



# Our Schools

FARMINGDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT | SUMMER 2019 | FARMINGDALESCHOOLS.ORG

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2019 VALEDICTORIAN AND SALUTATORIAN

### VALEDICTORIAN KUNJ PATEL



Kunj Patel is the valedictorian of the Farmingdale High School Class of 2019 with an established GPA of 105.069. He was president of the Spanish Honor Society and the secretary of Key Club, and he was inducted into the National Honor Society and the Tri-M Music Honor Society. Kunj participated in Science Bowl, Science Olympiad, and Model United Nations, and he served as captain on the boys varsity tennis team. He also volunteered for several community service organizations and tutored fellow Farmingdale students. Kunj implemented a rigorous science research project, in partnership with the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, in which he studied plants from Fire Island. He received honorable mention at Science Congress and went to Barcode Long Island to display his year-long research. This fall, Kunj will attend Villanova University to major in biology in pursuit of a career as an orthodontist.

### SALUTATORIAN JESSICA FINKEL



Jessica Finkel is the salutatorian of the Farmingdale High School Class of 2019 with an established GPA of 104.444. She was inducted into the National Honor Society, the Tri-M Music Honor Society, the American Sign Language Honor Society, and the Business Honor Society. Jessica participated in Key Club and DECA, placing in the Top 10 in Accounting in the DECA State Competition. She also earned the status of scholar-athlete. Jessica played on the girls varsity softball team and served as captain of the girls varsity volleyball team. She was a member of All-State symphonic band for French Horn, the section leader of marching band for mellophones, and she was the principal French Horn in the wind ensemble. To pursue her dream job of becoming a civil engineer, Jessica will head to Penn State this fall to major in engineering.

## FARMINGDALE THANKS THE COMMUNITY FOR ADOPTING THE 2019-2020 SCHOOL BUDGET

Every year, the Farmingdale School District Board of Education asks the community to put their faith in our schools and each and every year the residents come through. We thank everyone in the Farmingdale community for voting to adopt our 2019-2020 school budget this past May and wish to ensure all residents that we do not take this vote of confidence lightly. We pledge to work tirelessly to uphold the high educational standards we've set for all our students in the coming year—and well into the future. Thank you!



# FARMINGDALE HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2019 COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

The Commencement Ceremony for Farmingdale High School's Class of 2019 was held on Tuesday, June 25, 2019 at 6 p.m. at Hofstra University. For the first time ever, the ceremony was livestreamed on the district's YouTube channel. A processional of 454 students in their white and green robes entered to "Pomp and Circumstance" amid cheering from family and friends. Congratulations and best wishes to all the graduates!





# MOVING INTO THE FUTURE

At the end of every school year, all schools in Farmingdale hold special moving-up ceremonies or graduation (FHS). At these ceremonies, the Board of Education Scholarship & Citizenship Award—which recognizes a student who exhibits character, citizenship, discipline and leadership—and the Dr. Gary E. Karp Award—which recognizes a student who follows the legacy of Dr. Karp by demonstrating commitment to the school and community—are awarded. Congratulations to all of Farmingdale’s award-winning students!

## Albany Avenue Elementary School



**Alexis Matulik**  
Board of Education Award



**Michael Antonellis**  
Gary E. Karp Award

## Woodward Parkway Elementary School



**Riley Quinn**  
Board of Education Award



**Emma Brussell**  
Gary E. Karp Award

## Northside Elementary School



**Gianna Recine**  
Board of Education Award



**Michael Schmitt**  
Gary E. Karp Award

## Weldon E. Howitt Middle School



**Matthew Pantorno**  
Board of Education Award



**Gabriel Aliendro**  
Gary E. Karp Award

## Saltzman East Memorial Elementary School



**Jasmine Ng**  
Board of Education Award



**Matteo Asencio**  
Gary E. Karp Award

## Farmingdale High School



**Alayna Camisa**  
Board of Education Award



**Jackelyn Maltese**  
Gary E. Karp Award





## FARMINGDALE HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE

Adelphi University  
 The University of Alabama  
 Alvernia University  
 Baruch College  
 Belmont Abbey College  
 Binghamton University  
 Boston College  
 Brooklyn College  
 Brown University  
 Bryant University  
 Bucknell University  
 University of California - San Diego  
 City College of New York  
 Clemson University

University of Connecticut  
 Dean College  
 University of Delaware  
 East Stroudsburg University  
 Fairfield University  
 Farmingdale State College  
 Fashion Institute of Technology  
 Five Towns College  
 Florida State University  
 University of Florida  
 George Mason University  
 University of Hartford  
 Hofstra University  
 Hunter College

Ithaca College  
 John Jay College of Criminal  
 Justice  
 King's College  
 Kutztown University  
 La Salle University  
 Long Island University - Post  
 Louisiana State University  
 Lynn University  
 University of Massachusetts -  
 Amherst  
 University of Michigan  
 Molloy College  
 Mount Saint Mary College

Mount St. Mary's University  
 Nassau Community College  
 University of New Haven  
 New York Institute of Technology  
 New York School of Interior Design  
 New York University  
 The University of North Carolina  
 at Chapel Hill  
 Northeastern University  
 Pace University  
 Pennsylvania State University  
 Pratt Institute  
 Queens College





# EM MATRICULATION FOR CLASS OF 2019

Queensborough Community College  
 Quinnipiac University  
 Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute  
 University of Rhode Island  
 Rochester Institute of Technology  
 Roger Williams University  
 Rutgers University  
 Sacred Heart University  
 Salisbury University  
 Santa Fe College  
 Seton Hall University  
 Siena College  
 St. John's University

St. Joseph's College - Long Island  
 Stevenson University  
 Stony Brook University  
 Suffolk County Community College  
 SUNY Albany  
 SUNY Alfred State College  
 SUNY Buffalo State College  
 SUNY College at Brockport  
 SUNY College at Cortland  
 SUNY College at Geneseo  
 SUNY College at Old Westbury  
 SUNY College at Oneonta  
 SUNY College at Potsdam

SUNY Delhi  
 SUNY Maritime College  
 SUNY Morrisville  
 SUNY New Paltz  
 SUNY Oswego  
 SUNY Plattsburgh  
 SUNY Purchase College  
 The University of Tampa  
 Temple University  
 The American Musical and Dramatic Academy  
 The Culinary Institute of America  
 The Ohio State University  
 Towson University

University at Buffalo  
 SUNY Utica College  
 Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology  
 Vet Tech Institute  
 Villanova University  
 Virginia Tech  
 Western Connecticut State University  
 York College



# WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OUR SCHOOLS

## Albany Avenue Students Play Ultimate Human Board Game

The entire student body of **Albany Avenue Elementary School** got the chance to play the Ultimate Human Board Game—a life-sized, character-building game created to inspire teamwork and sportsmanship. The game was set up on the field and grades were grouped together and split off into three teams: red, green, and blue. Each team rolled the dice and played the activity they landed on, such as competitive cup stacking, maneuvering a hula-hoop down the line, and rolling one another up into toilet paper mummies. Music played as each activity was tackled, and teachers joined in the fun. It was a very spirited good time!



## A 'Pro-Duck-tive' Lesson at Northside Elementary School

Second graders in Mrs. Vahling's class at **Northside Elementary School** welcomed two baby ducklings into their classroom this past spring. Students made them a home out of a Rubbermaid tub furnished with shredded paper and were tasked with making sure there was always plenty of food and water. The end of the day became known as Duck Time, when the furry fowl were set free to waddle about the classroom. Mrs. Vahling used this time to teach students about echolocation—the process of locating objects with sound rather than by sight. The children watched as the separated ducklings chirped and listened, and were amazed at how quickly they were able to find each other. Students also took on a caretaking role, dressing as medical assistants and teaching students from other classes the proper way to pet the ducks. Children also took turns bringing the ducks home for sleepovers, and were especially fond of pool time in the courtyard, when they got to watch the ducks swim, paddle, dip under, and wash off. At the end of the school year the full-grown ducks went back to live on the farm from which they were hatched. The children thought the whole experience was “egg-cellent!”



## Menagerie Showcase at Saltzman

First grade students at **Saltzman East Memorial Elementary School** opened up their doors for kindergarten students to come and visit a menagerie showcase. Nearly a month in the making, the presentation is the culmination of an animal research project that has become a tradition at the school—and provides a great opportunity to introduce children to non-fiction books. Students visit the library, pick out a book about an animal that interests them, and research fun facts like what they like to eat and what habitat they live in. “They write a report and use their creativity to make a diorama to share what they have learned,” said teacher Maria Pedone. While the kindergarten students roam the classrooms and explore the different dioramas, the first-graders teach them about the animals and answer their questions.





# WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OUR SCHOOLS

## Woodward Parkway Elementary Student Raises Awareness for Diabetes Alert Dogs

Emma Brussell, a fifth-grade student at **Woodward Parkway Elementary School**, spent a day touring each of the district's elementary schools to tell her peers about *Emma's Journey*—a nonprofit organization she's founded to help children living with Type 1 Diabetes obtain a Diabetic Alert Dog. At each school, Emma took the stage with Rufus, her Diabetic Alert Dog, to answer questions about what it's like living with Type 1 Diabetes and how life-changing it was for her to have Rufus become her companion. Determined to help other children with Type 1 Diabetes get the finances they need to obtain their own Diabetic Alert Dog, Emma and health teacher Ms. Pignataro initiated a jog-a-thon fundraiser this past June at all the elementary schools, raising over \$7,000 for her nonprofit.



## Weldon E. Howitt Middle School Hosts Innovation Lab Exhibit

For two days, the learning space of **Weldon E. Howitt Middle School's** Innovation Lab was turned into an exhibit area for students to showcase recently completed passion projects. Now in its second year, Innovation Lab's purpose is to complement basic subjects while encouraging sixth grade students to study topics they personally enjoy and want to learn more about. Each week, time is set aside for them to explore their chosen subjects without the pressure of a grade. Teachers Jess Zanco and Philip Greco provide an educational scaffolding to help middle schoolers figure out what subjects they want to explore more deeply and help guide them toward a finished project. Presentations at this year's exhibit ranged from interior design, to coding, to criminal justice.



## Two Triple C Awards for FHS Students

**Farmingdale High School** students Madison Outing and Heaven Diaz earned the Triple C Award, bestowed by the New York State Attorney General to students who have demonstrated the three C's of Courage, Commitment, and Character. Madison and Heaven were nominated for their work on the creation of a new club (R.E.A.L. Harmony) and for their work on an inaugural multicultural showcase, designed to celebrate the diversity of the district and encourage cultural inclusion among the student body. The certificates were presented to the young women by Superintendent Paul Defendini and Assistant Principal Jed Herman during an intimate ceremony with family members.





**Farmingdale School District**  
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# FHS STUDENT LEAVES BIG PAWS TO FILL

Farmingdale High School senior Alayna Camisa—aka the Dale the Lion Mascot—has turned in her tail after four years of committed and enthusiastic service. Alayna first volunteered for the role in her freshmen year, and throughout her high school career made well over a hundred appearances as the spirited and beloved mascot. It was her idea to host a contest to name the lion, and she promoted her furry alter ego by cultivating a following on social media and by writing *Dale's Diary* for the school newspaper. Her first game was Homecoming 2015 and her last appearance was S.M.I.L.E. Day in spring of 2019. She happily held babies and dogs and tried to bring a smile to every child's face. "Everyone always loved it when I wiggled my tail," said Alayna. She is only the second FHS student to mascot for all four years.



Alayna took the role to heart. She learned all the cheerleading routines so that Dale could perform at pep rallies, games, and homecoming. She also learned how to carry on despite the temperature inside her costume—never once revealing her face in public for a water break. "That would kill the magic," she explained. Even with a fan inside the head and ice packs attached to her body, she would often lose up to eight pounds of water weight per appearance. But she loved it! "Being the mascot helped me with my school work," she said. "It helped me with presentations and made me more social. It was definitely a confidence builder."

In addition to being the school mascot, Alayna played varsity lacrosse, was involved in student government, student council, The Paper Lion school newspaper, Key Club, and National Honor Society. She was recently awarded the prestigious Dr. James Tolle Ungsung Heroine Award. She closed out the 2019 Varsity Awards ceremony, coming out in costume and then removing her head for the first and last time. And at graduation, she wore the feet under her gown.

This fall, she will attend SUNY Cortland to study early childhood education. "Being the mascot made me want to work with kids," she said. "But I won't be 'mascoting' there. I can't cheat on Dale. Dale will always have my heart!"

# FARMINGDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT LAUNCHES DALERS READ!

The Farmingdale School District has launched a new initiative called *Dalers Read!* It's designed to provide middle school and high school students with a collection of curated book titles, peer and faculty reviews, and resources to motivate summer reading. The website address is: <http://dalersread.farmingdaleschools.org>

It highlights top summer reads—broken down by grade level—along with a rotating selection of student and faculty reviews. There is also a page dedicated to Farmingdale's favorite authors, including several who have visited the district to meet with students. Parents are encouraged to use the website as a resource for tips on how to keep their children mentally engaged over the summer.

