



COPIAGUE. Connections

Spring 2015

COPIAGUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS - A GREAT PLACE TO LEARN

COMMUNITY SUMMIT: *Working Together for a Brighter Future*

Welcoming more than 275 community members, as well as local legislators, the Board of Education and administration hosted their annual Community Summit Breakfast on March 7. Following the theme "Great Schools Make Great Communities: Working Together for a Brighter Future," the District representatives delivered a state of the district report, focusing on the District's finances, aging infrastructure and millions in lost state aid while simultaneously highlighting student successes. Legislators in attendance included Town of Babylon Deputy Supervisor Tony Martinez, Presiding Officer of the Suffolk County Legislature DuWayne Gregory, New York State Assemblywoman Kimberly Jean-Pierre and New York State Senator Michael Venditto.

"The breakfast is an opportunity for the legislators to hear the concerns of our community, as well as for the District to thank them for their past support," said Board of Education President Brian J. Sales. "In order for our

legislators to effectively lobby for us, they need to hear from us."

Mr. Sales noted that despite the challenging times in education, including significant loss in state funding, changes to the curriculum and the implementation of APPR, Copiague students continue to succeed. He also touched upon the District's administration success plan by thanking retiring Superintendent Charles A. Leunig for his years of service and congratulating Dr. Kathleen Bannon, Jeanette Altruda, Joseph Agosta and Karla Cangelosi for their appointments as superintendent of schools, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School principal and Great Neck Road Elementary School principal, respectively.

Mr. Leunig presented the State of the Copiague School District, in which he discussed the challenges currently facing the District. "Educationally, we are on very solid footing; fiscally, we are on shifting sand," he said. "We need the help of our legislators to get us on much



firmer fiscal ground so we can continue to offer our children these programs. We need enough state aid each year so that we have a sustainable revenue stream that helps offset the limiting factors of the tax cap."

During the summit, audience members were introduced to the top 10 members of the Class of 2015 and enjoyed performances by Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School's Jazz Band and Madrigal Choir, Great Neck Road Elementary School's Sign Language Club and Susan E. Wiley Elementary School's Dance

Club. They also watched an "in their own words" multimedia presentation featuring students discussing what they value in their education.

Attendees concluded the program by participating in a school community input activity to elicit input and support for a capital improvement project. The information gathered will assist the Board in tailoring the project for the community. Following up on the community input, the Board separately hosted a similar activity with the top 20 members of the Class of 2015.

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Committed
to Community...see inside

COMMITTED TO Community

The Board of Education, administration and staff work in tandem with the Copiague community to provide students with a well-rounded educational experience. Along with offering a comprehensive curriculum, the District believes in instilling good morals and ethics that will produce model citizens on the road to college and the workplace.

Through various school clubs and programs, students are given the opportunity to build good character, develop leadership skills and make a difference in the Copiague community and beyond. "We take great pride in ensuring our students are well-rounded individuals," said Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig. "By participating in various community service activities, our students learn the value of helping others."

This newsletter features just a few of the clubs and programs that focus on giving back to the community.

Key Club

Also sponsored by the district, Key Club provides students with opportunities to build leadership skills and foster caring and responsible attitudes. Each year, students participate in various community service projects throughout the Copiague community.

Each year, the Key Club hosts several fundraisers for sick children. One of the most popular fundraisers is the Key Club fundraiser that builds awareness and encourages communities to provide support for children in need.

SOUL Environmental Club

The SOUL Environmental Club plays a vital role in keeping our school grounds beautiful. The club focuses on becoming more environmentally friendly at our high school. Through various projects, they inspire others to take action. For example, they participate in Adopt-A-Highway projects and begin a mission to plant trees in Babylon for the SOUL Environmental Club.

"This project gives our students the opportunity to give back to the community and take responsibility for our environment."

Tree Huggerz

In an effort to improve our school's environment, the Tree Huggerz club focuses on tree gardening and improving our school grounds. Through a hands-on learning approach, members learn about trees and their importance in academic lessons, field trips, and projects in the outdoors. Club members participate in various tree gardening projects.

The club's primary focus is on maintaining our school's garden. Over the years, members have determined which vegetables and fruits grow best in our garden and have grown seedlings that will be planted in the school's garden. The club's newest initiative is creating gardens on our school grounds.

"We would love to have you experience planting a tree with us," says James Travis, the club's president.

Service Learning Committee

Susan E. Wiley Elementary School provides students the opportunity to use their talents and skills to help others. Through various projects, students use their time and talents to help others in need. Through the Copiague Kiwanis, students write letters to children in need and provide support to students and faculty who are in need.

"We have the most talented students and we instill in them the value of service learning with them through their projects," says Matuszewicz.

Home and Careers

The Home and Careers Club, open to seventh- and eighth-graders at the middle school, creates, shares and enjoys ways to help the community while reinforcing skills learned in class. Organized by consumer science teacher Christine Barteldt, the club is geared toward promoting a safe and happy school environment while engaging in unique community service projects.

In addition to community projects, the club is also actively involved in anti-bullying events at their school and encouraging their peers to make healthy food choices.

Builders Club

The Builders Club, a Copiague Kiwanis-sponsored middle school organization led by art teacher Maria Ostrofsky, provides opportunities for students to work together in service to their school and the community. As their motto, "We Build," indicates, the Builders Club is for young people who want to take positive, constructive action to build a better world for themselves and others. Their goal is to develop leadership qualities in young people through experiences in volunteer community service. With each project, the students learn that concerned individuals working together can make a difference.



the Kiwanis Club, the high school's Key Club is part student-led organization that provides its members with character, provide community service, develop leadership inclusiveness. Under the advisement of JoAnn Erwin, projects that benefit their school, the District, the and beyond.

Club sponsor food and toy drives, cancer walks and patients. The club also takes part in the Thirst Project, a freshwater wells in developing nations and impoverished people with safe, clean water.

UL (Student Organization of Unified Leaders) Club focuses on high school students taking an active the community and environment clean. Last spring, part in Suffolk County's Adopt-A-Highway program, responsible for eight to nine cleanups a year in front of the on Dixon Avenue. The club hopes to act as a model and other high schools throughout the state to take part in the Adopt-A-Highway program. Club advisor Joe Mannix is looking to middle school Adopt-A-Highway program with the Town of for the spring of 2015.

program is great for the kids," said Mr. Mannix. "It allows give back to their community while learning about social ity."

use education with environmental awareness, the high Club focuses on promoting healthy lifestyles through the environment. The club uses a project-based meaning the learning starts in the classroom with formal followed by students implementing what they have learned club members put their classroom skills into practice during

project each year is restoring and growing the high for the winter, the club researches their options to vegetables they would like to grow. In March, members will be planted in the garden in the spring. One of the is assisting the middle school and elementary schools of their own.

to see gardens at all of our schools so that students can a tiny seed and watching it grow," said club advisor

mentary School's Service Learning Committee gives ability to help their school and local community at a young projects, students learn to give back by donating their hers. Students recently donated items to troops overseas VFW, made donations to an animal shelter and wrote the Stony Brook Children's Hospital. In the spring, will plant flowers and bushes in front of the school. influence over them at this age, so the more we can ue of giving back, the more likely they are to carry it their academic careers and beyond," said advisor Iwona



The Great Neck Road Elementary School SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) Club educates students on making good decisions and the importance of being an "upstander" instead of a bystander in difficult situations. In addition to teaching these lessons, club advisors Lissette Persico and Adrienne Mahoney select one to two outreach projects for the club to focus on each year.

"The students really feel good about giving back to the community," said Ms. Mahoney. "It makes them feel like they have some power to change the world, because they do."



Students throughout the District participate in their schools' student governments, which allows members to display the attributes of a leader and be a role model for fellow classmates.

At the middle school, the student council works to provide additional school activities for students. Officers are elected by their peers, and each homeroom has a representative. Regular biweekly meetings are held to plan school spirit days, food drives, scholarships and rewards for good behavior.

Teachers at Deauville Gardens East and Deauville Gardens West work to provide elementary students with opportunities that support the District's character education program through student government-led projects. Students are involved in decorating cards and creating care packages for military troops, holding mitten tree, food and toy drives, and undertaking numerous other projects that encourage leadership.



To view a video spotlighting a few of the community service clubs, please use your smart phone to scan below.





Character & Talent Celebrated

Twenty-one students from throughout the District stood out among their peers and were honored for their hard work by the Board of Education at the Student Recognition Awards on Feb. 11. This tradition, conducted twice a year, was started by the Board of Education to honor students who make unique contributions to their school community or have succeeded despite personal challenges.

The District extends its congratulations to the following students:

Deauville Gardens East:

Chloe Allen-Jackson
Tiana Newman
Valeria Padilla
Luis Tejada

Great Neck Road:

Kayla Allison
Luis Rosario Balbuena
Martin Rybka

High School:

Jennifer Cabrera
Joseph Pearson
David Szabo
Demitrius Terrell
Lauren Zisman

Deauville Gardens West:

John Compono
Julianna Sakin

Susan E. Wiley:

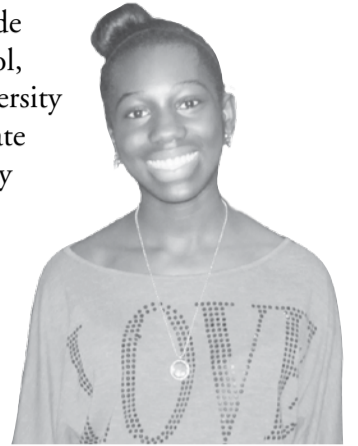
Davante Jenkins
Paige Wilimczyk

Middle School:

Mery Gomez Herrera
Daniel Gutierrez-Huertas
Jamila Jackson
Faith McCombs
Joshua Molina

A Faithful Leader

Faith McCombs, an eighth-grade student at Copiague Middle School, was selected by Stony Brook University School of Social Work to participate in the 28th annual Youth Academy "Counseling and Treating People of Colour: An International Perspective" Leadership Conference held last December.



Nominated by her mother, Faith, along with other students ages 10 to 17, traveled to New Orleans, Louisiana, to attend the peer leadership conference. During the three-day event, Faith had the opportunity to participate in educational workshops, hear from guest speakers, and network with peers and adults from across the United States.

The conference helped equip participants with skills for successful leadership by focusing on six areas of social work: health, mental health, substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, violence prevention and education.

"Faith has a very bright future ahead," said Principal Andrew Lagnado. "If she chooses a career path that allows her to help people, we are confident she will be quite successful."

To remain updated on important information and upcoming events, please "like" the Copiague Public Schools Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/CopiaguePublicSchools>



STUDENTS SHINE IN 'Godspell'

Students at Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School demonstrated their theatrical talents when they brought to the stage the exuberant and colorful musical production of "Godspell," presented by the fine arts department.

Set in modern-day New York City, "Godspell," created by John-Michael Tebelak, follows a group of people who help the character of Jesus Christ tell different parables by using a wide variety of comedic games and storytelling techniques. Composed by Stephen Schwartz, an eclectic blend of songs ranging from pop to vaudeville is employed as the story of Jesus' life dances across the stage. In the

end, Jesus' messages of kindness, tolerance and love are vibrantly brought to life.

The musical was directed by Gina Occhiogrosso and included support from assistant director Michelle Budion, choreographer Sylvia Walsh and many other skilled individuals. The cumulative efforts of faculty, staff and students resulted in an exceptional musical performance.

"The students had a great time doing the show," said Ms. Occhiogrosso. "It turned out to be a blast for all of us, and we were really excited to put the show on for the community."



Using your smart phone, scan the QR to the left to view a video highlighting "Godspell."

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