



High Expectations  
High Achievement

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

POINTS OF PRIDE

December 2023

Academics

- The Central High School District received the College Board Advanced Placement Medium-Sized District of the Year Award on Dec. 5.
- Joseph Darcourt, the Calhoun Class of 2023 salutatorian, was named a semifinalist in the Gates Scholarship program. If he becomes a recipient, it will cover all the costs of college not covered by financial aid.
- Michael Malchevsky, a Kennedy senior, was awarded a \$180,000 scholarship from ROTC.
- Junior and three-time medalist Danya Zaidi, sophomore Jake Wilson from Mephram, and Penelope Orlando and Ryan Karis from Calhoun advance to the Nassau County semifinals of the Poetry Out Loud contest in February for a shot at the New York State finals.
- Kennedy freshman Kellan Auyeung (right) placed first at JFK in the AMC 10 for underclassmen, and junior Jacob Krukus (left) won the AMC 12. In the AMC 10, Mason Schlesinger placed second and Jacob Moont placed third. In the AMC 12, Connor Barath, Mark Prainito and Jayden Simon placed second Avidan Moont placed third.
- On Dec. 14, the Bellmore-Merrick Business Challenge was held at Brookside. CHAMP provided Italian dishes, Bellmore-Merrick Broadcasting covered the event and the Calhoun orchestra ensemble provided musical entertainment. Representatives from local colleges as well as politicians were on hand for the experience. Winners were:
  - Entrepreneurship: Giavannah Posner (Cal), Brandon Magnuson (JFK), Saif Ahmed (Mep).
  - Not-for-profit fundraising: Kate Kenny (Cal), Lauren Piscazzi (JFK), Kimberly Janosek (Mep).
  - Sports and entertainment marketing: Brynn Hutchins (Cal), Jack LaGalia (JFK).
  - Hospitality services: Alexa Addonizio (Cal), Jenna Feig (JFK), Kayla Rudnitsky (Mep).
  - Finance: Jacyln Cunha (Cal), Nick Sabo (JFK), Joseph Mordoff (Mep).

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Arts

- Signora Di Chiara’s eighth grade Italian class at Merrick Avenue participated in the AATI “Gara di Foto” contest. Students’ photo submissions captured Italian culture, demonstrating food, family and travel. Matthew Rosman came in first place, Kristiana Ippoliti in third place and Sofia Maganuco in fourth place.
- Calhoun’s choral group PULSE performed at Radio City Music Hall ahead of the Rockettes on Dec. 3. They are directed by Jeannette Pincus.
- Calhoun hosted an immersive, student-created Art Expo on Dec. 8.



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- **Calhoun's Jackie Dobbs** sang the national anthem at the Dec. 4 districtwide celebration where it was announced that the district received the College Board Advanced Placement Medium-Sized District of the Year Award. The **Calhoun Rock Band**, **Mephams' MephaCapella** and the **Kennedy strings orchestra** all performed at the celebration. **Mephams-based Bellmore-Merrick Broadcasting** captured the day's events and **Kennedy-based CHAMP** provided some of the catering.
- **Julia Cohen** of **Kennedy** (Symphonic Orchestra, violin) and **Liam Osborne** of **Mephams** (Instrumental Jazz Ensemble, tenor trombone) traveled to Rochester Dec. 8-10 to participate in the All-State Symphony Orchestra at this year's NYSSMA Conference.
- Sixth graders from Birch, Levy Lakeside and Shore Road elementary schools visited **Kennedy** for a "sneak-peak" concert performance from Kennedy's Advanced Orchestra, Concert Choir and Wind Ensemble.

### Athletics

- Returning New York State champion and **Mephams** senior **Yianna Foufas** is ranked No. 13 at 115 pounds in the new National Girls High School Rankings. Earlier this school year she traveled to Japan as a member of the Kintaro USA National Team, representing the United States at the Japan All-Female Open.
- **Grand Avenue** seventh grader **Riley Kolinsky** made the Bellmore-Merrick varsity bowling team. He is reportedly the first seventh grader in 18 years to make the varsity bowling team.
- **Calhoun**, **Kennedy** and **Mephams** hosted the Sprig Gardner Wrestling Tournament Nov. 30-Dec. 2.
- The **Kennedy** and **Calhoun kickline** squads hosted clinics for local youth on Dec. 16 and Dec. 30, respectively.
- The **Calhoun girls basketball** team hosted a clinic for younger students on Dec. 30.
- **Calhoun wrestler Reese Adams** competed at the Queen of the Mat Tournament and won second place in her weight class.
- **Leo Ferry** of **Kennedy** was named to an all-tournament basketball team on Dec. 8 and led all scorers with 17 points in the contest.
- **ACES club (Athletes Compassionately Educating Students)** from **Mephams** visited the North Bellmore elementary schools. The students worked with the sixth grade classes and shared their experiences in middle school/high school.
- **Isayah Contreras** of **Mephams** posted a national leading time of 1:22.93 in the 600-meter at the Nassau Coaches Invitational, Ocean BreezeTrack and Field Facility on Staten Island, on Dec. 9.
- Four student-athletes were named to the Newsday top 20 girls wrestlers for the 2023-24 season. Congratulations to **Gabriella Schechtman** of **Kennedy**, **Yianna Foufas** and **Talia Robles** of **Mephams** and **Reese Adams** of **Calhoun**.
- Two **Kennedy** seniors were named to the Newsday top 100 wrestlers for the 2023-24 season, **Brandon Goldstein** and **JJ Pizzirusso**.

### Altruism

- The **Grand Avenue Yorker Club** raised \$500 throughout November for the district's food pantry, the Community Cupboard.



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- The **Grand Avenue Builders' Club** sponsored a Coats for Kids drive in December.
- Merrick Avenue hosted a book drive in December to benefit the Book Fairies.
- Members of the **International Buddy Club** from **Calhoun** joined members of the **International Buddy Club** at **Merrick Avenue** on Tuesday, Dec. 12, to celebrate the holidays and make gingerbread houses to bring cheer to others. The gingerbread houses were donated to the Brookside Senior Center.
- The **Mephram LEOs** volunteered before and during the Bellmore Lions Club annual Polar Express event.
- **CHAMP students** baked cookies for the Bellmore Lions Club annual Polar Express event.
- The **Mephram Spanish Honor Society**, under the leadership of Ms. Feldman and Ms. LoMonaco, utilized money raised through various fundraising events to help fulfill holiday wish lists for families. They went shopping at Target to purchase gifts for eight members of the Community Cupboard.
- The **Kennedy Key Club** orchestrated a successful blood drive on Dec. 11, collecting 29 pints of blood.
- **CHAMP** students decorated 1.5-foot-tall gingerbread cakes that were raffled off. Proceeds benefited UNICEF. They also hosted an open house for interested eighth graders on Dec. 18.
- The **Grand Avenue PPS staff** organized a successful toy drive to benefit the John Theissen Children's Foundation.