

# Syosset Pride

*A Publication of the Syosset Central School District*

[www.syossetschools.org](http://www.syossetschools.org)

## BIG IDEAS for Technology

Chromebooks, tablets, Makerspaces and other technologies are enhancing teaching and learning across the district.

Students throughout the Syosset CSD are participating in a variety of curricular pilot programs that place leading-edge technology in their hands while teaching them how to put the tools into practice and think creatively.

Last year, a districtwide Technology Workgroup was formed to develop a vision for educational technology with a 'think big' mindset and a goal of expanding the breadth of technology-related courses. The ultimate goal is to engage students, enhance their understanding of how technology works, promote a collaborative environment and inspire content creation across all academic disciplines.

"We are trying different things at different schools and targeting certain grade levels to determine which initiatives present the greatest value and have the greatest impact on our children overall," said Assistant Superintendent for Business Patricia Rufo, who co-chairs the workgroup. "Our long-term goal is to broaden opportunities for all students and encourage them to be creative. Teachers are reporting back

that students are very enthused and enjoying the new projects. However, we want to be sure that what we are doing not only interests them, but really benefits them as well."

The workgroup established an identity called Project I.D.E.A. based on four guiding principles for piloting technology projects. Projects are designed to promote inquiry, differentiation of instruction, engagement, and must be applicable in the real world.

One of the most significant, far-reaching initiatives being implemented at multiple elementary and secondary schools is one-to-one computing, which places Google Chromebooks in the hands of middle, high school and elementary students and equips kindergartners with Samsung tablets. The devices provide instant access to the Internet, digital textbooks and course materials anywhere.

Fourth-graders at A.P. Willits Elementary School have been using their Chromebooks for a range of activities, from an interactive project about the impacts of severe weather to persuasive essays on topics of interest, making their case for the most strategic sport or the best vacation spot. Kindergartners at Robbins Lane Elementary School are using the Samsung tablets to conduct

research, explore "digital storytelling" and develop creative group projects on animals for their ELA block, which concurrently meets a Common Core digital presentation requirement.

Third-graders at Walt Whitman Elementary School are using their Chromebooks in a flipped/blended classroom setting, where they are creating multimedia projects in world geography and math using Web-based programs such as Peardeck, Kahoot and Sumdog. According to teacher Nina Trembly, in-class participation has grown to 100 percent, and since students can take their devices home, they are reviewing, changing and building upon their work after the lesson is over.

"The Chromebooks are definitely inspiring our kids to collaborate more and share their ideas," said Village Elementary School Principal Jeffrey Kasper, whose fifth-graders have been using the devices at home to write responses to each other's questions regarding material covered in class. "They definitely enjoy the camaraderie that has developed just by interacting with their classmates outside of the classroom."

Chromebooks are also changing the in-classroom approach at the



middle schools. South Woods Middle School eighth-grade social studies students are encouraged to not bring pens, pencils or paper to class, but rather to rely on their Chromebooks as digital notebooks. Through the use of Google Apps for Education, students access all assignments through Google Classroom, navigating through Google Docs, Slides, Sheets, Forms and other Google tools. Primary documents are annotated with DocHub, and authentic historical photos, speeches and videos are included in digital notes, which can be utilized at any time.

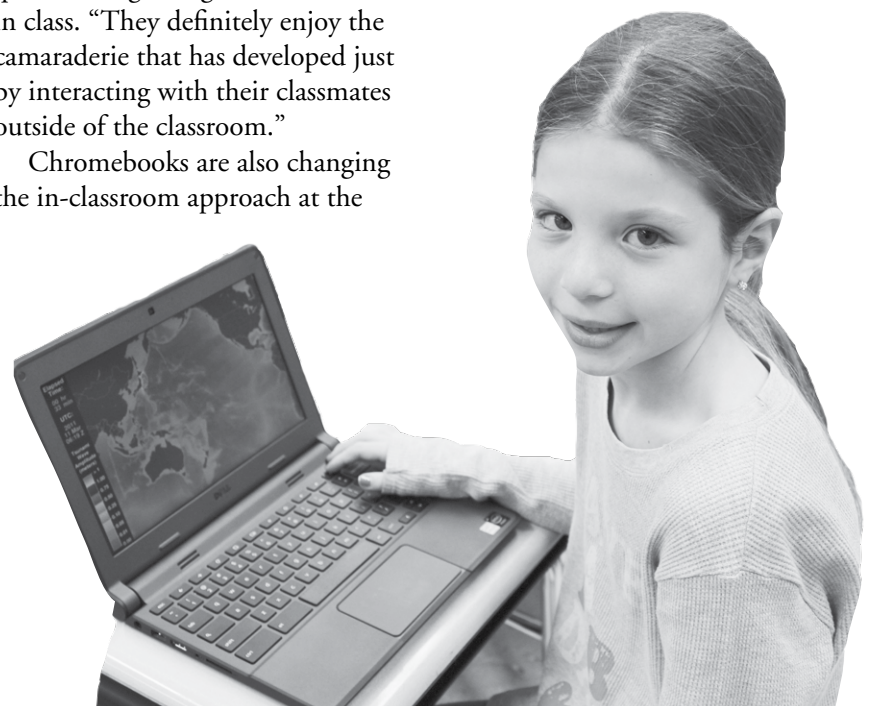
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A.P. Willits fourth-graders track storm systems using their Chromebooks.

# A Message from Your *Superintendent*



To the Syosset Community,

Happy New Year to the parents, staff and students of the Syosset community. I hope you had a restful holiday break and are approaching the new year as invigorated as we are.

We're excited to use this issue of The Pride to give you a glimpse of the pilot programs under study by the Technology Workgroup. The Board has made enhancing the district's technology a priority, and the fruits of that emphasis are ripening. Last year, the district made significant investments in our technology infrastructure, purchasing increased bandwidth, finishing a backup system, and expanding Wi-Fi coverage district-wide.

That new infrastructure laid the foundation on which we have explored a number of approaches – flipped classrooms, 1:1 initiatives with both tablets and Chromebooks, coding, robotics, makerspaces, etc. – to see which ones work best for Syosset.

Our goal has been not to implement technology for its own sake, but to emphasize those initiatives that foster Innovation, Differentiation, Engagement and Application – Project I.D.E.A. We see the role of technology as enhancing, not replacing, the classroom experience, putting students in the driver's seat and letting them explore the things that interest them personally and

translating what they learn to new challenges. We'll be evaluating the early results of these pilots with the Board and making decisions about which are the best candidates for expansion.

Just as this attention to the district's technology infrastructure is making these enhancements possible, we must continue to pay attention to the district's "bricks and mortar" infrastructure and have been working with our architects and the Board of Education to identify and prioritize our ongoing maintenance and rehabilitation efforts with the district's physical plant. At the Board's request we have been developing a comprehensive facilities

plan for the district that will address the needed maintenance and repairs and consider any future facilities needs.

Best wishes to all in the new year!

Regards,  
Dr. Tom Rogers  
Superintendent of Schools

# A Message from Your *Board of Education*

Dear Syosset Community,

Welcome to 2016! We hope your holiday season was filled with joy and we wish you all the best for a happy and healthy new year.

This holiday season, students and staff throughout our schools put service above self to help those less fortunate. Through various toy, food and coat drives, among other acts of kindness, the Syosset schools showed the generous spirit that exists within our community. Thank you to everyone who made a difference in brightening someone else's life.

The midpoint of the school year is an opportunity to take stock of the many initiatives underway at Syosset. The Board has prioritized using technology to enhance the learning process and is looking forward to a presentation from administration in March on the various pilot projects underway in our schools – from "flipped classrooms" to Chromebooks and makerspaces. This newsletter will give you a little preview.

Last fall, the Board toured a number of sites in the district from leaky roofs to aging boilers to see the various projects our architects have prioritized. These needs aren't glamorous, but the Board is committed to maintaining the health of our facilities, and the district is developing a long-term plan to make needed maintenance a continuous priority.

Another high priority has been school security. Based on the recommendations of our safety

consultant, additional investments in both physical and electronic safety measures will be made to continually reinforce the safety of our students and staff. Fortunately, many of these investments can be paid for by grants from the State's Smart Schools Bond Act.

Last spring, the Board created an Athletics Committee to examine the equity between boys and girls athletics programs, and the adequacy of our athletics facilities. As a result, changes were made to immediately improve the girls' softball field. Other improvements are underway while over the longer term the committee explores the possibility of a turf field.

Similarly, the Board's Food Allergy Committee has been active helping shape a new policy that the Board adopted in December. Soon, the district will train a broader cross section of staff and make Epi-pens more readily available in order to improve our response in a crisis. Going forward, the Committee's next task is to harmonize the different prevention approaches employed across the district.

At the State level, we're pleased that the Governor and Board of Regents have heeded our letters calling for a change in direction on testing and teacher evaluation. More time is needed for these new changes to gain momentum, but they represent a welcome departure from the state's previous positions.

At our January Board meeting, we held our first budget informational meeting. Please attend



future meetings (see Budget Workshops/Dates on p. 3) as we make important decisions for the future.

As always, you are invited to attend the regular portion of our meetings. For those wishing to read a summary of Board actions and discussions, Board Meeting Notes are posted on the district website, [www.syossetschools.org](http://www.syossetschools.org). Just click on the "Board of Education" tab. If you ever need to contact us, you can refer to our email addresses online or in the district calendar.

We look forward to seeing you at our meetings.

Warm Regards,  
The Syosset School District Board of Education

Michael Cohen	Rob Gershon
April Neuendorf	Josh Lafazan
Chris Di Filippo	Susan Parker
Andrew Feldman	Laura Schlesinger
Tracy Frankel	



# BIG IDEAS *for Technology*

Chromebooks, tablets, Makerspaces and other technologies are enhancing teaching and learning across the district.

Students in Jessica Gonzalez's Spanish class at H.B. Thompson Middle School also learn in a paperless Google Classroom environment, which they refer to as the BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) initiative. Gonzalez said the transition was seamless and BYOD has empowered students to assume greater responsibility for their work and collaborate with students in her other Spanish classes. This spring, her students will use their devices to work jointly with a school in Costa Rica via the videoconferencing app Google Hangouts.

At Syosset High School, AP Economics students will use their Chromebooks to research data from the Federal Reserve website and simulate a bimonthly meeting with the Fed Board of Governors to determine interest rate targeting and monetary policy. Math students at the high school have been utilizing iPads to design more collaborative and engaging projects.

Tablets and iPads are also being used to promote independence and self-paced instruction in H.B. Thompson seventh-grade special education students, as well as for personalized learning in the resource room and first- and third-grade classrooms at Walt Whitman Elementary. Occupational and speech therapists are using iPads for intervention strategies district-wide.

Young students are using Google

Apps to become more mindful of the importance of helping others. Baylis Elementary School Library Media Specialist Kelly Fokianos and Enrichment teacher Barbara Conover are leading third-graders in a "Small Changes" community action project through the Jane Goodall "Roots and Shoots" website. Students are researching and recording notes from various digital resources, connecting with authentic experts on the environment and mapping areas in need using Google Earth. After identifying human, environmental and animal needs both globally and within their community, the third-graders brainstorm ideas on how they can help. They are currently mapping areas where food and water are wasted. According to Conover, children and parents alike have embraced the project, and her students have substantially grown as 21st-century learners who strive to make a difference in the lives of others.

Fourth-graders at Berry Hill Elementary School will get a taste of project-based technological learning when they apply their knowledge of electricity to build their own flashlights. The students will use online computer-aided design software to create 3-D representations of their flashlights. Each flashlight will be printed three-dimensionally and assembled to



*H.B. Thompson foreign language students learn in a completely digital environment through the Bring Your Own Device initiative.*

house circuitry built by the students.

While the portability and ability to connect with others and gather, process and present information has transformed the way Syosset students are learning, physical spaces within the school buildings are not being overlooked. Makerspaces — dedicated areas that encourage students to tinker, create and share interest-based individual and group projects — are being developed at South Grove Elementary School and South Woods Middle School. These spaces can include a variety of resources, such as simple tools for cutting and shaping wooden objects, electronics workbenches, molding machinery to make the most out of simple materials and promote ingenuity, and 3-D printers like the one that will be utilized in the Berry Hill flashlight project.

Both the South Grove "Fab Lab" and the South Woods Makerspace

will be utilized in conjunction with STEM curricula at both schools. Additionally, the H.B. Thompson library is being redesigned to create a more collaborative space that will include mobile devices, an interactive projector and fluid seating design.

"New technology is exciting, so it's tempting to focus on a device and try to work backwards to a purpose. I'm especially pleased that our Technology Workgroup focused first on goals — and then identified the devices and software most likely to achieve them," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Thomas Rogers. "There is no question that technology is a large part of students' and adults' daily life. Our job is not just to expose students to more technology, but to find ways for it to complement a teacher's efforts while unlocking new potential in students."

## Budget Workshops/Dates:

*All meetings will be held in the South Woods Middle School auditorium prior to the regular Board of Education meetings, which begin at 8 p.m.*

**Monday, February 8:** Budget Information Workshop, 7 p.m.

**Monday, March 21:** Budget Information Workshop, 7 p.m.

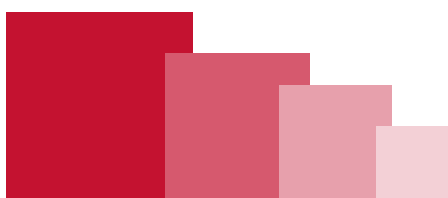
**Tuesday, April 19:** Budget Information Workshop, 7 p.m., Budget Adoption to Follow

**Monday, May 9:** Official Budget Hearing, 7:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, May 17:** Official Budget Vote, 6 a.m.-9 p.m. at Robbins Lane Elementary School, H.B. Thompson Middle School and Syosset High School

## Kindergarten Registration

Kindergarten registration for the 2016-17 school year will take place on Wednesday, March 30 for students attending Robbins Lane, South Grove and Village; and Thursday, March 31 for students attending J. Irving Baylis, Berry Hill, Walt Whitman and A.P. Willits. For specific times, please contact your school or refer to the district website at [www.syossetschools.org](http://www.syossetschools.org).



# STUDENTS IN THE

## The Next Generation of Innovators

### FIVE INTEL SEMIFINALISTS NAMED AT SYOSSET HIGH SCHOOL

Congratulations to Alexandra Chan, Daniel Hirsch, Rachel Kang, Joshua Katz and Benjamin Senzer for being named five of the 300 national semifinalists in the 2016 Intel Science Talent Search.

The Intel Science Talent Search, the nation's oldest and most prestigious pre-college science competition, has been bringing together the best and brightest young scientific minds in the United States for 75 years. Of the 300 semifinalists, 44 were selected from Long Island schools, with Syosset garnering the second-highest total of selections in Nassau and Suffolk.

"I couldn't be more proud of our students and their teachers, who work so hard to make their success a reality," said Syosset High School Principal Dr. Giovanni Durante. "To submit to Intel is a major accomplishment in and of itself, but to be selected as a semifinalist is truly extraordinary. This is a true honor for the entire Syosset community."

Each semifinalist receives a \$1,000 award from the Intel Foundation, with an additional \$1,000 going to his or her school. The competition overall awards \$1.6 million to provide the opportunities and resources that students need to become the next generation of inventors, entrepreneurs and STEM professionals.

Alexandra was selected for her research that supports the hypothesis that greater variation in DNA sequences caused by sexual reproduction is beneficial to the evolution of organisms. Comparing both sexual and asexual lineages of 10 mud snails, she determined that sexual activity facilitates the clearance of potentially harmful mutations, which accumulate more rapidly in asexual snails.

Daniel's research demonstrates that correlations exist between

business success and different characteristics of the founders of Fortune 1000 companies. These include birth year, education level, college attended, hometown location, previous work experience and even the professions of the subject's parents. He feels that these conclusions can be used by companies, universities and students alike to focus their educational and business experiences in order to achieve entrepreneurial success.

For her project on climate change, Rachel researched solar energy solutions for operating the Long Island Rail Road, Long Island's largest electricity user. She studied various models of equipment to achieve optimal electrical output and found that most LIRR stations are south facing, which would be beneficial to capturing sunlight using solar panels. Computing the economic benefits, Rachel determined that it would take only three to four years for the LIRR to net a profit from shifting to solar power.

"Knowing that I was doing something that could potentially benefit my community directly, I was constantly engaged and motivated to ensure that each and every calculation I made was accurate and precise," said Rachel, who would often commute to Stony Brook University as a tenth grader to conduct research. It was then, while riding the LIRR, that she took notice of how much electricity was being used and how an alternate source of power could benefit the environment.

Joshua examined the relationship between TSP2 proteins, which are found to inhibit the formation of new blood vessels, and LOX, which has been linked to promote metastasis of malignant tumors. He determined that although TSP2 and LOX levels directly correlate to one another and



Superintendent of Schools Dr. Thomas Rogers congratulates Syosset High School's five Intel Science Search semifinalists along with Administrative Assistant for Science Tom Allen, Social Sciences teacher Dan Manzo, Science Research Coordinator Veronica Ade, Business teacher Diane Malley and Syosset High School Principal Dr. Giovanni Durante. Semifinalists pictured (L-R) are Joshua Katz, Alexandra Chan, Benjamin Senzer, Rachel Kang and Daniel Hirsch.

are both implicated in various cancers, when reintroducing TSP2 to cells, its inhibiting expression ultimately degrades LOX. This process could serve as an aid in treating cancer.

Benjamin assessed the negative effects of pollutants in marsh biomes by studying microscopic organisms taken from sediment grains of shells collected from Tobay and Crab Meadow beaches. Using an energy dispersive X-ray spectroscope, he analyzed the chemical compositions of the shells taken from different layers of the marsh over time to identify trace elements of pollutants (via geochemical selectivity, shells absorb and remove sediment possessing the greatest abundance of pollutants). As a result, Benjamin was able to determine which pollutants existed in the marsh at certain periods of time.

"Geology is a much more hands-on field of science than most people realize," said Benjamin, who found himself collecting samples while knee-deep in tidal marsh water. "My project allowed me to go outside and physically experience what most people could only read about in scientific journals."

"The Intel Science Talent Search is the Nobel Prize of high school research," said Syosset High School Science Research

Coordinator Veronica Ade, who works closely with all of the semifinalists and likened the 20-page entry paper to writing an additional college application. "For many of these students, it's the culmination of four or five years of hard work. Intel adjudicators are not only looking for phenomenal research, they are looking for well-rounded students who have varied interests, are good people and have the makeup for success."

"Intel STS alumni over the past three-quarters of a century have gone on to successful STEM careers and to achieve top honors and recognition in their chosen fields," said Maya Ajmera, president and CEO of Society for Science and the Public and publisher of the Science News media group. "As a fellow alumna, I'm thrilled to congratulate the semifinalists and welcome them to the Intel STS family. They are the next generation of innovators, and we look forward to witnessing the impact they will have on making the world a better place."

Semifinalists were selected from 1,750 entrants hailing from 512 high schools in 43 states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, and six American and international high schools overseas.





## National Hispanic Scholar Honored

Congratulations to senior Brian Schultheis on being named a National Hispanic Scholar in the College Board's National Hispanic Recognition Program. Brian scored in the top 2.5 percent among Hispanic/Latino students in the region on the 2014 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Additionally, he had to complete an extensive application for evaluation by the College Board. In a survey of last year's National Hispanic Scholars, 91 percent indicated that they felt recognition made them more competitive candidates for the nation's top colleges and universities. Brian's principal, Dr. Giovanni Durante, congratulates him here.



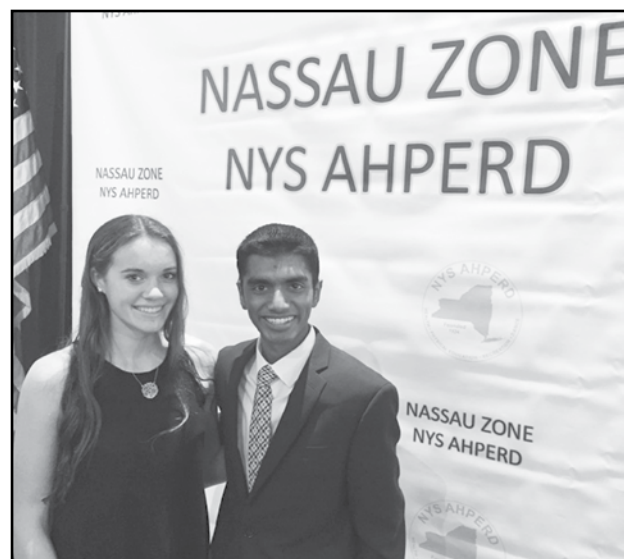
## Commendable Students

At its December meeting, the Board of Education recognized 33 Syosset High School students who were named Commended Students in the College Board's National Merit Scholarship Program. As Syosset High School Principal Dr. Giovanni Durante announced the names, Board members and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Thomas Rogers congratulated those students who scored in the top five percent in the country on the PSAT/NMSQT. Earlier this year, the Board recognized the 16 students who were named semifinalists in the NMSP.



## Physically and Civilly Fit

Congratulations to seniors Josh Thomas and Kelly Siebert, who are recipients of the New York State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance's annual Zone Award. The award is presented to students who exemplify and demonstrate an understanding for the New York State Learning Standards for Health and Physical Education by exhibiting a physically active and healthy lifestyle; demonstrating sportsmanship, character, civility and citizenship; exhibiting exceptional achievement in physical education class; and achieving a high level of fitness on an approved fitness test.





# Tops in All-State Musicians *Again*

Congratulations to Syosset High School's 24 outstanding musicians who were selected as performers or alternates for the New York State School Music Association's All-State ensembles, which performed at the 2015 NYSSMA Winter Conference this December. Once again, Syosset High School had the highest number of All-State musicians in the state, including two jazz musicians who were chosen for more than one instrument. The district congratulates the following students:

## **All-State Chorus:**

Dylan Eliassof – Mixed Chorus, Bass II  
Julia Naldjian – Mixed Chorus, Soprano I

## **All-State Jazz:**

Agostino Bellocco – Instrumental Jazz Ensemble, Tenor Saxophone; Wind Ensemble, Alto Saxophone; Jazz Alto Sax Alternate  
Jacob Sugarman – Instrumental Jazz Ensemble, Alto Saxophone; Symphonic Band, Bassoon

## **All-State Band:**

Julie Chou – Piccolo Alternate  
Natalia Koziel – Flute Alternate  
Christopher Yang – Snare Drum Alternate

## **All-State Orchestra:**

Eugene Ahn – Cello Alternate  
Maximillian Chen – String Orchestra, Violin  
Scott Feltman – Symphony Orchestra, Double Bass  
Victoria Kong – String Orchestra, Violin  
Marisa Labarca – Violin Alternate  
Sojin Lee – String Orchestra, Viola  
Vivian Lin – String Orchestra, Cello  
Dahyun Park – Violin Alternate  
Ben Rhee – Symphony Orchestra, Violin  
Michele Ripka – String Orchestra, Violin  
Benjamin Senzer – String Orchestra, Double Bass  
Emma Sun – Violin Alternate  
Jeremy Wang – Violin Alternate  
Sidney Wong – Violin Alternate  
Jonah Wu – Violin Alternate  
Cameron Zandieh – Symphony Orchestra, Violin  
Kevin Zhang – Harp Alternate



*Many of the district's All-State musicians attended a recent Board of Education meeting, where they were honored.*

## **STAFF PLAYS A KEY ROLE**

Congratulations to Syosset CSD Coordinator of Fine and Performing Arts Michael Salzman, who has been named NYSSMA's president-elect. Salzman currently serves as second vice president and this year presided over some 900 All-State students and their rehearsals and performances during the All-State festival.

Syosset music educators also played a key role at this year's conference. Syosset High School teacher and State Chairperson for the Tri-M Music Honor Society Rona Pontecorvo brought eight student officers from Syosset Tri-M to present on the benefits of joining the organization. Music teachers in attendance were very impressed, took copious notes and asked excellent questions.

Additionally, South Woods Middle School teacher Mandy DeShrage presented on flute pedagogy, Village/A.P. Willits Elementary School teacher Matthew Wurtzel presented findings of his grant research on professional development for first-year music teachers, and Syosset High School leave replacement orchestra teacher and NYSSMA String Coordinator Steve Fayette conducted orientation sessions for new adjudicators. Several other Syosset music teachers served as chaperones for the weekend.

# Artists Selected for Regional Honors

Three Syosset High School student-artists are being honored for creativity that stands out. The artwork of Christy Qian and Matthew Weiss was selected for display in the Suffolk Center on the Holocaust, Diversity and Human Understanding's "Embracing Our Differences" moving outdoor exhibit.

Christy, who completed her work last year under the tutelage of Syosset High School art teacher Amanda Signorelli, used Adobe Illustrator to create a colorful image of the earth being touched

by hands comprised of phrases promoting cultural acceptance, while the words "The world belongs to all of us" appear in the center of the earth. Matthew, who studied under art teacher Nicole Lynch, used Adobe Photoshop to create an image in the shape of the United States, accompanied by the phrase "We become not a melting pot, but a beautiful mosaic." Both students are currently enrolled in Lynch's class.

Curated by a group of highly respected art professionals, the "Embracing Our Differences" art

exhibition features 27 billboard-sized images created by professional artists and students from all over Long Island.

Congratulations are also in order for sophomore Isabella Charles, who won the Nassau Music Educators Association's

logo design contest. Isabella's winning design has been printed on T-shirts, sweatshirts and other articles that promote NMEA All-County concerts taking place this winter. She also studies in Lynch's class.



*(From left) Matthew Weiss, Isabella Charles and Christy Qian display their honored works of art with their teacher, Nicole Lynch.*

# AROUND THE SCHOOLS



**Making bots go at Village.**

## Analyzing Words & Time

As a tool to help students visualize and analyze lengthy texts, South Woods Middle School has been using a word cloud program called Wordle. The program amplifies words based on how frequently they are used in the material and helps jump-start students' close reading of primary sources by discussing key words in advance to support comprehension. Recent texts used in Wordle include the Declaration of Independence, Patrick Henry's speech at the Stamp Act Congress and John Winthrop's "City Upon a Hill" sermon. The school is also using the program Dipity to create timelines of key historical events, demonstrating the importance of chronological reasoning. For a recent chapter, students developed the top ten reasons why the Colonists broke away.

## Beyond the Hour

Schools throughout the district participated in the national Hour of Code by logging on to Code.org to practice block coding (Java) by programming their own "Minecraft," "Frozen" or "Star Wars" video games. Students are also being encouraged to further their programming practice at home. At Robbins Lane Elementary School, students have been following suit via links such as [www.kodable.com](http://www.kodable.com) and [Scratch.mit.edu](http://Scratch.mit.edu).

## Brown Bagging Robots

Village Elementary School kindergartners have been taking advantage of Brown Bag seminars

during lunchtime to learn the very basics of coding. They recently created a track of code and programmed miniature Ozobots to move around the track and follow the path they charted. Fourth- and fifth-graders at Robbins Lane Elementary School also learned how to program the Ozobots for their Hour of Code activities.

## Cast Your Vote

At A.P. Willits Elementary School, fourth-graders are solving the problem of the day using handheld Mimio vote devices that make class participation fun and a little less intimidating. Students respond to a problem posed on the Smart Board quickly. According to teacher Anthony Roche, aside from being fun to use, the devices also serve as an excellent assessment tool that provides the teacher with instant feedback.

## Deeper into the Doc

Students at Walt Whitman Elementary School have been collaborating in small-group reading instruction using Chromebooks, traditional books and Google Document to write thoughtful responses to questions that arise from the texts. According to third-grade teacher Nina Trembly, students are thinking more deeply about the material and requesting to work on assignments outside of their regularly scheduled group time. She said writing has improved immensely. Mirroring360 is another new feature that Whitman students are enjoying. Through a few simple keystrokes

and a projector, they can share their work with the entire class for valuable feedback.

## FIRST Hosts

Syoset High School's robotics program hosted the FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Tech Challenge robotics scrimmage and workshop. This student-led event was held at the Composite Prototyping Center in Plainview, where Syoset welcomed teams from four other schools to test and modify their robots, tour the state-of-the-art CPC composites manufacturing facility and network with engineering professionals.

## Flipping for Video

Earth science teachers at H.B. Thompson Middle School have been using a program called Screencast to record short video lessons of important concepts for students to view from home. This "flipped classroom" model enables teachers to use in-class time to focus on more hands-on activities and address the "why" and "how" questions, rather than "what." It also allows for additional time to assist students who require more guidance with the content.

## More Than Hanging Out

Fifth-graders at Berry Hill Elementary School conducted Google Hangout sessions (distance learning) with Syoset High School computer programming students to see for themselves how their elders work. They learned some quick basic programming tips as well as the logic behind the language with the help of programs

such as Greenfoot, a program that teaches how to code in a gaming environment. "Not only is it fun to play these games while coding, but you can also really learn a lot," said Berry Hill student Samir Panchal. "I can look ahead and anticipate problems and then plan on how to solve them."

## Programming Unplugged

Students throughout the district are also participating in various "unplugged" exercises to learn how to write algorithms and understand the basics of coding. One activity at Baylis Elementary School consisted of using playing cards to demonstrate how creating conditionals can tailor a program to specific information by tying cards' suits, colors or values to outcomes, then drawing cards and awarding points to determine success.

## Vital Skills Through the Virtual World

The occupational and physical therapy departments at South Grove and Walt Whitman elementary schools are raving about the a new Web-based, interactive, virtual motion gaming system called Timocco. Using tennis-sized balls, a webcam and a desktop computer, the program has helped improve a multitude of cognitive and motor skills in students, including bilateral coordination, hand-eye coordination, posture, visual discrimination, visual memory and attention. Timocco requires students to control their hand movements (represented on a computer screen) to reach specific targets and can be adapted to meet each child's specific needs.

**Answering is fun at Willits.**





# Athletic Accomplishments



These Girls Lacrosse players were among the student-athletes who signed Letters of Intent to play in college.

## Committed **ATHLETES**

Fifteen of Syosset's most distinguished student-athletes recently signed Letters of Intent to play their respective sports at the collegiate level, pending admittance to their respective schools. Students donned caps or attire from their school of choice as they signed their letters in front of family, coaches and special guests. Coordinator of Health, Physical Education and Athletics Drew Cronin hosted the event in conjunction with

boys varsity lacrosse coach John Calabria, whose team had the highest number of signing students.

"There is really nothing like playing sports at the collegiate level, and that has been the goal of everyone here who is about to sign a National Letter of Intent," Calabria said. "Syosset High School works hard to ensure its athletes thrive, and these students represent the elite of the elite."

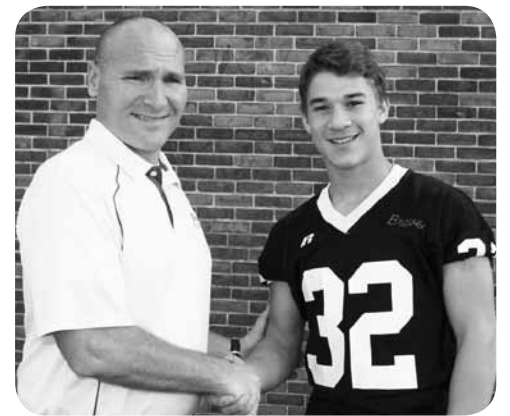
## Jetting to the **End Zone**

Congratulations to senior Mike Elardo on winning the 2015 Jet Receiver Award as Nassau County's top wide receiver in varsity football. This marks the second consecutive year that Mike has won the award. He led all seniors

with 52 catches, totaling 876 yards with an average of 19 yards per catch, this season. He also scored six touchdowns, leading the Braves back to the playoffs.

For his three-year varsity career, Mike totaled 154 catches, 2,941

yards with a 19.1-yard average per catch and 28 touchdowns. He is also a two-time All-Long Island selection, 2015 Conference Player of the Year and First-Team All-State. Coach Paul Rorke congratulates Mike here.



## FALL SPORTS WRAP-UP

### BOYS CROSS-COUNTRY

The boys earned a Nassau County championship this fall, winning their 11th consecutive championship in track and field and cross-country and once again securing the Division 1A title. They were undefeated in 150 events, and 16 runners broke 18 minutes in the 5K.

### GIRLS CROSS-COUNTRY

The girls earned their sixth Nassau County championship in eight years and boasted an undefeated regular season at 13-0. This included division and conference championships and qualifying for the state championships.

### FOOTBALL

In defense of their Long Island championship, the team earned fourth place in the conference (5-2)

and qualified for the playoffs. They finished with a record of 5-4 overall.

### BOYS SOCCER

The boys had another successful run in the playoffs, advancing to the final four of the Nassau County Class AA championship for the fourth consecutive year. Despite losing in the semifinals, they posted a season record of 12-4-1.

### GIRLS SOCCER

The girls won the AA2 conference title again, following up last year's accomplishment with an impressive 6-2-1 conference record and a remarkable playoff run. They began the season neck and neck with regular season champ Baldwin and had several comeback wins that showed their true character and perseverance.

### GIRLS SWIMMING

The varsity swim team broke six school records in the medley relay, 200-meter freestyle relay, diving, 50-meter freestyle, 100-meter freestyle and 400-meter freestyle events while qualifying for the county championships in 13 different events. The team also had county finalists in four different events: Isabell Hen (100-meter backstroke and 400-meter freestyle) and Liz Lu (50- and 100-meter freestyle).

### GIRLS TENNIS

The team advanced to the semifinals of the Nassau County tournament, finishing with the third most wins in conference with eight.

### BOYS VOLLEYBALL

The boys varsity squad finished as conference champions for the first time in 14 years, posting a 14-1 record. Only undefeated Massapequa finished with more conference wins during the regular season.

### GIRLS VOLLEYBALL

The girls team made significant strides this season after finishing with just three wins a year ago. They entered the season ranked fourth in Class AA, compiled nine wins and advanced to the county semifinals. They also won the Nassau County Volleyball Coaches Association Team Sportsmanship Award.



The boys cross-country team won their 11th consecutive county championship.

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# SyossetPride

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