



*The Amityville*

SPRING 2010

# TIDE

## WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS

District staff members focus on challenging students to achieve their personal best every day, and to develop a spirit of excellence in each building. Starting at the elementary level, strong foundations are built as a result of ongoing staff development that trains faculty to utilize the latest innovative methods and maximize the cutting-edge computer technology provided by the district.

Consequently, graduation rates continue to climb and students are being accepted into prestigious universities. This edition of *The Tide* will give our community an inside look at the wonderful collaborations between our students and staff to achieve success.

## AMITYVILLE STUDENTS CAN!

As a result of the "Strive For 85, Yes You Can" initiative at the high school, eighty-six juniors scored an 85% or higher on the New York State English Regents Exam, far exceeding the state requirement for passing, which is 65% or better. "For too long,

students have had the mindset that 65% percent is an appropriate passing grade," English Director Judith Riordan stated. "We are trying to change that mindset and motivate students not only to pass the Regents, but to reach their personal best."

Prior to taking the Regents Exam, banners were displayed throughout the high school touting the "Strive for 85, Yes You Can" motto. Teachers delivered inspirational talks to the students and well-attended preparation courses were offered on Mondays and Wednesdays after school. A film about global competitiveness was shown to students to remind them that there are young people all over the world striving for success, and that these efforts must continue well beyond high school.



## *Academically* and *Athletically* Inclined

### *National Scholar*



Senior Jamilah Lindo has been honored with Advanced Placement Scholar status. During her time at the high school, Jamilah (congratulated here by Principal Dr. Scott Andrews) completed a rigorous academic program of Advanced Placement and college-level coursework and is the Valedictorian of the Class of 2010. She has been accepted to Georgetown University, Fordham University, New York University, and Sacred Heart, and as of press time, was still waiting to hear from Columbia University. "I feel confident and well-prepared to take the next step to college," Jamilah stated, where she plans to major in Biology/Premed.

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## State Champion



Junior Sancho Barrett finished in first place in the 55-meter hurdle competition at the New York State Public High School Athletic Association meet. Sancho also placed second in the Federation category, losing in a photo finish. *Newsday* has selected Sancho as the recipient of the All-Long Island award. Congratulations to Sancho (pictured) and his coach, Reynolds Hawkins.

## A MESSAGE FROM YOUR *Superintendent*



We hope you enjoy this spring issue of the *Amityville Tide*. In it we feature the many

accomplishments and activities of our students and staff. Be sure to check out our students' successes in music and the visual arts. We've also highlighted the Amityville Memorial High School Drama Club's spring presentation of the musical *Once Upon A Mattress*. Athletic excellence also continues in the Amityville tradition, and we take particular pride in our "All-Academic Team" and our New York State Scholar-Athletes.

As we move into the fourth quarter of the 2009-2010 school year, we are entering the homestretch. Soon we will be

celebrating another school year at commencement and moving-up ceremonies around the district. While we acknowledge and honor our successes, we must keep in mind that these last few months are the most important time of the academic year. Our students must still face final examinations, Regents exams and numerous other standardized assessments at most of the grade levels. Students and teachers across the district will be busy preparing for all of these end-of-the-year evaluations. In addition, seniors will be making very high-stakes decisions about their futures. Most will be considering college or other postsecondary education, some will be looking at entering the world of work, and still others will be preparing to enroll in the military. Clearly, much hard work remains to be done. Our

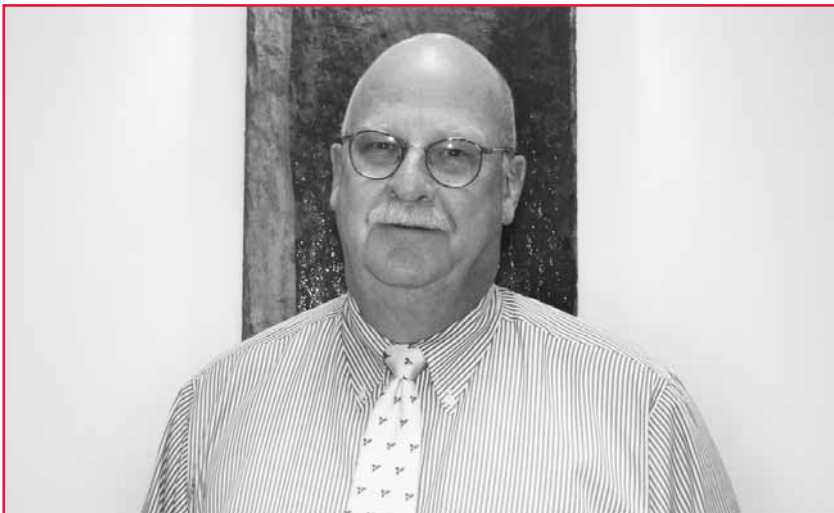
students, teachers, counselors and administrators will have to be working right up to the final bell to ensure the success of every pupil.

So, as we appropriately take time to recognize and celebrate our achievements and successes, we must also rededicate ourselves to working hard all the way down this homestretch. We need to take the enthusiasm and dedication that marked our achievements thus far and apply them to the final quarter of the year. This will guarantee that everyone will experience success as we cross the finish line.

*John R. Williams*

Dr. John R. Williams  
Superintendent of Schools

## LEADERS IN THEIR FIELDS



The National Association of Secondary School Principals/School Administrators Association of New York State has named **Pete Hutchison Assistant Principal of the Year**.

Mr. Hutchison (pictured) has been an Assistant Principal at the high school since 2004, and was nominated for this prestigious award by high school Principal Dr. Scott Andrews. "Mr. Hutchison maintains an unending commitment to ensuring that all of our students receive a high quality education," stated Dr. Andrews. "He has had a significant impact on the infusion of technology into our school and on the creation of an extremely positive school culture."

Mr. Hutchison began his career more than 20 years ago as a special education teacher. He fulfilled the role of middle and high school special education teacher and technology coordinator in the Mineola Public School District prior to joining the Amityville team. In addition to a Bachelor's degree from Pennsylvania State University, Mr. Hutchison holds a Master's degree from Long Island University and a professional certificate in administration and professional development from the College of New Rochelle.



Social worker and track and field coach **Reynolds Hawkins** has been invited to represent Long Island Partners in its Partners of the Americas (POA) project for the Caribbean countries of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. As the Long Island chapter's Chairman of Youth and Sports, Mr. Hawkins embarked on a ten-day mission to develop a Youth Employment Through Sports plan to promote sports-based activities in St. Vincent and assist youngsters in the acquisition of life skills for future employment in a global economy.

Mr. Hawkins has been a POA volunteer for more than 20 years, sharing his expertise in the areas of youth and sports. He was instrumental in the training of St. Vincent athletes for the Caribbean Olympics and the 1988 Olympic Games. Mr. Hawkins is a private practice social worker in addition to his work in the district, and a member of the Suffolk County Anti-Bias Task Force. He is pictured (center, left) being congratulated by Athletic Director Ron Forman, Superintendent of Schools Dr. John R. Williams (far right) and Director of Physical Education, Health Education and Nurses Tony Cerullo (far left).



# Warrior Ways

## WINNING WITH WARRIOR PRIDE

Students and staff continue to make the athletic program a source of pride for the district both on and off the playing field. The **Girls Tennis** team was noted throughout their season for their commitment to fair play and sportsmanship. The **Girls Varsity Soccer** team achieved the most victories by an Amityville soccer team since 1990, and the **Football** team earned Suffolk County Champion status, making it to the playoffs for the third consecutive season. The **middle school Boys Basketball** team finished its second consecutive undefeated season, and **Varsity Boys Basketball** coach Jack Agostino celebrated his 400th win during his career in the district. The Warriors continue to impress academically as well, with many students achieving Scholar-Athlete status, maintaining academic averages of 90% or better for the season.



*The district's "All-Academic Team" is made up of athletes from various sports who maintain a GPA of 90% or better during their respective seasons.*



*Members of the Boys and Girls Varsity Soccer teams earned New York State Scholar-Athlete status for maintaining a GPA of 90% or higher during their respective seasons.*

## Creativity Abounds

### Honors in the Arts



The district is pleased to announce that the work of two high school art students was selected for the Nassau Community College Annual Art/Science Exhibition. This year's topic was "How the media redefines the truth." Tenth-grade student Rebecca Levenberg entered her work titled "Girls Gone Anorexic" in the mixed-media category. Senior Eileen Interiano's pastel painting called "Immigration" was also on exhibit. "We are extremely proud that two of our young artists represented Amityville Memorial High School at Nassau Community College," stated high school principal Dr. Scott Andrews.

### ART CREW SHARES TALENTS



Members of the Park Avenue Art Crew support many school and community initiatives through their artistic creations. Advised by Park Avenue art teacher Dorothy MacGregor, the group meets after school to prepare thematic works of art for various events and occasions. They also beautify the Park Avenue auditorium, where the community and Board of Education come together for meetings.

# Students Benefit from *District Music Program*

## Congratulations

Nine music students have been chosen to participate in the highly selective Suffolk County Music Educators Association's (SCMEA) All-County performing groups. Students were chosen based on their NYSSMA solo levels and ratings, NYSSMA festival comments, and teacher recommendations.

**Meghan Brooks**

(Flute – Div. 3 Band – High School)

**Anthony Abate**

(Tenor Sax – Div. 2 Band – Middle School)

**Maridalia Abreu**

(Soprano – Div. 2 Chorus – Middle School)

**Kaliq Alexander**

(Baritone – Div. 2 Chorus – Middle School)

**Catherine Arriola**

(Soprano – Div. 2 Chorus – Middle School)

**Stephanie Boegle**

(Soprano – Div. 2 Chorus – Middle School)

**Simone Smith**

(Soprano – Div. 3 Chorus – Middle School)

**Roxanne Roach**

(Violin – Div. 2 Orchestra – Middle School)

**Nia Dennis**

(Clarinet – Div. 1 Band – Park Avenue)

## Sounds of Music

The sound of music resonated through the halls as student-musicians fine-tuned their musical skills prior to each school's concert. The high school's Chamber Ensemble provided a sneak peek or "mini-performance" of their talents for the Board of Education, and also gave back to the community by performing in a number of outside venues. Each school's concert was well attended.



In order to help ensure that the middle school music concert was a great success, members of the high school's Tri-M Music Honor Society took time out of their busy academic schedules to coach the younger student-musicians. The two sets of students gathered in small groups in hallways and



music classrooms as the middle-schoolers practiced their musical numbers. The Tri-M students worked them through any difficulties they were having. This is the second year that the Tri-M members have participated in peer tutoring the middle school music students.

## High School Drama Club Provides Top-Notch Entertainment

Under the direction of Melissa Asbell and Elisa Castro, the high school Drama Club presented an entertaining production of Once Upon a Mattress, which depicts the story of the Princess and the pea. The students rehearsed regularly after school and worked together to perfect their performance, which included singing and dancing. The talented group is pictured after providing the Board of Education with a "sneak peak" of the drama prior to performing in three sold-out shows. Congratulations on a job well done.





# Making *Meaningful* Choices

In order to help students make smart, healthy life choices, the high school has invited a number of outside groups to share their important messages with students. In one such production, Stories of Substance (SOS) used the power of theater and peer education to address sensitive subjects such as drug and alcohol abuse, child and girlfriend/boyfriend abuse, overuse of caffeine drinks, and even the effect of an alcoholic parent on the family.

Sponsored by KFB Prevention Through the Arts, SOS presented a theatrical performance for high school students in the auditorium, where they enacted common, and not-so-common, situations involving substance abuse. SOS features a cast of college students, some of whom are studying special topics in theater. Following the performance, SOS peer educators opened the floor to questions from the students and encouraged them to share their opinions of the performance, as well as their own encounters and feelings. SOS productions are often scripted after real-life stories that come from the very students for whom they perform and advise.

Making the right choices results in positive consequences. This was the message delivered to students by the Nassau County District Attorney's Office during their program, Choices and Consequences. The presentation is designed to steer students away from substance abuse, using graphic footage of automobile accidents and testimonies from young people who have been arrested for drunk driving incidents. Students are advised that if they choose to disregard the important message discouraging substance abuse, they should at least have a plan for getting home safely. After the assembly, students were provided with an overview of the laws governing drunk driving. Some students even volunteered to wear 'beer goggles,' used by the police to provide a true perspective of how alcohol abuse can temporarily impair a person's vision, and subsequently, his or her reactions.



*Amityville students got up close and personal with the SOS peer educators.*



*Lieutenant Gerard Gralton assists John Vasquez in trying on goggles to replicate the effects of drunkenness.*

## Middle School Students **Give from the Heart**

The Shared Decision-Making Team at the middle school has implemented a new program, "Giving from the Heart," that encourages students to participate in random acts of kindness and generosity. Each month, a positive character trait is focused on, and any student who 'gets caught' displaying that trait becomes part of a group who is rewarded. The winning group has a say in their reward, and one of the more interesting and well-received rewards was to allow the students to play the faculty in a spirited game of basketball. Pictured is the student team, with Ms. Maria Carrua and Ms. Janine Cobian, the teachers who coached them and proud Principal Mark Pitterson (back row, right of center), who presented each student with a certificate and praised him or her for making their school a better place.





# STUDENTS AND STA

## Collaborative Efforts

### Feelin' Fractions Districtwide

Students were immersed in all things fraction during the first annual districtwide Fraction Day. Math Director Claude Irwin explained that the day was designed to allow students in kindergarten through 12th grade to study the mechanics of fractions and become engaged in the concept. "Many students feel anxious when they have to perform a mathematical function with a fraction, and this event is intended to reduce that anxiety," Mr. Irwin stated.



Math Director Claude Irwin is pictured with middle school students Mauricio Rivas, Amaya Perry, and Andre Francis during Fraction Day.



Kathleen Hyland's sixth-grade class at Park Avenue wore armbands to identify themselves as fractions.



Northwest students are pictured with first-grade teacher Kristina Komsic during a lesson on fractions and how it related to the slicing of a pizza pie.

### Walking to Higher Reading Levels



As part of their goal to increase students' reading comprehension levels and promote literacy throughout the school community, teachers and administrators at Park Avenue created and implemented the "Walk to Read" program for third graders. One period per day these students enjoy a privilege typically reserved for "big kids" – they change classes (much like middle and high schoolers do) and walk to special reading classes for which they are grouped by ability and need levels. The third-grade teachers share all 200 students on a typical day, implementing a variety of teaching methods and interventions designed to improve reading skills. Students meet in guided reading groups, and visit centers where they can experience learning in small group settings at the pace and level best suited for them. "We are already seeing the results of our efforts," stated Ms. Musso, referring to the in-house decoding assessments that are administered to students on a regular basis.



Lisa Zomback works with students on building sight words.



Melissa McCormack works with students in a guided reading group.

# WORK HARD AT WORK Yield Positive Results

## VIRTUAL LEARNING KEEPS STUDENTS ON TRACK

The Virtual Academy began during the fourth quarter of the last school year, but the program's success has been staggering. Four days a week, students who are unable to attend regular classes for a number of reasons now have the opportunity to catch up on assignments through the use of web-based programs in a special computer lab provided by the district. Stated Virtual Academy supervisor Steven Lindenfeld, "The Virtual Academy replaces home tutoring, and students are successful due to the one-on-one teacher support."

The Virtual Academy is directed through Right Reason Technologies, a provider of web-based training and e-learning solutions. The company provides the Virtual Academy with a liaison to provide support with technical issues and online assignments.



*Right Reason Technologies liaison Jamie Wood provides support for Virtual Academy students and teachers.*

## Student Curators Display Work on Egypt

Denise Graham's sixth-grade students at Park Avenue culminated their studies of Egypt with a unique project that allowed them to creatively express what they had learned, and then share their knowledge with other students and faculty.

To begin their studies, students visited the Egypt Room at the Vanderbilt Museum in Centerport. Ms. Graham gave students a list of seven assignments from which to choose one, all of which required them to research and prepare a creative project. While some students chose to construct pyramids, others created board games modeled after Egyptian recreational customs or wrote and illustrated magazines depicting ancient Egyptian fashion. For the presentation of their projects, students collectively put their work on display in their own little museum, having been inspired by the Vanderbilt trip and a Q & A with the curator.



*Students show some of the items they created and displayed in their own museum of ancient Egypt.*

## It's a Prime Time to Read



*Superintendent of Schools Dr. John Williams admired student Kalani Shand's Dr. Seuss hat.*

Elementary school students and parents throughout the district gathered at Northeast on the night of March 2 to promote literacy and celebrate the birthday of beloved author Dr. Seuss. Guests created and decorated construction paper Seuss hats in the cafeteria before they marched into the gymnasium for several reading activities.

Northeast library teacher Tina Smith explained, "The purpose of the evening is to motivate students to read, which is an important factor in student achievement and lifelong success." Teachers read a sampling of popular Dr. Seuss books and surprise storyteller Celine Lieffrig of the Amityville Public Library, read *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street*, Dr. Seuss's first book, published in 1937.

Students also enjoyed games of Seuss Bingo, read quietly with their parents, enjoyed a crazy hat snack, and culminated the celebration with a Happy Birthday sing-along.



*Michael Melendez, Carlos Ponce, and Juan Ponce proudly wore their Dr. Seuss hats during the reading event.*



# Not Your Average Career Day!

Due to the cooperative efforts of the guidance team and staff members, the district continues to offer career exploration opportunities, not just at the secondary level, but at the elementary level as well. Park Avenue hosted its second annual Career Day, coordinated by guidance counselors Kimberly Balducci and Donna Salerno and teacher Kerrin Hughes. The event was part of an ongoing effort to expose students to career information and help them identify options at an early age. During the latest career-oriented event, middle school students were in awe when a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter landed on the grounds of their school, piloted by Captain Kougemitros and co-pilot Chief Warrant Officer Wortman. Students had the opportunity for true, real-world, hands-on learning as they entered the cockpit and handled the chopper's controls. Director of Mathematics Claude Irwin was instrumental in arranging for the chopper's landing. "Today is about dreaming big, and making those dreams a reality," he said to students.



*Community members graciously volunteered their time to participate in Park Avenue's Second Annual Career Day.*



*Captain Kougemitros landed a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter on the middle school grounds during Career Day.*



*Students had the opportunity to get a close-up look at the controls of the chopper.*

## Dates to Remember

**April 30 – May 1**

**EWMMS Musical**

**7:30 pm – AMHS Auditorium**

**May 11**

**AMHS**

**National Honor Society Induction**

**7 pm – Auditorium**

**May 12**

**EWMMS**

**National Junior Honor Society  
Induction**

**12:30 pm – Gymnasium**

**May 12**

**Board of Education**

**Regular Meeting**

**7 pm – PAMES**

**May 18**

**SCHOOL BUDGET VOTE**

**7 am – 9 pm**

**AMHS and NE**

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Budget Vote and Board Trustee Election

**Tuesday, May 18, 2010**

**7:00 A.M. - 9:00 P.M.**

**Amityville Memorial High School and  
Northeast Elementary School**

## ARE YOU REGISTERED TO VOTE?

The Board of Education and administration encourage all residents to register to vote. In order to vote you must be:

- 18 years of age or older
- A United States citizen
- A resident of the district for more than 30 days prior to the day of the vote (two proofs of residency are required)
- Registered with either the school district or the Suffolk County Board of Elections

For more information, contact the District Clerk at 598-6507.

## BOARD OF EDUCATION

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