

Our Schools

The Community Newsletter of the Farmingdale Public Schools • Fall 2014

The goal of the Farmingdale public schools is to establish ourselves as a high-achieving school District, as evidenced by high levels of student performance in all areas.

Spirit Week a Smashing Success

Homecoming marks one of the first large events of the new school year, and it is always a time filled with excitement and school pride. This year's Farmingdale High School Homecoming was no exception; dubbed "Spirit Week," 2014 Homecoming was a week-long celebration of all things Daler.

Each day throughout Homecoming week featured a different challenge; kicking off the events, on Monday, students were encouraged to wear the jersey of their favorite sports team. From Tuesday through Friday, consecutively, they celebrated America by wearing red, white and blue; participated in Twin Day, during which pairs of students dressed in identical outfits; wore the specific colors assigned to their classes on Class Day; and wrapped up the week wearing green and white, the FHS colors.

Other activities were held in addition to the daily themes. On Wednesday night, students from each class – freshman, sophomore, junior and senior – built floats to represent their grade level. The week culminated in a day-long fair. It was a carnival-like atmosphere where students sold school merchandise and snacks to raise money for their various clubs and unveiled the floats. Homecoming concluded with members from all across the Farmingdale community taking in a Daler football game. It was a wonderful end to a memorable week. Thank you to all involved, and go Dalers!



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Farmingdale Welcomes Principal Febbraro

The Farmingdale school community is fortunate to welcome Northside Elementary School's new principal Michael Febbraro. Prior to joining the District, Mr. Febbraro served as an elementary classroom teacher, district lead teacher, gifted and talented teacher, assistant principal and elementary principal. He holds a bachelor's degree in sociology and elementary education from Molloy College, a master's degree in literacy from Adelphi University and a Certificate of Advanced Study in educational administration from Hofstra University. Mr. Febbraro and his wife are the parents of four young children. When asked about his expectations this year, Mr. Febbraro said "I am looking forward to continuing the tradition of excellence that already exists here at Northside."

Seeking Nominations for the 18th Annual Wall of Fame Induction

The Wall of Fame was established to honor distinguished Farmingdale High School alumni. Located in the FHS lobby, the wall displays the plaques of all honorees. Candidates for the Wall of Fame must have graduated from FHS at least 10 years ago and been successful in their academic pursuits. They must also be role models to our current students, as evidenced by their achievements. A nomination form may be obtained from the District website, www.farmingdaleschools.org, or picked up in the main office of any of our District schools, as well as in the Farmingdale Public Library. The deadline for the receipt of applications is Monday, January 5, 2015. The induction ceremony will be held on April 27, 2015, at Farmingdale High School's Thomas W. Guilford Lecture Hall.

A Message From Your Board of Education

The 2014-15 school year is three months old, and we here in the Farmingdale School District have much to be proud of. As you can read about here in the pages of *Our Schools*, two Farmingdale High School seniors have advanced to the highly exclusive semifinal portion of the National Merit Scholarship Program, 11 high school music students have been selected for all-state and all-national performing groups, and our varsity sports teams have helped FHS – for the fifth consecutive year – earn Scholar/Athlete School of Distinction accreditation. Accomplishments such as these are testament to the dedication of our students and the exceptional qualifications of our teachers.

As we celebrate our accomplishments, we also look for ways to continuously improve. We touched on the topic of growth mindset in the spring edition of this newsletter. As we embrace a growth mindset, teachers are finding more opportunities to guide and motivate students, encouraging them to remain persistent, resilient and focused on the process of learning. This philosophy stresses the importance of feedback as a fundamental step in the educational experience. Teachers make the focus on learning clear through lesson-learning targets and communicate clearly a confidence in all students' learning ability. Through this approach, students are encouraged to monitor their own learning and set goals; reminding them along the way that with effort and the support of their teachers and parents, they all can achieve.

In a continuing effort to enhance our learning environment, several facility projects Districtwide began over the summer months. These projects included window and curtain-wall replacements and work in the courtyard at Weldon E. Howitt Middle School, window and curtain-wall replacements and energy-performance work at Stanley D. Saltzman Elementary School, new doors and locks Districtwide, renovation at the main office of Farmingdale High School, cameras and front-entry security systems Districtwide, and other smaller facility projects across the District. These various projects will enhance the learning environment for all students.

We value your involvement and input, and we ask that all parents and other community members become and remain active in District meetings, committees and events. We encourage you to get to know your children's teachers and participate in monthly PTA and Board of Education meetings, all of which are listed on the District calendar. We continue to believe that a major strength of the Farmingdale School District is our ability to work cooperatively and respectfully together. In that spirit, we wish each of you a successful and rewarding year.

Very truly yours,

Farmingdale Board of Education

Shari Bardash-Eivers, *President*
John E. Capobianco, *Vice President*
Russ Catanzaro, *Trustee*
Michael Goldberg, *Trustee*
Kathy Lively, *Trustee*
Rick Morrison, *Trustee*
Ralph Morales, *Trustee*

FHS Students Work to Raise Funds for AHRC

The goal of the AHRC is to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities. It accomplishes this goal by providing a variety of services, including rehabilitation, guardianship and educational programs. Since Nassau County's chapter was founded 65 years ago, more than 2,200 people have received assistance.

One way in which the AHRC raises funds for its services is through events such as its annual walkathon.

Farmingdale High School has a long history of participating in the walkathon, and for nine years running, the school has been the top fundraiser in Nassau. It's a testament to the hard work and compassion of our students that FHS continues to be successful in this event. In addition to the walkathon, AHRC also hosts an annual t-shirt contest. The contest requires contestants to design a shirt incorporating the AHRC logo and depict the concept of people helping people. Students from FHS have won the t-shirt contest two years running.

As gratifying as it is to see our students succeeding in the various fundraising events, the true spirit of the day was to help people with developmental disabilities living in the county. We are proud that our students understand their responsibility to the community and set a wonderful example for our District.



Facilities Upgrades at Farmingdale School District

Pictured here are our new, energy-efficient windows at Weldon E. Howitt Middle School. These windows were built using funds from the District's capital reserve that was approved during the May 2013 budget vote. Installed over the summer of 2014, windows such as these are part of the District's long-term energy plan, which also includes planned lighting, boiler and temperature-control work. These improvements will enable the District to maintain an appropriate academic environment at less cost to the community.



Did You Know?

- Over 700 FHS seniors and their parents attended the Farmingdale High School presentation of the Choices and Consequences safe-driving program presented by the Nassau County District Attorney's office.
- A Northside Elementary School student, Avery D'Andrea, won 3rd place in the New York State 2014 School Bus Safety Contest. Avery was presented with a certificate and a \$50 check from the New York Association for Pupil Transportation.
- Two Northside students were selected to perform in the FHS fall play *Les Misérables*. Jenna Hammelman and Ava Monteleone were among 30 students who auditioned. Jenna is playing the part of Little Eponine and Ava is playing Little Cosette.
- FHS student magazine receives national recognition (see page 3).

What's Happening in Our Schools

Albany Avenue Elementary School

The scene one recent Wednesday at **Albany Avenue Elementary School** was picture-perfect Farmingdale: 500 students replete in green and white, gearing up for the big Homecoming football game. It was a vibrant display of Farmingdale pride, one that promoted community among the students and a boosted school morale.



Making the day even more exciting for Albany Avenue students, FHS football players and cheerleaders visited the elementary school to join in the celebration. The football players spoke to the young children, and the cheerleaders entertained them with a dance routine. It was an exciting day for all Albany Avenue students – one that they aren't likely to soon forget.

Northside Elementary School

In the spirit of making the world a better place, students from the Farmingdale School District celebrated International Dot Day recently, and included among those students were over 300 from **Northside Elementary School**. Inspired by the children's story "The Dot" by Peter H. Reynolds, International Dot Day provided students with the opportunity to apply the book's powerful themes of bravery, creativity and self-expression to their own lives. Students created dots with unique messages and displayed the pieces in the shape of a rainbow inside the school. The children also dressed in polka dot outfits and participated in fun and educational activities. International Dot Day delivered a powerful message: making the world a better place starts by giving back to your own community.



Saltzman East Memorial Elementary School

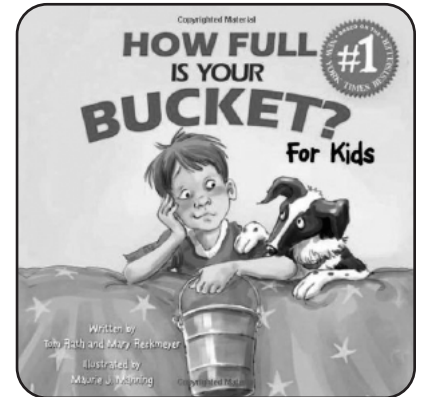
Over 600 elementary school students from **Saltzman East Memorial School** recently participated in International Dot Day. Inspired by Peter H. Reynolds' book, *The Dot*, International Dot Day challenged students to make their school year a positive and successful one, celebrated school unity and promoted a positive school atmosphere.



In the book, a teacher dares a resistant student to "make her mark" on the world. Working from this message, Saltzman students were encouraged to use their bravery, creativity and self-expression to better themselves and motivate others. Students wore polka dots to school and discussed how their "mark" can positively impact the community and make it a better place.

Woodward Parkway Elementary School

Students and teachers at **Woodward Parkway Elementary School** recently held Friendship Week – a week that emphasized unity and promoted positive school culture. Wednesday was a particular highlight of Friendship Week; on that day, students held Fill Your Bucket Day, inspired by Tom Rath's book *How Full is Your Bucket?* The book tells the story of Felix, a little boy that learns that being kind not only helps others, it can help him, too. Moved by that message, each student carried around an imaginary bucket inside their heads, and were encouraged to fill each other's buckets by performing random acts of kindness. It was a fun, thoughtful day that also addressed a serious subject: In a society that sees too much bullying, programs such as Fill Your Bucket Day teach children that being kind to one another is the best policy.



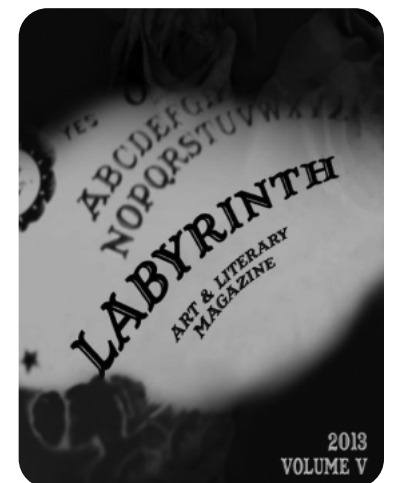
Howitt Middle School

Students from **Howitt Middle School** recently participated in the Rachel's Challenge program. It was a powerful day enjoyed by all students. Rachel Joy Scott was the first victim of the Columbine Tragedy; Rachel's Challenge was created based on her life and writings. The program aims to provide solutions to many of the issues involving teens, including bullying, depression, discrimination and suicide. Over 21 million people from around the country have participated in the program.



Farmingdale High School

Students at **Farmingdale High School** are finding practical applications for their creative abilities, and national publications are taking notice. *Labyrinth Magazine*, FHS' magazine, has been named one of the best in the country by the National Scholastic Press (NSP). The organization's annual Best Literary Magazine Contest selects only eight school magazines from across the country for this award.



As a result of its selection, *Labyrinth Magazine* will be published in the hardcover edition of NSP's 2014 *Best of High School Press*. The poem "Waiting," by Class of 2014 FHS graduate Michelle Randazzo, will also be published. Congratulations to all the students who make *Labyrinth Magazine* such a continued success and to their advisors Regina Nicholas and Virginia Paladino.

11 FHS Students Selected for All-State and All-National Performing Groups

Only the most talented and accomplished performers are chosen to represent their schools in All-State or All-National performing groups. This year, 11 Farmingdale High School student musicians – 8 ensemble and 3 alternates – were selected to join the prestigious groups based on their New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) solo performances. Sponsored by NYSSMA, the annual festival features students playing a prepared piece and being rated by judges. Student candidates are judged on every aspect of performance, including tone quality, technique, musicianship, interpretation, musicality, dynamics and sight-reading.

Selection to All-State and All-National Performing groups is a considerable accomplishment; it speaks volumes to the dedication of our students and their teachers. Congratulations to all of our selected students.



FROM THE SPORTS DESK

As Teams Soar on the Field, FHS Is Named Scholar/Athlete School of Distinction for 5th Consecutive Year

Exciting things have been happening on and off the field for Farmingdale's student athletes. In what is being called one of the most exciting games in recent memory, the FHS Dalers recently defeated Freeport in a hard-fought, intense game by a score of 37-34. With the score all tied at 34 as regulation ended, the Dalers drove down the field for the winning field goal in overtime to the delight of the home crowd. The victory for the Dalers was a huge win coming a week after a disappointing loss at home to Baldwin. The Dalers completed the regular season with a huge win over Valley Stream Central (35-0) resulting in an overall record for the season of seven wins and one loss. For a full schedule of games for all Farmingdale sports teams, visit the FHS website at www.farmingdaleschools.org/fhs and click on the "Athletics" tab.



The playing field isn't the only arena in which our student athletes are excelling. For the fifth consecutive year, Farmingdale High School has been named a Scholar/Athlete School of Distinction by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association. FHS received this distinction after all varsity teams earned a collective grade point average of 90 percent or better during the previous school year. Juggling academic and athletic responsibilities is a challenge for any student, but Farmingdale's status as a School of Distinction proves our students are up to the task. Congratulations to the students, teachers and coaches who helped the District earn this honor.

2014-2015 Board of Education Meeting Schedule

All Board meetings are open to the public, and we encourage all District residents to attend. Regular monthly meetings take place in the Weldon E. Howitt East Cafeteria, 70 Van Cott Avenue, at 8:00 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Shari Bardash-Eivers is our Board president for the 2014-2015 school year, with John E. Capobianco serving as vice president. Serving as trustees are Russ Catanzaro, Michael Goldberg, Kathy Lively, Rick Morrison and Ralph Morales. Board of Education meetings are noted on the 2014-2015 District calendar and on the website: www.farmingdaleschools.org

- **December 10**
- **January 14**
- **February 4**
- **March 4**
- **March 11**
Budget Workshop
- **March 18**
Budget Workshop
- **March 25**
Budget Workshop/
Public Input Proposed
2015-16 Budget

- **April 15**
Adopt Farmingdale Budget
for Voter Approval
- **Tuesday, April 21**
Special Meeting –
Adopt BOCES
Administration Budget
- **May 6**
- **Tuesday, May 12**
Special Meeting/Public Hearing
2015-16 Proposed Budget

- **TUESDAY, MAY 19**
**BUDGET VOTE
AND ELECTION**
- **May 27**
Special Meeting - Recognition
Ceremony FHS Auditorium
6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.
- **June 3**
- **July 1**
Organizational Meeting
- **August 26**
Special Meeting - Tax Levy