

DECEMBER 2017

LOCAL DO'S

JANUS VS. AFSCME

**THE U.S SUPREME COURT
COULD OUTLAW UNION
DUES, SIGNIFICANTLY
WEAKENING UNIONS
ACROSS THE COUNTRY. OUR
LABOR RIGHTS AS WE KNOW
THEM ARE AT STAKE.**



continued on page 2

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JANUS VS. AFSCME

“ONE DOWN, ONE TO GO”

BY MARK STEINBERG,
BMUST PRESIDENT

With a “no” vote tally at an incredible 83%, union strength and solidarity was on full display November 7 with the defeat of the proposed Constitutional Convention. With the support of our national affiliates (AFT and NEA) and our state affiliate (NYSUT), BMUST participated in a campaign to educate all New Yorkers about the incredibly negative implications of

Our work however, is not done. Now we must educate our members about the next existential threat to unions in our country. If you recall, during the 2015-2016 school year, BMUST spent a great deal of time educating our members regarding a case before the Supreme Court that would have had a negative impact on the strength of unions. That case (Friedrichs v. The California Teachers’ Association) was ultimately defeated with a tie vote after the death of Justice Scalia. We knew however, that



Mark Steinberg,
President, BMUST

“As educators and union members, it is vital we know and understand what is about to directly impact our bargaining rights, strengths, and even existence.”

opening up our state constitution to individuals and groups seeking to destroy our pensions and our rights as members of a union. To everyone who participated in our campaign, whether you displayed magnets, lawn signs, or made phone calls, I thank you.

there were similar cases following Friedrichs and that once Scalia was replaced, we would face another battle in the war on unions.

Fast forwarding to 2017, we now have a complete Supreme Court with the nomination and appointment of Neil Gorsuch by President Trump and Congress. Back in September, the Supreme Court agreed to take the case of

Janus v. American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, Council 31. It's strongly believed that the case will be successful and will ultimately turn all states into **"right to work"** states. (An oxymoron to say the least. It should be called "right to work for less" states.)

Your union will once again be discussing with you the importance of supporting organized labor and asking that you re-commit to being a member of BMUST. Once the case is decided next spring, you will certainly hear from anti-union groups attempting to convince you to leave the union and "give yourself a raise" by not having to pay dues.

I want you to think about that. Why would it be so important for these groups to get you to leave your union? Are they truly concerned about the fact that you are paying dues? Perhaps their agenda isn't so benevolent. How will they benefit if unions are destroyed in this country? Something to think about.

I am encouraging all building reps to have conversations about Janus with their staff members. I am including with my article a **Janus Case Fact Sheet** that I sincerely hope you will read and discuss with your

colleagues so you can better understand what is happening here. As educators and union members, it is vital we know and understand what is about to directly impact our bargaining rights, strengths, and even existence.

I truly hope everyone appreciates our contract, benefits, and working conditions here in Bellmore-Merrick. I hope all members will say "no thank you" when they are being encouraged to become free-riders. Choosing to become free-riders weakens all of us and will lead to hard feelings and resentment. When given the opportunity to become free-riders and weaken our union, I hope you will keep in mind the following quotes:

"United we stand. Divided we beg."

"The only effective answer to organized greed is organized labor."

– Thomas Donahue

In solidarity,

Mark



FACT SHEET ON JANUS V. AFSCME

What is Janus v. AFSCME? On November 21, 2016, the National Right to Work Foundation and the Liberty Justice Center filed a brief with the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals on behalf of Mark Janus challenging the Illinois law that requires government employees to pay a “Fair Share” or “agency fee” to the union that represents them. The plaintiffs allege that where public employee unions are concerned, all advocacy is “political” in nature and under the First Amendment, citizens cannot be compelled to support any form of political speech. The Janus case seeks to overturn **Abood v. Detroit Board of Education** and the Supreme Court has now agreed to accept the case.

What is Abood? Abood v. Detroit Board of Education is an important case that the Supreme Court decided unanimously in 1977. **In Abood, the Court affirmed that it is constitutional for public sector unions to collect Fair Share fees (also called agency fees) from employees who choose not to join a union, but who are legally entitled to benefits provided by the union, including contract bargaining with the employer.**

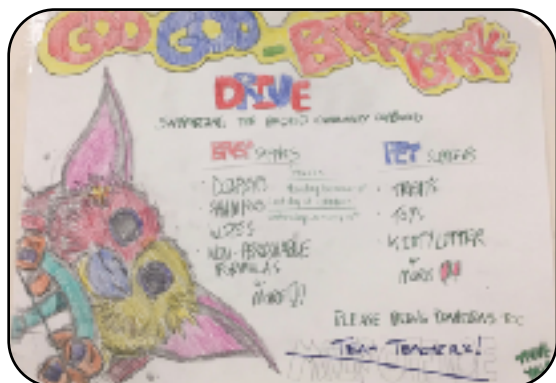
Who is trying to undermine the collective bargaining rights of working people? Corporate CEOs and wealthy special interests want to further tilt the economic rules in their favor by making it even harder for workers to come together, speak up and get ahead. They also want to destroy the ability of unions to be active in electoral politics or political advocacy. This case, which deals with public service workers, is just the latest tactic by the same wealthy interests that have been attacking working people for decades. The best way for working people to get ahead is to band together to win better wages, working conditions and benefits. **This case is not about worker freedom; it’s about weakening the unions workers depend on to advocate for their interests.**

What are Fair Share fees? Everyone can choose whether or not to join a union at work and nothing in this case will change that. **When the majority of people vote to form a union, however, the union is required by law to represent everyone in the bargaining unit, whether that employee is a union member or not.** As all public employees enjoy the benefits, job security and other protections the union negotiates, **it is only fair that all employees contribute to the cost of securing those benefits and protections.** Currently, public employees who don’t want to belong to a union only have to contribute to the costs of the representation they receive, including the cost of negotiating and maintaining contractual benefits, protections and rights. No public employee is required to join a union or pay any fees that support political candidates or a union’s political or ideological activities.

What’s at stake if unions lose this case? If we get a worst-case decision that allows employees to be free-riders, the possibility exists that some members will make a very short-sighted decision to “give themselves a raise” by not paying dues. If enough members choose that path, it is possible that your union will not be able to function effectively as an advocate for members – or possibly not be able to function at all. In that case, the union could be decertified and, if that occurs, your collective bargaining agreement would remain in effect for only a year. **After that you would not have a contract.** That would mean no more salary schedule, no requirement of the district to provide or contribute to health insurance, no rules about working conditions, no grievance procedure and so on. In other words, all employees would become at-will employees who are completely subject to managerial discretion on everything concerning their employment - pretty much like it is now in many Right-to-work states where there is no collective bargaining. If and when that happens, the “savings” achieved by not paying dues will be seen for what it really is – a very bad bargain. But by that time, it will be too late to do anything about it.

THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT OF GIVING

BY STACY PEKUSIC (GRAND AVE M.S.) LOCAL DO'S WRITER



Our Bellmore-Merrick faculty have long prided ourselves on our generosity and dedication to helping those less fortunate than us, and we feel that spirit of giving even more acutely during the holidays. This year is no different. As our holiday break approached, the spirit of giving thrived at Grand Avenue Middle School.

Goo Goo Bark Bark

When we think of charity, we often consider things from an adult perspective; however, this year our student ambassadors had a more petite population in mind. They created the whimsically-named “Goo Goo Bark Bark” Drive to benefit the Community Cupboard. Students and faculty donated items such as pacifiers, non-perishable formula, diapers, toys, pet food, and treats. The “Goo Goo Bark Bark” may be remembered for its quaint name, but its focus was those who rely on us the most.

Jeans for St. Jude's

Nowhere was holiday spirit more obvious than during our “Holiday Spirit Week.” Each day leading up to the holiday break, faculty and students donned a themed outfit and donated money to St. Jude's Pediatric Cancer Research Foundation. On Monday, we wore our most comfortable denim for “Jeans for St. Jude's.” Tuesday's theme was “Green Grand Gear,” Wednesday's “Gold Grand Gear,” and Thursday's “Grand Camo.” Finally, we capped off our Spirit Week with a perennial favorite, the Ugly Holiday Sweater Contest. Faculty were turned out in their ugliest attire, while homeroom classes voted for their favorite student ugly sweaters. The winners were sent to the auditorium for a school-wide contest, which was streamed live on Grand's website channel. This was a wonderful way to build comradeship and solidarity as we headed into our well-deserved holiday.



Holiday Cards for the Homeless

Since 2015, Grand's English Department has partnered up with the Mercy Haven organization to distribute holiday cards to homeless children and families on Long Island. Students and staff were invited to the library to create handmade cards that included some uplifting, holiday-inspired quotations and were distributed before Christmas Eve. The project was a great way for us to “connect with kindness and caring” this holiday season and to show that “Grand CARES!”

The spirit of giving, while always a staple of Bellmore-Merrick life, inspired us all at Grand Avenue this holiday season.

A HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR VISITS MEPHAM

**BY BILL MORRIS (MEPHAM H.S.),
LOCAL DO'S STAFF WRITER**

Lola Mozes is a remarkable survivor of The Holocaust, having lived through several Concentration Camps, including Auschwitz, and The Death March. Lola is also the grandmother of a Mepham 9th-grader, Andrew Fried, and was invited to share her experience, as Andrew's class had just completed reading Elie Wiesel's Night. She also graciously allowed Bellmore-Merrick Broadcasting, of which her grandson is also a part, to film her visit. Lola (who doesn't like formal titles) spent nearly 6-years in captivity and shared her inspiring story of survival with mine and Jen Landry's two 9th grade Inclusion classes on December 6th, 2017.



Lola requested that our students do their homework and be ready to share their questions with her, and that they did. For an hour-and-a-half, Lola answered our questions in harrowing detail, bringing this dark period in history vividly to life. She described a narrow escape from the gas chambers, meeting the vile Dr. Mengele, and working for her survival. She even paralleled her story to Elie Wiesel's by describing how she clung to her mother in the camps only to lose her during the Death March.

In addition to sharing such powerful and honest stories, Ms. Lola Mozes inspired us to be more empathetic in our lives. She read us some of her moving poetry, and shared wonderful lessons on humanity. She told us to: "Love life, love people, and to open our hearts." She also cautioned us to: "...not follow leaders blindly... and to speak up against injustice without using violence." She stressed that education and young people are "the light of the world." Ms. Moses even sent us a follow up letter to thank us and to remind us to be brave and to enjoy our lives while supporting our fellow man. To say that our visit with Ms. Mozes was an honor is an understatement.



“LET THERE BE PEACE ON EARTH”

BY WENDY SIMSON (CALHOUN H.S.), LOCAL DO'S STAFF WRITER

Calhoun hosted a great district music event with The Kennedy HS Variety Choir, Word of Mouth from MAMS, Pirate Radio from Mephram, Grand Voices from Grand, and Crescendo from Calhoun. The event benefited the Community Cupboard. The grand finale featured all the groups and students from the elementary districts singing “Let there be Peace on Earth.”



Thanksgiving has come and gone; and with it comes the beginning of the holiday season. Calhoun hosted its annual Thanksgiving Community Dinner. The Thanksgiving Dinner was great. The food was outstanding – thank you to everyone who made a dish or donated to the night in some way. The entertainment was great – Express Yourself! delighted the crowd and the On Tour performances showcased some amazing vocals. Our kitchen was staffed by our cafeteria ladies who donated their time and brought their own kids to help serve. Our National Honor Society volunteers decorated and served the food while also staying to help clean up. Ms. Brucculeri, our social worker, organized the raffles and donations and was incredibly helpful in getting the night to be as successful and as beautiful for our community as it is. We raised over \$2400 which we gave directly to the Community Cupboard. The district assembled 100 Thanksgiving baskets for families in our community. Students from all 6 schools put together the meals that were delivered to families here in Bellmore and Merrick.



“A MEANINGFUL DINNER”

BY BRUCE REED (JFK H.S.), LOCAL DO'S EDITOR

The spirit of giving has been in overdrive here at Kennedy H.S. Jessica Conte (Art) and Barbara Green (Special Ed), organized a charity program entitled The Giving Tree. The purpose of this program was to support local families in need within our district. The staff were invited to take a “gift ornament” from a decorated tree in the main office. On each ornament was inscribed a gender, an age, and a suggested gift idea for a family in need. Within a day, the Kennedy staff took all the gift ornaments off the tree, and then began to deliver tons of toys and gifts for the less fortunate. Jessica and Barbara were overwhelmed by the positive response from the Kennedy community. This program benefited the families of the BMCHSD Community Cupboard.

In the same spirit, several organizations here at Kennedy teamed up to sponsor the first “Ladles of Love.” The CHAMP program, JFKs Student Government, the Key Club, and the JFK Staff Association jointly sponsored this event that included a pre-holiday dinner with impressive raffle prizes. For the low price of just \$15, guests who attended this dinner were treated to a gourmet meal prepared by the CHAMP program. While dining, the guests were serenaded by the JFK Music Arts Students. Several large gift baskets filled with holiday goodies were raffled off, enabling the organizers to raise over \$1,000. The proceeds from this event also was earmarked for BMCHSD's Community Cupboard. Well done, Kennedy!



“THE EXTENDED COMMUNITY OF M.A.P.”

BY LAURA SHERIDAN (M.A.P.), LOCAL DO'S STAFF WRITER



It's year 12 here at Brookside! Who knew? We continue to grow and change, but what works, stays. Although small, we have a large extended community, and MAP's students and staff get out and about . . . quite a bit. Field trips and community service have always played key roles in education here at MAP. This year has been no exception.



In October, Darlene Boden, Martha Di Giovanna, and Mary Sweeney took students to visit St. Francis Episcopal Church in Bellmore to see the arrangement of their gardens and the vegetables they grow for The Freeport Emergency Food Pantry. The knowledge

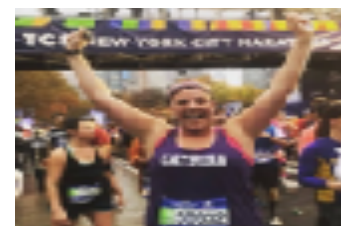
they gained there will be used in the Brookside garden, which is grown for the Community Cupboard.

Later that month, the AP Euro and AP Literature classes traveled to the Met Cloisters. Tiffany Rzempoluch and Laura Sheridan joined their students on a guided tour of the Cloisters and then sent them



on a scavenger hunt to learn more about religion, art, and gardening (there it is again) in Medieval European life.

November was busy as well. Darlene Boden, Susan Ellinghaus, and Karin McMahon took a Sunday field trip into the city to cheer on Catrina Christensen as she successfully ran her first New York City marathon!



To celebrate Veterans' Day, MAP had the honor of hosting veterans of World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, and the Iraq War. Students had the opportunity to hear a beautiful rendition of “God Bless America” and hear stories from the men's experiences during and after their service. We hope to bring the veterans in again to record their recollections on video for the benefit of posterity.

Geisha Kwiatkowski would like to thank Steve Rose—a retiree of GAMS—for connecting us with Vet2Vet and

bringing them here to visit!

Martha Di Giovanna and John Boyle took the Forensics class to the DNA Learning Center in Cold Spring Harbor to do the Forensic DNA Profiling lab where the students were able to use their own DNA and work with actual lab equipment. They were then taken on a tour of the robotic section of Northwell Health Core Lab, which both allowed them to see a real lab in operation and to grasp how many job opportunities are available in the health care profession.

Zach Gosse and his Class and Community Leadership students partnered with 5th-grade students at Newbridge Road Elementary School; they read the book *Wonder* and saw the film together. They then organized a #choosekind reinforcement activity: with the 5th graders, they made dream catchers for children who are spending holidays in the hospital.





Zach Gosse, Joe Netto, and a group of students joined Calhoun's Prep for Life class for a trip to Canine Companions for Independence in Medford. They received a demonstration with Lauren and Ralph the Dog about commands they use to train the dogs, along with information about the free service they provide. Everyone was given a facility tour and spent some time visiting with some very charming canine friends.

In November, the Community Cupboard celebrated its first birthday! The Cupboard—born from a conversation between Karin McMahon and Tiffany Rzempoluch—has grown significantly over the past year thanks to the efforts of Karin, Tiffany, Darlene Boden, Mara Bollettieri, and Catrina Christensen. This year, the Cupboard has been called upon to help the district and Kiwanis create and distribute holiday baskets.

Thanks to the combined efforts of volunteering teachers, student ambassadors, Prep for Life and COORE students, clubs, teams, and other community organizations, the Cupboard has helped over 30 local families, 27 of whom utilize the pantry on a biweekly basis. The Cupboard—which runs on donations—has distributed over 15,000 items to date. Thank you to everyone who has helped make it a success!

In November, Map hosted teachers and administrators from Nassau BOCES, Northport UFSD, NYC BOE, Oceanside's Castleton Academy, Queens College, Roslyn's Hilltop Academy, Sewanhaka Endurance Program, Three Village Academy, and William Floyd's Academy and Learning Center for the annual LIAEA Conference at Brookside. LIAEA (Long Island Alternative Education Association) conferences are where alternative educators get together to share our best practices, support one another's endeavors, and celebrate alternative education. This year some of our attendees came to gather information to take back to their districts to begin the process of starting their own alternative programs!



Special shouts out to Calhoun's Rich Perry (our tech guru) for presenting a workshop on Amplifying Student Voice through Video and to our own Joe Netto for presenting a workshop on Research-based Mindfulness Curriculum for Adolescents—Learning to BREATHE.





TOYS 4 TOTS

NASSAU UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER



Thank you to all BMUST members who donated an abundance of toys for our Toys for Tots program! Your generosity is greatly appreciated. As a result of your good will, BMUST members were able to enliven the spirits of sick children at Nassau University Medical Center in East Meadow, New York. our very own Henry Dircks masqueraded as Santa and cheerfully greeted the young children who looked up from their hospital beds in astonishment. BMUST members distributed toys to a variety of locations at the hospital complex. Thank you, also, to the BMUST volunteers who made this effort possible. We very much appreciate the gift of your time and talent.

-Bruce Reed, Local Do's Editor



MAMS "RAMILY" OFF TO A STRONG START

BY LISA SHAPIRO (MERRICK AVE M.S.), LOCAL DO'S WRITER

If Scrooge needs a lesson in spreading good cheer, a visit to Merrick Avenue would set him on the right path! However, it wouldn't hurt him to bundle up as the new heating system seems to be preparing us for the frigid winter temperatures that have already started flirting with us. We know...the system has kinks...

The SADD club, led by Erin Yaltzindeg, has been running a holiday coat drive for community members in need of some assistance. The International Buddy Club, headed by Denise Schleith, has also been collecting eyeglasses to be sent to Puerto Rico in an effort to support those still caught in throes of the aftermath of Hurricane Maria. In addition, the International Buddy Club of MAMS, along with Calhoun, made gingerbread houses. These were delivered along with the toys BMUST collected to children currently being treated at Nassau County Medical Center.

Natural Helpers held a bake sale which raised money to be donated to Mercy First (formerly known as Merrick House). Funds will be used to buy holiday gifts for the children currently living there.

We also hope that we are able to add a little bit of love to the children of Jessica Cimmino with the delivery of two beautiful dresses for her daughters. The holiday season can be difficult for many, and maybe, just maybe, this will make it a little easier on them. We teamed up with Grand Avenue M.S. who also will be donating to Jessica's family. We all have a special place in our hearts for the entire Cimmino family.

A few of our untenured teachers survived their observations with Mr. DeTommaso, so what better timing to celebrate than at our holiday party which was held at The Meetball Place in Farmingdale on December 15th. It was a great showing and a change of pace after a few years of doing a "Halfway There"

party. Great job to the Sunshine Committee for organizing this!

With the finish line to the holiday break in sight, the faculty and staff has also been "Elfin'" each other; leaving anonymous gifts in each other's rooms and then requesting the chain not be broken by passing on small gifts to two other colleagues. The Secret Snowmen were revealed at a dessert buffet on Friday, December 22nd. I think this building really has figured out how to get a jump start on the holidays (as well as those few extra pounds that we will wish away with our New Year's Resolutions).

On that note, on behalf of the RAMily, we wish nothing but love, good health and happiness and for 2018!!



SAVE THE DATE
BELLMORE-MERRICK CHSD
COUNCIL OF PTA'S
FOUNDERS' DAY

PLEASE JOIN US FOR AN
EVENING OF DINING & AWARDS
MONDAY, MARCH 12, 2018

COCKTAIL HOUR: 6:00 PM
DINNER IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING
(CASH BAR)

THE CORAL HOUSE CATERING HALL
BALDWIN NY
(MILBURN AVE & MERRICK ROAD)

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As a show of thanks to the more than 600,000 NYSUT members that comprise this labor union, NYSUT Member Benefits will once again be holding our annual Member Appreciation Month celebration in February 2018.

Special prize drawings will be held each day of the month. To be eligible to win, you must be a member of our voluntary MAP Alert email service.

Sign up any time through the end of February 2018 to be eligible to win... but if you join MAP by January 31, 2018, you'll have the most chances to win!

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