

# LOCAL DO'S

## SPRINGING INTO ACTION



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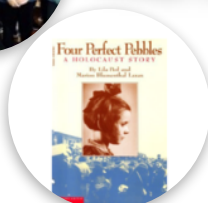
**EXPANDING HORIZONS AT CALHOUN, pg. 5**



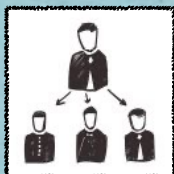
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## "UNION SERVICE" ROB WALSH, BMUST PRESIDENT

**MY UNION SIBLINGS,**

**Happy Spring!!**

I hope this edition of BMUST's Local Do's finds you and your families doing well.

With spring comes a new season of celebration and gratitude. I want to start by thanking and congratulating our **Founder's Day** winners. Your commitment to the students and families of Bellmore and Merrick is inspiring. I also want to thank our building PTA liaisons, **Nikole DeLuca, Mary Haslbauer, Terry Negron, Josephine Parlagreco, Ayoka Primus, Jackie Rothschild, and Jenn Verwys**. Their service on behalf of our union and their assistance in maintaining our important connection to the PTA's has been crucial. A special

the classroom, and we're honored to have worked alongside you. We look forward to celebrating with you at the **BMUST Dinner Dance** on June 20th!



**Rob Walsh,  
President, BMUST**

If I may have a moment of personal privilege, I want to thank two giants who will be "retiring" from the BMUST Board of Trustees (BOT). **Susan Grippa** has been the president of the Paraprofessional unit during my tenure as president, and her leadership has been outstanding. Thank you, Susan, for the guidance and council you have provided to me, to the BMUST community, and to your fellow paraprofessionals.

**Congratulations to our eleven retirees (eight teachers and three paraprofessionals) who will embark on the next phase of their journey in just a few short months. To Darlene Boden, John Boyle, Paul Cirino, Colleen Conroy-Silverman, Michael D'Addio, Cheryl Gitlitz, Susan Grippa, Robert Kaefer, Helmut Schleith, Deborah Slutsky, and Denise Vono.**

thanks to **Carolyn Condenzio**, our BMUST liaison with the PTA Council, for attending monthly meetings on our behalf. Finally, let's give a round of applause to **Ed Tumminelli** and the **Calhoun High School Rock Band**, a.k.a **Stifler's Mom**, for playing an incredible pre-game set that got the night started off on the right foot.

Congratulations to our eleven retirees (eight teachers and three paraprofessionals) who will embark on the next phase of their journey in just a few short months. To **Darlene Boden, John Boyle, Paul Cirino, Colleen Conroy-Silverman, Michael D'Addio, Cheryl Gitlitz, Susan Grippa, Robert Kaefer, Helmut Schleith, Deborah Slutsky, and Denise Vono**—we say thank you! Your dedication and service have made a significant impact on the lives of the students with whom you have worked in

I also want to express my thanks and gratitude to **Sharon Wisla**, who has been the president of the Bellmore-Merrick Retired Teachers Association (BMRTA) for 15 years. Her wisdom and guidance have been invaluable to me throughout my presidency. Although we will miss the presence of these two powerful leaders and unionists, we are eternally grateful for their service, which has made our union stronger and more effective.

As we approach the end of the school year, please continue to take good care of yourselves and to look after one another. Thank you for all that you do for the betterment of our students, our community, and our union.

In Solidarity,  
**Rob**



## “CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENTS AT GAMS”

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



There have been many interesting events at Grand Avenue lately!

Our spring musical, *Newsies*, performed by Grand Avenue's Drama Club, was a smash hit! Under the direction of **Ms. Levy**, assisted by **Ms. Levine**, **Mrs. Cantwell**, and **Mr. Giordano**, the Drama Club's production was another huge success! The creativity of the sets certainly showcased the talents of the Drama Club members! Ms. Levy puts her heart and soul into all her productions and this performance was one for the books!

Next up, the Science Department is keeping learning interesting and fun! The Science Club, led by **Ms. Cruz** and **Mr. Langer**, have been conducting some really exciting experiments with their students. For their infamous egg drop contest, students are directed to create a contraption that is no bigger than 12 inches by 12 inches that will cushion the fall of a raw egg. The goal is to drop the contraption from a second floor window and land on a spot closest to the target without cracking the raw egg! Also, in a contest involving diet coke and mentos, students are directed to make a contraption that will cause the diet coke to shoot up as high as possible upon putting in the mentos. Sounds like a blast!



Ms. Cruz also just returned from the *South Asian American Women's Association Science Competition* this Tuesday, with her Science Research Club. As a Board of Advisor, she assisted her entrants behind the scenes, as they prepared to showcase their work. The two groups who competed placed first and fourth (and received an honorable mention). The two groups, along with the rest of the Science Research team, now set their sights to the *Long Island Science Congress*. Good luck to them!

Students at Grand Avenue used their creativity to participate in the World Language Department's annual district-wide poster contest. The contest is part of a celebration of **World Language Week**. Students submitted entries in French, Italian, Mandarin and Spanish to compete in the poetry, essay and comic strip categories. Students also had the opportunity to express their artistic vision by creating posters illustrating this year's theme: "*Language is a Path to...*" Students in **Mr. Doherty** and **Mrs. O'Conner's** classes were even district-wide poster winners!

Congratulations to all who participated!



## “ADVANCING TOWARD EXCELLENCE AT MEPHAM”

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

### AP Capstone Caps Off the Year

On Wednesday, April 20th, the AP Seminar sophomores presented the second of their performance tasks, the individual multimedia presentation, in a full-day symposium to their classmates, teachers, and multiple members of Mepham's faculty who stopped by to visit. Each student presented an argument for 6–8 minutes on a self-chosen topic inspired by stimulus sources provided by the A.P. College Board. Throughout the day, students lent each other support, motivation, and guidance and the entire day was a huge success. The junior AP Research students will present their year-long research projects this week in 15-minute increments, after which time they will have successfully completed the AP Capstone program.



### Day of (No) Silence 2023

Mepham GSA, in conjunction with A World of Difference and the LEOs, is hosting its annual observance of National Day of Silence, sponsored by GLSEN. GLSEN defines Day of Silence as “a national student-led demonstration [when] LGBTQ+ students and allies all around the country—and the world—take a vow of silence to protest the harmful effects of harassment and discrimination of LGBTQ+ people in schools.” This year's theme is Rising Up, and it is inspired by the wave of anti-LGBTQ+ policies recently enacted in other states. The day will finish with a “breaking the silence” gathering and letter-writing to local representatives.



### BMB on Location in Long Beach, CA

A years-in-the-making event, the students of Bellmore-Merrick Broadcasting finally made it to California after years of pandemic-related delays. The students worked grueling hours on various challenges posed by Student Television Network, facing off with peers from broadcasting groups around the nation. While exhausting, the experience was wholly rewarding. With its newfound knowledge of the workings of STN, BMB is poised to venture to California's sunny shores for next year's competition.



## “EXPANDING HORIZONS AT CALHOUN”

BY BETH FINNERAN (CALHOUN H.S.), LOCAL DO'S WRITER

Calhoun teachers encouraged students to expand their horizons last quarter, whether it was learning about other cultures, delving deeper into a subject they love, or developing their emotional learning. **Hui Chen** and **Cara Sycoff** of the World Language department created beautiful displays representing China and Italy, respectively. Ms. Chen organized a celebration for the Lunar New Year in the school cafeteria, where Calhoun students studying Chinese taught other students and faculty how to make dumplings. Students also learned about other traditions connected to the Lunar New Year, such as the giving of red envelopes to children. Students learned how to master the art of chopsticks by using them to count Cheerios! Lots of fun was had by all participants. Students left the experience with a deeper appreciation of Chinese culture.



**Hui Chen, a teacher of Chinese, and her students leading a workshop on dumpling-making.**

The World Language teachers also highlighted the value of learning other languages with their poster contest. Students made posters emblazoned with slogans such as “*Language is the Path to Unity*” and



**Alyssa Sieber (Spec Ed) & Daytona Melo (Science), celebrate the Lunar New Year.**



**Ms. Chen's students created a beautiful display for the Chinese Lunar New Year.**



**Cara Sycoff's beautiful display motivates the learning of Italian culture.**

“*Language is the Path to Peace.*” Not only did the Language teachers encourage students to participate, but they also rallied the faculty to join in by voting. World Language teachers also committed time judging the finalists. In addition to the poster category, there were essay and poem categories. These contests, events, and display cases are just some of the many ways our World Language Department demonstrates their dedication to Calhoun.

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**Sharissa Khan**, Social Studies teacher, and **Sean Formato**, English teacher, supervised the Model UN Club. In March, Ms. Khan and Mr. Formato took their Model UN students to the United Nations in New York City to participate in an International Model United Nations Conference. Students became ambassadors, learned about current global issues, and then deliberated with other student ambassadors from around the world to create workable solutions to current world challenges.



**Calhoun Model UN Students pose in NYC with Mr. Formato and Ms. Khan.**

The Guidance department also encouraged students and staff to reflect on and prioritize their own emotional wellness and to reach out to others to prevent bullying and suicide during *P.S. I Love You Day*. The Guidance department arranged numerous fun and inspiring activities to remind students that they are valued and to let them know of the many resources in the Guidance department. Each student was greeted at the door as they entered school and given a card with an inspirational quote. Throughout the day, the Calhoun Colt mascot visited classrooms along with some guidance staff to give out special treats. In the hallway outside the cafeterias, there were tables with resources so students could learn who to contact if they needed help. This event is just one of the many ways the Guidance department is working hard to counter the emotional health crisis facing adolescents this year.



**Model UN Students' Field Trip to NYC**



**Daytona Melo** and **Dava Reischman**, advisors to the Science Club, prepared their students for the Science Olympiad at Syosset High School, where students competed in various team events that challenged not only their science knowledge, but their teamwork and innovation skills as well. The Science Club and Science Olympiad inspire students to deepen their interest in science while connecting with other students who share their passion.

The Senior Experience classes, under the guidance of **Liz Separ**, **Jason Elias**, **Tanya Cestaro**, and **Nicole DeBonis** also focused on teen mental health by using the fundraising from the Senior Experience Fashion show to support The *JED Foundation* with the goal of building up resiliency and life skills in teens in order to prevent suicide. Through the Senior Experience program, 75 students worked together with the support of faculty models to raise \$12,000 for The JED Foundation.





## “A WHOLE DIFFERENT BALL GAME AT MAP & A DAY OF BONDING AT BROOKSIDE”

BY LAURA SHERIDAN (M.A.P.), LOCAL DO'S STAFF WRITER & HEATHER LOHR (PREP ACADEMY)

On the second floor of the Brookside Building there is always a shift at the beginning of the second semester; some years it is more seismic than others. Traditionally, as soon as we wrap up mid-year Regents exams and midterms, we welcome new students to MAP. This is when students who struggled during the first semester transfer to our program (predominantly in grades 10 and 11). But in 2017 that changed. For the first time, MAP was opened up to second- semester freshmen hoping to catch up before all of ninth grade had slipped through their fingers. Normally there are few 9th graders, but this January, among the new students we welcomed many freshmen. We saw more than a 30% increase in our student

body overall, and it changes the chemistry of the program quite a lot.

Now we have an actual freshmen class and we are excited to get them on track to pass 9th grade and advance to 10th grade next year!

The **Brookside Educational Center** is a multigenerational medley, housing the BMCHSD administrative offices, the PREP Academy, the Meadowbrook Alternative Program (M.A.P.), the Twilight Program, the Electrical and HVAC/R Training Center, the BMUST Union offices, the Community Mainstreaming Associates, the AHRC program, the Parent Center, the Senior Community Service Center, and the TLC Daycare Center. One of the gifts that the PREP Academy has brought to the building is its ability to connect with everyone. This is why last week it hosted its **2nd Annual**



**Brookside Day of Bonding!** According to **Rebecca Menachem** who teaches at both PREP and MAP, “*This is an initiative to unite the students, staff, and agencies within the Brookside building as well as help the students emerge into leadership roles by running booths for the preschool children. The PREP students set up for the day by recruiting groups and agencies to run booths by staff and students alike.*” Included among the activities were a coloring station run by PREP students, a giant conversational Jenga game, a hockey station, and free water tattoos! There was a hot chocolate bar and a grilled cheese station, which were run by the PREP Academy & MAP leadership students. In the words of PREP student **Marcel Lowenstein**: “*The day of bonding was when all the people from the building participated in booths to have fun. We prepared by taping papers to the wall for the name of the booths and to show people the way to the cafe. I enjoyed playing Jenga and Ms. Pacman. I played Jenga with new friends and old friends. I almost beat the third level in Ms. Pacman. I went to the cafe. I had hot chocolate for the first time and it was delicious. I had grilled cheese and it was good. I had an amazing time at the Brookside Day of Bonding.*”

And that’s what it’s all about!

## “ THE TALENT OF GRATITUDE AT JFK”

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

Earlier this month, the wind ensemble received a visit from members of the American Legion and VFW from Merrick, Bellmore, and N. Bellmore. The purpose of the visit was to express gratitude for the upcoming performance of the wind ensemble at the Joint Expeditionary Base in VA. During the visit, the members of the American Legion and VFW shared their experiences with the students, including serving in the White House, CID, and being a part of the honor guard during President Kennedy's funeral. Additionally, they made a generous donation to the band, which would be used to provide food and snacks for the students on their trip. The donation was accepted by Richie Ippoliti, whose grandfather had served in WW2. As a token of appreciation, the wind ensemble performed a preview of their upcoming performance.



**Mrs. Scalero's** Physics class students were excitedly learning about static electricity, and they had a hands-on experience with the build-up of charges on a Van de Graaff generator, which was accompanied by lots of fun and enthusiasm, not to mention new hairdos!



JFK's Math Department wished everyone "Happy Pi Day!"



## "COURAGEOUS & STRONG AT MAMS"

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

The countdown is on to what we wish will be an endless summer and we are keeping busy!

In science: **Jennifer Verwys** and **Christina Corwin** brought their Investigation in Science classes to compete at the **SAAWA Science Fair** competition in Hicksville on March 28th. The Verwys-Corwin duo also brought their classes to the **Long Island Science Congress** on April 18th to compete in their science research fair. 28 students attended, with 13 research projects competing. Several students placed at the fair and will be honored and given a cash prize at an awards ceremony. Lots of great scientists will be making their way to the high schools, so consider this your heads up!

**Another Spirit Day?** We have many opportunities to show our spirit, whether wearing purple to honor women for *Women's History Month*, or specific team colors for *Battle of the Teams* (more on that later).

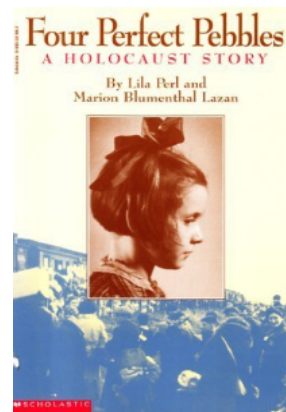
We will reprise the sports spirit theme on April 20th, since it was pointed out by true sports fan of the math department, **Allison Roubos**, that on that very day, it will be the first time since 1994 that the NY Knicks, Nets, Rangers, Islanders, and New Jersey Devils are all in the playoffs at the same time.



Who wants a cookie? In just six minutes, the *Pride Club* sold out at their first ever bake sale, raising money for the **True Colors United Foundation** which "implements innovative solutions to youth homelessness that focus on the unique experiences of LGBTQ young people." Pride is looking forward to hosting another sale with the goal of doubling their earnings while selling out in less time.

A step into the past: Holocaust Survivor, and author of *Four Perfect Pebbles*, **Marion**

**Blumenthal-Lazan** returned live on stage after some time to share her experience as a young girl during the Holocaust. Many of us have heard her story before but it always feels like the first time. What a gift for our students to see a true survivor. A testament to her tale was the level of silence during Ms. Blumenthal-Lazan's presentation: you could hear a pin drop in an auditorium full of tweens.



**Reason2Smile:** Student Council hosted a bake sale and bracelet sales during the month of March to benefit Reason2Smile. Reason2Smile is a non-profit organization that supports educational opportunities for a number of orphaned students living in Kenya. These opportunities include secondary school, trade school, college, and university. The students of the MAMS Student Council raised over \$200 to donate to a great cause.

**Merrick Strong!** The International Buddy Club had a guest speaker from the **Leukemia & Lymphoma Society** at their March 7th meeting. **Mrs. Jessica Mack**, a MAMS parent, came to speak about the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and how it offers support and services to people in the world. She spoke about her own personal experiences with leukemia & lymphoma. In addition, she donated black & gold bracelets that say "*Merrick Strong*" to our club to sell to help raise awareness and money for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Club members sold bracelets during their lunch periods March 13-15th. In addition, **Mrs. Schleith** and IBC sponsored a "Wear MAMS Gear Day" for faculty and staff. The combination of the two events raised \$570 to donate to the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

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On Tuesday, March 21st, International Buddy's Club (IBC) encouraged all students to wear crazy socks for **World Down Syndrome Day**. During the IBC meeting, the kids watched a video about students with



down syndrome all over the world speaking different languages, interacting with others, being welcomed and showing their many talents. After watching the video, the IBC discussed the importance of acceptance, how being different is beautiful, and the importance of treating others with kindness. Students decorated "crazy socks" with messages that said "*What makes you different, is what makes you beautiful*", the reasons they feel that being different is a good thing and the importance of being kind. Students hung their messages all around the building.

Anyone like to sing in the rain? Under the direction of **Mike Dlugozima, Katie Vedilago, and Jessica Ehrlich**, the thespians of MAMS put on a two night performance of *Singing in the Rain, Jr.* No washout here! Just many rave reviews.



Battle is Back! After 9 years...NINE YEARS, Battle of the Teams made its return.

On March 16th, the seventh grade teams competed in a series of field day style events, with the eighth grade competing on the following day. The excitement was palpable, with kids and faculty decked out in their team colors and head to toe sportsmanship. It was so great to see the kids come together and cheer each other on. Looking forward to the next one!

Congratulations: Three years ago, **Carly Falk** and **Sarah Norton** nominated **Dan Stiglitz** for the **2020 LIFACS Ellen Swallows Richard's Award**. This award goes to someone who the FACS department considers a "Friend of FACS." At the end of March, Sarah had the honor of presenting this award to Dan on behalf of the MAMS FACS department at the LIFACS Spring Conference, the first conference since the start of COVID.

Congrats, Dan, on being such a great friend!



*You are cordially invited to attend the  
Bellmore-Merrick United Secondary Teachers'*

# **End of Year Celebration**

*Tuesday, June 20, 2023*

*6:30 pm - 10:30 pm*

## **Westbury Manor**

*1100 Jericho Turnpike Westbury*

*\$75 per person*

*Please RSVP by May 20, 2023*



RSVP HERE

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- Providing for your family
- Purchasing a new home
- Home improvement
- Purchasing a new vehicle
- Travel and entertainment

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Mar-Apr 2023