

LOCAL DO'S

THE WINTER EDITION



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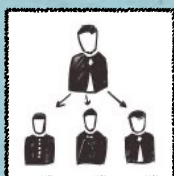
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GRAND AVENUE - KIM FRIEDMAN
MAP - LAURA SHERIDAN
MEPHAM - EDWARD GROSSKREUZ
MERRICK AVE - LISA SHAPIRO

“UNION SERVICE”
ROB WALSH, BMUST PRESIDENT

MY UNION SIBLINGS,

Greetings! I hope your 2023 has gotten off to a fantastic start. I know we cannot seem to shake this COVID, flu, RSV thing - but thank you for continuing to plow through it all.

This year is an election year for BMUST. In May, we will hold elections for the positions of President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, and Treasurer. The election of Head Building Representatives will also take place at the same time. 10 school days later, we will hold elections for

I've recently had the chance to visit each building for the first time since the pandemic began. I apologize for the delay in visiting. If we couldn't connect during my visit, please feel free to reach out to me at any time. I teach at Mephram every morning from 7:30-10:30 AM, but I am able to meet you wherever it is convenient (Mephram, your school or the BMUST office) between 11:00 AM and 3:00 PM. If you have any questions,



Rob Walsh,
President, BMUST

“This year is an election year for BMUST. In May, we will hold elections for the positions of President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, and Treasurer. The election of Head Building Representatives will also take place at the same time.”

building representatives. If you're interested in running, speak to any current elected officer or representative to learn more about the position and commitment required. Notification of the elections will be sent in March.

We have been working to update the BMUST Constitution and By-Laws for the past three years. The changes to the By-Laws were approved at the November Representative Assembly meeting. However, the entire membership must approve changes to the Constitution. We plan to hold an informational meeting for all members this spring to discuss the changes and explain the rationale. A vote to approve the changes will take place during one of the elections mentioned above.

concerns, or want to schedule a meeting, email me at president@bmust.net or call the BMUST office at 992-1068 - please know that it is never a bother. Our secretary, Meg Hirsch, is available in the office daily from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

Have a great second semester! Spring will be here before we know it. Continue to take good care of yourselves and to look after one another.

In Solidarity,

Rob



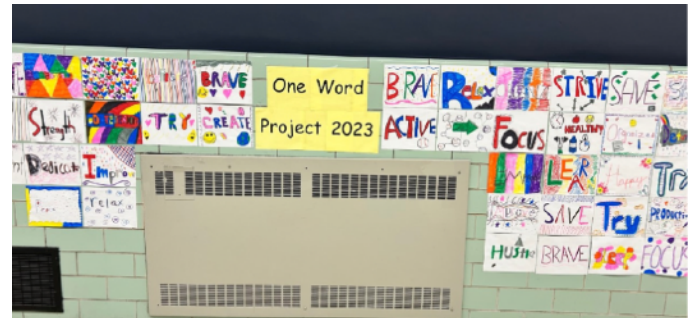
“AN EVENTFUL WINTER SEASON AT GAMS”

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

For two weeks in December, the students in **Ms. Sloane** and **Ms. Gray's** science classes followed a storyline in which they had to first create an exothermic reaction to make enough heat to help a snake egg survive as it was transported from a construction site to a lab conservatory. The second week they had to build a portable egg incubator that would allow the eggs to maintain their position during a car ride and also survive a fall. Students were engaged in defining and identifying engineering problems, developing solutions and optimizing solutions based on their egg drop results. Students worked diligently and had an amazing time with this design challenge!

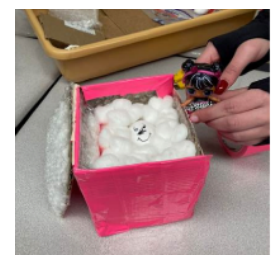


Starting off the New Year with a spin on “Resolutions,” **Mrs. Friedman's** Reading classes took part in the *One Word Project*. Students brainstormed goals for the year based on what they'd like to achieve, try, or improve on. Next, they chose 1 word that exemplified all those goals. This 1 word would be their focus for the year, in all aspects of their lives. Students then created a poster of their



word and used their artistic expression to show their creativity with their 1 word resolution. It was a meaningful and creative project!

In other exciting news, **Natalie Bonvicin** and **Michelle Gray's** support classes participated in a *Candy Cane Fundraiser Operation*, selling candy canes to the students and staff of Grand Avenue. The idea was inspired by our District's message of *Pathways/Path/Purpose*. Based on students' long term goals, they were assigned a task related to the project. Students interested in a communication's field made school announcements. Students interested in pursuing an artistic career created posters and flyers, and those interested in business were responsible for sales and handling money transactions and keeping track of the stock. At the heart of the operation was its cause, and that included thinking of others this holiday season. The students raised \$600 in candy cane sales and all proceeds were donated to the Bellmore-Merrick Community Cupboard. What a wonderful, charitable way to intertwine such important skills with holiday cheer!



“ART & CULTURE THRIVING AT MEPHAM”

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



A Celebration of the Poetic Art

Just a week ago, Mepham English teachers **Melanie Sirof** and **Nicole Maresca** revived Mepham's annual **Poetry Invitational** event after the hiatus imposed by the pandemic. A small cadre of Mepham students, who have exhibited interest in and talent with poetry, joined with visiting students from Baldwin and Farmingdale High Schools to spend nearly a full day crafting original poetry, listening to guest poets, and performing their original poetry.



MLK Week: Keeping the Dream Alive

Mepham students have been hard at work to do their part to better the Bellmore-Merrick community for MLK week. Social Studies teachers have been motivating their students to donate foodstuffs for the Community Cupboard, and the adjoining departments are keeping the spirit of the day present in the students' minds. Mepham's Senior Leadership classes are helping MLK Week events to run smoothly. Soon they'll be vetting compliments that have been written by their peers for a public take-a-compliment display in the main hallway.



It's the Year of the Water Rabbit! Time for Dumplings!

Mandarin teacher **Lydia Qiu** hosted a dumpling-making event for students interested in celebrating the Lunar New Year, learning a bit about Chinese culture, socializing, and enjoying delicious food. So many students turned out that all the hundreds of dumpling skins were stuffed with filling in just a short time! *Gong xi fa cai*, everyone! (*Wishing you great happiness and prosperity!*)

Mepham Band Hosts Santa Claus

On December 23rd, band director **Anthony Brandofino** and his band students hosted the children from North Bellmore's elementary schools in an effort to inspire these youngsters in continuing their music education. This annual event gives kids the opportunity to perform alongside the Mepham band. It's so fun that even Santa shows up to spread some holiday cheer—and candy canes!



“LEADERSHIP IN ACTION AT CALHOUN”

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

Calhoun Teachers Mentor Future Leaders

Calhoun has a long tradition of mentoring students to detect students in need and to take decisive leadership to address those needs. The following examples exemplify leadership in action at Calhoun.

Brian Joyce's leadership class conducted a toy and craft drive for the John Theissen Children's Foundation, a nonprofit that helps sick and underprivileged children across Long Island. On January 19th, **Joyce's** leadership students delivered the toys to the Foundation where they learned about the work the Foundation does. Students also actively participated in the work by sorting their donations, loading a box truck load of toys to be delivered to a homeless shelter in NYC, as well as packaging toys for sick children and those who are less fortunate, which resulted in fulfilling the wishes of 50 children.



Brian Joyce and his leadership students with the toys they collected through their toy drive.



Joyce's leadership students learning about the work done by the John Theissen Children's Foundation in Wantagh.



Joyce's leadership students pack toys to fulfill the wishes of underprivileged children.

Nickolas Mascary models the ideal of Calhoun leadership. Nick, mentored by the advisors of his clubs **Mrs. Tumminelli** in DECA and **Ms. Finneran**, in Racial Equity Club, created the “Hope Project” inspired by a recent family visit to Haiti where he was moved by the poverty he saw there. Wanting to make a difference, he researched nonprofits that were helping the situation in Haiti and he discovered “Hope for Haiti.” Using the skills he learned in DECA, he created a massive awareness and fundraising project that aimed to educate the local community about the dire situation in Haiti and then fundraise for the nonprofit “Hope for Haiti.” Nick created a coalition that included students, teachers, parents, administrators and staff throughout the district and even with the elementary schools and local businesses. Through the Racial Equity Club, he organized a table with raffles at Colt Fest, t-shirts and bracelet sales, a Trivia Contest, numerous bake sales and even a Krispy Kreme fundraiser!

7 stores in Merrick donated a raffle:
Thank you to: Via Roma, Taquitos, Dunkin Donuts, Artistic Nails & Spa, Starbucks, Souper Fry, Island Empanada



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In about 111 days, Nick and his coalition organized over 28 events, with the culminating event, called “Hope Day” raising \$900 in one single day. This event involved all five of the BMCHSD’s schools. Kennedy’s Diversity Equity Inclusion Club, Mephram Equity Alliance, Grand Ave’s International Culture Club, Merrick Avenue’s International Buddy Club all organized bake sales on Giving Tuesday, November 29th, and encouraged students to wear blue to show solidarity and support for those impoverished in Haiti. **Catherine Azzara** at Grand Avenue and **Denise Schleith** at MAMS invited Nick and Calhoun’s Racial Equity Club to visit their clubs to educate the students about the situation in Haiti.

The way teachers, administrators, staff and community support the leadership of our students shows what can be accomplished when people come together.



Calhoun and MAMS students uniting to benefit Haiti.



Denise Schleith’s students at MAMS organized a bake sale for “Hope for Haiti.”

"SURFS UP AT M.A.P. & THE PREP ACADEMY'S HOSPITALITY AT THE THIRSTY HUSKY CAFE"

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



"Let's go surfin' now/ Everybody's Learning how/ Come on and safari with me..."

On temperate Friday mornings during the Spring and Fall, students from **MAP and the Prep Academy** have been bonding at the beach. A select group of students from both programs have been taught by the instructors from the Skudin Surf School at Riverside Boulevard in Long Beach, N.Y.



The overall purpose of the surf classes is to assist students to learn the basics of surfing with their instructors.

Consequently, it is also helps to strengthen the connection between the M.A.P. program and the Prep Academy, who are next-door neighbors on the 2nd floor of the Brookside Building. **Catrina Christensen**, Guidance Counselor for both programs, calls it "*surf therapy*." Prep and MAP students (and staff) rode the bus together, suited up in wet suits, and rode some waves. While doing this they got to socialize and bond (and live like The Beach Boys!).



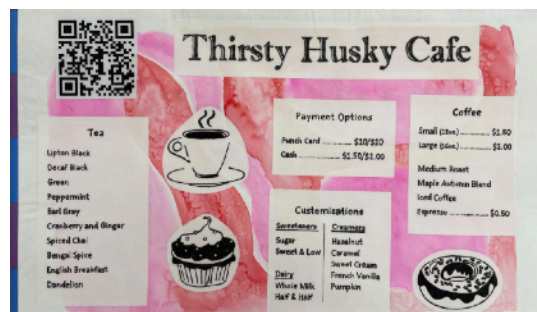
In addition, the Prep Academy makes mornings more bearable for the Brookside community through the **Thirsty Husky Café**. Each morning, students from Prep's Business Enterprise Class provide hot drinks to building staff. They take orders, prepare and deliver drinks, and according to **Dr. Joe Netto**, "they caffeinate the building!"

Patrons receive a punch card to keep track of their purchases.

The Prep Academy's art students collaborated with students who work in the Husky Café to create functioning menus and placemats. The budding artists worked on layout designs using art methods, including but not limited to, paper weaving, washed and salt water color techniques and coffee painting. Patrons are able to scan the barcode on a menu and put their orders in with the items that are available. Barcoded menus have been placed in all offices, hung up throughout the school, and carried around by

students who work in the café.

In an ingenious twist, the backs of the menus have been woven from paper so that you can flip the menu over and use it as a



"CELEBRATING, COMMEMORATING, & COMPETING AT JFK"

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

JFK Students Celebrate Lunar New Year:

JFK students wished a hearty 'Happy Lunar New Year' with multiple celebrations over the course of two weeks to mark the *Year of the Rabbit*. The **World Language** hallway was filled with colorful displays and decorations, including good luck banners and bright, colorful lanterns. Students in **Hui Chen's** 2H and 3H classes perfected their calligraphy skills as they practiced Chinese characters. The festivities culminated with students



displaying their culinary skills as they cooked authentic Chinese dumplings! The events were co-sponsored by Culture Club, with their advisor, **Franca Fiorentino** and **Hui Qiu's** 4H/AP classes. Chinese New Year marks the beginning of the Spring Festival, when people wish each other good fortune for the year ahead.

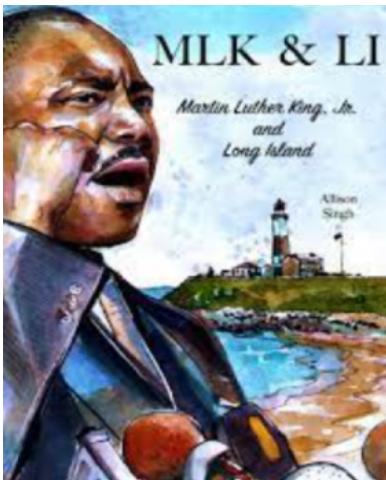


Smashing it at an Esports Competition.

The Cougar Esports Team hosted a unique Super Smash Brothers tournament using Nintendo Switch. Led by club advisor, **James Alford** the 36 participants competed for the title of best "Smash" player in the school, while also prepping for the larger district-wide tournament coming up this Spring. During the competition, participants learned the value of pursuing one's goals in the face of adversity and respecting one's opponents. Best of luck to Cougar eSports in the upcoming tournament!



MLK's Long Island Visit:



JFK's Leadership Course teachers hosted this year's MLK Day of Service. **Kristy Faulkner, Erin Leitzel, and Bradley Seidman** coordinated the efforts of their leadership students to teach a lesson focused on the impact of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on American society. Using Allison Singh's children's book, *MLK & LI: Martin Luther King, Jr and Long Island*, the students highlighted Dr. King's visits to Long Island to address a wide variety of issues, including racial inequality and segregation.

The students traced MLK's visit to Long Beach, Uniondale, Fire Island and other regions

and the impact of his visit on the socio-economic issues of Long Island. In the days that followed, JFK Student Ambassadors collected tissues, toilet paper, and paper towels to help refill the BMCHSD Community Cupboard and support families in need.



"RAISING SPIRITS AT MAMS"

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

Students at Merrick Avenue are guaranteed lessons, experiences and opportunities in the art of giving. The reason for this is the faculty and staff are "helper" oriented and intrinsically motivated by giving back to the community. We wear this passion on our sleeves and do our best to model qualities that lend themselves to being good citizens inside and outside of the classroom.

Word of Mouth, led by **Dana Brandwein**, took their show on the road and went caroling at the Bristol Assisted Living Center and the Seasons in East Meadow on Friday, December 23 to spread some holiday cheer. The residents of the Seasons were so touched that they made a donation to the MAMS Music Department.



The MAMS Student Council collected new toys to be donated to Ronald McDonald House during the month of December. Over 50 toys were collected and distributed on December 21st. In addition, MAMS Student Council sponsored a "Be the Change" fundraiser in association with the district-wide MLK Day of Service. Students collected loose change and donations over the course of three days. Over \$100 was collected and will be used to benefit the community cupboard.

Our FACS department was also pretty busy this past December, completing two wonderful service learning projects. Students baked over 300 cookies for the Community Cupboard's holiday food

distribution. Additionally, a group of 8th grade students traveled to Island Harvest where they helped package over 500 meal kits for local elderly who are food insecure.

Our PRIDE club held their first coat drive. The response was so great that someone, while looking at the amount of coats and cold weather accessories remarked, "It's a lot!" Students bagged the coats and delivered them to locations around Long Island.



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Over 2,500 books were collected for the Book Fairies, with **Audrey Drakos**, **Renee Molinaro** and **Lisa Shapiro** leading the charge. Our hope is that children all have the chance to curl up with a good book.

The coat drive and book drive benefitted faculty and staff, as many of us were able to make room for new holiday gifts and purchases as a result of cleaning out closets and bookcases!

We certainly hope our students feel proud of their actions and hard work dedicated to helping the community. Whether it was the sweet sound of their voices sharing holiday songs or a neatly packed bag delivered to someone's door, I am confident they made a stranger's day.

In other news which you may have caught on the district website: congratulations are due to the MAMS eSports team, which was awarded a \$500 Grant! Technology teacher **Dan Stiglitz** successfully secured this grant, which will be used towards a new gaming system to be utilized by the team. The grant was awarded from the Jovia Financial Credit Union's 2022 "Funding Your Ideas" Teacher Grant Program. This annual program helps fund various classroom and school-wide ideas proposed by teachers, principals and administrators.





*The Bellmore -Merrick United Secondary Teachers
would like to honor and celebrate the following
students for their outstanding contribution to our
school community:*

Grand Avenue Middle School

Alyssa Francis
Andrew John
Sean Maroney
Brett McGovern
Patrick Mulvey
Genevieve Paolillo
Emma Pulliza
Chase Schmitt
Daniela Sicignano

Merrick Avenue Middle School

Phoebe Clancy
Gianna Cuomo
Kristina Ippolitti
Karim Kessba
Larry Kinkela
Lindsay Nashtatik
Jesse Osborne
Jillian Tuttle
Ryan Wexler

John F. Kennedy High School

Josh Amiel
Preston Bowman
Jonathan Griffiths
Billie Lombardo

Meadowbrook Alternative Program

Virginia Bruder

Prep Academy

Stella Hong

**Wellington C. Mepham
High School**

Sebastian Fu
Samantha Nadler
Liam Osborne
Nicole Saraceni

Sanford H. Calhoun High School

Robert Bello
Kara Dobbs
Ben Knigin
Hannah Lewis



ANNUAL BMUST DINNER

TUES Westbury Manor,
JUNE 20 Westbury, N.Y.

BELLMORE-MERRICK UNITED SECONDARY TEACHERS
BMUST
DEDICATION ♦ PROFESSIONALISM ♦ SERVICE



KNOW YOUR BENEFITS



Vol. 3 -- In the last issue I focused on Maternity Leaves. This issue will focus on Article XI of the contract -- Unpaid Leaves of Absence (beginning on p. 19 of the new contract. There is a searchable .pdf of the contract at www.bmust.org in the password protected members only section.

A BRIEF LOOK AT OTHER TYPES OF LEAVES

As I mentioned in the previous issue, the vast majority of leaves that I handle for the BMUST are maternity related leaves with or without FMLA. Those leaves probably comprise 85-90% of the emails, phone calls, texts and face-to-face conversations that I have with members. The other 10-15% usually focus on personal leaves (I have never had a conversation with a member regarding leave for Peace Corps type programs, serving in a political office, emergency military call-up or a teacher exchange program -- all of which are acceptable types of leave requests).

A teacher may request a personal leave of one full school year, for any reason and shall not be unreasonably denied. That request needs to be submitted by February 1 of the previous school year. Requests for a personal leave for the 23-24 school year are due by Feb. 1, 2023 unless there are unforeseen circumstances that causes the request to be made after that date. The return from an unpaid leave notification date is February 1 but no later than the Monday after the February break.

There are significant differences regarding a personal leave and the leaves that were mentioned above.

- When you return from a granted personal leave you will be placed back on the salary schedule at the point the leave commenced. Your seniority will also be adjusted for your time off-payroll.
- When you take one of the aforementioned leaves the individual would be placed back on the salary schedule had they been in the district during that time period and there would be no adjustment to seniority.
- Unpaid leaves of absence (off-payroll) are not pensionable whereas a paid leave of absence may be pensionable (e.g. emergency military call-up) depending on the situation.

Please reach out to me with any questions, *everyone's situation is unique*.

Please reach out to Pete Brideson at 1vp@bmust.net with questions. Next issue "the importance of column movement"

Check out all your union membership has to offer!

LEGAL SERVICE PLAN

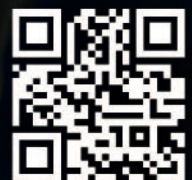
Plan benefits include:

- Crucial estate planning documents (a Simple Will, Health Care Proxy, Living Will & Durable Power of Attorney)
- Free telephone consultations
- Guaranteed maximum fees for specific legal matters

FINANCIAL COUNSELING PROGRAM

Plan benefits include:

- Unbiased objective advice
- Free telephone & virtual consultations
- Assistance with retirement planning, 403(b) savings, college savings, tax planning and more



Learn more by scanning the QR code to the right,
visiting **memberbenefits.nysut.org**
or calling **800-626-8101**.

For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits.

Jan-Feb 2023