BMUST SOLIDARITY!
BMUST WELCOME BACK PARTY

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“GRATITUDE IN SERVICE”

BY ROB WALSH,

BMUST PRESIDENT

I would like my first Message from the President to be a message of thanks. Thank you all for your kind words of support and encouragement and for entrusting me with the presidency. I do not take this position, nor its responsibilities, lightly. While working on your behalf, I will work tirelessly to show you that your trust in me has not been misplaced. As I mentioned on opening day, there are some big shoes to fill. The BMUST presidents who have come before me – most recently Louis DeFilippo, Rick Hamilton, Mike Dolber and Mark Steinberg were excellent leaders and strong unionists. They left us with a great contract, built strong relationships with both the administration and the community and helped to assemble one of the best faculties around. It will be my job, our job – for I cannot do this without you, to fortify and strengthen the contract, to maintain the excellent relationships that have been fostered and to ensure that you are able to do what you do best, what you love to do – teach.

You have elected a strong and seasoned executive board. Nobody has a better understanding of our contract or is a better negotiator of that contract than First Vice President Peter Brideson. Second Vice President Bill Morris has more energy and great ideas than anyone I have had the pleasure of served alongside. BMUST Treasurer Brad Seidman does an amazing job keeping our fiscal house in order. Head building representatives - Heather Castellano, Carolyn Condenzio, Brian DeGaetano, Jason Elias, Geisha Kwiatkowski, Amanda Myles-McAnally have the most difficult job in this union and they do it exceptionally well. The President of the retirees, Sharon Wisla, and the President of the paraprofessional unit, Cynthia Leung do a wonderful job of representing their constituents and add vital voices to the conversation and debate during our Board of Trustees meetings.

Although we have only had three meetings thus far, it is clear that you have elected a dedicated and engaged collection of building representatives. Our building representatives play a vital role in the running of our union within each building and their time and energy spent on our behalf is much appreciated. The final group of people that deserve our thanks are those who serve on our many committees and give so generously of their time to represent each of us and our interests (often at the end of a long day of work). I would especially like to thank the chairs of those committees who schedule meetings, keep minutes and report back to the Board of Trustees and the Representative Assembly.

Thanks to Bruce Reed for his time and energy putting together our outstanding Local Do’s newsletter. Thanks to our amazing secretary, Meg Hirsch, without whom I would, quite literally, be lost. I would also like to thank a number of folks with whom I have had the pleasure of working alongside for many years, folks who have had a great impact on me during my nearly 20 years of serving in BMUST and who are no longer sitting at the table with me. BMUST is stronger because of you and your work on our behalf.
Finally, thanks to all of you for welcoming me into your buildings and faculty rooms. I have really enjoyed the opportunity to chat about BMUST and union issues, teaching and the challenges we are facing in the classroom. As I said on opening day, your issue, contractual or not, is our issue. I cannot promise to be able to tell you what you would like to hear, but I can promise you that you will be heard.

John F. Kennedy said it best, “as we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.” I hope you all have an outstanding 2019 – 2020 school year - a school year full of opportunities for growth for both you and your students.

In Solidarity,
Rob

“A GARDEN GROWS IN BROOKSIDE!”

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

Greetings from Meadowbrook Road!

At Brookside we have an abundance of courtyards! Over the past few years, the one by the auditorium has been transformed into the Brookside Garden. What began with a grant for a greenhouse slowly became a well-developed nursery, and like all good community gardens, it is the culmination of many community members pitching in: nurse Darlene Boden; Science teachers Mary Sweeney and Martha DiGiovanna, Social Studies teacher Tiffany Rzempoluch, and Health/PE teacher Karin McMahon; MAP husbands Bob Ellinghaus, Brian DiGiovanna, and Ed Boden; Eagle Scout Ryan Simmons; the community gardeners at Rosemary Kennedy School and St. Francis Episcopal Church; and Mrs. Sweeney’s Environmental Science class.

Last year, Mrs. Sweeney’s class used the garden to learn about photosynthesis, evolution, genetics, and biodiversity. They grew dozens of plants from seeds, heirloom varieties that Mary says will “breed true.” They then collected seeds from some of them to see how the same heirloom plants can grow again. As a result of this project, students learned how to plan, grow, plant, and harvest, developing skills that Mary trusts “will go forth with them for the rest of their lives.”

The garden, whose produce goes to the Community Cupboard, plays a role in a Service Learning program that includes reading Paul Fleischman’s Seed Folks, a story about how an unplanned community garden changes a neighborhood. On a windy day this past spring, we videotaped the garden being planted with the help and supervision of Mary and Tiffany. (We sped it up--I promise.) Perhaps you’ll recognize some faces!

http://msshersenglishpage.weebly.com/map-happenings.html

Best regards,
Laura
“ENDURING ACTS OF CHARITY”

BY LINU CHACKO (MEPHAM H.S.),
LOCAL DO'S STAFF WRITER

THIS IS MEPHAM!

September brought lots of pride and patriotism to the halls of Mepham High School!

First, September 11th provided an opportunity for reflection and respect for those lost 18 years ago, and those who have, and continue to serve our country. Mepham is fortunate to have students and teachers who continually find special ways to honor our loved ones and our nation.

Current Mepham 10th grader, Nicholas Carrano created a 9/11 Memorial Garden and gifted it to his elementary school, Park Avenue. Carrano designed a Peace Pole with “peace” written in 12 languages, surrounded by American flags and flowering plants.

12th grader, Stephen Arcese, created a beautiful U. S. flag out of steel and donated the item to Mepham H.S.. Room 326 is its proud home, where students and staff can view and reflect on American pride.

Mepham will continue its tradition in setting up the 5th Annual Flag Field of Honor on the front lawn. The stunning display is set up by the seniors, led by Ms. Dennis and Mr. Patten, and waves proudly from 10/27 through 12/9.

Rounding out the first month of school was Mepham Pride! Spirit week was September 23 through 27th, and faculty and students displayed their spirit in pjs, camouflage, and even their favorite band/artist t-shirts! Friday, September 27th, everyone wore their Mepham gear as we celebrated Pep Rally and all our fall athletes. We were treated to performances by the band and Skull and Bones drama members.

This is Mepham!

Have a great school year, everyone!
“RAMILY SPIRIT”

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

The school year at MAMS has gotten off to a great start. Our new seventh graders are settling in nicely, as well as a number of new staff members who seem like they have always been part of the RAM-ily.

Another enjoyable Pep Rally was hosted outside on the turf, complete with beautiful weather. Staff and students love nothing more than a dress up day and October has boasted not one, but two Spirit Weeks. The first one was hosted by the Student Council, the second by SADD, asking students to pledge to be drug free during Red Ribbon Week.

Merrick Avenue Middle School faculty and staff proudly came out as allies in support of our students who are part of the LGBTQ community by wearing shirts conveying positive messages to let them know they are safe and supported during our first Ally Day. Our PRIDE Club has gotten off the ground and is currently working on programs for faculty and students in an effort to educate everyone on issues and concerns that are impacting the community, primarily that of mental health. Our goal is to continue to foster an environment of respect and inclusiveness. Love is love…

During the week of October 12th to the 19th, Roland Clark’s 7th grade English class was the featured classroom in Newsday’s Kidsday section. The class submitted articles ranging from topics covering the BMCHSD Community Cupboard, a celebrity interview with “The Cake Boss” Buddy Valastro, and a trip to the new Hudson Yards in Manhattan.

Last but not least, MAMS would like to extend a warm welcome to our new principal, Katelyn Dunn, and our new assistant principal, Kate Caporusso.

We look forward to an amazing school year.

“GRAND HAPPENINGS”

BY STACI PEKUSIC (GRAND AVE M.S.), LOCAL DO’S WRITER

Fall is in full swing at Grand Avenue.

Here are some highlights of our year so far:

The entire school came outside on October 18th, a beautiful and sunny Friday afternoon for our Pep Rally on the turf. This event was a showcase of the enormous talent and dedication of our coaches, teachers, and staff.

During the week of October 21st, the PTA sponsored the annual Scholastic Book Fair in the auditorium. All students had the opportunity to browse and purchase titles with their English classes.

Red Ribbon Week took place the week of October 28th. Activities included a bake sale, distribution of red pencils and ribbons, banner signing, and an assembly. Thank you to Pia Santodonato for organizing these events.

Finally, a “shout-out” to English teacher Rebecca Levy for being named New York State English Educator of Excellence for 2019. Great job!

HELPING HAND
This past September the Merrick Street Fair and Calhoun’s Concert Choir kicked off the festivities with their performance of the Star Spangled Banner. This is a wonderful tradition and they sounded great. The Rock Band had an incredible performance! They had a multi-song set and they got the crowd dancing and cheering. We look forward to seeing them perform at our football games and other venues this year!

Challenge Day at Calhoun is such a powerful day. It is a day of empathy building and a day where students have a truly unique opportunity to understand that they are not alone. “Cross the Line,” one of the most impactful moments of the day, helps students to see that no matter what is going on in their lives, other people have also been through the same circumstances. It is also an enlightening day for students to see what their peers may be struggling with and to look past the surface and show kindness rather than judgment. Teachers use the opportunity to talk to their students about the day and what it meant to them. For many years it has been a positive experience.

Congratulations to Sonia Sarju, a Senior, who is one of 14 students across Long Island to be accepted into the prestigious Partners for Future program at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. Sonia’s ASR teacher, Mrs. Christine Boyce, and her AP Biology teacher, Mrs. Kim Lascarides, were invited to meet with Sonia’s mentor and tour the laboratory during the program’s opening reception. Established by Dr. James Watson in 1990, Partners for the Future provides an opportunity for talented Long Island high school students to have hands-on experience in biomedical research at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. This is an extraordinary opportunity for Sonja and Calhoun looks forward to her work.

Congratulations to Katie Magliaro who was honored as the Youth Advocate of the Year receiving the Mary Margaret Quinn Youth Advocacy Award from SANYS. We are so proud of how she advocates for her needs here at Calhoun and we are so proud she was honored at the county level.

Calhoun Kickline is hosting their annual Kickline Clinic on November 9th. The clinic is offered to Bellmore-Merrick students grades K-8, who are interested in learning Varsity level dance technique and registration is due by November 1st.
MUST MEMBERS AT THE
MAKING STRIDES AGAINST BREAK CANCER WALK 10/20/19

Thank you to all who supported this worthy cause!
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