

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

## **POINTS OF PRIDE**

**February 2024**

### **Academics**

- **Gabrielle David** and **Ian Klimov** of **Calhoun** were selected as the Calhoun representatives in the National Council of Teachers of English Awards in Writing Contest. Gabrielle and Ian's submissions, which were reflections about a quote from Michelle Obama, will be judged by English teachers nationwide. The national winners will be announced in May.
- **Kennedy** was named an International Technology and Engineering Educators Association 2023-24 STEM School of Excellence. As winners, Kennedy joins an outstanding group of schools that are making a significant difference in the lives of students through Integrative STEM (I-STEM) literacy.
- **Brendan Chiu, Aaron Khan, Daniel Lin** and **Joleen Shau** of **Kennedy** created the Click Clack Knapsack to help an individual access materials from their backpack. Maxwell Frank, Ellie Gelman, Evan Kolberg, Jack Levit, Mark Prainito, Jayden Simon, Mason Tso, Cole Wasserman and Kyle Wasserman were named REACH finalists after they created Portion Pal, which helps children from overstuffing their mouths with food.
- Seven students in the CHSD have been named National Merit Finalists in the 2024 competition. **Joseph Darcourt** and **Fiona Wong** of **Calhoun**; **Sara Maltempi, Avidan Moont** and **Cole Wasserman** of **Kennedy**; and **Matthew Keegan** and **Matt Yang** of **Mephram** were among those who earned this distinction.
- **Caleigh McAteer** of **Calhoun** was selected to share her essay at Writopia Lab's Youth Essay Writing Conference 2024: A Celebration of Critical Thinking Across Disciplines at the conference at the New York Society for Ethical Culture in New York City, where she will get to present a portion of her essay.
- **Fiona Wong**, an ASR senior and **Calhoun** Class of 2024 valedictorian, placed first in the category of Chemistry at the regional JSHS (Junior Science and Humanities Symposium) Research Competition. She advanced to the regional final symposium on Feb. 24 at York College.
- Eight students from Kennedy competed at JSHS on Feb. 11 as well. Seniors **Dylan Friedman, Ava Goldsmith, Paula Pastor, Minami Rodger** and **Claire Schwartz** and juniors **Jack Levitt, Mark Prainito** and **Jayden Simon** were named semifinalists. **Minami Rodger** placed third in the behavioral science category.

### **Arts**

- The **Kennedy Chamber Orchestra** performed a Valentine's Day-themed concert for a local senior citizen home on Feb. 14.

- **Merrick Avenue MS student Justin Gusmano** performed for more than 75 seniors at the Sandel Center in Rockville Center. He treated them to a one-hour performance of his original material and some classic hits from Christopher Cross, Billy Joel, Frank Sinatra, Stevie Wonder and more.

## **Athletics**

- At the Nassau County indoor track and field championships on Feb. 7, **Mephams Isayah Contreras** finished in first place in the boys 600-meter run finals with a time of 1:23.75. **Dominic Inzerilla** finished in first place in the boys 55-meter dash finals with a time of 6.62.
- **Jack Levitt** broke the **Kennedy** school record of 11' in winter track pole vault and placed second in the Nassau County championships.
- The **Calhoun girls track and field team** clinched the Nassau County championship on Feb. 6 for the third year in a row. **Danielle Lawrence** broke the school 55-meter dash record in a time of 7.31 seconds, which claimed her spot at the state championships. **Yolina Bastien** won the long jump and clocked her ticket to the state meet as well. **Sophia Hines** qualified in the long jump and broke her own school triple jump record with a leap of 39'25". **Hines** is ranked at No. 2 in New York State and No. 20 in the nation.
- The **Kennedy boys and girls basketball programs** volunteered to offer a youth skills clinic on Jan. 20.
- The **Kennedy baseball and softball programs** held weekly skills clinics for 125 local children.
- The **Bulldogs hockey team** traveled to Buffalo Feb. 29 to compete in the state championship.
- **Mephams varsity cheerleaders** placed second at the Nassau County championship and ninth in the nation out of 87 small varsity D2 teams at the National High School Cheerleading Championship in Orlando, Florida.
- In **Calhoun boys track and field**, **Max Jose** won the triple jump with a jump of 44' 8" and won the qualifier. **Logan Schaeffler** won the 1600 with a time of 4:28, topping Nassau County once again.
- **Calhoun wrestlers Dan Fauci, Rob Bello** and **Sean Gallagher** finished sixth in Nassau County in their respective weight classes. **Reese Adams** placed second at the Long Island Championship.
- **Mephams wrestler Jason Martin** placed fourth at 190 pounds, and **Chris Notti** placed sixth at 138 pounds in Nassau County.
- **Kennedy wrestler Brandon Goldstein** competed in the state championship on Feb. 25. He is the first heavyweight in school history to make it to the states. He finishes a five-year run with the Kennedy wrestling program with All-Conference and All-County honors, a conference championship, and two-time New York State qualifier.

## **Altruism**

- **Calhoun's Racial Equity Club** kicked off Black History Month with a presentation after school about Black history and things to celebrate about the journey to equality.
- **Cheerleaders** and **football players** from **Kennedy** volunteered to attend the Lakeside Pick a Reading Partner pep rally in the Merrick School District on Feb. 1 to get elementary students excited about reading.

- **Sophia Benno, Sadie Friefeld, Leah Pollack and Zara Selvin**, students in the **Kennedy** Leadership II program, hosted an antisemitism informational session and roundtable discussion to promote awareness of the issue as part of their civic-action project.
- **Animal Advocates** and **Key Club at Kennedy** joined forces to collect cat supplies for Catpurrcino's in Huntington. Their bakery doubles as a cat rescue.
- The **Mephram LEOs** collected scarves, hats and gloves through the February break for TriCYA in support of high-need families in Huntington.
- **ACES club (Athletes Compassionately Educating Students)** from **Kennedy** visited **Birch School** on Feb. 12. The students worked with the sixth grade classes and shared their experiences in middle school/high school.
- Students from the **Merrick Avenue International Buddy Club** and **Student Council** joined together and made over 50 Valentine's Day cards and mailed them to veterans on Long Island who participated in the Fall Honor Flight.
- **Kennedy VE teams Greenprintes, Geardup and the FBLA** jointly hosted a donation drive for the Community Cupboard in February.
- The **Mephram Key Club** hosted a successful blood drive on Feb. 28.