



Our Schools

FARMINGDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT | WINTER 2021 | FARMINGDALESCHOOLS.ORG

THE FORTITUDE OF FARMINGDALE

For school districts around the world, the pandemic caused a major change in the ways students learn. Farmingdale School District met the challenges of this new form of learning head-on. Now students learn both in-person and virtually, and knowledge they acquire in the classroom can be utilized in the real world in new and topical ways.

The introduction of the “Schoolology” platform in the fall of 2020 helped the Farmingdale School District create and maintain an efficient form of communication among students, teachers, and families. With the stroke of a few keys and the click of a button, parents are able to view the assignments and progress of their children. By providing access to these resources, the Farmingdale School District is able to ensure that teachers can continue to seamlessly offer an engaging educational experience and parents remain informed of their child’s progress. Creating this one-stop-shop for educators allows them to collaborate more effectively and share approaches and ideas. Ongoing daily support for teachers, students, and families with Schoolology, and all technology-related issues during remote learning, continues to be provided in accordance with the District’s longstanding efforts to always put students’ needs first. Our teachers have been working above and beyond to learn the new platform while tackling the challenges of virtual learning. They are participating in professional development workshops led by staff developers and also building collegial circles with each other in order to learn and grow with best teaching practices. The Remote Learning Teacher Resource guide provided several tutorials for platforms such as Schoolology, Google Meets, and Flipgrid to ensure teachers are proficient in the use of all platforms.



Being engaged members of their classes has allowed students to bring their ideas to life. In an effort to fortify safety measures, the District administration worked around the clock, along with Farmingdale High School Technology Department and Maintenance, to design and produce desk divider reinforcements. Students chipped in as well! Mr. Sterler’s Wood Materials Processing Classes and Mr. Bilello’s Vocational Carpentry Classes processed over 40,000 linear feet of PVC material needed to provide the reinforcements for over 8,000 desks in the school district as part of the “Shield Project”. The additions to desk dividers not only ensured the safety of both students and faculty, but provided students with the chance to see their education meet real-world application.

From inside Woodward Parkway Elementary School, our teachers continue to provide students with engaging learning experiences, both in person and virtually! The integration of Schoolology and virtual tutorials of how to use the innovative learning platform have prepared our youngest students for this particular chapter of their academic journey. Teachers are committed to providing moments of educational and social-emotional support—both inside and outside the classroom.

Additionally, morning meetings are being conducted for all students in order to cultivate a sense of community. By participating in this new morning ritual—which covers morning routines, what makes someone a hero, and recognizing the people in our lives that inspire us—a sense of normalcy is created for our remote students.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2021 WALL OF FAME HONOREES!

HONOREES WILL BE INDUCTED TO THE WALL OF FAME
ON MONDAY, APRIL 26, 2021 AT 6:30 PM

RUSS CATANZARO - CLASS OF 1970

Mr. Russ Catanzaro, a licensed electrician by trade, serves as a construction project manager for Gannon Vitolo Contracting LLC. Mr. Catanzaro is tasked with overseeing multiple projects with valuations exceeding several million dollars. Mr. Catanzaro, referred to by many as “Mr. Farmingdale”, has a deep love and commitment to Farmingdale, evidenced by the work he does within the community. He has served in the roles of both vice president and president of the Farmingdale Police Athletic League (PAL) for the past 25 years, and is a past recipient of the Nassau County PAL Volunteer Award. During his 12 years as a trustee of the Farmingdale Board of Education, Mr. Catanzaro was integral in ensuring that district-wide construction projects were completed safely, accurately, and within budget. Such improvements included replacement of all boilers and windows in the district as well as renovations to Farmingdale High School’s bathrooms and locker rooms.

CHRISTINE LATHURAS - CLASS OF 1991

Dr. Christine Lathuras graduated from Farmingdale High School as a four-time Athlete of the Year recipient. She earned her undergraduate degree at Hofstra University, where she was recruited and attended on a basketball scholarship. Dr. Lathuras then attended the University of Maryland School of Dentistry, Gray School of Medicine and is now a practicing dentist. Dr. Lathuras currently provides free dental care locally and has traveled to over fifteen countries to provide dental services to the underserved. In addition, she has taught emergency dental procedures to medical providers in refugee camps in Africa. Evidence of her exceptional work is memorialized in the accolades she has been awarded and the incredible work she continues to do. Most notably, Dr. Lathuras was the recipient of the Waterbury Chamber of Commerce Leadership Award, American Dental Association Volunteer Recognition Award and participates in the Milford Rotary, School of the World. Her donations contributed to four schools being built in rural Guatemala. Additionally, Dr. Lathuras volunteers at the Beth El Center, where she prepares and serves food to the homeless. Dr. Lathuras has often been quoted saying, “We don’t do dentistry, we change lives.”

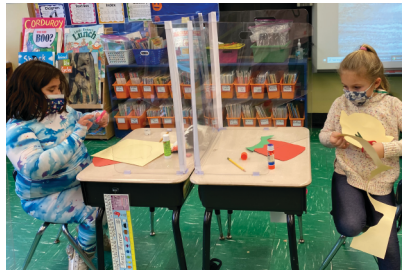
CHRISTA LUCARELLI - CLASS OF 1987

Following her graduation from Farmingdale High School in 1987, Ms. Christa Lucarelli attended and graduated from Molloy College in 1991 with a B.S. in Education. Ms. Lucarelli then went on to earn her Master in Library Sciences from Queen’s College. Upon completion of her graduate studies, Ms. Lucarelli returned to the Farmingdale community and began working for the Farmingdale Library, the same place she worked during her time as a young Farmingdale School District student. Her work began in the library’s children’s service area in 1991, and in 2002, she was named head of the children’s service department. As head of the department, Ms. Lucarelli established all of the children’s programs offered at the library, ranging from infants to high school-aged children. Ms. Lucarelli assumed the role of assistant director in 2010. One of Ms. Lucarelli’s most notable accomplishments as assistant director was her development and implementation of her “Triple P Program”—a program in which students volunteer every week to participate and spend time with their peers with special needs. This inspiring program has attracted over 70 participants since its inception. For her work in establishing Triple P, Ms. Lucarelli received the Town of Oyster Bay Award for the Creator of the Peer Pal Program (Triple P) at the Farmingdale Public Library.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OUR SCHOOLS

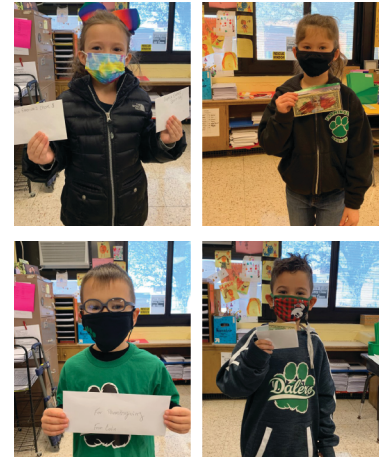
Albany Avenue Elementary School

First graders got in the holiday spirit and got creative this winter! Students were hard at work making elves. The lesson wasn't just a fun way to celebrate the holiday season, it taught students the valuable lesson of patience and following directions to achieve the results they wanted. Once complete, the Albany Avenue students brought their elves to life by writing stories about the elves' busy schedules during the month of December!



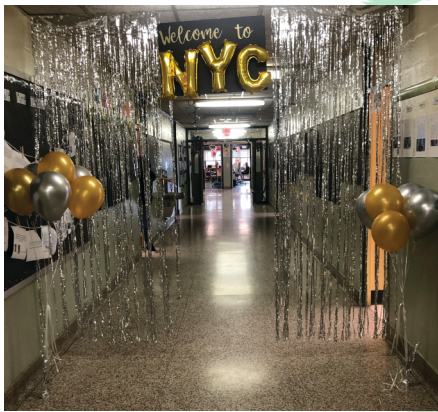
Woodward Parkway Elementary School

Talk about multitasking! Ms. Hopkins' first grade class gave back to the Farmingdale community all while doing chores at home. The first graders raised \$175 to help families in our community in need. The program taught our youngest Dalers the importance of compassion, kindness, and responsibility!



Northside Elementary School

Due to the pandemic, our fifth-graders weren't able to participate in the treasured tradition of going to New York City to see the holiday show at Madison Square Garden. It was certainly a bummer for all, but not to fret: The District brought Broadway to them! In order to keep holiday spirit alive, our Northside Elementary students celebrated the season by watching "Shrek the Musical" on Broadway.



Weldon E. Howitt Middle School

Dalers in Ms. Byers' 7th grade Visual Arts classes have been hard at work on Monochromatic Vector Self-Portraits using the Google Draw platform. Students have been learning how to take their own self-portrait and translate it to a digital platform using Google tools. The purpose of this colorful and creative digital project was to focus on the artistic properties of value and how to create the illusion of depth and form in a flat medium. We think our artists nailed it!



Saltzman East Memorial Elementary School

First-graders in Ms. Sparacino's and Ms. Parente's classes had the chance to shine bright during a science experiment! Students discovered that, as the sun moves across the sky, shadows move throughout the day. In order to demonstrate this phenomenon, students used flashlights to represent the sun and they made a gnome's shadow move and change in size by moving the gnome across the beams of the "sun's" life.



Farmingdale High School

The Italian Honor Society Club, along with the Varsity Leaders Club, hosted its annual Pasta and Sauce Fundraiser. Club members came together in a safe manner to collect 200 boxes of pasta and 150 jars of sauce for the St. Killian's food pantry. The successful annual fundraiser is truly a testament to the spirit of giving that our Farmingdale family embodies in everything it does!



FHS DECA MEANS BUSINESS

Our Dalers got down to business at this year's Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) regional competition! Fourteen students who took part in the first round of the annual competition have qualified to move on to the New York DECA State Career Conference, which is slated to take place virtually on February 26-28. By participating in DECA, emerging business professionals and entrepreneurs are able to hone their skills in the areas of marketing, finance, hospitality, and management throughout their high school and college careers.

This year's upcoming regional competition was modified for the virtual stage to ensure the safety of all students and moderators. As usual, the competition covers a vast array of topics as they relate to both business and entrepreneurship. The first round is composed of two components: the Test and the Role Play. The Role Play, traditionally made up of an original presentation that solves a given problem, is presented in person to judges who work in the corresponding category. Given the pandemic, students pivoted and transformed their presentations into pre-recorded videos presenting their solutions. A big congratulations to all 28 Farmingdale High School students who showed off their business chops, and to the 14 students who will be progressing to the next stage in the competition!

■ Stephen Kessler	Accounting Application Series
■ Ethan Wong	Accounting Application Series
■ Jacob Blanco	Accounting Application Series
■ Wendoly Barahona Zelaya	Automotive Service Marketing
■ Paolo Capucciati	Business Finance
■ Jenna Raczka	Food Marketing Series
■ Anthony Ciaravino	Entrepreneurship Series
■ Joseph Kessler	Entrepreneurship Series
■ Jenna Mayers	Hotel & Lodging Management Series
■ Tyler Hothersall	Human Resources management
■ Abigail Sneed	Human Resources management
■ Vanessa Espinosa	Restaurant & Food Service Management
■ Katie Hickey	Business Law and Ethics Team
■ James Hickis	Business Law and Ethics Team

The 14 semi-finalists will be joined by over 2,000 other New York State DECA contenders who have advanced to this year's State Career Conference. We can't wait to see our students close the deal this February!

FHS NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY'S NEWEST MEMBERS LIGHT PATH FOR THE FUTURE

Each year, the National Honor Society convenes to vote on the keynote speaker for the National Honor Society induction ceremony. This year's pick was none other than Farmingdale social studies teacher, Mr. James Hughes. Mr. Hughes' selection as keynote speaker was made especially poignant by the fact that his daughter, Sara, was one of 111 inducted into the Farmingdale High School chapter. He spoke about the significant character traits that encompass members of the National Honor Society.

In addition to Mr. Hughes' moving speech, inductees heard stirring orations from Superintendent Paul Defendini and Principal Dr. Samuel Thompson. The celebration, modified to conform to current COVID-19 restrictions, was held in the auditorium of the high school.

Following the ceremony, student officers of the National Honor Society lit candles to honor their newest members. Each candle lit represents the guiding principles the National Honor Society governs itself under, with the center candle representing the torch of the National Honor Society seal. The remaining four candles symbolize the virtues of Scholarship, Service, Leadership, and Character that each National Honor Society member embodies and upholds.

"How do we find hope during this current crisis?" James Hughes asked. "The answer is right here in front of me. It's the talented people who I know can solve today's problems and help create a better tomorrow."

- James Hughes,
Farmingdale Teacher



FARMINGDALE STUDENTS' QUARANTINE STORIES TAKE TO THE (VIRTUAL) STAGE



In the time of social distancing, art has the ability to bring people together safely. We are all so lucky that the incredibly talented student artists of Farmingdale have continued to create and to perform despite it all, inspiring us with their passion, creativity, and resolve.

One such Farmingdale student is Gabriella Stein, whose *Quarantine Story*, a video project, was recently recognized by Stage the Change, a locally based organization created to inspire young people through creativity and performance. Stage the Change will highlight Gabriella's work on its social media platforms. Additionally, Carly Paine and Trinity Babino received honorable mentions for their visual works.

Gabby—along with Carly and Trinity—created funny and poignant stories that resonated with all who experienced them. Stage the Change took notice, and now a much wider audience will get to experience this moving work.

At the start of the pandemic, Stage the Change created a call to action for students to write monologues about their COVID experiences. Farmingdale High School theater teacher Glen Beck saw an opportunity to turn this project into an outlet of creative expression for students as they navigated such an unprecedented time.

Stage the Change was founded in 2012 through the Hauppauge High School Drama program to help students become global citizens through creativity and performance. Congratulations to Gabby for continuing to showcase the theatrical work being done at Farmingdale.

LOVE IN KODACHROME

Playwright Adam Szymkowicz's *Kodachrome* took to the virtual stage for the Thespian Honor Society in February! Joanna Posillico was chosen to be featured in the All-State virtual performance of Mr. Szymkowicz's work where she embodied the character of the "Waitress/Friend." Junior and senior students from across New York who belong to the Thespian Honor Society were invited to audition for the show. Out of hundreds invited to audition, Joanna secured her spot as a member of the cast. Joanna was one of only 9 cast out of all New York State Thespian Clubs.

Kodachrome takes place in a small town where everybody knows each other and the pace of life allows the pursuit of love to take up as much space as it needs. The town photographer, Suzanne, serves as the tour guide for our journey as viewers get a peek into her neighbors' lives to catch glimpses of romance in all its stages of development. The play encompasses aspects of love, nostalgia, the seasons, and how we learn to say goodbye.

New York Thespians is a chapter of the Educational Theatre Association which sponsors the International Thespian Society. Thespian troupes are chartered in public and private schools throughout the country. New York Thespians represents excellence in theatre education with troupes all across New York in both public and private schools.





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SIGNED, SEALED, DELIVERED

Signed, sealed, delivered—these colleges are yours! Nearly 20 Farmingdale High School seniors made their college choices official by signing their letters of intent at a recent ceremony. These letters signify the four-year commitment each of the 19 student-athletes have made to their respective colleges and sports teams. The young athletes were joined by their coaches, Superintendent Paul Defendini, Principal Dr. Samuel Thompson, Assistant Principal Arlene Martinez, Director of Athletics Jeanne Berkoski, and Beth Garvey for the momentous occasion. Among the colleges chosen to continue their athletic careers are: Geneseo University, Stony Brook University, SUNY Maritime, Binghamton University, University of Albany, Mercy College, SUNY Oneonta, St. Thomas Aquinas College, Becker College, St. Joseph’s College, Springfield College, Molloy College, Mercy College, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, USMA at West Point, US Naval Academy, Fordham University, Hofstra University, Monmouth University, Campbell University, Farmingdale State College, Adelphi University, and Long Island University. Congratulations Dalers! We can’t wait to cheer you on from the stands.



A LEGACY THAT STILL RIDES PROUDLY



Although Joseph Williams Jr.—the transportation specialist for the Farmingdale School District—passed away in February of 2019, the legacy he leaves behind can still be felt today. In recognition of his incomparable role as a member of the Farmingdale School District, Mr. Williams has been posthumously inducted into the

New York Association for Pupil Transportation’s (NYAPT) Hall of Fame. Each year, NYAPT selects one individual who upholds its mission of supporting, developing, and representing professionals who are responsible for the safe and efficient transportation of our school children for this honor. Joe’s exemplary track record embodies all that an honoree must possess.

In May of 2000, Mr. Williams began his tenure at the District and stepped into his role of providing safe

transportation for thousands of students to and from school every day. It was a role he met with a sense of great responsibility and determination. Throughout his time as Farmingdale School District’s transportation specialist, Joe was in the driver’s seat. Overseeing the routing of the District’s buses, implementing bus safety drills, and being responsible for preventative maintenance inspections on all District vehicles, Joe truly did it all. Additionally, he was responsible for spearheading the development of the District’s satellite-mapping program, which prepares bus routes for every student in the District. As an active member of the Farmingdale community, Mr. Williams engaged in a number of committees and took part in workshops and conferences in order to stay literate on all emerging school bus laws. As a strong proponent for legislation regarding bus safety, Joe attended several State Education Department advisory committee meetings and participated in NYAPT’s Lobby Day, the association honoring Joe with this honor. Congratulations Joe Williams and to his family that accepted the honor on his behalf on February 18!