

LOCAL DO'S



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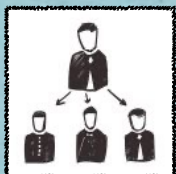
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“BMUST SUPPORT”
ROB WALSH, BMUST PRESIDENT

DEAR COLLEAGUES,

I hope this note finds you, your families, and loved ones in good health and spirits. It has been a great start to the new school year, but it has not been without its challenges. Our hearts continue to go out to the Farmingdale community for their unimaginable loss. I am incredibly proud of the BMUST community, which raised nearly \$3,000 to support the families of the band director **Gina Pellettiere** and the retired teacher **Beatrice Ferrari**.

On October 7th, we awoke to the news of a horrific, terroristic attack on Israeli civilians that killed over 1,000 innocent men, women and children in the most barbaric of ways. It was an attack a magnitude greater than the attack on the United

I often stress the importance of self-care and supporting one another. The events mentioned above underscore the importance of doing so. I would like to remind you that one of the benefits that became available with the July changes to NYSHIP is the option to access telehealth mental health services. Through the LiveHealth Online app, you can connect with a board-certified doctor, psychiatrist, psychologist, or licensed therapist for a telephone or video consultation. I understand that the app may not be the easiest to navigate, which is why BMUST is actively exploring alternative, affordable



**Rob Walsh,
President, BMUST**

For the 2023 - 2024 school year, NYSUT has made it a priority to educate its members on the challenges facing our Tier 6 colleagues. BMUST will follow suit. We will begin by making sure our building representatives have a good grasp on the issue, and then we will be reaching out to all of our members.

States on September 11, 2001. Let us unequivocally denounce this unprovoked attack on Israeli civilians by Hamas. Our thoughts are with those among us directly or indirectly impacted by this attack. I fear that there will be many more innocent lives lost in the Middle East in the days and weeks to come and hope for a swift end to the hostilities.

For the 2023 - 2024 school year, NYSUT has made it a priority to educate its members on the challenges facing our Tier 6 colleagues. BMUST will follow suit. We will begin by making sure our building representatives have a good grasp on the issue, and then we will be reaching out to all of our members. As I mentioned at our opening session, change will not come quickly. It took nearly 24 years to reduce the burden that Tier 4 placed on teachers. It will take time, and a great deal of effort, to do the same for Tier 6.

options for our members. If you encounter difficulties with the app, please reach out, and we will do our best to assist.

Finally, for those of you nearing retirement or those interested in learning best practices for retirement preparation, we have scheduled a ZOOM meeting with our retirement guru, **Hank Sessa**. Hank will host a ZOOM session on Monday, December 4th, from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm.

It is hard to believe that Thanksgiving Day is right around the corner. As we enter the holiday season, please continue to take good care of yourselves, your families and to look after your colleagues.

In Solidarity,

Rob

“SPIRITED CELEBRATIONS AT GAMS”

BY KIM FRIEDMAN (GRAND AVE M.S.), LOCAL DO'S WRITER

It's finally Fall and Grand Avenue is back in the swing of things!

The Foreign Language department has kicked off the year with an amazing, interactive research project! **Mrs. McDonnell's** 7th grade Italian classes

viewed travel videos that were made by her previous students, who are now in 8th grade. They then researched popular Roman travel sites in the library with the help of **Mrs. Paplawski**, the library-media specialist.

Mrs. Paplawski taught the students proper research skills and techniques to enhance their knowledge and collect the best information possible. The three day lesson culminated with students filming their own videos of the places they researched in Rome and talking about themselves in Italian in their videos. Everyone learned so much as they “traveled” to Rome!



Everyone at Grand was excited for the return of Fall Spirit Week, organized by our athletic coordinator **Ben Fisher**! Each day of the week was designated as a special dress up day for staff and students, such as ‘NY Team Pride Day’, the ‘Wear Pink for Breast Cancer Day’ and the ‘Grand Avenue Colors Day.’ The week culminated with the annual Spirit Rally, which included performances by Grand Voices, as well as the cheerleading and kickline teams. The 7th and 8th grades competed in various games, contests and activities to show their Grand Avenue spirit! It was a fun-filled afternoon for our Grand family!

As a tradition at Grand Avenue, the Students Against Destructive Decisions Club, led by **Julia Motley** and **Dr. Rachel Aguilar**, hosted Red Ribbon Week in late October. Red Ribbon Week empowers teachers, parents and students to start a conversation, and to make a pledge that encourages kids to live drug free and helps them to succeed. The club organized a week full of events which focuses on positive choices our students can make. During the week, there were a variety of activities which highlighted the SADD Club’s message. Such activities included decorating the school with positive chalk messages in front of the building and signs throughout the building, an assembly where the Drama Club put on a play about the risks of drinking and drug use, and a Bake Sale sponsored by the SADD Club. The events culminated with a Halloween Costume Contest and fundraising event, with a \$1 donation encouraged for participation. It was an educational, inspirational and FUN week!



"IN SOLIDARITY AT MEPHAM"

BY EDWARD GROSSKREUZ (MEPHAM H.S.), LOCAL DO'S WRITER

United in Our Support

#carsynstrong @Mepham

Mepham was awash in yellow on a day in mid-September given to raising awareness of childhood cancer while supporting freshman student Carsyn Volpe. A successful fundraiser selling yellow-ribbon printed T-shirts collected money sent to help the Volpe family as well as childhood cancer research. The students pulled out all the stops in making sure they sported yellow for the day.



Spirit Week Overcomes the Deluge

Despite the capricious weather, the 2023 Spirit Week was a hit! Depending on the day, students were dressed as Barbie & Ken, cowpokes, Wall Street execs, hippies, residents of Margaritaville, sports fans, or the cast of *Jersey Shore*. Even though Pirate Fest was canceled due to the inclement weather, Spirit Week ended with a Homecoming king and queen and a close football game.

Mepham Comes Out for National Coming Out Day

Wednesday, October 11th marked the annual National Coming Out Day. Multiple Mepham groups came together in a show of allyship and support for the LGBTQ+ community at Mepham and abroad. GSA hosted an after-school reading of the play *The Laramie Project* and handed out pride and trans pride ribbons. A World of Difference and Leos hosted a rainbow bake sale, sending all proceeds to LIGALY. Senior Student Leaders adorned the entrances to the building with positive messages in vibrant rainbow colors. It was moving to see so many groups band together to recognize this day.



**“CALHOUN'S WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT:
EVERYONE HAS A PLACE”
BY BETH FINNERAN (CALHOUN H.S.), LOCAL DO'S WRITER**

What makes Calhoun so unique is that everyone has a place and something special to offer. This was truly evident this month with the diverse activities both in and out of the classroom. The standout this quarter has been the COORE program whose coffee cart is much appreciated by caffeine crazed faculty members who actively support the COORE students in their entrepreneurial project. COORE-FEE has been a big hit with our building for our second year post-COVID. The students are working hard both at the counter, in the kitchen, and at the cash register. It has been a true team effort and we are happy to slowly



integrate with the building. We are now offering to host events ("The Johnson Special") or attend events to open shop Periods 1,2,4,5,8 during our class times. Looking forward to more successes and opportunities to collaborate in the near future!

Skudin' Surf has been a new addition to our COORE Program this year, where each of our classes have access to surfing lessons for three consecutive weeks at Long Beach. Crazy, right?! Our students have been loving their time on the ocean or in the sand, and the



memories have been priceless. There is something for everyone at Calhoun. In early October, our student leaders showcased a wide variety of extracurricular activities at our annual Club Fair. With the guidance of their very dedicated club advisors,



students put in a lot of effort to create visually appealing booths and were eager to recruit new members. During their free periods, teachers and students alike visited the booths, many of which even had free giveaways to help promote the clubs. The vast variety of clubs at Calhoun make Calhoun seem more like a college campus than a high school. Clubs range to support students' academic to creative to career interests. In addition, other clubs focus on community service, mental health, or just plain fun. For example, academic clubs include the science club, mathletes, and philosophy club, just to name a few. DECCA is a club for business and marketing. Frisbee Club is a very fun club where students can let loose on Fridays. One new and increasingly popular club is the growth mindset club. Many clubs at Calhoun were initiated by students and would not be possible without faculty support.

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Calhoun prides itself on helping students expand their experiences and embrace the world. Our World Language teachers recently inducted students into the World Languages Department Honor Society. It was a special moment to witness **Ms. Kefaliakos**, **Ms. Dand**, and **Ms. DeLuca** perform the oaths in the languages they teach. We are proud of our language program and the dedication of our teachers.



Speaking of impressive performances, **Mr. Salerno's** On Tour group wowed us with their first Evening of Improv. We are eagerly looking forward to their upcoming performance of Shakespeare's "The Winter's Tale." It's always a joy to see our students' talents shine on stage. And we know it takes a lot behind the scenes to make that happen.

At Calhoun, we believe in making a difference in our community. **Sue Litwin**, **Jennifer Pefanis**, **Jeff Haruthunian**, and **Matt Kramer** joined together to run a half marathon (13.1 miles) and raise over \$1,800 to fight Multiple Sclerosis.

A few other examples of how the Calhoun community stepped up to help others are: The Calhoun Key Club organized a Sock Drive for Veterans, as well as, a supply drive for a domestic violence shelter. The Music Boosters baked goodies

every Friday for a bake sale to support the families of the Farmingdale teachers who were tragically killed in the recent bus accident. Our Football team volunteered at the Merrick Fair on Sunday to raise awareness and donations for Sudden Cardiac Arrest in Athletes.

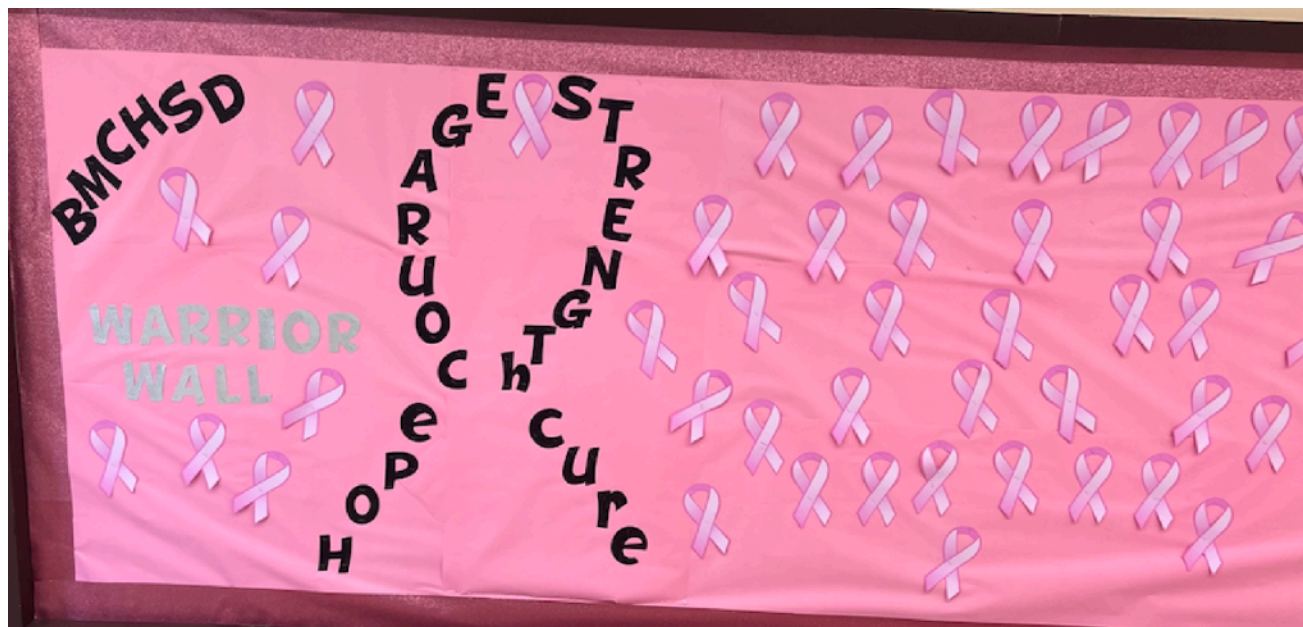


Finally, a special welcome to the newest member of the Calhoun community, Aleesia, **Michelle Battafarano's** baby girl!



"CARE AND GUIDANCE AT M.A.P."

BY LAURA SHERIDAN (M.A.P.) & REBECCA MENACHEM (PREP ACADEMY)
LOCAL DO'S STAFF WRITERS



It is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and **Karin McMahon** (Phys Ed) has created a Warrior Wall in the bulletin board outside the Community Cupboard where members of Brookside can celebrate those who have been diagnosed with breast cancer. Friday, October 27th, will be a Jeans/Pinkout day at Brookside; those who wish to wear jeans may make a \$5 donation. The funds will be donated to The Susan G. Komen Foundation. Everyone was able to write on the pink ribbons to draw attention to the loved ones who are fighting or who have fought this terrible disease (No donation was needed for this).



Once again, **Emily Abma's** Science room was abuzz with student activity. On September 30th, PREP and MAP students were invited to tie-dye articles of clothing in celebration of school spirit. Students and staff worked together to create different tie-dye color palettes and patterns. Working closely with staff allowed the students to receive more personalized

guidance and support, Students developed important life skills, such as communication, problem-solving, leadership, and teamwork. But most importantly, fun was had by all!

“ CREATIVE ENDEAVORS AT JFK”

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

The Art of Scratchboard

Scratchboard is a monochromatic drawing medium, characterized by a board coated with a layer of fine white or silver clay, subsequently covered with a layer of India ink. Initially, the drawing surface is entirely black. Artists create their drawings by using an etching tool to scratch lines through the ink. The more lines they scratch, the more detailed and brighter the artwork becomes. To produce scratchboard art, artists must employ an etching tool to remove the black ink from the board. In **Taylor Lodespoto's** Studio Art class, students delved into this artistic element of Line. Through this project, they honed their skills in various line-making techniques, enabling them to achieve a range of shading effects. As a result, students were able to craft lifelike depictions of animals on scratchboard!



HOPE Club Butterfly Garden

Our JFK students have embraced the opportunity to immerse themselves in nature, combining their passion with their commitment! Under the guidance of **Britt Norris**, the Hope Club students have devoted their time and effort to establish a captivating butterfly garden. This engaging project not only imparts environmental knowledge but also nurtures a deep affection for the diversity of life. This collaboration with their peers helps students to acquire diverse perspectives, knowledge, and experiences. We look forward to more collaboration in the months to come!

Esports Open Play Event

On Thursday, the Cougar Esports Team, lead by **Coach James Alford**, hosted their first ever Open Play event in the GI room after school. Students played Super

Smash Bros, Mario Kart, and other games on the Nintendo Switch console, showing off their gaming skills and competing in a fun environment. The Cougar Esports Team competes online in the High School Esports League and provides opportunities to play their favorite games against students across the country.

“ADVISORY PERIOD COMES TO MAMS”

BY BRETT SCHWARTZ, LOCAL DO'S WRITER, (M.A.M.S.),

From kicking off a new school-wide advisory period to eating cookies for a good cause, the students and teachers of MAMS have been busy showing what it means to be a member of the “Ramily.” The affectionate term for our Rams family captures that extra something special that makes MAMS such a great place for kids and adults. This is not to say, however, that we don’t know how to be competitive, too - just walk into the auditorium after school to find the MAMS Esports team battling it out in *Super Smash Brothers!*

Advisory Period

Thursday, October 12th was a fantastic day for MAMS, and the start of a very special addition to the culture of the building. As the kickoff to our new Advisory Period - through which students meet with a small group of peers twice per month and build connections - each classroom was buzzing with hilarious ice breakers, discussing “huddle questions” about feeling comfortable and supported, and getting to know one another in a more relaxed, informal environment. It was a terrific first session of what is sure to be a key part of the Ramily culture.

Honor Flight Long Island:

On September 29th, Honor Flight Long Island took a group of 45 veterans from WWII, the Korean War and the Vietnam War to Washington, DC to be recognized and honored for their service. Since MAMS International Buddy Club didn't have their first meeting until Tuesday, October 3, **Denise Schleith**'s 8th grade French students and some students from last year's International Buddy Club made cards for each veteran to receive during "mail call" on their trip. A few International Buddy Club members made signs to welcome back the veterans to MacArthur Airport. Due to the inclement weather and the flight being delayed, students were unable to be at the airport late Friday evening to welcome back the veterans. **Denise Schleith** was there to represent MAMS along with other groups and community members. News 12 Long Island reporter Virginia Huie was also on the trip and there was a surprise performance from the University of Maryland choir. It was a great day for our veterans to be honored!





Pride Club

Pride Club, advised by **Jenna Starr**, sponsored Come Out as an LGBTQ+ Ally Day. On October 11th, faculty and staff showed their support by wearing rainbow clothing and shirts with positive messages.

MAMS eSports Team

Daniel Stiglitz's MAMS eSports team started off their season with online tournaments of games like chess, *Super Smash Brothers* and *Rocket League*. They also started their in-person open for students to come and compete in person and meet other kids to play various games. Envious teachers walking by were left looking for an extra controller to relive their own video game glory days!



Be A Good Cookie Merrick Campaign

The hallways of MAMS were extra sweet on September 15th, as the school teamed up with the Cookies for Kids' Cancer organization and went "Gold" to support pediatric cancer awareness. Our popup cookie sales for students and staff raised a significant amount of money for the campaign.

Hispanic Heritage Month

Erin Yaltzindeg's Spanish classes learned about the background and history of Hispanic Heritage Month. Each class learned about a specific group of people such as musicians, artists, and other notable figures and created a class mural representing these famous individuals!

Meanwhile, **Karen Zdrodowski's** Spanish classes learned about the history and significance of the traditional Mexican game "La Lotería." Each class had the opportunity to try their luck to win by playing la lotería. Students used authentic lotería cards and dried beans as their tokens, just like in Mexico!

Cheer and Kickline Wear Pink

On October 12th, the MAMS Cheer and Kickline squads, led by **Brianna Replogle** and **Jennifer Verwys**, wore pink to support Breast Cancer Awareness Month at the 7th grade football game.

8th Grade Girls Soccer

Congratulations to **Nora Sheppard's** 8th grade girls soccer team! The team of incredible athletes remains undefeated as of this writing. Way to go, team!





OCTOBER 15, 2023

JONES BEACH, NY

MAKING STRIDES AGAINST BREAST CANCER WALK



Back to school can mean a lot of different things:

- *Starting a new career*
- *Planning for the future*
- *Balancing work and home life*
- *Making difficult decisions*
- *Enjoying your final year before retirement*
- *Recalling memories of a proud career*

Regardless of what you might be doing this fall, **NYSUT Member Benefits** offers a variety of endorsed programs and services that could help make you as prepared as possible for whatever the new school year may throw at you.



Whether you are looking to save money, protect your family, or plan for the future, **NYSUT Member Benefits** is a great place to start. With dozens of endorsed insurance, legal, financial, shopping, travel, and discount programs, you are certain to find something of interest that could benefit you or your loved ones.

And speaking of savings, the **Member Benefits Discounts & Deals** program utilizes the nation's largest private discount network to offer all NYSUT members (both in-service and retiree) exclusive access to savings of up to 50% at 850,000 locations -- including more than 21,200 New York State deals. If you have not already done so, head over to mbdeals.enjoymydeals.com to create your account with your NYSUT ID number, preferred email address, and password.

You'll then be eligible to save on restaurant dine-in or take-out, flowers and gift baskets, Bose electronics, clothing and shoes, oil changes and vehicle maintenance, sporting events, hotels and flights, car rentals, theme parks, movie tickets, and much more. Members are encouraged to download the MB Discounts & Deals mobile app for the best user experience with this program.

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