

# Our Schools

The Community Newsletter of the Farmingdale Public Schools • Spring 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, including New York State assessments and Regents exams.*

## 2014 Wall of Fame Induction Ceremony



Monday,  
April 28, 2014

6:30 p.m.

Farmingdale High School

Thomas W. Guilford  
Lecture Hall

*Details on page 2!*

## The New Assessments: Nurturing a Growth Mindset

In the fall edition of *Our Schools*, we focused on the new assessments, talked about their value and tried to address some of the common concerns. Since the assessments remain an integral part of the education that children in New York receive, we felt it would be valuable to provide parents with up-to-date information.

We are approaching these tests with a growth mindset. What does that mean? It's a positive outlook that maintains that comprehension and skill can be improved through effort and investigation, seeking challenges and learning from mistakes. A growth mindset includes understanding that the process is as important as the result — that learning *how* to learn, and not just being able to provide the correct answer, has lifetime benefits.

Of course, if we are going to ask our students to go through the challenging assessment process, we must provide them with ample support and direction. The assessments allow teachers to identify student strengths and areas for growth. Additionally, we have common quarterly assessments at the secondary level to evaluate students' knowledge relative to a specific set of academic goals; inform decisions at the classroom, school and District level; and diagnose gaps in a particular student's learning. With this data, teachers will be able to more accurately tailor their instruction to the needs of their individual students.

At each level, we are providing students with assistance designed to improve their assessment scores and alleviate any stress they may be feeling. In ELA classrooms, for example, teachers are using a program called Achieve3000, a premiere online educational tool that utilizes differentiated instruction to develop, enhance and promote literacy. Differentiated instruction is a philosophy that recognizes that each student has different needs and competencies by providing students with divergent methods for learning, often in the same classroom. By using differentiation programs such as Achieve3000, our instructors can meet the needs of all students in a classroom, and they can provide flexible and small group instruction in each class. These programs work most efficiently when coupled with the assessments; when a teacher has a particular student's MAP RIT score, for example, he or she can identify the student's instructional level and modify teaching accordingly.

For parents, assessments can sometimes be a delicate topic. This is certainly understandable; no parent wishes his or her child to face undue pressure or stress in the classroom. Without assessments, however, there would be no measure of a student's progress. Assessments not only help teachers evaluate the knowledge and skills their students have acquired, but also provide important insights for addressing individual student needs. By using all available tools, our teachers are preparing every student for success.

## Farmingdale High School Wins Two Best of Long Island Awards!

The quality of the educators and administrators employed by the Farmingdale School District has never been in question, but it is always great to receive outside recognition for the work our employees do. Recently,

**Farmingdale High School** Principal Glen Zakian was named Best School Principal in the *Long Island Press'* Bethpage Federal Credit Union Best of Long Island 2014 Competition. Mr. Zakian has been principal at FHS for seven years, and an educator for nearly three decades.



*"I am truly grateful to receive this award," said Principal Zakian. "I am honored to be a part of the Farmingdale community."*

Additionally, the FHS student body was recognized for its enthusiasm and unity, winning first place in the competition's High School Spirit category. Farmingdale High School hosts several events and activities throughout the year to encourage student extracurricular involvement, including Spirit Week and pep rallies, as well as philanthropic events such as volleyball competitions, student-faculty games and blood drives.

"We are proud that we have created a tremendous atmosphere and an overwhelming sense of pride in our community for our students to learn and succeed," said John Lorentz, Farmingdale School District Superintendent of Schools. "These recognitions are a testament to Glen, his staff and all of our students." Thousands of Long Islanders across the region voted in the awards-based program online. Congratulations to Principal Zakian, our wonderful students, and our supportive community!

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Farmingdale Public Schools  
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# FHS Tech Students Apply Their Knowledge for an Important Cause

In early February, the American Dental Association's annual *Give Kids a Smile* event took place at Garden City's Cradle of Aviation Museum, and Tech Honor Society students from Farmingdale High School were on board to help out. Hospitals and dental schools from across the region provided free dental care to underprivileged children throughout Nassau County. At this year's event, sponsored in part by the Nassau County Dental Society, an estimated 1,500 children received screenings, fluoride treatment and sealants. An event as large as *Give Kids a Smile* requires a great deal of logistical planning, not the least of which is the audio and visual setup. The Tech Honor Society students from FHS graciously volunteered their time to lend their skills in lighting, staging, and working two-way radios. The honor students also worked as ambassadors, assisting the dentists in several capacities. This event is a great example demonstrating the need for audio-visual skills and training in a variety of fields. In addition to applying what they've learned, our tech students gained a valuable lesson in helping those who are less fortunate.

## Important Budget Information and Upcoming Dates

The Board of Education is hard at work developing Farmingdale's 2014-15 budget proposal. As with every budget season, our District faces significant challenges in developing the 2014-15 budget. We strongly urge you to attend our upcoming Board meetings. For more information, please contact District Clerk Mary E. Rogers at (516) 752-6552.

### Voter Information

#### Q. Who is permitted to vote in the Annual Budget Vote and Election?

Only registered voters are permitted to vote. All residents who are registered for either school district or general elections are eligible to vote without re-registering, provided they have voted in a general or a school election within the last four years.

#### Q. Can anyone register to vote?

A person may register to vote if he or she is a citizen of the United States, at least 18 years of age, and a resident of the District for at least 30 days.

#### Q. Where can I register to vote?

Voter registration will be held on Saturday, May 10th at the Howitt East Lobby from 3:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Residents may also register on weekdays in the Office of the District Clerk between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. The last day to register is Thursday, May 15th.

#### Q. Can I vote if I will not be in town on the day of the election?

Absentee ballots are available. Please contact the District Clerk for an application for an absentee ballot and/or information regarding the absentee ballot process. Note that individuals who are designated as "Permanently Disabled" by the Nassau County or Suffolk County Boards of Election will be sent an absentee ballot automatically.

#### Q. If I have questions about voting, whom should I call?

If you have any questions regarding registration, eligibility to vote, or absentee ballots, please contact Mary E. Rogers, District Clerk, at (516) 752-6552. For District information and board meeting agendas, log on to [www.farmingdaleschools.org](http://www.farmingdaleschools.org).

#### ■ Wednesday, March 26

BOE Special Meeting – Budget Workshop  
Howitt East Cafeteria • 8 p.m.

#### ■ Wednesday, April 2

BOE Regular Meeting – Budget Workshop /  
Public Input / Proposed 2014-2015 Budget  
Howitt East Cafeteria • 8 p.m.

#### ■ Wednesday, April 9

BOE Special Meeting –  
Adopt Farmingdale Budget for Voter Approval  
Howitt E. Cafeteria • 8 p.m.

#### ■ Thursday, April 24

BOE Special Meeting –  
Adopt BOCES Admin. Budget  
Howitt East Cafeteria • 8 p.m.

#### ■ Wednesday, May 7

BOE Regular Meeting  
Howitt East Cafeteria • 8 p.m.

#### ■ Tuesday, May 13

BOE Special Meeting – Public Hearing /  
Proposed 2014-2015 Budget  
Howitt East Cafeteria • 8 p.m.

#### ■ Tuesday, May 20

BUDGET VOTE & ELECTION –  
Howitt East Gymnasium  
6:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

## You Are Invited to the 2014 Wall of Fame Induction Ceremony

Monday, April 28, 2014 • 6:30 p.m. • Farmingdale High School • Thomas W. Guilford Lecture Hall

This year's Wall of Fame honorees are excellent role models for the students of our District. They are:

#### ❖ Dr. Benjamin Giminaro (Class of 1938)

Dr. Benjamin Giminaro is a World War II veteran, physician, and life-long resident of the Farmingdale community. He served as lieutenant in the U.S. Navy Medical Corps, started the on-campus health service at SUNY Farmingdale, acted as our District's physician, and treated community members as a general practitioner for fifty years — from the same house in which he was born! Dr. Giminaro also served as chairman of the Farmingdale Zoning Board of Appeals, was a member of the Town of Oyster Bay Board of Ethics, and was president of the Farmingdale-Bethpage Historical Society and Farmingdale Rotary Club. Dr. Giminaro was also bestowed with the Jenkins Award, given by the Farmingdale PTAs.

#### ❖ Alfred Graf (Class of 1976)

Alfred Graf is a United States Navy veteran, a retired New York City police officer and a graduate of Touro Law School. He became a Suffolk County legal aid attorney and established his own law practice. As town supervisor in Brighton, NY, for two terms, Mr. Graf supported the community by creating the Brighton Boosters and opening a town food pantry. Currently in his second term as New York State Assemblyman for the 5th Assembly District, he is a member of numerous committees that support New Yorkers. During his career, he also co-founded the Adirondack Association of Towns and Villages, and served as an active member of the Town of Islip Youth Board.

#### ❖ Dr. Tansar Mir (Class of 1994)

Dr. Tansar Mir is a reconstructive plastic surgeon practicing in Manhattan and on Long Island. He graduated from SUNY Stony Brook School of Medicine, receiving recognition for his valuable research on wound healing. Additionally, Dr. Mir has dedicated his time and expertise in humanitarian missions to people in Peru and the Philippines. Throughout his travels, Dr. Mir performed surgery on burn victims, as well as those born with cleft lips and palates.



# What's Happening in Our Schools

## Albany Avenue Elementary School

Right before the students left for February break, fourth and fifth graders at **Albany Avenue Elementary School** had a chance to watch faculty members compete against each other in the eighth annual Hoops for Cans basketball game. It was a fun and meaningful event, one that let students cheer on their teachers (and Principal Joseph Valentine) while also helping



out community members in need. Close to 1000 cans of food were collected and then delivered to a local food pantry. While every student in the fourth and fifth grade was invited to attend, those who brought canned goods for donation received raffle tickets and a chance to win some exciting prizes. Thanks to everyone who participated in the annual Hoops for Cans basketball game and demonstrated that good will and charity extend far beyond the holiday season.

## Woodward Parkway Elementary School

Acrobatic artists from the National Circus Project recently visited with **Woodward Parkway Elementary School** students. The trained acrobats joined the students in their physical education classes to teach them a variety of circus-themed activities, including juggling, feather balancing and plate spinning. Additionally, several fourth graders practiced for an interactive workshop they attended with their parents later that day. At the workshop, the students surprised their parents with their new-found acrobatic skills.



The National Circus Project's visit was a fun and challenging event for students. It enhanced students' motor skills and concentration, and it taught them that physical activity and exercise can be accomplished in a variety of ways. Congratulations to our brave students for trying something new, and thank you to the National Circus Project for leading the activity.

## Northside Elementary School



Fifth grade students at **Northside Elementary School** recently held their annual play. Every aspect of the show, titled *I'm Gonna Let It Shine*, was handled by the students, including set building, costume design, and prop management. During music classes for several weeks, students memorized their lines and learned the dances and lyrics for all the songs. Not only did these experiences enhance their creativity and organization skills, but working on the play also taught them valuable lessons in human rights and history; the theme of *I'm Gonna Let It Shine* is the Civil Rights Movement.

## Howitt Middle School

In January, technology students at **Howitt Middle School** put their talents on display at an event called Junkyard Wars.

Participating students designed and built several machines that ranged from simple to complex, including pulleys, levers and various structures.

During Junkyard Wars, each student displayed how his or her creation operated. The fair was a fun and lively event, one that tested the students' acumen in engineering, woodworking, math and science.



As reports continually indicate the value of an engineering background and the strength of that particular job market, students who embrace and learn technology will have a distinct advantage. Congratulations to all those who participated in Junkyard Wars.

## Farmingdale High School

As Valentine's Day came and went, more than 600 students at **Farmingdale High School** used the holiday to make a powerful stand for unity. Students from every grade level of the high school wore purple shirts and headbands, created inspirational messages, and took pictures in a photo booth built by FHS technology students. All the activities were part of the "P.S. I Love You Day" campaign, and they brought attention to one of the most serious issues facing our nation: teenage depression and suicide.

The schoolwide event was created by the FHS student government. Students sold carnations, roses and chocolates, with all proceeds donated to the Long Island Crisis Center. The "P.S. I Love You Day" was a potent demonstration of the spirit of unity that is indicative of Farmingdale schools. No student should ever feel disrespected or unsafe while they are in school.



## Saltzman East Memorial Elementary School

Last month, as the Winter Olympics brought together athletes from around the world, global unity came into focus. It was during this time, fittingly, that students and their families at **Saltzman East Memorial Elementary School** held an event called "Popped Around the Continents" at the school's Family Math and Literacy Night. During the event, students and their families



"visited" various continents, playing math games and reading pieces of literature that corresponded with the particular region. In addition to having fun, many families who participated in "Popped Around the Continents" donated pajamas to Scholastic's "One Million Good Nights," a program that provides new pajamas to children and families in need.



# MUSIC AND FINE ARTS NEWS

## Farmingdale Sends Over 100 Students to Prestigious Music Festival

Every winter, the All-County Music Festival is held at the Tilles Center in Greenvale. Selection for this concert, in which the top student musicians from all over Nassau County perform, is a considerable accomplishment based on New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) scores and teacher recommendation. This year, Farmingdale sent an impressive 103 students to the festival.

The selected students spent weeks preparing for the concert. Before and after school, and during lunch time, teachers worked with the musicians and helped them prepare for the challenging music they would be playing. Among the teachers involved were secondary-level teachers Jonathan Bley, Sam Gelfer, Barbara Lieberman, Jessica Mischke, Gina Pellettiere, Emily Rhodes, Andy Segale, Matthew Szabo, Danielle Tucker and Claire Zatorski; as well as elementary-level teachers Joe DeAngelis, Matthew DeMasi, Joan Drewes, Katie Duke, Pat Facchiano, Erika Felker, Erica Hartmann, Becky Korn, Therese Mannino and Jennifer Tower.

In addition to the 103 selected to perform, several Farmingdale students were individually honored. In Division II, Devika Arora and Kelly Bergersen were vocal soloists. In the Jazz Band, Miles Malanowski and Cooper Malanowski performed solos on lead trumpet and lead trombone, respectively. Connor Fawcett performed solos as the only guitarist in the Jazz Band. In Division V, Ellyn Eivers was designated principal chair in the Symphony Orchestra. In the Symphonic Band, timpanist Matthew Mackenzie, oboist Caeley Looney, and clarinetist Steven Lensky all had solos. In Division V Jazz, Tyler Belo and Mike Fernandez were vocal soloists, Greg DeAngelis was lead trombonist and performed solos, and Matthew Malanowski was the only pianist and performed solos. Congratulations to all the performers and their teachers!



## FROM THE SPORTS DESK

### Winter Sports Updates

Our wonderful winter athletes provided a bright spot during a particularly tough winter. Read below for a full report on our winter sports.

- ❖ **Girls' and Boys' Bowling:** Another successful season for Lady Dalers' bowling; **the team finished second in the conference and fourth in the county.** Four members of the team competed in the individual championships. The boys' team had a solid season as well, finishing seventh in the conference and sending three bowlers to the individual championships. With so many freshmen and sophomore athletes, Farmingdale bowling has a bright future.
- ❖ **Girls' and Boy's Track and Field:** Our track teams had wildly successful seasons: **both were named Conference I Champions!** At that event, the Lady Dalers earned 17 All-Conference Honors while the Dalers won 14. Additionally, both teams did well at the County Championships. **The Dalers captured second place while the Lady Dalers took third place.** Several of our athletes were also sent to Cornell University in March to compete in the state tournament. Congratulations to our track teams!
- ❖ **Girls' and Boys' Basketball:** Playing in one of the most competitive conferences in the county, Farmingdale's girls' and boys' basketball teams certainly had their work cut out for them. The Dalers rode an impressive 10-2 record all the way to being named **Co-Conference Champions!** The Lady Dalers' may have come up short in their pursuit, but they are now more determined than ever to come back stronger next year.
- ❖ **Boys' Swimming and Diving:** The Dalers' finished second at the Nassau County Swimming & Diving Championships, winning several events and breaking many school records. They went on to compete at the New York State Championships in Rochester, which were held in late February. In addition, the team won the Long Island Swimming Officials Association's **sportsmanship award for the fourth consecutive year!**
- ❖ **Varsity Wrestling:** After another successful season, the Dalers' wrestling team headed to Hofstra University to **compete in the Nassau County preliminaries and county finals**, held in mid-February.

