

# The STANDARD

A PUBLICATION OF THE DEER PARK UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

## 2020 GRADUATES OVERCOME ADVERSITY TO *Celebrate Their Achievement*



Showing pride and community spirit in the face of adversity, Deer Park's Class of 2020 graduated at last in the school's 57th commencement, divided into six sessions over July 30 and 31. After students and parents assembled at the football field, socially distanced for safety, Morgan Laissle led the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by several memorable speeches.

"Although this ceremony is not what we imagined, it still symbolizes how far we've come," Senior Class President Emily DeStefano said. "Despite what was thrown our way, we figured out how to rise above it."

"This pandemic didn't stop us," salutatorian Zubaer Mohiuddin said. "Our generation stayed positive and invented new and creative ways to get around our problems. We didn't let that flame inside us burn out. We made the best of it."

"Not everyone has the opportunity to graduate from high school and make it this far," valedictorian Sameer Riaz said. "We did it, and yet we still take time to thank those who made this possible, because we

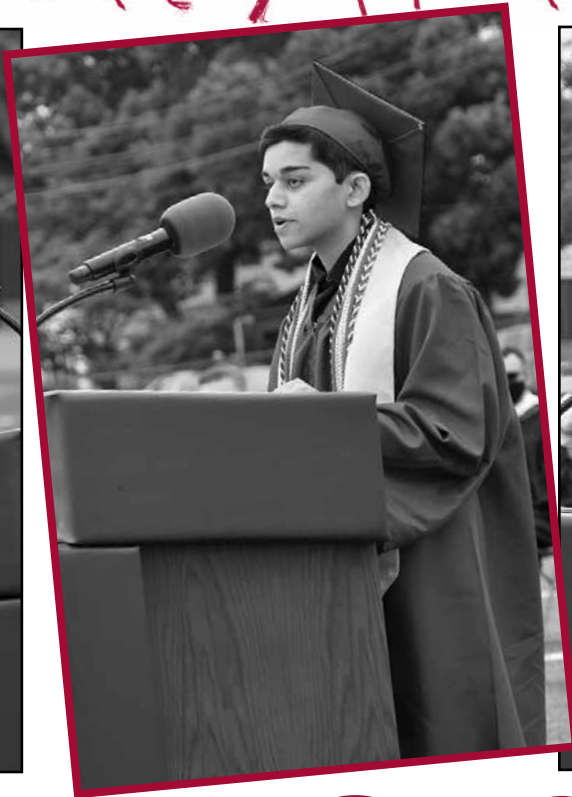
know that there are so many people who put effort into moving us along our journey."

Superintendent James Cummings told the new graduates, "If you've learned a lesson from this, you've learned how to overcome and how to make sacrifices, and then how to care for other people and maybe think about other people before yourselves."

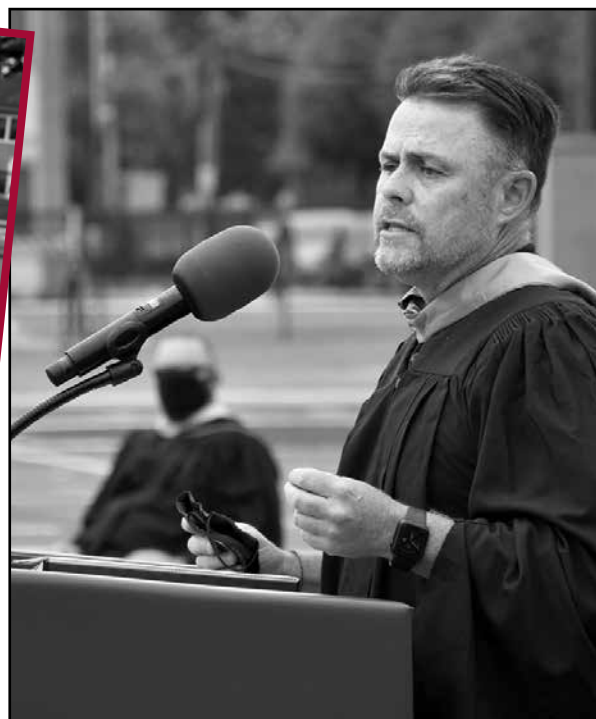
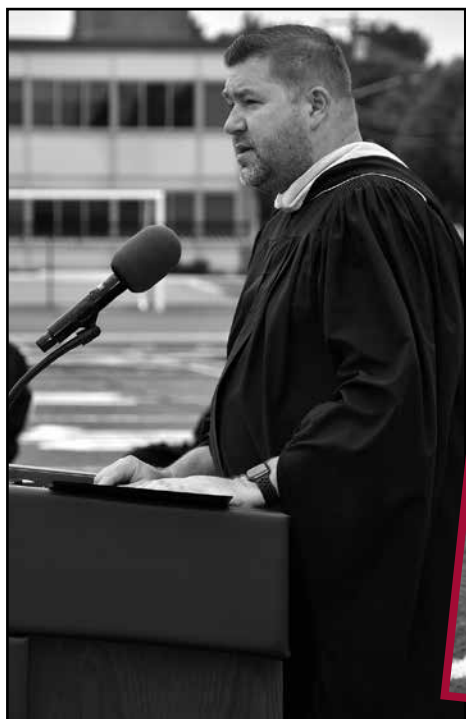
"You will be remembered as the Class of 2020 that has overcome these obstacles and moved forward to ensure that all your goals are met," Principal Charles Cobb said. "For that, I and the staff of Deer Park High School are most proud of you."

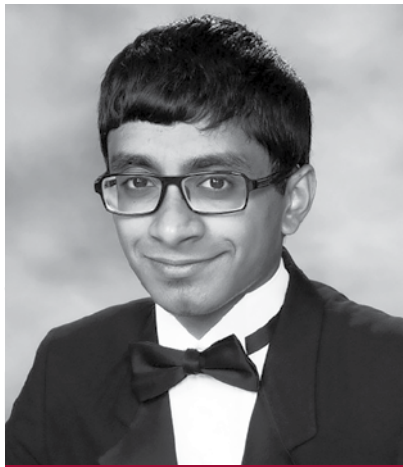
Following Cobb's words of praise, diplomas were conferred and tassels turned at each of the six joyful ceremonies, and the Class of 2020 embarked on the next step of their educational and life journeys.





# *Class of* 2020





*Valedictorian*  
Sameer Riaz



# MEET DEER PARK'S 2020

## *Valedictorian and Salutatorian*



*Salutatorian*  
Zubaer Mohiuddin

The high school's Class of 2020 valedictorian and salutatorian are Sameer Riaz and Zubaer Mohiuddin, respectively.

Riaz, president of the school's French Honor Society and captain of the Academic Team, is a member of the National Honor Society, Chess Club, Economics Club, Social Issues Club and PEN Society. He earned the Janice E. Tinsley Butterfly Award at Ujima 2018 and scored in the top 10 in the county on the National French Contest for the past four years. He will attend Princeton University, majoring in civil and environmental engineering.

Mohiuddin is vice president of the school's Spanish Honor Society and a member of the National Honor Society, Math Honor Society, Science Honor Society, math team and Science Olympiad team. He also serves as a volunteer at Good Samaritan Hospital and the Red Cross Club. He will attend Cornell University, majoring in biological sciences.

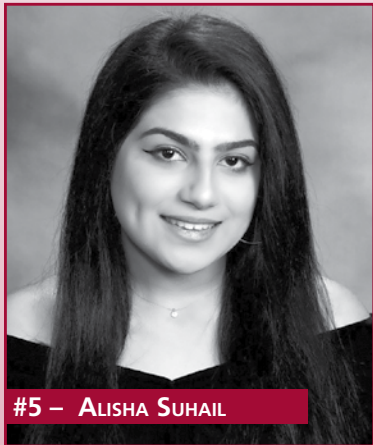
Rounding out the top 10 students are Tasfia Shaikh (ranked third), Matthew Rosati (fourth), Alisha Suhail (fifth), Alexander Glancy (sixth), Sabrina Felipe (seventh), Angela D'Antonio (eighth), Gavin Thomas (ninth) and Jessica Siford (10th).



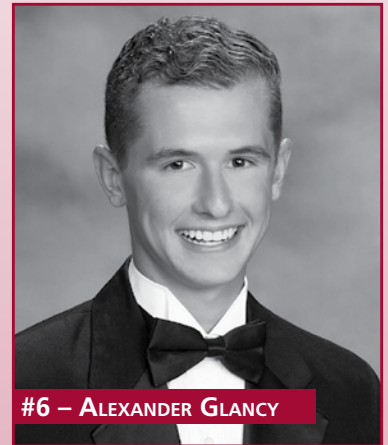
#3 – TASFIA SHAIKH



#4 – MATTHEW ROSATI



#5 – ALISHA SUHAIL



#6 – ALEXANDER GLANCY



#7 – SABRINA FELIPE



#8 – ANGELA D'ANTONIO



#9 – GAVIN THOMAS



#10 – JESSICA SIFORD

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# *New Ways* of Celebrating Moving Up

Throughout the district, the district's schools reimagined moving up this June, finding new ways to celebrate the many students who said goodbye to one phase of their educational careers and made ready for the next. Eighth graders at Frost enjoyed a triumphant drive-through ceremony in the school's parking lot on June 18, commemorating the last three years of their middle school journey. Students rode past in cars decked out in maroon and white as the Falcon mascot cheered them on.



## *Kevin Quirk Named* FROST ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL

The district has named Kevin Quirk as an associate principal at Robert Frost. A Deer Park native and graduate of the Deer Park High School Class of 1998, Quirk had worked as a special education teacher at Frost for the past decade. The Sayville resident earned his undergraduate degree from St. Joseph's College and his administrator degree from The College of Saint Rose.



## *New* Hires

New faces for the fall among district staff include elementary teachers Rashida Charles, Kasey Kephart, Ashley Maune and Alexandra Tucholski; ENL teacher Ricardo Carter; science teacher Nicole Passaretti; and special education teacher Darin Harrison.