

# Community connection

CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

## INTRODUCING *Our* VALEDICTORIANS AND SALUTATORIANS



Calhoun



Katherine Kustas and Alexander Boyd

**VALEDICTORIAN: KATHERINE KUSTAS**

Katherine is a dedicated individual who remains committed to both her academics and extracurricular activities. Demonstrating her continued involvement in the community, Katherine volunteers at the Merrick Library over the summer, reading books with children and assisting them with book reports. She has also volunteered at the Merrick Fair for two years in a row and participated in the Jones Beach Breast Cancer Walk.

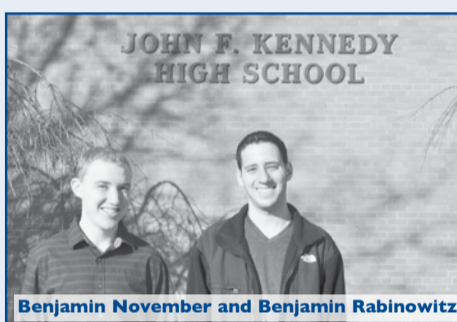
As historian of the student council, she photographs school events and is creating a montage for the senior class at the end of the year. Throughout her high school years, she has assisted in raising money and planning prom as part of student council. She's currently a member of the Science Club and has participated in soccer, winter track and badminton since freshman year. She's also been involved with Key Club and Yearbook Club, as well as with tutoring her peers. Katherine has played soccer her entire life, serving as goalkeeper on an outside soccer team in her spare time. She plans on studying finance or economics in college and hopes to become a financial analyst.

**SALUTATORIAN: ALEXANDER BOYD**

Every year, Alexander has conducted extensive research and written position papers for the National High School Model United Nations Conference in New York City on issues such as farming in the Middle East, intellectual property rights, the Arab Spring, and the situations in Somalia and Cote D'Ivoire.

Besides academics, Alexander serves as captain of the cross-country, winter track and spring track teams; the secretary general of the Model United Nations; and president of the band. He has volunteered at Robbie's Run for the past three years and is involved with We Care Blankets over the summers. Outside of school, he loves to read and is an avid sports fan. He plans on double majoring in political science and English, and hopes to do something that involves writing in his future career.

Kennedy



Benjamin November and Benjamin Rabinowitz

**VALEDICTORIAN: BENJAMIN RABINOWITZ**

Benjamin is not only committed to his high-achieving academics, but also to his extracurricular activities and volunteer work. A member of the school's Advanced Science Research program, he's completed research at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center on bioluminescence imaging in an immunology laboratory. He's volunteered at North Shore-LIJ Feinstein Institute, Hadassah and JCC Maccabi USA. Benjamin also dedicates his time to volunteering for the Forever 9 Foundation, helping to organize the annual 5K run in memory of his close friend Robbie Levine.

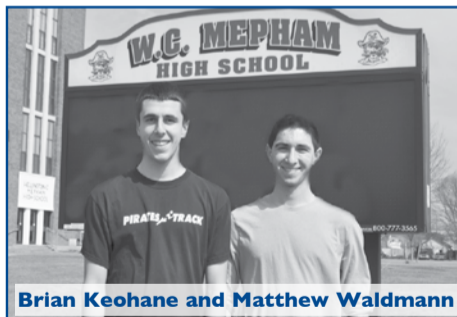
At Kennedy, Benjamin has been class vice president for the past four years, in addition to being an active member of the Key Club, wind ensemble and National, Science and Spanish honor societies. He has also participated in the National Honors Spanish Test for three years, earning a silver, bronze and honorable mention. A varsity soccer player for his entire high school career, Benjamin was team captain as a junior and senior, and was named All-Conference his junior year. He's also competed on junior varsity track, a travel soccer team, and took part in the Maccabi Games in track and field. He plans on majoring in pre-medicine and psychology in college, with the aspiration of one day becoming a surgeon.

**SALUTATORIAN: BENJAMIN NOVEMBER**

An AP Scholar with Honor, Benjamin is also a member of the school's Advanced Science Research program. He spent his sophomore and junior years conducting research at Citi College, and his junior and senior years researching at Brookhaven National Laboratory. His research paper earned him semifinalist status in the prestigious Intel Science Talent Search competition. Benjamin hopes to study engineering in college and obtain both a master's and doctorate in engineering.

Benjamin has served as chairperson of the Stock Market Club for Future Business Leaders of America as a senior, in addition to being a member of Athletes Helping Athletes and the Key Club. Benjamin is also a member of the National, Math, Science and Spanish honor societies, serving as a peer tutor for underclassmen with the NHS. Outside of school, Benjamin has volunteered at Winthrop University Hospital. During his freshman and sophomore years, he was invited to attend the National Young Conference – an invitation extended to students with excellent academic performance and leadership potential. He was named the Math Student of the Month at the school, and he's represented the Cougars on junior varsity and varsity football and track.

Mepham



Brian Keohane and Matthew Waldmann

**VALEDICTORIAN: BRIAN KEOHANE**

Brian is a National Merit Scholarship Program semifinalist and was named a candidate in the prestigious U.S. Presidential Scholars program. Recently, he was named a News 12/Capital One Scholar Athlete of the Week – an honor given to only 30 Long Island students a year that recognizes seniors who excel in athletics, leadership and scholarship. Brian is the first Mepham student to receive this honor and the second districtwide.

Brian is a three-season athlete in cross-country, basketball and spring track, serving as captain on all three teams this year. Outside of athletics, he is a member of the math team, Science Club and Athletes Helping

Athletes and takes a challenging roster of classes, including Advanced Placement U.S. History, English, macroeconomics, Calculus BC, Physics C, Italian and psychology. Brian is interested in studying engineering next year in college. His future career plans include going to graduate school and obtaining his doctorate.

**SALUTATORIAN: MATTHEW WALDMANN**

Committed to his studies in mathematics and science, Matthew is an active member of the Mepham community. Academically, he challenges himself with a rigorous course load, including such classes as Advanced Placement Statistics, chemistry, physics and Calculus BC. A member of the school's Physics Olympics team, math team and Athletes Helping Athletes program, he's also a dedicated member to several other Mepham activities. He's played for the varsity Bulldogs ice hockey team for the past four years, serving as captain for the past two, and played three years of varsity soccer, being named captain as a senior.

Matthew gives back to the community with his involvement in the Wounded Warrior Project and Make-A-Wish Foundation. Although undecided on which college he will attend next year, he plans to study aerospace engineering and hopes to become a successful engineer.

BELLMORE-MERRICK CENTRAL  
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# A Message from the Superintendent

Dear Members of the Community,



Over the past several months, I've been working closely with our Board of Education to develop a fiscally responsible 2014-2015 proposed budget – one that maintains the programs and supports our students, while being mindful of our local taxpayers. We intend to preserve the level of academics, athletics, arts and supportive services that our district has and will continue to be known for and to enhance our current offerings to align with the needs and demands of a 21st-century workforce.

Within the next few weeks, you'll receive a special edition of the Community Connection that outlines the full proposed 2014-2015 budget for the district. I encourage all residents to review the newsletter thoroughly and contact the district with any subsequent questions. Please remember to vote in the annual budget vote and trustee election at your normal voting location and times in the component districts on Tuesday, May 20. We've also provided a guide on registering in each of the component districts on page eight of this newsletter.

In the past newsletters, I've touched on my vision for the district – one that I've had in place since I began as superintendent last July. We have met and surpassed many of the goals I set forth, including opening lines of communication and collaboration with the component districts, improving instruction, communicating and partnering with the local community and rolling out a comprehensive safety plan, among many others. Additionally, our architectural firm, BBS Architects and Engineers, has been working to streamline our capital projects approval process with the State Education Department, ensuring that our students can best benefit from the work approved in the bond referendum and the energy performance contract.

It's important to note that the New York State Board of Regents has agreed to adjust the implementation of certain aspects of the Common Core Learning Standards. Among other recommendations, the Regents has decided to extend the implementation timeframe for the CCLS-aligned Regents examinations. For additional information on this phase-in, please see the article on page three. Administrators and faculty members in our district have worked tirelessly to fully align our curriculum with the standards, providing students with the best opportunity possible to succeed.

Our students continue to amaze me on a daily basis. From the three Kennedy students being named semifinalists in the Intel Science Talent Search and another three students from Mepham and Calhoun being honored as National Merit Scholarship Program finalists, to the individual awards and accolades countless students have received this year so far, Bellmore-Merrick is truly a special place for our incredibly talented and diverse student population. So many of our students excel in so many different areas – speaking to the level of dedication and hard work of everyone involved – parents, staff and students included. I know they will continue to do wonderful things during their time in Bellmore-Merrick and certainly after they have graduated.

As I look back on the past year thus far, I believe we have truly united our district under this year's theme – "One Voice, One Message." I've seen so many examples proving that our educators are entirely dedicated to the well being and advancement of each and every one of our students. With that type of student-focused environment that is always "for kids and about kids" – I know the children in Bellmore-Merrick will continue to reach their ultimate potentials.

Sincerely,

John DeTommaso  
Superintendent of Schools

# Bond Work UPDATE

Upon voter approval of the bond proposal for capital work on Dec. 2, the district and its architectural firm, BBS, have been working diligently to examine and identify a project timeline that will not only address critical needs, but also be sensitive to maintaining a stable environment for all students. All work seeks to create a safer and more modern environment that supports today's learning standards.

At this time, the district is considering a variety of options for potential phasing of all projects. Phase one, which would begin around summer of 2014, includes architectural and civil work such as ceilings (no lighting), exterior work to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, parking lots, gymnasium floors, security, masonry, field work and VAT. Initially, roofing work was considered for phase one, but will now be completed in one of the later phases. Phases two and three, which will begin in the summers of 2015 and 2016, respectively, will cover the majority of the work, including prior projects, lighting, ADA compliance, science laboratory renovations, bathrooms, doors, bleachers and upgrades to HVAC units, as well as other miscellaneous projects. Phase four, to commence in the summer of 2017, will wrap up the work on remaining miscellaneous projects. Please note that dates are tentative and are dependent on SED approval.

## Board Takes Stand Against InBloom

The Board of Education has passed a resolution demanding that data on district students not be transmitted to InBloom or any other private third party. This serves as a starting measure to express sincere concern about the security of sensitive data to the State Education Department and commissioner of education.

The resolution articulates the board's concern over a private organization, which is funded by outside companies, having control over student data. In the past, districts shared student data with the SED, but the required information was basic. These systems now require districts to provide information that is far more in-depth and explicit than in the past. The district has joined the ranks of school districts across Long Island that are expressing their concerns with InBloom and private third-party information providers.

"One of the district's priorities has always been and will continue to be the security of student data," said Board of Education President Susan Schwartz. "This resolution emphasizes the board's continued commitment to protecting the privacy of its students and takes a stand against the potential exploitation of such data."

# Common Core UPDATE

Over the past several months, there have been countless discussions and concerns expressed about the continued implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. In the district, administrators and teachers are diligently working together to write and refine the curriculum to provide the best possible materials and guidance for all students.

Teachers attended the after-school Professional Development Academy in the fall, which helped them deconstruct the New York State Learning Modules for seventh, eighth and ninth grade. The work continued during a half-day workshop for all middle school math teachers, and focused on analysis and modification of these modules to match student learning expectations and promote problem-solving, communication and reasoning. Monthly professional development department meetings are held to strengthen teachers' content knowledge and give them the opportunity to engage in collaborative sharing and learning.

In January, middle school math teachers met with teachers in the elementary school

districts to discuss the vertical progression of content, curricular goals, teaching strategies and resources.

Teachers from the middle and high school attended an "Algebra Alive" workshop that focused on leveraging instructional strategies for student success on the algebra Regents. This one-day training was designed to support teachers and provide a clearer understanding of the demands of the CCLS in algebra. The teachers were given the opportunity to practice several hands-on activities to help model concepts in the classroom, which they shared with colleagues when they returned to their schools.

To prepare for the transition to the CCLS for geometry next year, high school teachers attended a workshop that introduced them to the important shifts and changes in the curriculum. This is an ongoing topic of discussion in all department and professional development meetings, and a scope and sequence addressing these changes is currently being developed so that teachers can

prepare for them in advance.

In February, the New York State Board of Regents officially accepted several key recommendations on the CCLS. The most notable among these was that high school students would be given more time to meet the standards. According to the State Education Department, this includes the extension of the phase-in for Common Core-aligned Regents examinations, which are required for graduation. The extension calls for the Class of 2022 to be the first required to pass both the English and mathematics Regents exams at CCLS levels.

Additionally, the Regents called for the elimination of high-stakes testing for students, offering better options for English language learners and students with disabilities, clarifying what grades three to eight test scores mean, reducing unnecessary tests, and preventing unfair negative consequences to teachers and principals, among many others. A complete list of adjustments to the CCLS can be found at [www.regents.nysed.gov](http://www.regents.nysed.gov).



Aaron Goldstein and Brian Keohane from Mepham.

Calhoun's Max Mogel.

## National Merit Finalists

Aaron Goldstein and Brian Keohane from Mepham and Max Mogel from Calhoun have been recognized as finalists in the 2014 National Merit Scholarship Program. Finalists in the competition are eligible for state, corporate and college scholarships. According to the National Merit Scholarship Program, the 15,000 finalists were chosen from a pool of 16,000 semifinalists. The semifinalists represented the top one-third of 50,000 high scorers who took the 2012 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, which had 1.5 million entrants from 22,000 high schools. Ranking is done using a selection index score based on combined scores from critical reading, math and writing.

"It is a prestigious honor for a student to be named a finalist in the National Merit Scholarship Program," said Superintendent of Schools John DeTommaso. "Aaron, Brian and Max are exemplary students and enrich their schools in so many different ways. I congratulate all three of them and wish them the best of luck in their bright futures."

## BELLMORE-MERRICK AT THE Regional Science Olympiads

All three high schools from the district excelled during the Science Olympiad Eastern Nassau County Regional Competition. A total of 42 teams competed in events covering topics such as forensics, entomology, water quality, astronomy and anatomy, as well as hands-on activities including maglev and mission possible, among others. Students worked over the past several months with their team advisers and other science teachers to prepare for the competition.

Team A from Calhoun finished in 19th place, with four students medaling. Michelle Chin and Max Mogel took home third place in write it, do it, and Megan Corona and Haley Ryan received a medal for their fifth-place finish in the bungee drop.

Kennedy sent two teams to the competition, with Team A placing ninth. Kennedy students also took home medals in nine events: Bea Brown and Sam Epstein placed fifth in the chemistry lab; Logan Eisner and Blake Linzer took sixth place in designer genes; Josh Baron and Aaron Plass placed fourth in geologic mapping; Sarah Mousavi and Monique Polanco came in fourth place in mission possible; Eric Abramson and Josh Baron took fifth place in mission possible; Sam Epstein and Jeremy Marchuk took fourth place in rocks and minerals; Bea Brown and Sarah Harris took home fourth place in write it, do it; Steven Beigelman and David Mark placed sixth in astronomy; and James Giametta and Rachel Marshal took home fourth place in forensics.

Mepham's team finished in 14th place with a total of six medals. Vin Comisso took fifth place in boomilever; Kim Bell and Jaani Gandhi placed sixth in bungee; Vin Comisso and David Kormos took home second place in circuit lab; Anand Bradley and Gabe Ferreri placed third in designer genes; John Groover and Pat Hagerty placed fifth in maglev; and Brianna Isola and Hannah Weibley took home first place in write it, do it.



Calhoun students competed in the maglev competition during the Science Olympiad Eastern Nassau County Regional Competition.

## Scripps Spelling Bee

Students in Grand Avenue and Merrick Avenue showed off their spelling skills as they vied for the title of schoolwide spelling bee champion. Competing through numerous rounds, seventh- and eighth-graders spelled countless words of increasing complexity. Prior to the schoolwide competitions, students competed in their individual English classes, with two students from each class moving on to the school level.

At Merrick Avenue, seventh-grader Joshua Gold took top honors with “portmanteau” in the eighth round of competition. Grand Avenue eighth-grader Shivani Sharma was named the first-place winner after spelling “symptomatic” correctly in the 14th round. Both school winners progressed to the Hofstra University Long Island Regional Scripps Spelling Bee.

“We were so glad to have such a great response to the spelling bee, which we brought back after many years,” said Merrick Avenue Principal Dr. Meador Pratt. “At Merrick Avenue Middle School, we are always looking for ways to show how students can shine in their own way. This is yet another way the students are able to do that.”

“It certainly exemplifies all that is good in middle school,” said Grand Avenue Principal Carlo Conte. “The strength of character that these students display during the contest is remarkable.”



Seventh-grader Joshua Gold took home top honors in the schoolwide spelling bee at Merrick Avenue.



Grand Avenue's top four spellers – Collette Sirabella, Sophie Somvaru, schoolwide winner Shivani Sharma and Mark Johnston.

## Demonstrating Geography Knowledge at MAMS

Taking the knowledge they've learned in the classroom, approximately 90 students from Merrick Avenue tested their geography comprehension during the annual schoolwide National Geographic Bee. Students first competed at the classroom level, with two winners from each social studies class progressing to the schoolwide competition. The bee asks questions, which are prepared by the National Geographic Society, that focus on U.S. geography, continental and physical geography, and historic locations, among other topics. The activity connects concepts learned in social studies, such as time and place, in a fun and engaging manner.

Seventh-grader Sean Imel took honors by answering a question on the Icelandic city of Reykjavik in a championship tiebreaker round. Sean will now take a written examination to qualify for the state competition.

“The Merrick Avenue Middle School social studies department works very hard from September to January creating a sense of community in their classrooms to develop geographic skills, which feed into the Common Core Learning Standards,” said Karen McGuinness, social studies chairperson. “It’s really a lot of fun for students to become educated citizens.”



Seventh-grader Sean Imel took honors in the Merrick Avenue National Geographic Bee. He is pictured with his social studies teacher, Lauren Goepfert and Principal Dr. Meador Pratt.



Koromone Koroye, a spoken word poet, visited Mepham to facilitate a workshop.

## Experiencing Spoken Word Poetry

Mepham students got a firsthand experience of spoken word poetry during a special workshop through the afterschool ELITE program. Koromone Koroye, a performance poet and current Master of Fine Arts in poetry student at Hofstra University, performed several pieces for more than 30 students, answered questions and facilitated a workshop in which students were prompted to write their own spoken poetry. Students were able to learn about her creative process and how her experiences influence her as an artist.

Koroye, who came to Long Island from Nigeria to pursue an undergraduate education at Hofstra, discovered her love and potential for spoken word poetry as an undergraduate and performs for Artists Without Walls, an organization that inspires and unites diverse people and communities through artistic endeavors. She has also performed at The Cell, Lehman College and St. John's University.

“Watching this type of performance gives our students another way to be heard,” said English teacher Melanie Sirof, who coordinated the program with fellow teacher Nicole Maresca. “Spoken word poetry is as modern as poetry gets and thanks to YouTube, the audience for it is tremendous. Frequently, spoken word speaks to students who do not think they like poetry, or would never consider themselves poets. If our students can find their voices here, then they have an artful and honest means of expression. That seems like a pretty powerful tool with which to leave high school.”

## Poetry Comes to Life



Kennedy's Nicole Homburger took third place, Olivia Schmidt took first place and Amanda Aronoff took second place.



Calhoun English department chairperson Kim Serpe with first-place winner Nicole Fegan, second-place winner Bianca Liriano, third-place winner Julia Losner and event coordinator Sofia Caceres.

Students at Calhoun and Kennedy got in touch with their inner poets during the schoolwide Poetry Out Loud competitions. Poetry Out Loud is a contest that fosters an appreciation of poetry through memorization, performance and competition. Students first competed in their individual English classes, with class winners progressing to the schoolwide competition. Students recited their poems in front of a panel of judges and were scored based on voice and articulation, dramatic appropriateness, level of complexity, physical presence, overall performance and evidence of understanding.

At Kennedy, Olivia Schmidt took home first place, Amanda Aronoff was recognized with second place and Nicole Homburger was awarded third place. At Calhoun, ninth-grader Julia Losner came in third place with Ai's “Conversion.” Sophomore Nicole Fegan took top honors with the same poem, while Bianca Liriano, also a sophomore, placed second with her recitation of William Ernest Henley's “Invictus.” Amanda, Bianca, Olivia and Nicole will continue in the competition and compete at the Long Island Finals at Stony Brook University.

“This event could not have taken place without a tremendous amount of people – from the building administrators, English department and students to the parents who supported them,” said Kim Serpe, Calhoun English department chairperson. “Through the competition, students learned the value of poetry and competition, the importance of public speaking skills and how to portray themselves in a mature, intellectual way.”



## Honoring Black History Month



Seventh-graders Victoria Bennett and Morgan Useloff spoke about Condoleezza Rice and Harriet Tubman on the morning announcements at Grand Avenue.

Students at Grand Avenue and Kennedy honored influential African-American leaders, innovators, artists, athletes and visionaries for Black History Month. Ann Donaldson's 10th-grade world history class at Kennedy contributed to the creation of a montage celebrating Black History Month, which was featured in one of the school's presentation cases throughout the month of February. The display featured a variety of photographs of famous African-American figures from the past and present, as well as student work honoring the late Nelson Mandela. The 10th-graders incorporated quotes from Mandela and created pieces that represented the spirit of that quote. The activity provided a chance for students to recognize individual contributions of African-Americans and emphasize their regular classroom curriculum.

“Asking the students to focus on a specific individuals, like Nelson Mandela, inspired them to make a connection between historical figures and the world in which we live today,” said Donaldson.

At Grand Avenue, students recognized these influential leaders throughout the month by reading biographical selections during the morning announcements. Social studies teachers worked with several students to select a prominent African-American figure, research their life and work, and create a short biography on that person. Students then read their summaries on the morning announcements to educate the school on that person's achievements and influence on history, including Condoleezza Rice, Jackie Robinson and Harriet Tubman, among others. Additionally, social studies classrooms throughout the school learned about contributions of those figures throughout the month.

“This activity allowed our students to delve into the history of several influential African-Americans, learning and sharing more about their life, work and inspiration on our culture and history,” said Principal Carlo Conte.



Ann Donaldson's 10th-grade world history class at Kennedy celebrated Black History Month by creating a special display.



# Drama Production



## Broadway Comes to Mepham

Members of the Skull and Bones Drama Club at Mepham brought Broadway to the school's stage with their annual revue show – "A Night on Broadway" – under the direction of adviser Edward Grosskreuz Jr. and hosted by students Sabrina Mastrangelo and Eric Seltzer. In its fourth year, the production gives students an opportunity to spotlight and showcase their talents. Normally, the revue raises money for the drama program, however, this year, all proceeds from the event were donated to the Lymphoma Research Foundation. A total of \$1,651 was raised by the performance.

"The reason we do the revue is to give everyone their moment in the spotlight, really show off their love of theater and enjoyment of performing," said Grosskreuz. "This is just a real love of theater, putting on a show for the audience and having our own version of Broadway right here in Bellmore."

The students selected, staged and rehearsed their own scenes from a range of Broadway productions. Students performed everything from "Wicked's" "The Wizard and I," "Aladdin's" "A Whole New World" and "Rent's" "Seasons of Love" to "Pippin's" "With You" and "Peter Pan's" "I've Gotta Crow." Musical performances spanned a variety of famous musicals, genres and eras, with each student demonstrating his or her unique talents in the performances.



Members of the Skull and Bones Drama Club at Mepham performed in the fourth annual revue production, "A Night on Broadway."

## First Chair at All-State

Kennedy senior Gregory Mora was selected to sit first chair for the double bass in the All-State Symphony Orchestra during the New York State School Music Association Winter Conference in Rochester from Dec. 5-8.

To be a first chair, musicians must exhibit exceptional skill with their instrument and be a leader

to the others in their section. This honor makes Gregory the top bassist in the state. He is a member of Kennedy's string ensemble, pit orchestra and jazz band, in addition to attending the New York State Summer School of the Arts' School of Orchestral Studies. Gregory is also a member of the National, Tri-M Music, Spanish and Science honor societies. He is the president of Key Club and a biology peer tutor. He was named a scholar in the National Hispanic Recognition Program and was most recently nominated for the New York State Academic Excellence Award.



Kennedy senior Gregory Mora with Superintendent of Schools John DeTommaso, music teacher Kim Musial and trustee Janet Goller.

## On Tour Company Performs 'Pins and Needles'

Calhoun's On Tour Company continued its season with a production of Harold Rome's "Pins and Needles." Directed by Salvatore Salerno, "Pins and Needles" examines the 1930s through a pro-union outlook, documenting young workers as they make their way through an ever-changing landscape of culture and politics. In the original production, new songs and skits were introduced regularly to keep the show current.

The talented cast featured Brenda Alderete, Steven Bennett, Melissa Bianchi, Lauren D'Archangelis, Liz Earle, Matt Futterman, Robert Gallo, Alani Garcia, Jamie Glickman, Samantha Kamelhar, Jon Leiner, Dan Maldonado, Adam Myers, Will Rosenblum, Matt Vogel and Adam Wilkes.



Members of the On Tour Company performed in "Pins and Needles."



# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



## Calhoun

Daniel A. Gidasi, a member of Calhoun's Class of 2007, earned the nomination of New York Sen. Hillary Clinton to attend the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. He reported there for basic cadet training three days after graduation on June 27, 2007.

After completing the rigorous basic training course, Daniel spent four years at the Air Force Academy, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in aeronautical systems engineering. Over the course of his studies there, Daniel earned the honor of athletic distinction, achieving a perfect score on the grueling Academy Physical Fitness Test, becoming a member of the elite "500 Club," and graduating third in his class athletically. During his senior year, Daniel served in the position of Cadet Group Commander, where he commanded a group of 1,100 cadets. Over the course of his command, Daniel attended leadership seminars at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point and engaged in dialogue with former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. He was also a member of the Academy's inter-collegiate competition flying team, where he attended and placed in several national championships.

After graduating from the Air Force Academy and being commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force, Lt. Gidasi was selected for and attended the prestigious Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training (ENJJPT) at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas. There, Lt. Gidasi earned his wings in February 2012 and was awarded the honor of remaining at ENJJPT as an instructor pilot, where he presently serves today. Since becoming an instructor pilot, Lt. Gidasi has amassed more than 300 hours of flight time instructing in the T-6 Texan II as part of a cadre of U.S. and international pilots among 13 NATO countries supporting the mission of training NATO's finest fighter pilots. In the future, Lt. Gidasi hopes to remain in the U.S. Air Force for a career of service to his nation as a fighter pilot.

## Kennedy

As a 1985 graduate of Kennedy, Adam Scheffer has distinguished himself as a sportswriter, a National Football League reporter and an award-winning author. Adam is a graduate of the University of Michigan and Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism.

While a student at Kennedy, Adam was a member of the varsity basketball and track teams, while also being a professional sports junkie. He continued his passion for sports throughout his collegiate career and landed his first job covering the Denver Broncos football team for 16 seasons, including two when they won the Super Bowl. Adam is now considered as one of the most recognized sports analysts. Since June 2009, he has appeared on ESPN as an "NFL Insider," recognized as the top in his field by USA Today. In 2010, Sports Illustrated included Adam in its "Power 40+," a listing of the NFL's most influential officials, executives, coaches, players and media members.

An acclaimed author of four books, Adam has received recognition on the New York Times' Bestseller list.

Adam came back to Kennedy to discuss his high school experience, his career and to offer words of wisdom to students, parents and community members. Last year, Adam returned to Kennedy, bringing former New York Jets star Curtis Martin with him, to assist with a fundraiser to benefit those Kennedy families most affected by Superstorm Sandy.

Adam has excelled in all areas of his professional life and has done so through hard work and perseverance, with his pursuit of excellence taking him from the hallways of Kennedy to the spotlights of primetime TV on ESPN.

## Mepham

Dolores Kuneth Taisey, a member of Mepham's Class of 1965, has solidified her work as a real estate developer – buying, selling and improving inns and spas. Dolores graduated from Nassau Community College with an Associate in Applied Science in business education. Continuing her education, she obtained a Bachelor of Science in business and distributive education at the University at Albany. Always seeking to improve herself, she obtained additional certificates in education.

While at Albany during her student teaching assignments, Dolores met her future husband, James. After a brief occupational shift to the Midwest, the Taiseys moved back to the Albany area and bought a large home in need of major work. It was this first property where she learned how to renovate and upgrade living quarters. Together, the Taiseys turned their home into their first bed and breakfast – The Apple Tree Inn.

As the bed and breakfast grew, Dolores began working with the Ballston Spa Village board to help the village develop a community by improving the downtown district. Dolores assisted in the organization of the Ballston Spa Victorian Day Parade and the Festival of Trees. The Taiseys' grandest project was the 200-year-old Medbery Hotel and Spa, which was purchased in 2002 and upgraded with much of their savings. Today, with large rooms and suites, the Medbery is one of the leading hotels/spas in the area.

Dolores has always kept up with her education training, doing substitute teaching and instructing business at local community colleges. She's taught at the McGregor Correctional Facility in Saratoga County, providing business courses to inmates for more than 20 years.



## 'Golden 11' Team

Mepham senior Chris Durkin has been selected to the prestigious National Football Foundation's "Golden 11" team for Nassau County. This team is comprised of football's best 11 student-athletes in Nassau County. In order to be considered for this honor, students must demonstrate a continued dedication to both academics and athletics – maintaining scholar-athlete status and attaining All-County accolades. Additionally, selected students are good citizens in their school and respected members of the local community.

"The National Football Foundation's Golden 11 team is one of the most prestigious awards in the county that a football player can receive," said Mepham football head coach Anthony Cracco. "It's the culmination of an outstanding season both on the field and in the classroom. I can't think of anyone who is more deserving than Chris."



Mepham's Chris Durkin has been named to the NFF's "Golden 11" team.

## Gatorade NYS Girls Soccer Player of the Year

Kayla Cappuzzo, a senior at Calhoun, has been honored as the 2013-14 Gatorade New York Girls Soccer Player of the Year by the Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA Today High School Sports. In its 29th year, the award recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and character both on and off the field. The program annually recognizes one high school winner from each of the 50 states and District of Columbia in football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross-country, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball and boys and girls track and field. The finalist for the Gatorade National Girls Soccer Player of the Year will be announced in May.



Calhoun senior Kayla Cappuzzo.

As a midfielder, Kayla scored seven goals and passed for nine assists this past season, leading the Colts to the Nassau County finals. An All-American selection by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America, Kayla was also named the Class AA Co-player of the Year. She is a member of the U.S. Soccer Federation U-18 Women's National Team, all while maintaining an A average in school. She will be playing Division I soccer at Northeastern University in the fall.

## Mepham Cheerleaders Top in State

The varsity coed cheerleading team at Mepham was named the New York State Coed Champions for the second year in a row. The team of 30 student-athletes, coached by Jayna Kyriacou and Nicole Kyriacou with captains Kelly Cates, Julie Dijkstra and Brianna Frobosilo, dominated the mat with their stunts and tumbling. The Pirates competed against the top coed teams from across New York State.



# WINTER SPORTS ROUNDUP

## 19 Out of 20 Teams Achieve Scholar-Athlete Status

A total of 19 out of 20 winter sports teams, consisting of students from all three high schools, have received the New York State Scholar-Athlete Team Award.

At Mepham, the girls basketball team remained undefeated in the regular season with a 14-5 overall record. The team was named the conference champions, in addition to placing second in the Wantagh tournament. Coach Jim Mulvey was named Conference Coach of the Year, with Alexa Morris named All-Class, Nicole Moccio and Emily Schmitt honored as All-Conference, Erica Miller named a top scholar-athlete, and Megan Andrew and Bridgid McNeil named All-County. Additionally, Meghan Anderson was named Academic All-State. Boys basketball players Tyler Davis and David Gilroy took home All-Conference accolades. From the boys and girls winter track team, Steven Forte, Nadine Simpson and Charles Skidmore made All-Conference. Simpson, along with Taylor Held, Briana Noto and Toni Simpson, took home the conference and county championships in the 4x800. Emily Hagarty was named All-Conference in the 55-meter high hurdles, in addition to making All-County and being recognized as the conference champion in pole vault and triple jump and a state qualifier in pole vault. Kickline took the Long Island Championship in the pom category, as well as first place in pom and second place in jazz and open. Mepham's cheerleading squad placed 18th at nationals and was named the New York State champions for the second consecutive year. Louis Hernandez was named the New York State wrestling champion, with teammates Matt Assael, John Sherlock and Joel Zambrano receiving All-County status. Tyler Althenn, Kevin Cabrera, Sean O'Brian and Corey Preattle received All-Conference, and Peter Motley and Alex Pekoff received All-Division honors. Several letters of intent to play sports at the college level have been signed, including Erica Anzalone for soccer at Stony Brook University, Steven Forte for track at Manhattan College, Connor Gordon for baseball at Davidson College, Dom Raheb for lacrosse at Molloy College,

Christina Rizzacasa for softball at NYIT, Emily Schmitt for soccer at Ryder University, Dylan Stock for baseball at Binghamton University, Toni-Marie Valariano for softball at Queens College and Chris Vento for lacrosse at Belmont Abbey College.

Teams at Kennedy showed off their talent and skills throughout the season, with senior Ben Sather and junior Dave Arkow both placing third in Nassau County wrestling. From the girls basketball team, Samantha Milazzo was named All-Class, while boys basketball team members Nick Bandini and Eric Pauley were named All-Conference. Rifle member Sydney Goldschlag placed second in Nassau County and third at the New York State Championship. Baseball player Justin Ganca and softball player Lauren Sustad have both signed National Letters of Intent with Hartford University. Sydney Goldschlag has signed with Akron University for rifle, and Louis Cuttitta has signed with Adelphi University for lacrosse. For soccer, Krista Trinidad signed with Delaware, Allison Jones with Mount Saint Mary, Trevor Howe with SUNY New Paltz, Nicole Liotta with Central Connecticut, Franki Priore with Stony Brook University, Leanna Rodriguez with CUNY John Jay and Sara Rothery with University of Connecticut. Volleyball players Gary Anderson and Justin Fiegels have signed to Ramapo, with Ben Sather committing to SUNY Oswego for wrestling.

Calhoun's sports teams finished strong, with Tommy Holzmacher winning the county title in the high jump for boys track. Additionally, the following boys track members advanced to the state qualifier meet: Holzmacher for high jump, Brendan Carrol for 300-meter, Ryan Curran and Elias Plantanias for 3,200-meter, and Elijah Maduro for 1,000-meter. Holzmacher and Carrol progressed to the state meet. Girls track member Grace Moore advanced to the state meet in the 3,000-meter. At the wrestling Nassau County qualifiers, 11 Calhoun wrestlers earned All-Conference honors by placing in the top six in their respective weight classes, with nine wrestlers also qualifying for the county

wrestling championships. Wrestlers who placed include: seniors Dylan Goldstein, Chris Johnsen and Willy Jutt; juniors Isaiah Arroyo, Anthony Fitzsimmons, Thomas Fitzsimmons, Patrick Horn and Matt Krause; sophomore Terran Cooper; and freshmen Alex Cruz and Cole Haile. The boys basketball team finished in a fourth-place tie in Conference III (4-6) with Herricks, playing in a play-in game against Herricks, winning, and advancing to the Nassau County Class AA playoffs and later the quarterfinals. The following Calhoun students will be participating in athletics at the college level: Colin Bayer at Florida Southern College for lacrosse, Kayla Cappuzzo at Northeastern University for soccer, Brendan Carroll at Lafayette College for track and field, Caroline Criscuola at College of Mount St. Vincent for soccer, Harry Davis at Springfield College for Soccer, Emily Dolan at Western New England University for lacrosse, Nick Fronte at Skidmore College for baseball, Jack Kerner at Albertus Magnus College for lacrosse, Alexandra Marcello at Catholic University for soccer, Kyle McGinley at Wagner College for lacrosse, Eric Ohlendorf at Fordham University for soccer, Aleco Podias at SUNY New Paltz for soccer, Samantha Sanky at Utica College for softball, JJ Santagata at Ryder College for hockey, Taylor Sipos at James Madison University for soccer and Joe Zito at Lenoir-Rhyne University for lacrosse.

Districtwide, boys and girls bowling team member Chris Lewis finished in the top six in all of Nassau County, All-County with a 204.6 average, and qualified for the state tournament. Nicole Brown was also named All-County. The Bulldogs hockey team finished the regular season 15-1-1, being named Nassau County semifinalists and New York State tournament semifinalists. The boys swimming and diving team put on an impressive performance for the season, with Calhoun student Kevin Moran finishing second at the county competition in diving and qualifying for the state meet. Mepham's Moustafa Ibrahim took All-Division and All-County and qualified for states in swimming, while Matthew Panzarino was named swimming All-Division.

# REMEMBER TO VOTE

The annual budget vote will take place on Tuesday, May 20 at normal voting locations and times in the component districts.

## VOTER ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to vote, you must be a citizen of the United States, 18 years of age or older and live in the Central High School District.

## VOTER REGISTRATION

You can register in person until five days preceding the vote at the following component district locations:

### Bellmore Union Free School District

Winthrop Avenue School  
School days, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

### Merrick Union Free School District

All schools on school days, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

### North Bellmore Union Free School District

Administrative Office and all district schools  
School days, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

### North Merrick Union Free School District

Harold D. Fayette School  
School days, 9 a.m. -3 p.m.

## Transition Fair a **HIT**

SEPTA and Community Parent Education Center presented the seventh annual Fair for Transitioning Students with Disabilities: From Eligibility to Employment and Beyond, with hundreds of individuals, families, students, educators and other professionals in attendance. One of the premier transition events in the area, the fair offered a variety of information to assist with the transitioning process, including a step-by-step overview of the process, supported living options for people with special needs and eligibility determination.

More than 40 agencies set up informational booths throughout the building, where families and students obtained valuable information and asked questions. Kicking off the event with several songs was the Express Yourself choral club, a group that brings together members of Calhoun's On Tour Company with students in the Prep for the Future program through acting, singing and dancing. Keynote speakers Erin Murphy, a former Bellmore-Merrick student, and Peter John Vicari, a current student, spoke about their experiences and how they use the skills learned in Prep for the Future in the outside world. Erin also discussed her transition process into life after school.

Attendees were able to select workshops to attend from a diverse list, which included Medicaid Service Coordination, Waivers, Recreation and Crisis Services; Supplemental Security Income and Medicaid; Travel Training and Able Ride, Self-Determination and Consolidated Support Services; Pre-Vocational Training and Day Programs; and Special Needs Trust and Legal Guardianship. Additionally, several current and former students from Prep for the Future spoke during a special student workshop about their prevocational and vocational experiences. All workshops were led by experts in the field of disabilities rights and services.



Members of the choral group Express Yourself performed at the transition fair.

## Speaker Motivates 10th-Graders to *Bring Change*

Tenth-graders from across the district came together for a special presentation on the importance of diversity, acceptance and tolerance at the Brookside School. Speaker Sergio Argueta talked to students about a variety of topics, including socioeconomic status, religious differences, pop culture terminology and cultural differences, during his inspiring program "Bringing Voices Together with One Message." Student ambassadors from the district first listened to Argueta speak during the Erase Racism conference in November and thought it was important to bring their fellow peers from across the district together to hear his message.

Students from Calhoun, Kennedy and Mephram high schools, as well as the Meadowbrook Alternative Program, listened to Argueta speak about bridging gaps, overcoming ignorance, ending the cycle of stereotypes, and the power that everyone has to be courageous and take a stand. He drew on prior life experiences to empower young people to bring about change in their communities.

After the presentation, students returned to their schools and discussed the issues touched on in the assembly in their social studies classes. They examined which types of stereotypes and prejudices exist in their schools, how they unconsciously stereotype others, actions they can take to stop injustice, and their overall thoughts about the program.

Argueta is currently the director of undergraduate social work program at Adelphi University. While earning a master's degree, he worked as a gang specialist for the Nassau County Youth Board. He also became the executive director of STRONG Youth Inc. (Struggling to Reunite Our New Generation), an agency he founded that is one of the leading gang prevention and intervention agencies in the northeastern United States. Argueta earned a Bachelor of Arts from Hofstra University, a master's in social work from Stony Brook University, and is currently enrolled in Touro School of Law.



Speaker Sergio Argueta talked to 10th-graders in the district.

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