

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

POINTS OF PRIDE

September/October 2023

Academics

- The following students were named **National Merit Semifinalists**: **Joseph Darcourt** and **Fiona Wong** of **Calhoun**; **Sara Maltempo**, **Avidan Moont** and **Cole Wasserman** of **Kennedy** and **Matthew Keegan** and **Matt Yang** of **Mephram**. Additionally, **Ifra Ali**, **Sam Saldarelli** and **Tobias Seabold** of **Calhoun**; **Charles Decker**, **Christiana Foufas**, **Alex Luft**, **Jeffrey Nodelman**, **Liam Osborne** and **Sanjay Persaud** of **Mephram** and **Fiona Yeung** and **Dylan Pichardo** of **Kennedy** were named Commended Students.
- **Nickolas Mascary**, a **Calhoun** senior, was recently named one of three winners of the Voices for Truth and Humanity essay contest.
- **Vladimir Mkrtchian**, a junior at **Mephram**, received a distinguished honor in the Young Armenian Poets Awards 2023 by the International Armenian Literary Alliance. "Anahit's Legacy" will be featured prominently on both the Armenian Cultural Platform website and the International Armenian Literary Alliance website. He received a cash prize.
- **Joseph Darcourt** of **Calhoun** was named a Coca Cola Scholars Foundation semifinalist. He will now become a part of a pool of applicants from which 150 will be chosen to receive a \$20,000 scholarship.
- The **Class of 2024** valedictorians and salutatorians are as follows:
 - Calhoun:**
 - Valedictorian **Fiona Wong**
 - Salutatorian **Joseph Darcourt**
 - Kennedy:**
 - Valedictorian **Gabriella Tejada**
 - Salutatorian **Cole Wasserman**
 - Mephram:**
 - Valedictorian **Christiana Foufas**
 - Salutatorian **Matt Yang**

Arts

- **Mephram** senior **Liam Osborne** earned All-State honors in Instrumental Jazz for Tenor Trombone. His band director is Anthony Brandofino.
- At **Calhoun**, **Fiona Wong** was named a NYSSMA alternate on the snare drum, **Hannah Islas** was named an alternate as a jazz soprano voice, and **Lana Guber** was named an alternate jazz soprano voice.

- **Kennedy senior Dylan Friedman** has spent years creating his own artwork about wildlife conservation. Dylan's drawing, *Intellagama lesueurii howittii* (Gippsland Water Dragon), was submitted to the annual **David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation Wildlife Artist of the Year** contest and made it into this prestigious juried exhibition. He attended the Wildlife Artist of the Year 2023 Awards ceremony in September at the Mall Galleries in London.
- **Angelina Arceo**, a Class of 2023 **Calhoun** graduate, earned a perfect score on the AP Drawing Exam. She was one of only 308 students in the world to earn every possible point on the exam.
- **Merrick Avenue eighth grader Vincent Carella** earned second prize in the **Young Musician I** category of the Royal International Piano Competition 2023. He will now have the opportunity to perform on stage at either Carnegie Hall or Juilliard.
- **Kennedy junior Morgan Beers** was chosen as a winner in the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Nassau County Third Annual Art Competition. Morgan's artwork was selected to be featured in the CCE Nassau 2024 Gardening Calendar and Guide.
- **On Tour** opened its performing season Oct. 14 with its first Evening of Improv. They followed up with their first major production, Shakespeare's "The Winter's Tale," at the end of October.
- **Junior Kira Martino** of Mepham was one of 30 students selected to perform with Broadway professionals at the Long Island High School for the Arts.
- **Merrick Avenue eighth grader, Justin Gusmano** earned the New York State Award of Merit from the NYS PTA. Justin received this designation for Music Composition as he has already been honored by the Nassau County Region.
- **The following students were selected as All-County musicians for the 2024 festival:**
 - **Olivia Lettieri, Liam Nawrocki and Anna Schellberg of Grand Avenue**
 - **Sulakhni Brar, Sophia Chen, Noora Ibrahim, Patrick Lee, Charlotte Mayo, Nicholas Rooney and Jada Wang of Merrick Avenue**
 - **Jeremy Wang, Samuel Klein, Julia Cohen, Louis Auyeung, Fiona Yeung, Constantinos Shoureas, Jayden Eisenberg, Athina Malafis, Tali Eisner, Eliana Conra,d Zara Selvin, Alec Ader, Matthew Leicht and Lucas Rich of Kennedy**
 - **Rachel Benson, Samantha DiFranco, Eloise Hannula, Anthony Hoffman, David Klein, Evan Korman, Angelina Lix, Alana Muniz, Liam Osborne, Kiran Persaud and Samantha Rooney of Mepham**
 - **Fiona Wong, Wyatt Baxter, Kohana Bloom, Lana Guber, Hannah Islas, Justin Lapidus, Jack Messinger, Charlotte Tannenbaum, Evan Leicht, Kenneth Howe, Addison Kelson, Angelique Gauthier and Ian Klimov of Calhoun**

Athletics

- **Mephram** senior **Thomas Wildeman** was named to Newsday's Top 50 Long Island High School Boys Volleyball list. Wildeman racked up 275 kills, 106 digs and 69 aces last season.
- **Mark Diener** of **Mephram**, **Sean Cooke** of **Calhoun** and **Jaden Waldinger** of **Kennedy** were named to Newsday's Top 100 Long Island High School Boys Soccer player list.
- **Sharks** swimmer **Riley Fried** of **Mephram** qualified for states in the 200IM.
- The **Kennedy boys soccer team** clinched the Conference II championships.
- Both the **Kennedy junior varsity** and **varsity girls soccer teams** hosted a dedication game on Oct. 20 in honor of Morgan's Message, an organization involved in opening the dialogue about mental health among student athletes. **Kennedy's Abigayle Finkelstein** is an ambassador for the nationwide program.
- The **Calhoun football** team continued their season long support of St. Francis' cardiac screenings in athletes. They volunteered at the Merrick Fair on Oct. 22 to raise awareness and donations for this organization. All the donations will benefit St. Francis Cardiac Screenings for Student Athletes.
- The **district swim team**, the **Lady Sharks**, clinched the division championships. Counties are set for Nov. 4 at Eisenhower Park.
- The Calhoun **girls volleyball team** finished the season as co-conference champs.
- **Mephram wrestler Yianna Foufas** recently traveled to Japan to compete in her first international tournament. She lived in a yurt with a host family and visited the local schools while there.

Altruism

- The **Mephram varsity kickline** team hosted its annual Fall Dance Clinic for kids in grades K-8 on Sept. 30.
- The **Calhoun Key Club** sold cookies for the Be a Good Cookie campaign that is being spearheaded in Merrick to raise funds for pediatric cancer research. Similar bake sales were held at Merrick Avenue Middle School.
- The **Calhoun Key Club** and Merrick Kiwanis hosted a Sock Drive for Veterans from Oct. 2 to Nov. 15.
- The **Captain's Academy** at **Calhoun** hosted its annual Fall Sports Food Drive.
- The **Mephram High School football team** hosted a Teddy Bear Fundraiser, collecting brand-new teddy bears at their homecoming for a children's hospital.
- The **Mephram football team** sold shirts to benefit two charities, pediatric cancer and breast cancer.
- The **Mephram Leos** collected snacks (Goldfish, granola bars, candy, cookies, etc.) and assembled snack bags for the INN (a homeless shelter in Hempstead) through the month of October.
- The **boys and girls volleyball teams** at **Kennedy** hosted Pink Out for breast cancer fundraisers.
- The **Mephram Leo** and **A World of Difference Clubs** made posters for Coming Out Day on Oct. 11, planned a Hispanic heritage celebration on Oct. 28 and practiced making henna tattoos for the Pirate Fest at homecoming on Oct. 7.

High Expectations

High Achievement

- The **Grand Avenue Cares** team for the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk on Oct. 14 had 71 people sign up, ranked 88 out of 1,215 teams and raised \$3,257.
- At **Merrick Avenue**, the **Natural Helpers Club**, **SADD Club** and **International Buddies** club had a joint bake sale to show unity and support for children all over the world.
- **Kennedy junior Mia Shteyman** collected prescription glasses as part of an effort with the Merrick Lions Club and Kennedy student body.
- **The Mephram Leo Club** raised nearly \$2,000 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society at the Light the Night event at Eisenhower Park on Oct. 21. They came in third place of all the fundraising teams.
- **The Calhoun Key Club** collected hygiene donations for a domestic violence shelter.