



THE STANDARD

A PUBLICATION OF THE DEER PARK SCHOOL DISTRICT

TOP 10 SENIORS HONORED

Recognizing exceptional academic achievement, the high school's Top 10 Breakfast honored the 10 seniors with the highest grade point averages among this year's graduating class. The special annual ceremony, including a celebratory breakfast for these high-achieving students and their families, also served to announce the valedictorian and salutatorian.

Kyle Devine, ranked first with the highest GPA, was announced as valedictorian of the Class of 2014. Ranking second was salutatorian Andreas Stamatakis. The other students in the top 10 were Yasameen Saleem, third; Nasratullah Sultany, fourth; Victoria Trovato, fifth; Richard Jacullo, sixth; Christina Catanzaro, seventh; Daniela Zabbatino, eighth; Nicholas Vitale, ninth; and Ebne Rafi, 10th.

"I'd like to congratulate all of you," Principal James Cummings told the assembled seniors. "I can't wait to hear what you accomplish in the future."



Class of 2014 top 10 seniors (top row, l-r) Richard Jacullo, Nasratullah Sultany, Andreas Stamatakis, Kyle Devine, Nicholas Vitale, Ebne Rafi, (bottom row, l-r) Daniela Zabbatino, Victoria Trovato, Christina Catanzaro and Yasameen Saleem.

Learning Social Skills

The innovative Fun Club social skills program – implemented to help children in self-contained classes learn vital life skills – allows JFK students to take full advantage of the Life Skills Center, a simulated "apartment" set up at the former Washington School.

"This program is designed to increase opportunities for our children to be socially successful in school and in the Deer Park community," explained special education teacher Marie Tortorici. "We teach each child appropriate social skills to use when engaging adults and peers. We practice these skills in real-life scenarios at the apartment and then work on them further during trips into the community."



Students in JFK's Fun Club life skills program learn how to make a bed.

Visiting the apartment on a regular basis, the 25 students in the club rotate from one confidence-building activity to another, from vacuuming to folding laundry. In the kitchen, they sort silverware, wash dishes, and put pots and pans away. In the bedroom, they learn how to make a bed by working with a real bed and sheets, encouraging teamwork. A new "retail store," with assorted clothing and food items, helps the students work on real-world shopping, money and budgeting skills.



JFK Fun Club students practice washing dishes in the life skills program's simulated apartment.

A Message from Your *Superintendent of Schools*



Dear Residents,

As we plow through the winter season and look forward to the coming of spring, let us salute the many and varied ways in which our students have gone above and beyond in giving back through community service and working hard to help the less fortunate, starting with numerous food drives to provide assistance to families in need throughout the district.

Other examples are both myriad and inspirational. At Frost, the student council's "Soaps for Seniors" project collected toiletries for local senior citizens, while an educational bread-baking program resulted in the donation of hundreds of loaves and supplies to soup kitchens. A JFK third-grade class raised enough money for the Heifer Foundation to provide livestock for an impoverished village overseas. At the high school, the SADD club

adopted a group of needy veterans, and "Study Buddy" members of the World Language Honor Society volunteer to tutor younger students who are learning English.

The remarkable academic and creative achievements of our students continue to be celebrated across the district. At the high school, this included the Top 10 Breakfast, honoring the 10 seniors with the highest grade point averages among this year's graduating class; the welcoming of 55 students into the National Honor Society during the school's 52nd annual induction ceremony; and special recognition for 18 terrific achievers at the biannual Breakfast of Champions. In music, we boasted four selections for this year's Long Island String Festival and 22 students chosen for All-County ensembles, while four of our best athletes signed National Letters of Intent with top colleges and universities.

Exciting educational initiatives have contributed to the vitality of the district, from the League of Women Voters' visit to the high school to register seniors to vote, to the JFK Fun Club's innovation in helping self-contained classes learn life skills at a simulated apartment, to the successful pursuit of a BOCES Model Schools Grant at May Moore leading to student and faculty use of a new green screen studio.

With so many great things happening in the Deer Park School District, I hope that as you read this issue of *The Standard*, your sense of pride and excitement continue to grow.

Sincerely,

Eva J. Demyen

GRANT BRINGS GREEN SCREEN STUDIO

With a functional green screen studio at their disposal, teachers at May Moore will be able to expand educational and technological opportunities for students in grades K-2 thanks to a BOCES grant they pursued.

The green screen grant had its genesis in a successful 2012 election video project that used basic Flip cameras. It left the educators eager to improve the school's video capability with a green screen, which layers video images through a process called chroma keying. "We wanted to do a newscast for the entire school and community to see, to introduce new technology, and to help kids with their ELA skills for the Common Core," explained teacher Sue Steinman.

Steinman and five other May Moore teachers – Jennifer Cambria, Jessica Caputo, Tammy Cotrone, Dana Grafstein and Lauren McHugh – submitted a Model Schools Grant application through Western Suffolk BOCES last May, and won. The grant funds were utilized to fully furnish a professional green screen studio in the May Moore Media Center, facilitated by computer consultant Ellen Robertson. The initiative provides teachers and students access to this exciting technology for a variety of upcoming projects, including additional newscasts and the school's READ parent reading program, using the screen in conjunction with laptops and programs like Google Drive and Photobooth.

"We are so proud of this group of innovative teachers for taking the initiative to pursue the green screen grant," said Principal Alicia Konecny. "Our students are really enjoying the capabilities of this new technology, and we are hopeful for a future Spielberg or Scorsese."



Teachers at May Moore with the school's new green screen studio, funded by a BOCES Model Schools Grant.



New members of the high school's National Honor Society share candles as part of the organization's induction ceremony.

NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY *Inducts 55*

Cementing their commitment to academic excellence, 55 students were welcomed into the National Honor Society during the high school's 52nd annual induction ceremony.

President Kyle Devine provided a short history of the society, and four members – Student Council President Daniela Zabbatino, Vice President Ebne Rafi, Secretary Arianna Leo and Treasurer Taylor Price – spoke about and lit candles on the dais for each of the four NHS tenets: scholarship, leadership, service and character.

Joined by the rest of the current membership of the NHS, Devine and Leo presented the new inductees and Rafi administered the NHS pledge. After receiving their certificates and pins, each student shared the flame of his or her individual candle – in NHS tradition, representing learning – with the next in line until all of the new and old members' candles were lit.

STUDY BUDDIES VOLUNTEER at Public Library

In the ongoing Study Buddy program, high schoolers in the World Language Honor Society volunteer their time to tutor English language learning elementary school students at the Deer Park Public Library. Some children being tutored are receiving support for their world language classes, but the majority of the WLHS volunteer tutors are using their language skills to communicate with the families of the district's children who are learning English and to provide these younger students with reading and writing support.

“The Study Buddy program is just one way students in the World Language Honor Society fulfill their community service time,” explained Gina Palasciano, the districtwide curriculum associate of world languages and ESL. “It is a program we have had in place for nearly three years, and both the high school students and their Study Buddy friends benefit from this cooperative learning experience.”



World Language Honor Society student Eric Guzman tutors JQA English language learner Wesley Reyes at the public library as part of the Study Buddy program.

Breakfast of Champions Honors Achievers

Accompanied by their proud parents, 18 outstanding students were recognized for their achievements, hard work and determination to overcome obstacles at the high school's biannual Breakfast of Champions.

Students are selected as champions for each of the 15 departments at the high school, as well as two champions selected by principals and one by a teacher. For the Fall 2013 edition of the Breakfast of Champions, the honorees receiving plaques were Anthony Baculima Lopez by the ESL department, Nicholas Falco (family and consumer science), Theresa Grimaldi (health), Samantha Guttadauria (art), John Johnson (technology), Ali Karimi (English language arts), Joshua Larcom (guidance), Hope Mahon (physical education), Jacie Matera (business), Jaclyn Miano (performing arts), Malique Papailler (world languages), Johnny Rock (math), Domenico Russo (social studies), Tiffany Sawicki (science) and Kristy Vitucci (athletics). Additionally, the Principal's Award was presented to Kiani Marcellus, the Associate Principal's Award was given to Jordan Lazarich, and Blair Murray was honored with the Teacher's Choice Award.



Breakfast of Champions honorees (clockwise from top left): Tiffany Sawicki, Kiani Marcellus, John Johnson, Nicholas Falco, Hope Mahon, Domenico Russo, Joshua Larcom, Ali Karimi, Johnny Rock, Jaclyn Miano, Jacie Matera, Malique Papailler, Jordan Lazarich, Samantha Guttadauria, Kristy Vitucci and Theresa Grimaldi (not pictured are Anthony Baculima Lopez and Blair Murray).

Bread Baking Serves Educational and Charitable Needs



King Arthur Flour baking instructor Amy Driscoll is assisted by Frost students Mohammad Abdullah and Ajay Declaus during the school's presentation.

The middle school hosted the King Arthur Flour Life Skills Bread Baking Program, a culinary workshop that teaches important educational concepts while providing a valuable community service.

Participating seventh- and eighth-graders learned practical math skills like measurement as well as scientific processes behind the making of several bread varieties. Each student was provided materials to bake two loaves at home, one to keep and another to help feed those in need. The Frost bread-baking program donated 285 loaves of bread and bread-making supplies to two local soup kitchens.



League of Women Voters of Huntington Co-president Judie Gorenstein presents a history of U.S. voting rights to seniors as part of a voter registration program.

League of Women Voters Registers Seniors

Representatives from the League of Women Voters recently visited the high school on an ongoing mission of vital importance – registering new voters. Judie Gorenstein and Brenda Reiss, co-presidents of the LWV of Huntington, have been instrumental in delivering the message of the importance of voting to seniors who will be eligible to vote on Nov. 4.

The LWV, a nonpartisan organization whose mission is to encourage and engage citizens into being active and educated participants in government, has helped the high school register more than 1,000 students over the last four years.

Gorenstein began the presentation by providing the students some background on the history of voting rights in America, from the nation's founding and the Civil War to suffrage and the 26th Amendment in 1971, which affirmed the right to vote of those 18 years and older. She noted that in the 2012 election, only 45 percent of voters aged 18-30 participated. "The last people who got the right to vote, vote the least," she told the seniors. "Your vote is your power."

In a mock election for New York governor facilitated by Reiss, the entire class discussed and debated issues such as marijuana and immigration laws. The activity culminated in two students volunteering to "run" for governor and give speeches on their positions, something designed to encourage these future voters to examine candidates more closely. "Issues make them focus on where a candidate stands," explained Reiss. "We want them to realize that their votes count."

Class Buys Livestock for Village

JFK third-graders in the class of Maria Giammona, Marie Tortorici and Debra Wasp were inspired to raise money for Heifer International over the course of two weeks.

Funds donated to the charity go to purchase items such as livestock, which provide long-term solutions to problems of hunger and poverty.

Students who wished to volunteer for the project dropped spare change from lunch in the class donation bucket or earned funds by doing extra chores around the house. Once the money was collected, the class voted on what animals to send, deciding to provide a flock of chicks and a trio of rabbits to nourish families in a village overseas.



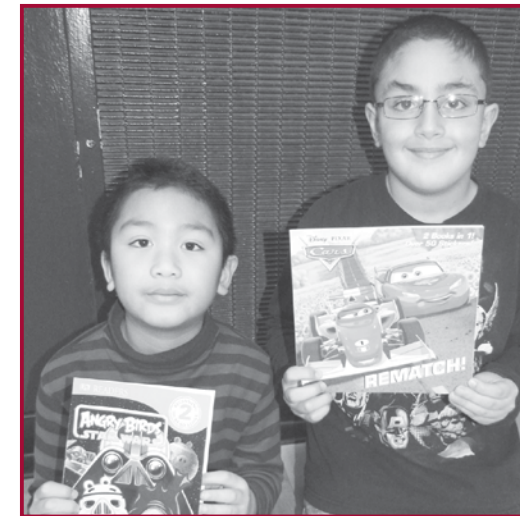
JFK third-graders donated to Heifer International to purchase chicks and rabbits for an impoverished village.

Fashion Students Create Breast Cancer Awareness Dress

With the goal of sparking awareness of breast cancer issues, two fashion design students at the high school created a unique work of art. Supported by fashion design teacher Rita Murphy, Alex Posillico and Ada Ramirez made a special breast cancer dress using only a mannequin and pink paper ribbons provided by the school's SADD club. Posillico and Ramirez both plan to study fashion design at the Fashion Institute of Technology in the fall.



Fashion design students Ada Ramirez and Alex Posillico pose with the breast cancer awareness dress they created.



JQA students discover new reading passions at the school's book fair.

BOOK FAIRS GET KIDS EXCITED ABOUT READING

Scholastic book fairs at John Quincy Adams and May Moore schools brought excitement to many young readers, who happily browsed the racks searching for that special author or character, while raising funds for the schools' Parent Teacher Associations.

"The book fair is extremely important because it encourages our children to read books," said JQA PTA Co-president Darlene Piazza, whose fair helped fund in-school assemblies. May Moore utilized its book fair proceeds to purchase more reading material for the children.



Young readers at May Moore are excited to look for books at the PTA-sponsored book fair.

NATIONAL LETTER OF INTENT SIGNINGS



Aaren Edmead

Point Guard Heads to Wagner

Aaren Edmead, a point guard on the basketball team, signed with Wagner College in Staten Island. Edmead, who was named All-League, All-County, All-Long Island, All-Conference and All-State, was a major part of Deer Park's two recent League IV championships. He cited the team's appearance in the Suffolk County Class AA championship game earlier this year as another career highlight. His major is undecided.

Lax MVP Signs with Old Dominion

Girls lacrosse standout Shannon Doolan will attend Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Va., where she will major in Asian studies. She is a top scorer on the team, a Scholar-Athlete and played for the Long Island Yellow Jackets lacrosse travel club. Doolan was also a two-time MVP and was named All-League, All-County and twice a Brine All-American.



Tyler Theiss

Baseball Captain to Play for Bridgeport

Baseball catcher and two-year team captain Tyler Theiss will attend the University of Bridgeport in Connecticut, where he will study criminal justice. During his four years as a member of the varsity squad, Theiss was named a Scholar-Athlete and the No. 9 catcher in the Northeast, and achieved All-League in his first three years with the team. He also played for the Long Island Titans travel baseball club.

Lacrosse Scholar Athlete to UMass Lowell

Kaylan DiModugno, who plays midfield/attack on the girls lacrosse team, has signed with University of Massachusetts Lowell, where she plans to study psychology and pre-med. A top scorer and four-year starter on the varsity squad, DiModugno was named a Scholar-Athlete as well as All-League. She also played for six years on the Long Island Yellow Jackets lacrosse travel club.



Shannon Doolan



Kaylan DiModugno



The league champion varsity tennis team was recognized at the high school's fall athletic awards ceremony.

Fall Athletes Recognized

Eleven high school sports teams were recognized at the school's fall athletic awards ceremony. Eight outstanding teams – varsity cheerleading, boys cross-country, kickline, boys varsity soccer, girls varsity soccer, girls swimming and diving, varsity girls tennis and varsity volleyball – were honored as Scholar-Athlete teams for their successful commitment to both athletics and academics. Teams honored with this award by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association must have at least five players and earn a cumulative team GPA of 90 percent or higher.

The varsity girls tennis team, led by three All-League players, was crowned League IV champions. The remarkable junior varsity volleyball team boasted an undefeated season, finishing 17-0. The boys varsity soccer and football squads qualified for the playoffs, while the JV football team received their league's Sportsmanship Award for fair play.



Teacher Spotlight

Middle school math maven Denise Black's career has been far from mundane, having taught pre-K in the district for 10 years prior to her current nine-year stint as a sixth-grade teacher at Frost. The switch was sparked by her passion for math, which she had minored in at Stony Brook University prior to obtaining her master's degree in special education.

"I loved teaching pre-K but was ready for a change," explained Black. "But teaching is teaching – it's relating to children. I use so much of what I learned teaching pre-K, here at Frost."

Her quick adoption of technology has marked her as

an innovator. "I always jump into technology, and math and tech really go together now," she said. "All of my students have a MacBook laptop, and lessons and supplemental materials are at their fingertips."

New to Black's classroom is full implementation of Common Core math, a change that emphasizes student collaboration and more exploratory, student-driven lessons in place of what she calls the "chalk and talk" of the past. "This is a different approach to the way we are accustomed to learn math," she said. "It's about learning in a group. My directive is to put the ball in their court. With Common Core math, the students reflect and



become thinkers, with more ways to solve problems and more tools in their pockets."

The strategic emphasis on discovery allows Black's students to fluidly integrate their math work into real-world situations, and she loves the more interactive aspects of the Common Core approach. "It's so cool to sit back and listen to the kids talk about math."

LONG ISLAND

String Festival Selections

Four of the district's superlative student-musicians – high school senior Noah Roff (viola), John F. Kennedy fifth-grader Julia Catanzano (violin), and Robert Frost eighth-grader Vy Do (violin) and seventh-grader Alexandra Doogan (bass) – were selected for this year's Long Island String Festival.

LISFA selection is based on several criteria, including NYSSMA solo festival scores and recommendations from school music teachers.

Additionally, 22 students from grades 5-10 were selected for All-County ensembles, sponsored by the New York State Council of Administrators of Music Education.

Roff was also chosen to be principal violist of the NYSCAME All-County Orchestra, a honor indicating that he is the top-ranked high school viola player in Suffolk County.



Frost student-musicians Vy Do (left) and Alexandra Doogan were selected to perform at the Long Island String Festival.

ECRWSS
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Soaps for Seniors



Frost student council members packaged donated toiletries in the "Soaps for Seniors" project.

The Robert Frost student council conducted its annual "Soaps for Seniors" project, a giving-back effort involving the collection of shampoo, conditioner, combs, brushes, toothpaste, toothbrushes, lotions and other hygiene products for the benefit of local senior citizens. Council members packaged the toiletries and delivered them to seniors at two local nursing homes, accompanied by musical performances from the school's choir and chamber orchestra.

SADD Provides for Vets



The SADD club packaged gift bags for veterans of the Veterans Place in Yaphank.

For students in the high school's chapter of Students Against Destructive Decisions, their commitment to helping local veterans goes beyond Veterans Day and has become a year-round endeavor, exemplified by a recent donation of gift packages for homeless vets at the Veterans Place shelter in Yaphank. SADD students donated hats, gloves and scarves; decorated gift bags; wrapped gifts; and placed a flag in each bag, readying them for delivery to the veterans.

Deer Park GIVES BACK

SUCCESSFUL STUDENT FOOD DRIVES

Students at the high school, middle school and JFK Intermediate collected hundreds of nonperishable food items, reinforcing their spirit of community service and aiding needy families throughout the district.

In the high school's annual food drive, students collected meal items through the student council and their classes. Class advisers then collected food in front of area supermarkets, followed by a homeroom food drive competition in which the winner alone brought in more than 100 items. Student council members then sorted and packed the food – enough to donate to 22 local families through the winter.

At Frost, more than 30 National Junior Honor Society students sorted and divided cans and boxes to create balanced meals in every basket, which they had accumulated over two weeks to provide assistance to families in need throughout the district.

At JFK, each class was responsible for collecting specific nonperishable items or canned goods, gathering more than 18 milk crates full of donated food items, organized into finished baskets and donated to 10 families in need.



High school student council members packed baskets for the school's annual food drive to help needy local families.

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