

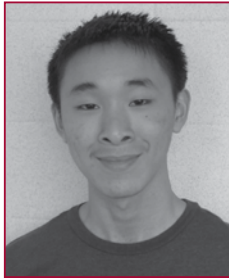
# The STANDARD

ISSUE 5 SUMMER 2015

A PUBLICATION OF THE DEER PARK UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

## ZHANG WINS NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP

Earning the prestigious title of Merit Scholar, Deer Park High School's Class of 2015 salutatorian Aaron Zhang was named a National Merit \$2,500 Scholarship winner.



The National Merit Scholarship Corporation selected Zhang for this honor due to his numerous outstanding academic accomplishments. He was one of just 7,600 named Merit Scholars out of more than 15,000 finalists in the 2015 National Merit Scholarship Program, held by the NMSC since 1955.

Zhang and other winning students can use their \$2,500 award at any regionally accredited U.S. college or university.

## Graduates Start Meaningful Journey

**A**t Deer Park's 52nd commencement exercises on June 26, the high school's Class of 2015 took a meaningful step on their life journey, celebrating in front of a cheering sea of family and friends.

The American Celtic Pipe Band again led the way, marching onto Al Centamore Football Field with a long line of excited seniors behind them clad in maroon and white, ready for their big moment.

Beginning the ceremony, the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Student Council President Taylor Morales, followed by a masterful rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner" by Jessica Orelus.

Superintendent Eva J. Demyen talked to the seniors about their yearbook theme, "A story to remember," relating it to an anecdote from her own senior year when she fell from a tree. "The moral is, if you fall, get back up," she told them.

In an emotional speech, senior class adviser James Henry told his students, "We've grown together as a family to achieve special recognition. You are a remarkable class and one I will never forget."



*Continued Graduation coverage on page 2.*

## PROPOSED CAPITAL BOND REFERENDUM INFORMATION

Over the past year, a volunteer-based facilities committee consisting of the district architect, administration and community members has been assessing the condition of our aging facilities and security needs. Together with the Board, they drafted a list of recommended projects, with anticipated costs for completion determined by architects. These

projects address the district's most immediate infrastructure and facility upgrade needs to ensure the safety of all students and staff as well as the community as a whole. Upon the advice of our financial advisors, the district has the opportunity to obtain a bond of approximately \$17 million without an increase in cost to our taxpayers.

Among the highlights of the

proposed plan are renovations at each of the district's schools, security upgrades at each school, roof replacements, and a turf field at the high school, as well as updates to the high school auditorium.

The Board anticipates adopting the resolution this summer for a public vote to take place in the fall. More information can be found on the district website.



*"It went great! Our community is awesome, so we have a strong support system. The most interesting thing for me was listening to my classmates' speeches and getting a sense of how high school was for each of them. I will miss the friendships I made, the teachers and, most of all, the close-knit community." - Taylor Brennan*



*"The graduation speeches were heartening, touching and emotional. The one thing I did not expect was the caps flying in the air. Seeing every one of my classmates graduate was a terrific experience and I wish them all the best." - Isaiah Bridgeman*



*Continued Graduation coverage from page 1.*



"Our time is measured in moments and memories," said wistful Senior Class President Taylor Brennan, lamenting how fast time had gone by for the students during their high school career. "I hope you find yourself happy and healthy after high school," she told them.

A 27-strong vocal ensemble then sang the school's alma mater, leading into affecting speeches by the salutatorian and valedictorian.

Salutatorian Aaron Zhang delivered a memorably metaphysical address, touching on time, space, mathematics and the universe. "It's easy to feel overwhelmed in the face of the unknown," he told his classmates. "The world you are about to enter is one of uncertainty, but look closer and you can find order and wonder. You are ready to find your way."

"Today marks one of the first turning points of our lives," said Sabrina Grunseich, the class valedictorian, reflecting on the students' shared journey at Deer Park.

Her contemplative speech discussed the meaning of time and the ephemeral nature of accomplishing goals. "Take the lessons you learn and use them in the now," she urged. "The journey to achieving a goal is more important than the accomplishment." She ended with a hope for her fellow graduates, saying, "I wish for all my peers' journeys to be filled with meanings and firsts."

In an ongoing tradition, Principal James Cummings welcomed back a face from a decade past, Class of 2005 valedictorian Megan Chrones Barco, who spoke of the value of gratefulness, even during difficult times.

The final speaker was Cummings himself, who noted the school's 94 percent graduation rate – tops in the town of Babylon – as a deep source of pride. "This is an easy class to brag about," he said. "I couldn't be more proud of what they've accomplished. This group has done incredible things – in the classroom, on the field, on the stage." Urging the new graduates to make a difference in the lives of



others, the principal ended his address on a high note, telling his charges, "It is time for you to make your mark on this world."

Their next step on that journey was to the podium, receiving diplomas from members of the Board of Education. Once all were seated again, it was time for the ritual of turning tassels from right to left, then tossing the caps to the sky. Leaving the field to the sound of the combined symphonic and ninth-grade bands performing Elmer Bernstein's "The Great Escape," the new alumni walked out to begin their bright futures.

# TOP 10



#1 Sabrina Grunseich



#2 Aaron Zhang

Rising to the top of the high school's Class of 2015 are valedictorian Sabrina Grunseich and salutatorian Aaron Zhang.

Grunseich, who serves as president of the school's National Honor Society and editor of the school newspaper, is a member of the Spanish Honor Society and Varsity Leaders Club. As a varsity athlete, she earned All-League for volleyball and Academic All-County for basketball. She will attend Stony Brook University this fall, majoring in chemistry.

Zhang, a winner of the National Merit Scholarship, serves as captain of the math team and vice president of the academic team. He is also a member of the high school's French Honor Society, plays in the chamber orchestra, and was named a Science Olympiad medalist and Suffolk County Math Team All-Star. Zhang will attend Brown University, majoring in computer science.

## Deer Park's *Dynamic Duo*



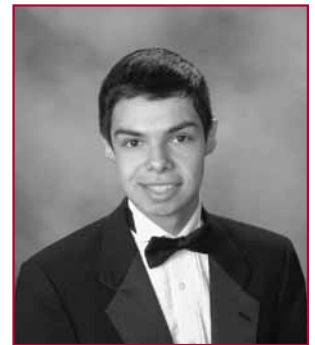
#3 Kyle Dillon



#4 Emily Fowler



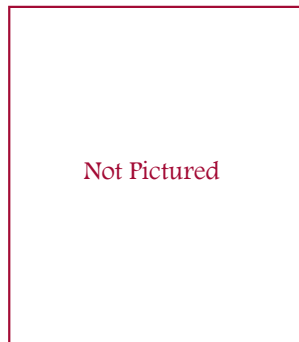
#5 William Keller



#6 Mauricio Montes



#7 Maria Skoljarez



#8 Alban Astafa



#9 Shahan Mian



#10 Jonathan Wagner



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## FINEST FALCONS RECOGNIZED *on Senior Awards Night*

The high-achieving members of the high school's Class of 2015 were recognized at the school's annual Senior Awards on June 4, giving teachers, administrators, local politicians and community members the opportunity to honor the students for the hard work and dedication they displayed throughout their high school years.



The awards, both school-based and communitywide in nature, covered a variety of areas of achievement. In some instances, students were required to write essays explaining why they would be the best candidate to receive a certain scholarship, while others were based solely on academic performance. Many of the awards were selected by a committee of teachers, counselors and administrators from the high school.

"The students sitting behind me represent Deer Park's finest," said Associate Principal Jeanne Kozlowsky in her opening speech. "As a result of these students' commitment to their studies, athletic teams, extracurricular activities and community, they have made this high school a better place."

Three different alumni groups – the Classes of 1983, 1984 and 1995 – sponsored scholarships this year, with a total monetary value of more than \$75,000. Awards that were distributed to the students included checks, plaques, medals, certificates, proclamations and iPads.

At the beginning, Student Council President Taylor Morales led the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a strong rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner" by Mauricio Montes. The high school's jazz ensemble, led by director Jerry Cannarozzo, performed before the ceremony and at the intermission for the audience's enjoyment.

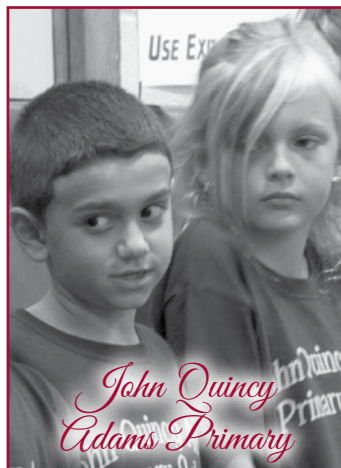


*Robert Frost Middle School*

# Moving Up *to a New Chapter*



*John F. Kennedy Intermediate School*



*John Quincy Adams Primary*



*May Moore Primary*