

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

## **POINTS OF PRIDE**

### **March 2024**

#### **Academics**

- **Marcus Cilibrasi** of **Merrick Avenue** and **Daniel Fu** and **Sean Domiano** of Grand Avenue qualified for the in-person regional Scripps Spelling Bee competition at Half Hollow Hills High School East on March 21. After winning their school's respective spelling bees, they completed the online Vocabulary Component on Feb. 1. The trio ranked in the top 50 test-takers on this exam, which qualifies them for the regional on March 21.
- The **Geography Bee at Grand Avenue** began with 75 seventh and eighth grade students as contestants. After several rounds of challenging questions, the following students were named winners: **Eric Shi** (first place), **Lucas Chan** (second place) and **Dru Das** (third place).
- **Two Mepham, two Kennedy and three Calhoun teams** qualified for the New York State VEX Robotics championships. They showcased their skills at The Harvey School in Katonah, New York, on March 3.
- At the Long Island Science & Engineering Fair, **Jayden Simon** of **Kennedy** won third place in the Microbiology category and a special award from the office of Naval Research. **Ava Goldsmith** won first place in the Cellular and Biomolecular Sciences category. She will compete in the International Science & Engineering Fair in Los Angeles May 10-17.
- Students from the **Grand Avenue Middle School Science Research Program** competed in the Long Island Science & Engineering Fair Middle School Fair on March 5. **Milena Chomicz-Grabowska**, **Anna Kaplun** and **Mia Tascarella** took home first place, **Patrick Mulvey** and **Aidan Cheung** took third place, as did **Isabel Ziegler** and **Anna Schellberg**. **Tami Cruz** is their science teacher.
- The **Kennedy Math Team** celebrated an outstanding achievement, securing a flawless performance in the March contest with a perfect score of 30 out of 30 points. The team consists of **Connor Barath**, **Jacob Krukas**, **Avidan Moont**, **Paula Pastor**, **Mark Prainito**, **Jordan Siegel**, **Cole Wasserman** and **Daniel Zhou**.
- At the Roslyn Hackathon, **Kennedy freshman Henry LaGalia** showcased his exceptional skills, clinching first place with the Most Impressive game. **Evan Kolberg**, **Jack Levitt** and **Jayden Simon** secured the runners-up position in this year's People's Choice Award.
- **Calhoun students Alexander Birdie**, **Jack Gavnoudias**, **Michael Jerozal** and **Brandon Richardson** were selected to Boys State by the American Legion. **Samantha Kalinoglu** and **Camryn Zubiria** were selected to Girls State. **Taylor Halvorsen** and **Amanda Nevins** were named alternates.
- **Melih Agac**, **Diego Cajiao**, **Christiana Foufas**, **Sebastian Fu** and **Maximus Walker** of **Mepham** clinched second place at the Long Island Physics Olympics in the Precisely Predicting Projectiles event on March 13.

- **Greenprints, a Virtual Enterprises group from Kennedy**, is among 40 teams from across the country to qualify for the national level of the Virtual Enterprises International competition. They will head to the Jacob Javits Convention Center in Manhattan on April 11-12.
- **Grand Avenue** and **Merrick Avenue coding teams** created solutions to Python, HTML and block code challenges in the sixth annual All-District KIDOYO MS Code Conquest Hackathon on March 15.
- **The Bellmore-Merrick Broadcasting program** traveled to California in mid-March for the Student Television Network's national convention.
- Nearly 70 **Calhoun** students attended the DECA State Career Development Conference in Rochester March 6-8. In total, Calhoun walked away with **22 medals**. We would like to congratulate **Jack Gunn, Vincenzo Parrino** and **Kyle Viola** – Top 10 Overall; **Liam Barkaus** and **Jake Fischetti** – Top 10 Presentation; **Nick Senese** – Top 10 Overall; **Sean Keene** and **Brandon Richardson** – Top 10 Presentation; **Ethan Wind** – Top 10 Exam Score; **Bianca Parente, Keira Sheridan** and **Emma Syska** – Top 10 Presentation and Top 10 Overall; **Rachel Hylan** and **Kate Kenny** – Top 10 Overall; **Ilianna Waldman** – Top 10 Overall. A very special congratulations to **Nick** and **Ayana Mascary** and **Mia Coghlan** for placing in the **Top 10** in their category, as well as winning **second place overall**, advancing them to the national competition at the International Career Development Conference in Anaheim, California.

## Arts

- On March 21-22, the **Merrick Avenue Drama Club** presented "Legally Blonde, Jr."
- On March 21-22, the **Grand Avenue Drama Club** presented "All Shook Up."
- **Kennedy orchestras** worked with Maestro Stephen Czarkowski for a workshop on March 1. Mr. Czarkowski is the music director and conductor of The Apollo Orchestra, associate conductor of York Symphony Orchestra and assistant conductor of Opera Camerata.
- **Julia Cohen, Dylan Friedman** and **Daniella Tejada** of **Kennedy** were chosen for the prestigious annual Long Island's Best: Young Artists at The Heckscher Museum. It is the only juried exhibition on Long Island that offers high school students the opportunity to show their work in a museum. Additionally, **Friedman** won an Achievement Award in Social Commentary and **Cohen** won honorable mention.
- **BOCES student Alexia Vitsos** was among 11 individuals named 2024 Education partners by Nassau BOCES for their "profound effects on public education in Nassau County."
- The **On Tour Company** production of "Bright Star" opened on March 8.
- **High school orchestra students** visited **Grand Avenue Middle School** on several days to work with middle school musicians as part of the NYSSMA Peer Tutoring Program. In this program, students from all three high schools assist the middle school orchestra students in preparation for the upcoming NYSSMA solo festival.

## Athletics

- **The Bellmore-Merrick Bulldogs** traveled to Jamestown, New York, on Feb. 29 to compete for the New York State hockey championship. They won each game, only falling short to Bethpage in the final matchup on March 3.

- **Calhoun students Sophia Hines, Max Jose, Danielle Lawrence and Logan Schaeffler** competed in the winter track state championship on March 2 on Staten Island. **Hines** placed second in the long jump and fourth in the triple jump. **Schaeffler** repeated as the indoor 1,600-meter state champion with a finish time of 4 minutes, 11 seconds. The time was Schaeffler's personal best.
- **Logan Schaeffler** of **Calhoun** won the most outstanding distance runner for Nassau County at the Nassau County Awards Dinner. **Sophia Hines** won the most outstanding field athlete. This is the first time Calhoun has brought home these two awards together in the same year.
- The **Challenger basketball team** finished their season with a game against Seaford on March 6.

### **Altruism**

- Students at **Merrick Avenue** participated in a bookmark drive where they designed sets of bookmarks to be donated to a local organization.
- **Skylar Weiss** and **Molly Kilman, students in Kennedy's Leadership III class**, organized a toy drive for their passion project. All toys were donated to patients at Cohen's Children's Medical Center.
- **Ms. Negrón's Leadership I students at Kennedy** organized a dodgeball tournament to benefit Project Heal, a nonprofit organization in the U.S. focused on equitable treatment access for those suffering from eating disorders.
- **Leadership II student Jayda Levine of Kennedy** caught the attention of Nassau County Legislator Michael Giangregorio with her recent project, which was dedicated to giving children on the autism spectrum a chance to engage in a fun activity with their peers. She was invited to attend a session of the legislature in April as Giangregorio's guest for recognition.
- To celebrate World Down Syndrome Day, **Prep Academy** and **MAP teachers Rebecca Menachem** and **James Balestrieri** got pairs of blank socks for Prep students to decorate one and MAP students to decorate the other.
- The **MAMS Wellness Center** led a collection of over 1,500 handmade cards to send to children and families at the Ronald McDonald Children's House. These well wishes were created by MAMS students to help brighten the spirits of families dealing with serious childhood illnesses.
- On March 21, **Brian Joyce's Leadership class from Calhoun** returned to **Merrick Avenue Middle School to visit eighth grade social studies classes** with the goal of combating hate speech. The Leadership students designed and taught a lesson that allowed students to recognize hate speech and its impact on individuals, groups and communities, both online and offline. Students also discussed solutions for addressing hate speech.