigating tough days and celebrating great days during your high school careers. Once you graduate, you will be part of the Deer Park Falcons alumni. To be a member of this group is to feel a sense of pride that you are a part of a great community who, from far and wide, still have devotion to Deer Park and to each other."



#3 Shubat Alam



#4 Matthew Flores



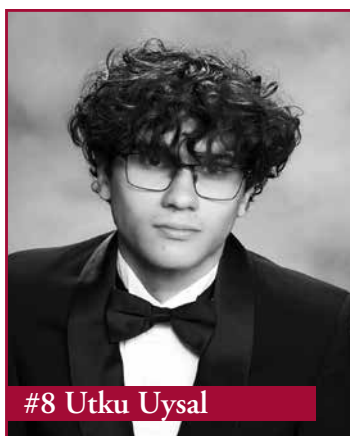
#5 Valerie Ponte



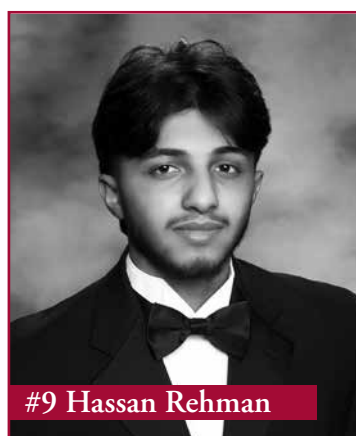
#6 Gloria Min



#7 Lissha Varghese



#8 Utku Uysal



#9 Hassan Rehman



#10 Naeil Alim

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Celebrating Big Steps at **Moving-Up Ceremonies**

Robert Frost Middle School, John F. Kennedy Intermediate School, John Quincy Adams Primary School and May Moore Primary School all celebrated moving-up milestones in June, as Frost's eighth graders prepared for high school, fifth graders at JFK advanced to middle school and second graders at the two primary buildings got ready to step up to third grade at JFK.



May Moore Primary School



John Quincy Adams Primary School



John F. Kennedy Intermediate School



Robert Frost Middle School



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