



## Learning in Action



Kindergarteners at Washington Drive Primary School participated in a string of holiday, gingerbread-themed lessons right before the holidays. Some of the gingerbread lessons included adding and subtracting different kinds of gingerbread men and creating their own gingerbread man in disguise.



Students at Thomas J. Lahey had the ability to experiment with Google's new Expeditions Augmented Reality technology in December, examining details of objects they may never get to see in real life – such as whales and stingrays swimming through the ocean, Leonardo da Vinci's flying machine, and more!



Students from Oldfield Middle had the opportunity to act as teacher for a day this winter. Participating students came to school dressed as their teacher and followed the teacher's schedule for the day – teaching a prepared lesson plan, taking attendance and checking homework.

# Harborfields HIGHLIGHTS

*The Official News Source of Harborfields Central School District*

## Focusing on the Arts at Harborfields

Within the Harborfields Central School District, students are taught the importance of the arts through the dedication and passion of their teachers.

Districtwide, a large variety of courses and clubs are available to students who need outlets for their creativity. Besides the many art and music opportunities, students also have available to them theater, photojournalism, visual arts, marching band and more. These experiences are crucial to students becoming well-rounded citizens, and promote self-expression and discovery-based learning.

### MUSIC

Students in the district are introduced to music at a young age – now, in grade three, children are able to begin orchestra instruction. Many studies show that music education enhances brain activity, with proven correlations between studying an instrument and academic achievement. Many of Harborfields' past valedictorians, salutatorians and students with the highest GPAs have studied an instrument from elementary school through their senior year.

"In a music ensemble, a child will learn so much more than just the notes on the page. Responsibility, leadership, persistence, discipline and self-expression are just a few of the rewards that studying music can provide," said Thomas J. Lahey music teacher Catherine Ferraro.

Responsibility is a lesson that is learned repeatedly as a music student. Students must remember to bring their instrument to school and take it home on their lesson day, take care



of it, maintain it and keep track of what day and time they have lessons. How well they are able to play a piece of music is a reflection of how much time they set aside to practice every day. By the time students reach middle school, they are much more prepared to tackle the additional responsibilities and tougher course work that middle school provides.

Allie Ebanks, a seventh-grader at Oldfield Middle School, has been playing the piano since she was four and the cello since she was in third grade. Ebanks looks forward to her music classes each day and believes in the importance of having a creative outlet.

"Learning to read music was like learning a new language – and it helped me learn other tough subjects, like math and science, easier," Ebanks said. "By getting to use both sides of my brain in school, it helps everything feel more balanced."

When students reach high school, a slate of performance and nonperformance electives are available that are tailored to help aspiring musicians further their skills and the knowledge base that they began back in elementary school.

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# A MESSAGE FROM Dr. Francesco Ianni, Superintendent of Schools

Dear Harborfields Community,

I hope you all enjoyed the holidays and started the new year off happily and healthfully. Our students have taken this season as an opportunity to give back, pay it forward and bring the community together through many events and charitable efforts. Now we are looking ahead towards spring and continuing to focus on our district's goals.

This January not only signified the start of 2018 – for me, it also marked the commencement of my second year as your superintendent of schools. I would like to thank you for showing such enthusiasm for the updated district vision and initiatives that are setting the stage for a future of success. I have been working closely with the administrative team and Board of Education to ensure a streamlined approach to best practices in education that equip students with college- and career-readiness skills.

Innovation is a critical component of this as we guide our students to be responsible and knowledgeable in a world that is increasingly more technology-driven. A major area of concentration this school year has been the rollout of our technology plan and Chromebook initiative. Our administration and faculty have worked together to prepare a smooth and beneficial integration of technology into instruction.

Financial and operational efficiency is also among our top priorities, and we are always exploring ways to make the most of what we have. As we begin the budget development process, we welcome your involvement and input at our Board of Education meetings and encourage you to follow our Facebook page for the latest news and updates.

Sincerely,

Dr. Francesco Ianni  
Superintendent of Schools

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## Focusing on the **Arts** at Harborfields

Without an earlier path being forged for these students, the high school program wouldn't be as successful as it is.

"Harborfields has long valued the concept of the complete student, holding the arts up as an essential part of a well-rounded education and fostering in students a lifelong appreciation for the arts," said Music Department coordinator Dan Bilawsky.

In high school, students have the choice of orchestra, choir, and symphonic band or wind ensemble. Aside from large group rehearsals, each section has smaller sessions so students can receive the attention they need to help the group be better as a whole. In addition, a beginner's guitar class was implemented in the 2016-2017 school year and was in such high demand this school year that it was nearly maxed out. Students also have music theory classes available to them to help further their knowledge and skill in playing their instruments, and to explore the building blocks and language of music in greater detail.

Outside of school, students are able to join groups that meet at night, such as jazz band, chamber orchestra and vocal ensembles. These groups require auditions and feature many of Harborfields' most serious and disciplined musicians.

"Music is my stress reliever," said All-State band selectee Melanie Bautista. "And I believe that being given the opportunity to pick up an instrument in fourth grade helped me find the path I'm on now. Being a part of the music program has taught me

so many things other than the instrument itself."

Other after-school music opportunities include marching band and kickline. All of these groups have participated in events that took place outside of school, such as the Newsday Marching Band Festival, marching at Disney World and performing in New Orleans. The groups also serve the local community in different capacities such as Athletic Hall of Fame inductions and tribute performances for veterans.

In addition to all of these activities, Harborfields also has a very active Tri-M Music Honor Society, which provides services to the community such as a pit orchestra, which provides music for the spring musical, and ad hoc groups assembled for special events. Within the high school, Harborfields has upwards of 400 students in the music program.

### ART

Art classes at Harborfields are also very important. Even at an early age, art helps children develop and grow. In the early stages of education, children aren't necessarily capable of expressing themselves through words. Giving them a creative outlet in art class allows expression through a form of creative problem-solving – an opportunity to use pictures, instead of words, to portray how they feel. It also enables students with different abilities to shine.

"Art does so much for the kids," said Washington Drive art teacher Chris Maresco.

"Sometimes kids who have a hard time in academic areas tend to excel in art class, and giving them this creative avenue gives them the chance to be successful in different areas."

In these elementary years, students are exposed to as many mediums as possible, and many respond positively to things like painting and sculpting.

From elementary to high school, this love is cultivated in Harborfields students in and out of class. In middle school, students are also able to participate in art and photography after-school clubs. At the high school level, besides in-school academics, students have the opportunity to be

a part of exciting activities like art showcases, exhibitions, competitions and clubs. Outstanding art students at HHS may also be recognized for their artistic ability and scholarship through induction into the National Art Honor Society, beginning in their junior year. This year, for example, the National Art Honor Society will have its work exhibited at the Heckscher Museum of Art, which is opening April 14. In October, National Art Honor Society student Jenna Hart had an art piece accepted into the "Nightmare on Main Street" juried exhibition.

In addition to all of these offerings, art students may collaborate with students who write for The Zephyr – an art and literary magazine created, designed and published by students. Student members all become editors of the publication, with one student acting as editor-in-chief, and are trained to use computers to scan and edit images in Photoshop. Each student will also be trained in the use of the online program used to assemble the publication for professional printing. These practical life skills are necessary when anticipating joining the art world after high school.

Many student-artists at Harborfields High School take advanced art courses through local art leagues, fine arts schools, and college and university programs that are open to high school students. Each year a significant number of graduating seniors pursue art study at the college level. The district's Drawing and Painting II/III class is part of the St. John's University College Advantage Program, and students who meet the course requirements receive six college credits.

### THEATER

Theater at Harborfields is an exciting and unique avenue for students. The opportunity to take part in a production starts in middle school, in Drama Club, and extends through high school. At Harborfields High School, while there is an in-school theater class, the bulk of student involvement is in the school's theater company, which is an extracurricular activity.

Whether students are playing a role in the production or helping out behind the scenes, participating in the performing arts builds the cognitive muscles that help students succeed not only in school, but in life. Somewhat obvious benefits include becoming more comfortable with public speaking or accepting critical feedback and constructive criticism, but other benefits go much



deeper than that. When a student receives a role in a production, they have to teach themselves to think differently and to get into the mind of a character they may not yet understand – exploring the depth of human expression in myriad ways. This can be especially helpful to teenagers, who can find it difficult to express their emotions. Participating in the arts becomes a healthy and transformational avenue to learn to express themselves.

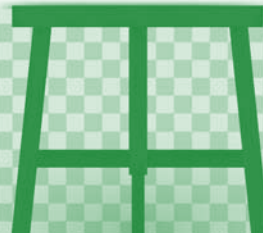
Since the successful performance of "Antigone" in the fall, much of the theater company has been dedicated to the Student Government's Playfest – a festival of short plays presented by each grade, written, directed and performed by students. Each grade level's play was evaluated by a panel of theater alumni judges, and awards, such as best play and best leading actress, were given out. The students loved it.

Senior Emma Johnston, whose play was performed in last school year's Playfest, was an assistant director in this year's production and is a huge proponent of the annual festival.

"I participate in theater year-round and it's always exciting to see students take part in the joy of performance – sometimes for the first time," Johnston said. "Also, the way it connects us together is incredible. Many of the friendships I have stemmed from my experiences in Playfest and have lasted through the off seasons."

Another avenue for students to perform includes the yearly spring musical. This year the Harborfields theater company will be presenting the Tony Award-winning musical "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee." They will be giving back to the community by performing for senior citizens in the district, as well as doing a special night for SEPTA families. Additionally, the company produces an early summer production, Shakespeare in the Park, when the high school's south courtyard is transformed into the perfect setting for a Shakespearian play.

Overall, students throughout the district have many creative outlets – and studies in each of these areas confirm the positive effect the arts have on students.



- **Based on data collected from College Board, the organization Americans for the Arts found that students with four or more years of arts classes scored an average of 80-102 points more on the SAT than students with half a year or less of arts classes.**
- **A nation-wide study conducted by Adobe found that creativity is one of the top three personality traits that are important to success in the workplace, according to American employers.**



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## Students in the Spotlight

### HONORABLE MENTION



High school sophomore Michael Panariello was selected for an honorable mention award in this year's Celebration of Suburban Diversity student essay contest. This contest, sponsored by Hofstra University, drew over 400 submissions islandwide. At the Celebration of Suburban Diversity banquet on Nov. 14, Michael was presented with a \$200 check.

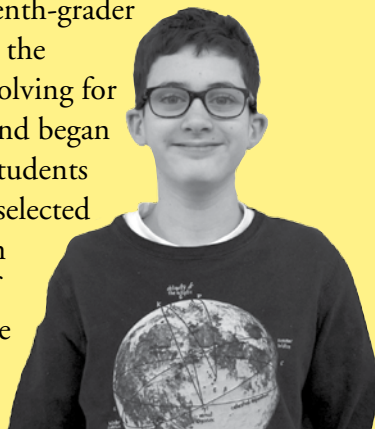


### *Ayn Rand Contest*

High school juniors Courtney Forberg, Kelsey Fowle, Carlos Godoy and Billy Waring placed as semifinalists in a nationwide writing contest sponsored by the Ayn Rand Institute. Each student entered their essay last year after reading and responding to the novel "Anthem" in Ms. La Mantia's English Honors class.

### Creative Institute

Oldfield Middle School seventh-grader Caleb Kapen was accepted into the Institute of Creative Problem Solving for Gifted and Talented Students and began attending this fall. While 600 students were nominated, only 90 were selected for the program, making Kapen a part of the top one percent of math students islandwide. Once finished with the program, Kapen will have spent a total of 50 hours over 20 Saturday mornings studying an extensive mathematics curriculum.



### County's Best in Sportsmanship and Character

The boys junior varsity soccer team was recognized by Suffolk County Soccer Officials Association for having the county's best practices of character and sportsmanship on Dec. 6. This recognition, given at the Suffolk Zone Awards dinner, speaks volumes about this team. "They not only play the game well, but do so with class and character," said John Valente, director of health, physical education and athletics.