

The Pillars of Success
Academics, Athletics, the Arts and Altruism

POINTS OF PRIDE

January 2024

Academics

- **Christiana Foufas, Molly Graff and Matt Yang of Mephram and Claire Schwartz and Cole Wasserman of Kennedy** were named Regeneron Science Talent Search Scholars on Jan. 10. They were among 300 students chosen nationwide and now advance to the finals stage.
- **Mara Rosenstock of Merrick Avenue** won first place in the American History Essay Contest sponsored by the Amityville Colonel Gilbert Potter Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Her essay has been entered into a statewide competition. Mara was honored with a certificate and received a cash prize. **Jenna Hughes and Avianna Rao's** essays also received commendation.
- **Iliana Waldman of Calhoun** hosted a fundraising charity dinner on Jan. 4, Women in Business and Leadership, at Fabio's Restaurant in Merrick. The goal was to attract around 100 high school girls to attend the event and to inspire these students to learn ways to succeed and overcome challenges that women in the workplace may face during their careers. Iliana was featured on News 12.
- **Joseph Darcourt** advanced as a 2024 Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation regional finalist, receiving the Hispanic Heritage Youth Award and a \$3,000 scholarship.
- **Maisy Ebner of Merrick Avenue** was accepted into the Institute of Creative Problem Solving for Gifted and Talented Students at SUNY Old Westbury.
- Seventh grader **Matthew Pantaleev** was named the Merrick Avenue Middle School **Geography Bee champion** on Jan. 5. Seventh grader Anthony Petrocelli was the second-place winner. **Dylan Garcia, Evan Garcia, Owen Kam, Matthew Pantaleev, Anthony Petrocelli and Brody Tepfer** were the top six finalists.
- Both **Grand and Merrick Avenue middle schools** hosted schoolwide Scripps Spelling Bees in January. **Ava Andrews and Daniel Fu** from **Grand Avenue** and **Marcus Cibrasi and Soul Brar** from **Merrick Avenue** will move on to the regionals on March 21.
- **Mephram's Robotics Club's** junior team, comprised of **Melih Agac, Diego Cajiao, Logan Carlin, Daniella Contrera, Gabriella Contrera and Daniela Samanigo** secured the Design Award at the VEX Robotics Competition on Jan. 7 at Farmingdale High School.
- **Calhoun junior Mia Cavero** is the second author listed on the abstract that was submitted for publication for the Lunar and Planetary Science Conference coming up in March. She worked at Stony Brook University this past summer on a project utilizing data and photographs provided from the Mars Rover.

- **Omana Phillips**, a senior in **Calhoun's** ASR program, recently had her abstract, "Early Markers of Cardiovascular Disease in WTC-Exposed Firefighters" accepted to the American Thoracic Society 2024 International Conference, where she will be presenting her poster on May 20 in San Diego.

Arts

- **Calhoun's On Tour Program** performed "Arsenic and Old Lace" on Jan. 20, 26 and 27.
- Students in **Mrs. Castellano's** freshman class at **Mepham** entered the annual national fall poetry contest sponsored by Creative Communication. Thirteen of those students were selected to have their entries published in the annual anthology, "A Celebration of Poets." Congratulations to **Dylan Abramowitz, Nicole Arnell, Pieper Frem, Star Galan, Madison Gies, Giorgina Gogas, Maaz Haque, Evan Korman, Alexa Lupo, Carmela Mehale, Natalia Rivera, Emma Tannus** and **Ethan Zemtsov**.
- **Mepham's** literary magazine, **Fragments**, and **Calhoun's** literary magazine, **Pegagus**, received the rank of Superior in the 2023 National Council of Teachers of English's Recognizing Excellence in Art and Literary Magazines (REALM) program. **Nicole Maresca** serves as the faculty adviser for **Mepham** and **Dawn Boland** and **Jason Boland** serve as the faculty advisers for **Calhoun**.
- **The Kennedy Wind Symphony and Concert Choir** have been invited to perform at the Best Bands & Choirs International festival at Carnegie Hall on April 18.
- **Calhoun senior Lana Guber** and **junior Hannah Islas** have been accepted into the All-State Vocal Jazz ensemble to perform at the 51st annual Joseph R. Sugar NYSSMA Day in Albany on March 4.

Athletics

- **Angelina Setteducate** took first place in the conference, winning the shotput for **Mepham** at champs on Jan. 17.
- The **Calhoun girls track and field team** earned their sixth consecutive conference title.
- At the 2024 NYSPHSAA Girls Wrestling Invitational, **Mepham** senior **Yianna Fofas** secured her second New York State title, wrestling at 120 pounds. Senior **Talia Robles** earned All-State honors and is in the top four women in her 138-pound weight class. **Calhoun** freshman **Reese Adams** finished in fifth place in the 114-pound weight class.
- **Brian DeGaetano**, the head wrestling coach at **Kennedy**, will be recognized with the National Lifetime Service to Wrestling Award. This spring, Coach DeGaetano receives this award during an induction ceremony at the National Wrestling Hall of Fame and Museum in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Altruism

- **Mepham's SADD Club** hosted Doors for a Cause, a door decorating competition throughout the school to raise money for the Community Cupboard.
- **CHAMP** baked Cookies for a Cause. Students created 1.5-foot gingerbread cookies that were raffled off to students, faculty and staff. A total of \$428 was collected and donated to UNICEF.
- **The Calhoun Racial Equity Club** has been fundraising for Reaching Children's Potential Program – Global Volunteers. Senior Grace Miller has volunteered in Tanzania and connected the club to the organization.

- The **Calhoun leadership class** hosted a supply drive in January for the Ronald McDonald house in New Hyde Park.
- **Calhoun Senior Leadership** classes visited fifth grade classes at Birch School in the Merrick Elementary District on Jan. 9 to present on the power of language. Students at Calhoun created a lesson for students that talks about the importance of decision-making and being thoughtful in their word choice.
- **Grand Avenue** students **Natalie Bonvicin** and **Ayoka Primus** led a candy cane fundraiser that raised \$355 for the district's food pantry, the Community Cupboard.
- In conjunction with the district's **Day of Service**, the **Merrick Avenue Student Council** sponsored a Be the Change fundraising event on Jan. 10-11 to benefit the Community Cupboard.
- **Ms. Drakos, Ms. Molinaro** and **Ms. Shapiro at Merrick Avenue** collected and organized more than 2,000 books for Book Fairies of Long Island.
- **The Grand Avenue SADD Club** collected Mugs of Love for a local shelter, filling coffee mugs with pantry items and wrapping them up for donation.
- **The Grand Avenue Builders Club** hosted a book drive throughout January for Book Fairies.
- The **Mephram LEOs** collected scarves, hats and gloves until February break for Tri Community & Youth Agency in support of high-need families in Huntington.
- The **Merrick Avenue Student Council** held a Be the Change drive on Jan. 10-11 to collect change during lunch periods to benefit the Community Cupboard as part of the MLK Day of Service, raising nearly \$70.
- The **Calhoun Key Club** hosted a book drive through early February.