

Our Schools

The Community Newsletter of the Farmingdale Public Schools • Winter 2015

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.

Read About
Farmingdale Schools'
Exciting New Initiative
With the
Local Public Library



See Back Page

For the Second Year in a Row, Farmingdale Is Named to AP's District Honor Roll!

Farmingdale is one of only seven school districts on Long Island to qualify.

The nonprofit organization College Board has once again named the Farmingdale School District to the Advanced Placement (AP) District Honor Roll. Farmingdale is one of just 7 districts on Long Island, and just 28 statewide, to receive this honor. Distinguished districts were recognized for expanding access to Advanced Placement coursework while increasing the percentage of students earning scores of 3 or higher. Being named to the AP District Honor Roll is a considerable achievement; of the thousands of public school districts across the United States and Canada, only 547 met the criteria. This designation speaks volumes about the dedication and work ethic of Farmingdale students and teachers. We'd like to commend all of them for helping Farmingdale receive this prestigious honor for the second year in a row.

New ENL After-School Program at FHS

Sarah Jimenez, a senior at Farmingdale High School, has never been one to ignore a problem. When she noticed that English as a New Language (ENL) students and native-English speakers in her school weren't as integrated as they could be, that they did not mingle or interact as easily as other students, she did not shrug her shoulders in apathy. "We have more ENL students in our school than ever," Sarah explained. "But it was clear they felt cut off. We wanted to make them feel more included, both socially and academically."

Earlier this year, Sarah put those words into action. With the help of ENL instructor Mr. Primavera, Sarah created the multifaceted ENL After-School Program, which aims to provide ENL students with peer tutoring while fostering a stronger social bond between all students. The club meets once a week after school, in addition to various other times throughout the week. Already, the school reports, the club is paying dividends: the social interaction and familiarity among ENL and native-English speaking students at Farmingdale High School is markedly improved.

The program, however, did not achieve that level of success by chance; Sarah worked tirelessly to ensure that the club would be well staffed, and that ENL students would take advantage of its benefits. She met with her advisors in the National Honor Society, of which she is a member, to organize a volunteer schedule. Society members who volunteer earn hours toward the fulfillment of their community service requirements. Sarah did the same with the FHS Key Club. Students in those associations quickly realized the opportunity; to date, over 30 student volunteers, mostly juniors and seniors, work at the ENL After-School Program.

Sarah will be graduating from FHS in the spring and heading to college. But the program she created is in good hands. Mr. Primavera has agreed to continue advising next year, and the Spanish Honor Society will help facilitate. Other students, of course, will take up where Sarah left off, becoming role models and mentors to younger students.

Traditional curriculum can go only so far. Teachers provide students with the tools and knowledge to make their way in the world, but it is ultimately up to the students to chart the path. Taking action when confronted with an obstacle, assuming extra work for the greater good, as Sarah has, goes beyond what an instructor can teach. The ENL After-School Program has had tangible benefits for the culture of Farmingdale High School. All thanks to one senior who decided to make a difference.



Non-profit
Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Farmingdale Union
Free School District

CAR-RT SORT
RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER

Farmingdale Public Schools
Administrative Offices
50 Van Cott Avenue,
Farmingdale, New York 11735

Something Special Is Happening in Farmingdale



By putting students in touch with Holocaust survivors, the Adopt a Survivor project allows young men and women to experience history through the stories of those who lived it. Throughout the fall, Farmingdale High School's Ambassadors' Club, a group comprising over 40 students, traveled to Manhasset every Tuesday to visit the Holocaust Museum and take part in this special program. The participating students met in small groups with Holocaust survivors and listened to their heart-rending stories. In turn, the students promise to pass those stories on to the next generation.

Mr. Primavera, the advisor to the club says: "The students get to share history up close. They learned about the Holocaust through the personal connection they make with their survivor. It is amazing to watch the relationships develop and the respect and reverence the students bring to the project."

The unfortunate reality is that these survivors will not be with us much longer; these students have taken the responsibility of ensuring that the legacies of Holocaust survivors are not lost. Part of the promise the students made was an oath to visit a school, church, or civic group, and pass on the story of their adopted survivor. They will work to make sure this horrible episode in history is never forgotten. It's a serious and challenging responsibility for these young people to take on, and it speaks volumes about their characters. If we do not study history, it is said, we are doomed to repeat it. The students in the FHS Ambassadors' Club are doing their small part to make sure that doesn't happen.

Valedictorian and Salutatorian Announced

Farmingdale is proud to announce that Tosha Patel, from Woodward Parkway and Howitt Middle School, and Julia Piraino, from Albany Avenue and Howitt Middle School, have been named FHS Class of 2015 valedictorian and salutatorian, respectively. Stay tuned to future newsletters for more information, and congratulations to Tosha and Julia!

WINNERS AND ACHIEVERS

Two FHS Students Are Semifinalists in National Merit Scholarship Program

Less than one percent of the approximately 1.5 million applicants in the 60th Annual National Merit Scholarship program advance to the semifinal round. The distinction is a representation of true academic excellence, and Farmingdale High School is proud to have two such students so honored this year: seniors Julia Piraino and Griffin S. Rhein. As semifinalists, Julia and Griffin will have the opportunity to advance through the competition for a chance to win one of approximately 8,000 National Merit Scholarships to be distributed next spring.



"We try to create an environment that fosters academic achievement," said FHS Principal Glen Zakian. "We encourage our students to strive for their academic best. We could not be more proud of Julia and Griffin; this honor is a testament to their hard work and success."

Acceptance into the National Merit Scholarship competition is based on a student's PSAT/NMSQT® scores. Congratulations to Julia and Griffin!

16 Farmingdale High School Student-Athletes Sign Letters of Intent



In early December, 16 Farmingdale High School student-athletes signed letters of intent to attend prestigious colleges and universities around the country. Schools include the University of Florida, James Madison University, Fairfield University, Lafayette College, Molloy College, Niagara University and Manhattan College. Parents, coaches and FHS Principal Glen Zakian were present to watch as the students committed to their respective schools.

Collegiate athletics offers a great opportunity for our varsity students to continue playing the sports they love at a higher level, all while getting a first-rate education. At the college level, our graduating students will compete in lacrosse, soccer, baseball, swimming, and track and field teams. Congratulations to all 16 of our student athletes, and best of luck!

FHS Students Perform in the Iconic Grand Ole Opry House

Last fall, two student musicians at Farmingdale High School traveled to Nashville, Tennessee, to perform at the National Association of Music Educators Annual Conference. Violinist Thomas Eustaquio and jazz guitarist Cole Szilagyi performed a challenging repertoire to a massive crowd at the Grand Ole Opry House. The honor was granted to them based on their distinction as some of the finest young musicians in the nation.

What's Happening in Our Schools

Albany Avenue Elementary School

Over 200 students at **Albany Avenue Elementary School** recently experienced democracy in action. In December, children voted for their student council representatives during the school's Election Assembly. Candidates created their own campaigns, wrote and presented their own speeches, and worked to promote their candidacy. The election creates a governing body of students who serve as representatives to the school district's administration.



The student council comprises fourth and fifth graders who have been nominated by their peers to one of four positions: president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. It was a successful and exciting day for all involved, one that gave students a chance to learn about a totem of our democracy: the election.

Northside Elementary School

Northside Elementary School welcomed several local WWII and Vietnam War veterans, as well as a members of the United States Marine Corps Color Guard, to celebrate Veterans Day and give students a history lesson from those who served our country. The fifth grade class sang several patriotic songs interspersed with dialogue giving background of the songs, one of which was accompanied by one of the students playing the flute. Two young trumpeters played taps and another student played the drums as the Marine Color Guard presented the colors. A special PowerPoint presentation was given, highlighted by the students reading their letters of appreciation to veterans everywhere. Showing respect for the men and women who served our country is an important virtue to instill in young students, and this event demonstrated that students appreciate the sacrifices all American veterans have made.



Saltzman East Memorial Elementary School

Students at **Saltzman East Memorial Elementary School** came together recently to brighten Thanksgiving for several families in need. It all began with the school's Turkey Trot road race; students who wished to participate could do so by donating a food item. After the race, students took the donated items and prepared Thanksgiving Baskets. All in all, 25 baskets were created and distributed to local families. In addition, The Heart of Gold Foundation made a generous donation of twenty five turkeys.



In the hubbub of the season, we often forget the true meaning of the holidays. Thanksgiving, in particular, is designed to give thanks and help those less fortunate. Through their gracious efforts, children at S.E.M. displayed compassion and thoughtfulness.

Woodward Parkway Elementary School

Students and teachers at **Woodward Parkway Elementary School** are using the new technologies available to them to augment their education. Fourth graders, led by Robin Gerberg and Jaquie Clark, are using new strategies in the Google Classroom program to enhance their learning environment. Google Classroom is designed to help teachers instruct paperlessly and more efficiently through Google Docs. For easy organization, children are able to keep track of what is due via an assignments page which they access from their own Google Drive accounts. Students and teachers alike are enjoying the new system, and the District has set up training sessions so that other teachers can feel comfortable in the Google setting.



Howitt Middle School

In November, **Howitt Middle School** held its annual *Yes, You Can* assembly, a powerful program that teaches students about perseverance in the face of adversity. Presented by the Howitt PTA Arts in Education Program, the 2014 assembly featured an address by Lloyd Bachrach, a man born with a congenital bone deficiency which left him with little or no hope for a normal life.



However, Mr. Bachrach did not back down; he overcame the adversity in his own life and made his dreams come true. He became a motivational speaker, made connections with people, and inspired many with his story and his clear, consistent recipe for success. It was a powerful moment for all those in attendance, one that the 6th graders who experienced it are not likely to forget.

Farmingdale High School

Recently, students from **Farmingdale High School** participated in the Young Professionals Leadership Competition, held at St. Joseph's College. At the event, FHS students were tasked with preparing presentations on several business scenarios for industry judges. The judges, comprising Long Island professional businesspersons, provided feedback and constructive criticism. Congratulations are in order to four students who placed in the competition: Anthony Costantini and Brian Jones, 2nd place in Entertainment Marketing; Emily Podlewski, 2nd place in the Job Interview category; and Kayla Balling, 3rd place in Travel and Tourism.



"The Farmingdale High School Business Department and DECA continue to be exemplary role models," said FHS Principal Glen Zakian. "These real-life competitions and experiences truly prepare our students for the rigors and reality of the public world of business."

Farmingdale High School Presents: *Les Miserables*

Last fall, the talented students from Farmingdale High School staged one of the most beloved musicals in theater history. Under the direction of Jessica Mischke and Beth Swansen, the students put on Victor Hugo's timeless tale, *Les Miserables*, to the delight of Farmingdale audiences. The classic show, which debuted on Broadway in 1987, features several famous numbers, including "I Dreamed a Dream," "Who Am I," "Master of the House," "One Day More," and "On My Own."

Many people were instrumental in this successful production, but special thanks must go out to set directors Bill Buchholz and Joseph Bianca, as well as Sam Gelfar, the FHS orchestra director.

Les Miserables tells the tale of Jean Valjean, a man sentenced to 19 years in prison for stealing a loaf of bread. Valjean dedicates his life to doing good for everyone he meets, including Fantine, a factory worker; Fantine's daughter Cosette; and Inspector Javert, the man who had haunted Valjean all his life. After its initial run, *Les Miserables* was revived on Broadway two times, and it was turned into an award-winning motion picture in 2012.



FROM THE SPORTS DESK

The student athletes of the Farmingdale School District continue to impress. For the 16th straight season, all varsity teams at FHS have achieved Scholar-Athlete team status. In order to earn this honor, the teams must maintain a cumulative grade point average of over 90. It's a testament to the hard work and dedication to academics displayed by all our student athletes. Congratulations!

Varsity Football

The Dalers completed a successful 7-1 regular season with an impressive shutout of Valley Stream Central, 35-0. The team headed to the Conference I Playoffs, where they lost a heartbreaking game to the Massapequa Chiefs. After leading most of the game, the Dalers lost in the final second. With their strong season, however, the Dalers are poised for a big year in 2015.

Varsity Girls' Swimming and Diving

Congratulations are in order to the Lady Dalers' Swimming and Diving team: They finished in 2nd place at the Nassau Division B Championship! The Lady Dalers entered the tournament on an impressive hot streak, having won four of their last six meets. At the Division B Championships, they were denied a first-place finish by Garden City, the 14-time defending county champions.

Varsity Girls' and Boys' Soccer

Both the girls' and boys' soccer teams headed into their respective playoffs with high hopes. The Lady Dalers lost a tough game in the first round to Syosset. Changes lie ahead for the FHS Girls' soccer team, as many of the varsity athletes are seniors. Three athletes, however, plan to continue their soccer careers at the collegiate level.

The varsity boys' team defeated Uniondale in its first round of the playoffs. The team moved on to face Massapequa in the quarterfinals; after an exciting 80 minutes of soccer, the game remained scoreless. During the intense, sudden-death overtime, Massapequa managed to score first, defeating the Dalers 1-0. It was an exciting game, one that clearly demonstrated that even in defeat, our varsity athletic teams make the Farmingdale School District proud.

Farmingdale Schools Team Up With Local Library

The Farmingdale Public Library (FPL) is an invaluable resource for everyone in the Farmingdale community, students and adults alike. Recently, new initiatives have been launched by the Farmingdale School District and the FPL to strengthen the bonds of communication, and make all the library's wonderful information and technology more accessible to students.

Jennifer Olsen, Farmingdale's Director of Elementary Education, and Christa Lucarelli, the Assistant Director of the Farmingdale Public Library, worked together to coordinate the resources of the library so it was more in line with the instruction in the public schools. "Children at the elementary level are assigned a letter representing their reading level," said Mrs. Olsen.

"The library reorganized the display of its books to reflect those letters. It made it so much easier for parents to help their children find appropriate books."

Recently, iPads and various apps were purchased for Farmingdale elementary schools to help augment the curriculum. Many of the apps available for these iPads are expensive. Thanks to the new connection between the school and public library, however, students were able to use the apps that the library had already purchased, thus eliminating the need for redundant purchases. The new spirit of cooperation has produced all sorts of tangible benefits just like this. "We want to do anything we can to make things easier for parents," said Ms. Lucarelli. "Everyone should be able to benefit from their local library."

