

DATES TO Remember

- February 2-6**
Kindergarten Registration
- February 9**
Board of Education Meeting
@ 7:30 pm
- February 12**
HS Pops Concert
- February 16-20**
Schools Closed
- February 26**
HS African American
Heritage Celebration

Keeping Schools *Safe* and *Secure*

School safety and security are major issues currently facing school districts across the country. In an effort to strengthen its already strong Emergency Management Plan, the district has obtained a \$100,000 Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REM) federal security grant.

According to Joseph Millan, the Director of School Safety, the district will be using the grant monies to purchase a variety of equipment and supplies, as well as for training of administrators, teachers, and staff. To receive the grant, the district administration had to describe how they would incorporate the money into increasing and strengthening the Four Phases of an Emergency Management Plan, which include prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

The REM federal security grant will be used to purchase five Evacu-tracs, which provide safe, reliable and fast emergency evacuation for students and teachers with mobility issues and special needs; Emergency Go Kits, knapsacks that have first aid kits, class rosters, daily attendance records, and a

vest for the teacher to be readily identified; and a new Visitor Management System that will be placed at the reception area in each building to streamline registration, print professional visitor badges (that include photo, date of birth, date of visit, and area visiting) and view reports of all activities. A pilot will be run at the high school in the spring.

"It's important to steadily improve our Emergency Management Plan at every opportunity," stated Mr. Millan. "The purchase I am most excited about, because it gives a great and immediate impact, is the Visitor Management System. It will be an effective deterrent to people who should not be in our buildings."

In addition, the district will work with the Suffolk County Department of Health to create a pandemic flu response procedures in the event of a breakout and receive NIMS (National Incident Management System) Training. Also, in each building the district will hold 12 evacuation drills per year, including 11 fire drills and one non-fire evacuation drill, one lockdown drill, one modified lockdown drill and one shelter-in-place drill.

Emergency School Closings

In the event that it becomes necessary to close the schools because of inclement weather or an emergency situation, a districtwide automated telephone call will be made to all parents and staff. In addition, the following radio and television stations and website will broadcast the closing of schools.

WHLI - 1100 AM WCBS - 880 AM WBAB - 102.3 FM
 WALK - 97.5 FM WALK - 1370 AM WKJY - 98.3 FM
 WBZO - 103.1 FM WBLI - 106.1 FM WMJC - 94.3 FM
 News 12 Long Island
 Website: www.copiague.k12.ny.us

KHANG NGUYEN IS COMMENDED

Khang Nguyen, a senior at Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School, has been named as a Commended Student in the 2009 National Merit Scholarship Program. Approximately 34,000 Commended Students throughout the nation were recognized for their exceptional academic promise. Although they will not continue in the 2009 competition for National Merit Scholarships, Commended Students placed among the top five percent of more than 1.5 million students who entered the 2009 competition by taking the 2007 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test.

Khang was recently named the Class of 2009 Valedictorian and is currently President of the National Honor Society, DECA, Captain of the Quiz Bowl team, Drum Major in the award-winning Marching Band, and a member of the spring track team. He is also a religion educator at his local church. Khang hopes to major in Economics this fall at Stanford University, Dartmouth College, Cornell University, Brown University, Columbia University, or Stony Brook University.



KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION FEBRUARY 2-6

Kindergarten registration for the Copiague School District will be held at the District Administration Office, located in the Copiague Middle School on Great Neck Road, from February 2-6, 2009 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and again from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., by appointment only. Children who will turn five on or before December 1, 2009 are eligible to attend school in September 2009. Registration requirements include proof of the child's age, residence within the boundaries of the Copiague School District, and immunization against polio, measles, rubella (German measles), mumps, diphtheria, and hepatitis B. Additional information on immunizations should be requested from your child's physician. A law recently enacted in 2008 expands a physical to include Dental Health Screening. For registration information, call 842-4015, ext. 538. Those who do not plan to register their children at this time should also call school officials to assist in the District's planning.

En español

Niños que cumplen 5 años de edad antes del primero de Diciembre de 2009 deben matricularse para Kindergarten en la Oficina Administrativa Central localizada en el 2650 Great Neck Road en Copiague comenzando el 2-6 Febrero, 2009. Por favor de llamar al 842-4015 x538 para hacer una cita.

New Playgrounds

PROVIDE TONS OF ENTERTAINMENT

The students at Deauville Gardens and Susan E. Wiley Elementary Schools are enjoying recess on brand new playgrounds. The two new American Recreational products were purchased using proceeds from the district's vending machines resulting in no cost to taxpayers.

Copiague Connections

Issued by the Copiague Board of Education as an information service to taxpayers and parents



Copiague Public Schools

A GREAT PLACE TO LEARN

www.copiague.k12.ny.us

WINTER 2009

Spreading Holiday Cheer

More than 350 senior citizens from Amityville, Copiague, and Lindenhurst gathered at Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School for the annual Senior to Senior Dinner. Approximately 150 seniors from the Class of 2009, with help from their advisors aDrena Brown and Corinne Myer, volunteered their time to dance, serve dinner, and mingle with the senior citizens.

"I feel that it is important for the district to continue holding the Senior to Senior Dinner because it shows the senior citizens that they are an important part of the Copiague Public Schools whether or not they have family members still attending our schools. It is also a way for the

seniors of the Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School to show support to the senior citizens and give back to the community," said Ms. Brown.

During the dinner, attendees enjoyed performances by the Madrigal Choir, directed by Larry Wurtzel, whose members sang a number of Christmas songs, and the Copiague Step Team, coached by Ms. Brown, which presented several step routines.

"I think it's a great opportunity to get to know the people in our community who help support our education," said twelfth-grader Alexandria Hutchinson. Added twelfth-grade student Latoya Bailey, "Seniors should have some fun, too!"

The Senior Class would also like to thank the following local businesses for donating food to the Senior to Senior Dinner: Albert's Pizza, Bellissimo Ristorante, Caridad, Chateau La Mer, Dunkin' Donuts, El Classico, Foods of Italia, Friendly's, Giacomo's Italian Bakery, Golden Pine Deli, Hollywood Food Deli, Joe's Pizzeria, Mema's Little Things, Mike's Pizzeria & Restaurant, New Palermos Pizza, Pizza Express, Pizza Hut, Salvitos Bakery, Speedy Mart, Starbucks, The Bulldog Grille, The Woodlands Country Club, and Zheung Xing Kitchen.

"Without their assistance we could not have hosted such a successful event," said Ms. Myer.



Copiague School District
Copiague N.Y. 11726

ECRWSS
Resident
Copiague School District

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Copiague, N.Y. 11726
Permit No. 42



BOARD OF EDUCATION

Brian J. Sales, *President* Laura Gavey, *Vice President*
 Michael Greb, *2nd Vice President* Doris Fischer Henry Johnson
 Rosemary Natoli Everett E. Newman III

Charles A. Leunig, *Superintendent of Schools*

A MESSAGE from the Superintendent

Dear Residents,

Welcome to our Winter 2009 double issue of Copiague Connections, our official district newsletter! It's hard to believe that almost one half of the school year has passed! In this issue you will find numerous articles and stories focusing on the latest happenings in the Copiague Schools, including some highlights of recent holiday programs and special events which occurred during the late fall and early winter. Of particular note, our Marching Band continues to impress both locally and at the national level - you will read about them being

the only marching band from the entire northeast invited to march in the annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade - another coup in a very long list of accomplishments.

Also featured, among others, are stories about the college planning process, our annual Homecoming parade and festivities, the latest Hall of Achievement inductees, our first-ever annual Madrigal Reunion Concert, a burgeoning and incredible Middle School Theater Arts program, our award-winning food service program, and stories honoring and recognizing our nation's veterans.

As you receive this newsletter, we will be in the midst of completing all of our annual districtwide New York State ELA testing, mid-term and Regents examinations and will be looking forward to incremental improvements in all areas. I should note that the continuing theme that runs throughout this edition of our

newsletter and all others is our never-ending single-minded focus on student achievement. Every teacher, administrator, and staff member is working hard to ensure that every one of our students realizes success over the course of this year and beyond.

I hope that you enjoy reading about our students' positive activities and successes both in the classroom and other arenas, and join us in helping make 2009 the best year ever in our history. After all, *Copiague is a great place to Live, Learn, and Work!*

Regards,



Charles A. Leunig
Superintendent of Schools

COPIAGUE COMES OUT TO SAY

Thank You

The members of the Board of Education are volunteers who devote countless hours to ensure children in the school district receive a high-value education, while keeping their promise to the community to be cost-efficient and fiscally responsible.



During the Board of Education meeting on October 20 the community, district administrators, staff and students joined to show their appreciation for the dedication and vision the Board has demonstrated in leading the district to the next level of success.

The Copiague Middle School Select Chorus, under the direction of Ms. Gina Occhiogrosso, showcased their musical talents and expressed their appreciation to the Board for their support of the arts by performing several songs in English, Spanish, Latin and Polish.

"Each member of the Board commits countless hours to serving our students and our community," stated Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig. "Together they have a combined total of 70 years of experience as Board members. We are grateful for their professionalism and commitment and thank them for their efforts on behalf of our students and the community." In addition, several administrators, staff, and PTA representatives were also in attendance to express their appreciation on behalf of their membership. Refreshments, provided by the PTA, were served.

UPDATE ON TECHNOLOGY

This school year students and staff members throughout the district are benefiting from the deployment of several new technologies and upgrades. "The twin goals of improving student achievement, and providing staff and students with access to the tools and data they need, guide our efforts," stated Director of Technology Todd Harris.



In June, teachers and students in the high school presented a play as part of a live videoconference with the district's three elementary schools. As part of the district's technology plan, elementary classroom teachers have received new laptop computers for use with their students and the district's student data system. Every classroom computer at the Susan E. Wiley Elementary School has been replaced, as have the Middle School teacher laptops. The district has also provided additional laptop carts, printers, scanners, LCD projectors, document cameras, and SMART Boards in each of the schools classrooms. The secondary schools have each been set up with new wireless networks that are ten times faster than the systems previously in place.

During the 2007-08 school year, for the fourth consecutive year, the district conducted the most videoconferences in Western Suffolk. Copiague strives to provide outstanding technical support, training and resources to the students and staff. Please check the technology link on the district website for more information and access links to hundreds of educational websites - www.copiague.k12.ny.us

Copiague School District Food Services Department AWARDED GOLD

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has recognized all three district elementary schools - Deauville Gardens, Great Neck Road, and Susan E. Wiley - as a Gold-Level Team Nutrition School in the HealthierUS School Challenge. The district is the only one to receive this honor in the entire State of New York. The Challenge was developed in support of President Bush's HealthierUS Initiative, which helps Americans take steps to improve personal health and fitness and encourages all Americans to be physically active every day, eat a nutritious diet, get preventative screenings, and make healthy choices.

In a letter to the district, Director of the Child Nutrition Division of the United States Department of Agriculture Cynthia Long wrote, "[Your schools] demonstrate the attributes of the HealthierUS School Challenge: being enrolled as a Team Nutrition School, offering reimbursable lunches that demonstrate healthy menu-planning practices and principles of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, providing nutrition education to students, providing the opportunity for physical education, maintaining an average daily participation of 70 percent or higher for reimbursable lunches, and adhering to guidelines established by FNS for foods served and sold in school outside of the National School Lunch Program."

The Copiague Food Service Department serves 3,100 lunches districtwide on a daily basis. Every day students are offered fresh fruit and low-fat milk, salad lunches are an option four days a week, with a side salad provided with Friday's meal, and 95% of all bread products are whole grain. "The object of offering healthy options to students every day is to help them to develop good eating habits at a young age so they're more apt to carry them throughout their lives," said Linda R. Leonardi, R.D., Director of the Copiague Public School District Food Service Department.

"I am very honored for the Food Service Department to be recognized for its hard work in providing nutritious meals on a daily basis for the students of Copiague," stated Mrs. Leonardi. "Along with the recognition of the lunch program, it has been a coordinated effort involving the support of the Board of Education and administration of this very important issue of a healthy lifestyle for all children." The awards are effective for a two-year period, following this year.

PREPARING FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

In light of the economic forecast and the unpredictable impact next year's New York State Budget will have on state aid to local school districts, the Copiague Public Schools will continue to take steps to contain costs in both the short and long term while remaining committed to the preservation of a quality education for all of our children. Some examples of cost-saving measures currently in effect for the remainder of the 2008-2009 school year include:

- Curtailing out-of-state travel for conferences and field trips
- Reorganizing and consolidating practice schedules for teams and other activities
- Moving all weekend programs to the high school to reduce and consolidate weekend use of buildings
- Curtailing overtime
- Consolidating certain staff positions
- Pursuing additional grant opportunities to offset budget expenditures.

Copiague Honors Fall Athletes

Hard work, determination, and athletic talent were honored at the annual Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School Fall Sports Awards Dinner. Sponsored by the Booster Club, more than 140 student-athletes were acknowledged at the event. This season the district honored members of the Boys and Girls Soccer, Gymnastics, Boys Cross-Country, Boys Golf, Field Hockey, Girls Tennis, Volleyball, and Football teams.



Continuing a yearly tradition, five special memorial awards were presented to outstanding athletes for demonstrating leadership on and off the field. This year Laura Natoli (Girls Soccer) was selected for the Michael S. Cohen Award, Amanda Fanizza (Gymnastics) was the recipient of the Dolores Sandefur Award, Joseph Pulido (Boys Soccer) was presented with the Lombardo Award, the Barbara Day Award was bestowed on Lindsay Wunsch (Field Hockey), and Danielle Dickson (Volleyball) received the Deborah Tekosky Award. A Golden Eagle award is also given to a student on each team who had the highest cumulative grade point average for the season. For the fall season, Mateusz Anilowski (Boys Soccer), Stephanie Diegue (Tennis), John Dzikowski (Golf), Amanda Fanizza (Gymnastics), Jessica Murphy (Girls Soccer), Corey O'Brien (Football), Katherine Silva (Volleyball), Monika Sulima (Field Hockey), and Maxwell Woelk (Cross-Country) were all presented the Golden Eagle.

IEASIA WALKER SIGNS NATIONAL LETTER OF INTENT



Commits to University of South Carolina

Ieasia Walker, a senior at Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School, signed a National Letter of Intent with the University of South Carolina. Ieasia received a full scholarship to attend USC and play basketball for its women's team.

"I'm excited," said Ieasia. "USC has a great coaching staff and I look forward to working with head coach Dawn Staley and the rest of the staff."

Ieasia has been a member of the Copiague Girls Varsity Basketball Team for the last five years, beginning in seventh grade. Last year at her position of point guard, she averaged 19.4 points per game, 8.7 rebounds, 7.4 assists, and 5.1 steals. She was recently named MVP of the 2008 Metro Classic "Boros vs. Burbs" All-Star Game, and according to espn.com, Ieasia is the No. 70 prospect in their HoopGurlz Hundred for 2009.

"Over the last five varsity seasons Ieasia has demonstrated tremendous improvement in her game," stated Copiague Girls Varsity Basketball coach Carol Olsen. "She presently has accrued 1528 career points at Copiague and has led our team to three league championships and two Suffolk County semifinal appearances. I, along with Coach Garcia and Coach Ferreti, wish Ieasia the best of luck as she pursues her collegiate career."

In the Zone

On December 3rd at the East Wind Caterers Inn in Wading River, two Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School seniors were presented with the New York State Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance Suffolk Zone Award. Daniel Kurzyp and Danielle Dickson were awarded certificates and gold medals recognizing their outstanding achievement as Physical Education students, scholars, and citizens.

"Daniel is an exemplary student athlete," stated Peter Cesare, Coordinator of Physical Education and Athletics. "He strives to excel in the classroom and serves as a role model on and off the field." Throughout his high school career, Daniel maintained an "A" average while participating in sports and school activities, while also holding a job. Daniel has a "team first" attitude and is extremely competitive. His determination is to be the best he possibly can, consistently showing outstanding effort in physical education. Daniel plans to enter college and study business as well as continue competing in athletics.

Speaking about Danielle, Mr. Cesare stated, "She is a hardworking student and a competitive athlete." During her years of high school, she has maintained an "A" average while at the same time excelling in sports. Danielle hopes to attend Stony Brook University and major in pharmacology. Her physical education teachers have inspired her to continue participating in sports throughout her years in college.



Varsity Fall Award Winners 2008

| Sport | Name | Award |
|------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Field Hockey | Lindsay Wunsch | All-Division |
| Field Hockey | Samantha Spadone | All-Division |
| Field Hockey | Brittney Ott | All-Division |
| Boys Soccer | Jiovany Marcia | Exceptional Seniors Team |
| Boys Soccer | Jiovany Marcia | All-Conference |
| Boys Soccer | Jiovany Marcia | All-County |
| Boys Soccer | Joseph Pulido | Exceptional Seniors Team |
| Boys Soccer | Joseph Pulido | All-League |
| Boys Soccer | Nick Tstinas | Exceptional Seniors Team |
| Boys Soccer | Mateusz Anilowski | Academic All-County |
| Boys Soccer | Douglas Jimenez-Bonilla | All-Conference |
| Football | Kristen LeGendre | 1st Team All-Conference |
| Football | Michael Mitchell | 1st Team All-Conference |
| Football | Andrew Wellington | 2nd Team All-Conference |
| Football | Aurius White | 2nd Team All-Conference |
| Football | Chris Nelson | 2nd Team All-Conference |
| Football | Chris Nelson | Suffolk County All-Star |
| Girls Gymnastics | Amanda Fanizza | Scholar-Athlete Award |
| Girls Gymnastics | Samantha Werkmeister | All-League Honorable Mention |
| Girls Tennis | Rukaya Hamadama | All-League |
| Girls Tennis | Maura Nahrevar | All-League |
| Girls Volleyball | Hanalee Fordyce | All-League |
| Girls Volleyball | Alexandria Breit | All-League |
| Girls Volleyball | Katherine Silva | All-County Academic |
| Girls Soccer | Kelly Williams | All-League |
| Girls Soccer | Shaana Headley | All-Conference |

Blast from the Past

On the evening of October 25, the Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School Madrigal Choir held a special concert featuring many Madrigal alumni from years past.

"The concert was conceived as a way for present Madrigal members to understand that music, singing, and their experience in the Madrigal Choir lasts for a lifetime, not just high school," stated Madrigal director Larry Wurtzel. "One of the goals was also to tie together our ever-growing musical extended family to reconnect with our Fine Arts program."

Added Coordinator of Fine and Technical Arts André Poprilo, "Mr. Wurtzel's long, distinguished career gives our vocal program the opportunity to connect the past to the present and allow our students to see what the future may hold, through this wonderful concert."

Many of the alumni performers featured in the concert now make their living as professional musicians, performers and music teachers. All of

the performers demonstrated a level of music excellence which gives present Madrigal members the incentive to reach a little bit higher and to always strive to be the best that they can be.

Mr. Wurtzel was joined during the evening by Beverly Wurtzel, middle school choir director Gina Occhiogrosso and retired music teacher Wallace Feith, who were all central to the development of these talented performers throughout the district's K-12 Vocal Program. It is hoped that the Madrigal Alumni Concert will become an annual event.

Alumni performers featured in the concert included: Robert Bennett, Jillian (Duffy) Black, Noelle Joy Cariola, Melissa Sulecki Chicarelli, Robert D'Ambrosio Jr., Derrick Davis, Bob DiGiovanna, Christopher Duffy, Nadine Ford, Joshua Hemmings, Michael Johnson Jr., Sarah Meehan, Raina Murnak, Antonio Quinones, Cristen Fischer Salisbury, Daryl Schwartzwalder, and Dawn Schwartzwalder.

EAGLE PRIDE SOARS DURING HOMECOMING 2008

School spirit and community pride were at an all-time high as spectators filled the stands at Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School for the start of Homecoming 2008. Administrators, parents, students, and community members were all there to cheer for the Eagles as they took on Smithtown West. Sunny skies and an unusually warm November afternoon provided the perfect setting for the game.

The morning of Homecoming commenced with a parade showcasing student floats. Participants marched from Great Neck Road Elementary School all the way to the High School, and included teachers, administrators and students who displayed their grade-level floats much to the enjoyment of community residents who lined the streets to view the parade and show their school support. The Grand Marshal for this year's parade was retired longtime mathematics teacher Dan Pasaric. The culmination of these events was the Homecoming 2008 Booster Club-

sponsored Fair, where student and PTA-run organizations set up booths to sell everything from cookies to popcorn.

Following the fair and parade the Varsity Football game was held on the Walter Reese Football Field. Despite a loss to Smithtown, the football team played with their hearts out in front of a large hometown crowd. During halftime the award-winning Marching Band provided musical entertainment, while the Cheerleaders and Steppers wowed the crowd with their energetic routines.

Halftime also included the introduction of this year's King and Queen and their royal court. This year's court included freshmen Timothy Cunningham Jr. and Djanna Hamadam, sophomores Dan Handy and Amber Perrier, and juniors Wendy Bellanton and Charde Lockett. Rounding out the Homecoming court were the King and Queen, seniors Michael Marotta and Courtney Abrams.



THREE COPIAGUE ALUMNI INDUCTED INTO HALL OF ACHIEVEMENT

Every year the district honors past graduates of Copiague High School who have succeeded in their careers and lives or have distinguished themselves by virtue of their contributions to community and society. In celebration of the twelfth year of the Hall of Achievement, three alumni were inducted into the Hall at a special ceremony.

"The goal of the Hall of Achievement is to introduce positive role models to our school community," stated Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig. "Such models, by their very nature, inspire students to adopt high aspirations."

This year's honorees included Peter Cesare, Class of 1980, Steven Robert Rebholz, Class of 1982, and Diane L. Saunders-Keyes, Class of 1968. "This year's group of inductees are outstanding individuals," said Board of Education President Brian J. Sales. "All have continued the tradition of Eagle pride throughout their lives."

Following graduation in 1980, Peter Cesare attended SUNY New Paltz where he majored in Business Administration and Management with a minor in coaching. He earned his Master's degree from SUNY Stony Brook and his Education Administration Certification from Long Island University - C.W. Post Campus. From 1987-2000, Mr. Cesare taught physical education in the

Copiague School District and for the past eight years he has been the district's Coordinator of Physical Education and Athletics. Recently, the United States Tennis Association named him Suffolk County Athletic Director of the Year. He and his wife, Melody, who is also a teacher in the district, have two sons.

Stephen Rebholz is a lifelong Copiague resident and began his career in the Copiague Public School as a sophomore when he was a student worker in the high school print shop. Since then he has held numerous positions in the district including custodian, mail clerk, and teaching assistant. He now works at the Susan E. Wiley Elementary School as a physical education teacher. For the past eight years, he has been the head coach for the Boys Varsity Basketball team, leading the Copiague Eagles to numerous titles, including the Long Island Championship. Mr. Rebholz attended SUNY Farmingdale, where he met his wife, Jodi; Hofstra University; and received his Master's Degree from Adelphi University.

Diane L. Saunders-Keyes, a member of the Class of 1968, attended SUNY Farmingdale and St. Joseph's College before beginning a 32-year career with the Town of Babylon. Mrs. Saunders-Keyes held numerous positions for the Town of Babylon, including Youth Employment Counselor, founding



director of the North Amityville Senior Center, and Deputy Commissioner of Human Services. One of Mrs. Saunders-Keyes passions in life is helping those who are less fortunate than herself. In 1984 she organized the North Amityville Youth Awareness Council, has been an active tutor with Literacy Volunteers of America, a mentor with Long Island Youth Guidance, and a Suffolk County Community Mediator. In February 2008, she joined a group of volunteers to help victims of Hurricane Katrina rebuild their homes. She is happily married with five children and nine grandchildren.

Congratulations to this year's inductees!

Marching Band Dazzles National Audience on Thanksgiving

On November 27, the Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School Marching Band went where no other Copiague band has gone before. The 115 members of the band performed in Herald Square and live on the NBC television network as participants in the 82nd annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Copiague was the only high school band from the northeast to march in this year's Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

To be chosen, the band had to submit an application, which consisted of video performances, letters of recommendation, competition history, and a biography on band director John Wevers. During their 75 seconds of national television fame, the band performed "Puttin' on the Ritz."

"After practicing for so many years with so many different kids and parents who went through the band - all to get us to where we were at that moment - it was surreal," stated Mr. Wevers. "Exhilarating!"

The band has won five New York State Championship Titles, and has performed in Disney World, Opening Day at Shea Stadium, and won the New York City St. Patrick's Day Parade award. They are also the only band from Long Island ever to have earned the distinction of "National Class." This year's band currently has 115 band members representing more than 20 different ethnic backgrounds.

At the winter concert held on December 17, the band was presented with a Legislative Proclamation from Town of Babylon Councilwoman Jacqueline A. Gordon. Legislator Dwayne Gregory also recognized the members of the band.



PLANNING FOR THE *Future Today*

The college/career resource center at Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School opened its doors this past September and is currently available to all students throughout the day. The resource center has been designed to help the students develop a plan of action related to postsecondary planning.



High School Senior Rukaya Hamadama learns she was accepted to St. John's University during an on-site admissions program meeting with Admission Counselor Sarah Chiffic.

Working together with their guidance counselors, with assistance from the guidance secretaries, students utilize computers, books, and the Internet to help choose their after-graduation path. Internet programs available for the students include College Board, Guidance Direct, CHOICES, and virtual college campus tours.

"Frequently, students begin their post-high school planning by taking an interest inventory screening which will highlight a student's strengths and interest toward a particular career cluster," stated Director of Guidance K-12 Mary Klein. "Students investigate occupations within their career cluster and match those occupations to potential educational institutions. Our students enjoy taking virtual college campus tours and exploring potential earning ranges of their career choices."

The college/career resource center may also be used for registering students for SATs, ACTs,

financial aid, scholarship searches, and completing electronic college applications. College admissions officers visit with students in the center, during which they highlight their schools' attributes to attract interest in their particular school. This year, many colleges are conducting on-site admissions for the students and are even waiving their application fees.

Guidance counselors also conduct group sessions in the resource center room regarding financial aid, resume writing, and college essay topics. "This year our guidance counselors have had professional development experiences in the resource center on CHOICES and Guidance Direct," said Ms. Klein. "This technologically advanced center provides our students and counselors with everything they need to be successful in achieving the students' future career goals."

COPIAGUE STUDENTS GIVE BACK During the Holidays

To give back to the community that supports their education, students and staff in the district organized numerous food drives. Throughout the months of November and December, students got into the spirit of giving and learned the value of helping others by working together.

To help local families in need during the holiday season, hundreds of pounds of nonperishable food were collected by the students and staff members. The goods donated to the individual schools were combined and distributed among local charities and food pantries, where they were then given to local families in need of assistance.

On November 20, Deauville Gardens Elementary School held its annual one-day Thanksgiving food drive. Students, teachers, parents, and staff members brought in hundreds of cans and boxes of nonperishable food, which were then donated to the Full Gospel Church on Great Neck Road in Copiague. The Great Neck Road and Susan E. Wiley Elementary School students organized a food drive that began in the middle of



October to help local families remain fed during the holiday season. In addition to food drives, the elementary school students also participated in a mitten tree project, which donates hats, scarves, and mittens/gloves to those less fortunate.

At the secondary level, the middle school Builders Club held their annual holiday food drive, sixth-grade teacher Alice Jankowski and her mother donated five complete Thanksgiving dinners to needy families within the district, the PTA collected toiletry items for veterans, the Builders Club and Esteem Team joined together to conduct a toy drive, and the Student Support Department held a food drive for the December holiday break. Members of the Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School Key Club organized a food drive and Stuff A Bus activity for Thanksgiving and a Toys for Tots fundraiser for the December holidays. Following a week of food donations, the Key Club members stuffed a school bus with nonperishable food items, which was then delivered to Our Lady of the Assumption in Copiague to replenish its food pantry in time for Thanksgiving.

Together, the students helped work to make the holidays a little better for those community members less fortunate than themselves.



Celebrating

THE PROTECTORS OF OUR FREEDOM



Pictured with Mr. Pellettier are students from the eighth grade.

In commemoration of Veterans Day, on Monday, November 10th, and Wednesday, November 12th, Mr. Matthew Pellettier, a math teacher at Copiague Middle School, spoke to the seventh and eighth-grade social studies classes about his personal experiences as an Iraqi War veteran and the meaning behind Veterans Day.

Mr. Pellettier was a member of the Army National Guard for six years before he was activated and deployed to Iraq, where he was stationed for a year. He presented a PowerPoint and video that showed the students what he experienced firsthand, spoke of his reasons for joining the National Guard and shared stories of his time in Iraq.

"I wanted to speak to the students to tell them my story," said Mr. Pellettier. "Many of the students don't know anyone who has served their country and I wanted to give them a face to think of when they celebrate Veterans Day."

Following the presentation, the students participated in a question-and-answer forum with Mr. Pellettier. Questions ranged from where he slept to general questions about Iraq and its people.

Challenge Day

For the second consecutive year, the students at Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School participated in Challenge Day. Challenge Day was instituted to provide the students with workshops and programs that encourage communication and demonstrate the possibility of friendship and understanding through the celebration of diversity and truth. Ten teachers, two guidance counselors, Assistant Principal Dr. Linda Caputo, and 80 students participated in the first of three programs.

"Challenge Day helps to challenge the students' norms and behaviors," stated Dr. Caputo. "It allows them to see that even though we live in such a diverse microcosm, we're all the same."

Throughout the daylong event, students who were chosen by their social studies teachers took part in numerous activities geared toward building trust and getting to know one another. The day began with icebreaker activities followed by trust-building events, in which they participated in a trust train and shared facts about themselves that others might not know. The day culminated with an open microphone, at which time every student was encouraged to talk about how they would like to make a change and foster a better culture and environment for everyone.

"I'm talking to students and teachers today that I've never spoken to before, and I'll continue to talk to them after today," said sophomore Seleyna Cruz.



PROMOTING A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Continuing its dedication to student safety and promoting a healthy lifestyle, Deauville Gardens Elementary School held its annual Run Against Drugs. Leading up to the Run, students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade learned of the negative effects of drugs and alcohol during their physical education classes with their teachers Pamela Atlas, Michelle Bonaventura, and John Sack.



Students in kindergarten through second grade ran as a class, and upon completion each received a ribbon celebrating their participation and a snack provided by the Parent Teacher Association. Students in third, fourth, and fifth grades were grouped according to their ability and medals were given to the first, second, and third-place winners in each grade.

This year members of the Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School Varsity Club, with their advisor Antoinette Spencer, volunteered their time to run with the students.



Family Literacy Night

Susan E. Wiley Elementary School recently held its second of three Family Literacy Nights aimed at increasing parental involvement in the literacy program. During the program, student-actors put on two Reader's Theater performances based upon *The Three Little Pigs*. Reader's Theater performances are dramatic presentations of books through scripted form that help students focus on fluency development, motivates reluctant readers, and strengthens comprehension.



Following the performances, families worked together on an MSTE (math, science, technology) project for which they had to build a house capable of withstanding the weight of a stuffed wolf, using only 50 pieces of uncooked spaghetti and no more than ten marshmallows.

The Home-School Connection Committee, along with Literacy Coordinators Sheri Droz and Melanie Luck organized the entire night.

HONORING OUR VETERANS

In honor of Veterans Day, the students and staff at Great Neck Road Elementary School hosted a Veterans Day Breakfast Celebration. Invited to attend the observance were members of the local V.F.W. and relatives of students who have served or are currently serving in the Armed Forces.



The students and staff at Great Neck Road Elementary School hosted a Veterans Day Breakfast Celebration for members of the local V.F.W. and relatives of students who have served or are currently serving in the Armed Forces.

During the program, attendees were treated to a rousing performance by the school band, enjoyed a short play by the fifth-grade students, heard essays from the third, fourth, and fifth-grade classes, sang along to patriotic songs with the kindergarten students, and ate a delicious breakfast provided by the staff. The culminating event honored each member of the Armed Forces. The veterans also enjoyed a PowerPoint presentation of photos and information featuring the servicemen and women from Copiague, which was created by Lisa Miller, Great Neck Road's Library Media Specialist.

"Every student and staff member contributed in some way to the celebration honoring our brave men and women," stated Great Neck Road Principal Joseph Agosta.

COPIAGUE STUDENTS "PICK A LITTLE, TALK A LITTLE"

On Thursday, November 20, the Copiague Middle School auditorium was transported back in time to 1912 Iowa as the students performed their fall musical, *The Music Man, Jr.* Under the direction of Gina Occhiogrosso, the students worked hard for weeks in preparation of their performance debut. In addition to the actors on stage, students were also in charge of all the behind-the-scenes action, including running the lighting board and acting as production stage manager.



The Music Man is a musical with book, music, and lyrics by Meredith Willson and based on a story by Willson and Franklin Lacey. The plot centers around con man Harold Hill, played by Trevor Cody, who poses as a boys' bandleader and sells band instruments and uniforms to naive townsfolk before skipping town with the cash.

The students performed all of the songs made famous by the Broadway musical, including "Pick a Little, Talk a Little" and "Seventy-six Trombones."

