



## Learning in Action



Harborfields elementary school students participated in an Hour of Code at TJL and Washington Drive on Dec. 11.



Five Thomas J. Labey Elementary School students – pictured left to right, Ben Cammarota, Sean Whelan, Gianna Ballard, Olivia Drew and Peyton McQuade – recently participated in the Parents Educators and Kids, or PEAK, Music Festival.



Students at Oldfield Middle School recently explored basic coding techniques using Ozobots – a pocket-sized coding robot that responds to different colors.

# Harborfields HIGHLIGHTS

*The Official News Source of Harborfields Central School District*

## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING A || TOP PRIORITY ||

To support the Harborfields Board of Education's goal to provide a caring and motivating learning environment for students, the district has reevaluated and implemented new policies, practices and procedures focused around mental health awareness and social-emotional learning.

Perhaps the most influential change is the implementation of the district's K-12 Comprehensive Developmental School Counseling Plan. Adopted by the Board in spring 2019, the plan, which aligns with New York State counseling goals, was rolled out in September with great success.

Over the summer, Maribeth Corr, the district's K-12 guidance administrator, and Harborfields High School Principal Timothy Russo spearheaded educational training sessions to familiarize the district's teachers with the new plan and its objectives. The guidance department's central goal is to "assist in

the development of the whole student in mind, heart, soul and body to make for a successful future beyond their educational experience in our district."

"Our mission is to provide all students with a comprehensive grade-level curriculum to develop academic skills, social-emotional well-being, and college and career readiness," Ms. Corr said.

Social-emotional learning is the process through which individuals acquire and apply knowledge, attitude and skills to manage emotions, set and achieve goals, show empathy, maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions.

There are five aspects of social-emotional learning: social awareness, self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making and relationship skills. To effectively teach students those aspects, it's important

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# A Message from the Superintendent of Schools

Dear Harborfields Residents,

Happy New Year! I hope you enjoyed the holidays and the many events that December featured, including concerts, outreach projects and student recognitions. We are kicking off the new decade with numerous developments and achievements to be proud of.

First and foremost, on behalf of the Board of Education and the district, I would like to thank the community for supporting us on the capital project updates. The infrastructure upgrades, security enhancements, academic renovations and physical education/athletic improvements all support our vision to provide a world-class education to Harborfields students, one child at a time.

We are especially excited about the renovation of school libraries at TJL, OMS and HHS, the new general science classroom that will be built at TJL, the new outdoor play area coming to WDPS and the installation of a synthetic turf field at HHS. We began the planning phases for all bond projects, and will continue to update the community on its progress.

Another area in which the district is progressing is guidance. As was highlighted at our December Board of Education meeting, the Comprehensive Developmental School Counseling Plan is being implemented this school year. This involves a strong focus on social-emotional learning, with programs at all school buildings that equip students with self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision-making and relationship skills.

We are confident that all these steps will help us lead students to success, both in the near and far futures. Thank you for supporting our programs and for helping us bring Harborfields Central School District to the next level.

Sincerely,

Francesco Ianni, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

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## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING A TOP PRIORITY

to incorporate them not just in the classroom through curriculum and instruction, but also through district policy and family and community partnership.

To begin to instill these skills in students, the district's restructured counseling plan calls for new student-counselor ratios, frequent progress reviews and grade-level meetings where all students meet with their counselors regularly to discuss stress management, study skills, career development and more.

Additionally, new social-emotional learning programs are being implemented throughout the district's four schools.

At Washington Drive Primary School, educators are planting the SEEDS – or Social-Emotional Education Development for Schools – through several new learning initiatives. The latest, the "I'm Not Alone" campaign, kicked off in several classes this year, and it's as simple as reading a book.

Beginning in kindergarten, teachers read at least one of 14 books, chosen by teachers, that serve as a gateway for greater in-class

**“Our school counseling program is dedicated to fostering opportunities to support the social and emotional well-being of our students and maintain the standards we believe are essential to a Harborfields education.”**  
– Maribeth Corr,  
K-12 guidance administrator



Students at Thomas J. Lahey Elementary School recently shared their most admirable traits as part of the school's Beautiful Me curriculum.

discussions on topics like empathy, compassion, kindness and diversity. The books are also available to both students and teachers in the library's "Empathy Book Nook" throughout the day.

Each of the books will not only leave a lasting impression on the students as they transition to middle school but will forever be a permanent fixture on the walls of Washington Drive. Over the past month, several talented and dedicated parents have volunteered their time to paint a mural depicting each of the 14 books to promote a positive and supportive environment.

By next school year, all classes will be engaged in the initiative. "Our goal is that by the time students leave Washington Drive, they will be familiar with at least several, if not more, of the books and the lessons associated with each," Principal Kathryn McNally said.

At the elementary schools, students also partake in a weeklong nationwide initiative: "Start With Hello." The initiative, created by Sandy Hook Promise, focuses on uniting people of different backgrounds to prevent social isolation and invites guest speakers to discuss important topics like empathy and compassion.

Additionally, at Thomas J. Lahey Elementary School, female students are learning to love and appreciate themselves for who they are in the "Beautiful Me" program. The program, which officially began last year, was integrated into the curriculum in September for elementary school students as a way to boost their self-confidence and self-worth at a young age, according to Assistant Principal Andrea Horowitz.

At the beginning of the school year, students said that they were uncomfortable when asked to compliment themselves. However, after a few short weeks, they were eager to share their most admirable traits and praised themselves for being kind, loyal, funny and smart, among other things.

"It's nothing to be ashamed of," physical education teacher Michele Turchiano said. "It's something to be proud of."

"Everyone's body is different," health teacher Susan Crispino added. "Think about all of your wonderful qualities."

That mindset is crucial upon entering middle school where the counseling plan

focuses heavily on mental health awareness.

Recently, the guidance department invited students, teachers and parents to Oldfield Middle School to watch "Angst," a documentary designed to raise awareness around anxiety and its sociological effects. The film includes interviews with children, teenagers, educators, experts and parents and discusses topics like symptoms, warning signs and positive coping mechanisms.

"The goal is to start a conversation about mental health and to increase communication with parents," Ms. Corr said. "We have to work with our families so that social-emotional learning can grow beyond just the school setting."

The guidance department also recently expanded the film to high school students and their families. On Jan. 29, the school's auditorium was full as the film explored the crippling effects of anxiety. Afterwards, the school hosted a discussion and Q&A session with students and their families.

The film is a welcome addition to the high school, where students are learning about "positive self-programming." An integral part of the school's "No Place for Hate" campaign doesn't come from a textbook but rather from real-life experiences told by guest speakers.

Recently, students at Harborfields High School also learned about suicide prevention and positive coping mechanisms from Roger Von Braun, who shared the tragic loss of his brother.

He advised students to be more self-aware. "Start to realize when you're thinking negatively and take control of the situation," he said.

These presentations put a face to anxiety and depression and discuss real-life scenarios with students as a way to encourage them to reach out and ask for help.

Additionally, at the high school level, counselors are



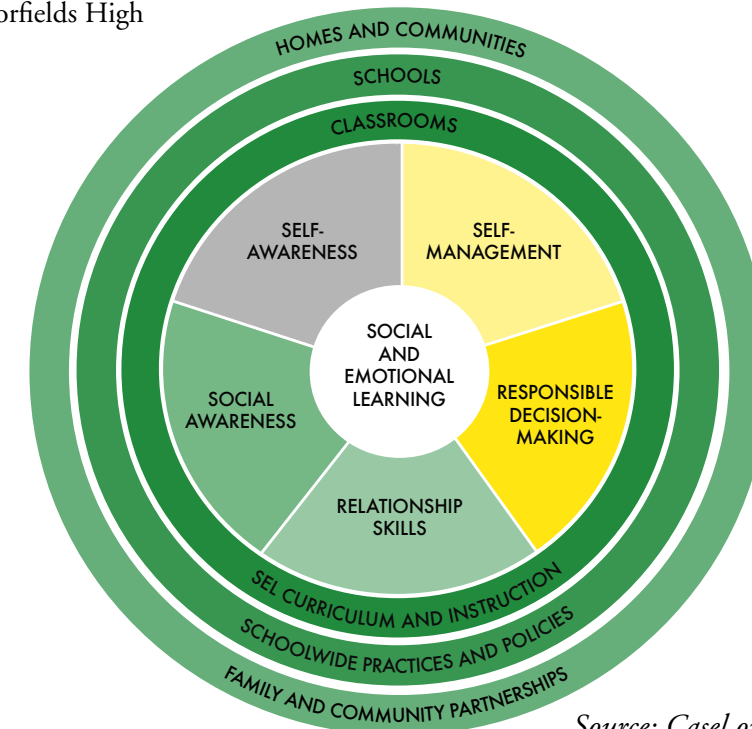
Roger Von Braun visited Harborfields High School to discuss positive coping mechanisms and practical strategies during a suicide prevention assembly on Dec. 11.

working daily with students to advance their career and college readiness and planning.

Each of the counseling plan's program goals will be reviewed annually by the district's School Counseling Advisory Committee, which will then make recommendations for improvement.

Throughout the first half of the academic year, the committee met with a building-level subcommittee to ensure that the school offers a welcoming and affirming environment, a variety of social-emotional learning programs, rigorous instruction and inclusive curricula and assessments, with high expectations for all.

"Our school counseling program is dedicated to fostering opportunities to support the social and emotional well-being of our students and maintain the standards we believe are essential to a Harborfields education," Ms. Corr said.



Source: Casel.org

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# Shining STUDENTS

## EMERGING LEADERS

Two Harborfields High School students, Will Barbaccia and Hannah Proce, were recently recognized at the Young Professionals Chamber of Commerce's 17th annual Emerging Leaders Business Competition on December 4th.

Will won second place in the sports and entertainment marketing category and Hannah won second place in retail marketing. More than 300 students participated in this year's competition from schools all across Long Island.



## PHYSICAL EDUCATION AWARD RECIPIENTS

Two exceptional high school seniors, Joseph DeSimone and Julia Malich, were honored as recipients of the 2019 Suffolk Zone Excellence in Physical Education Award.

The annual Suffolk Zone award is Suffolk County's highest award in physical education. Students must possess an "A" average in physical education achievement, be scholastically sound, exhibit leadership skills and qualities in a physical education setting and have demonstrated

overall leadership in schoolwide activities. Most importantly, students nominated for this honor must be outstanding role models to their peers and within the community.

## GIRLS SWIMMING PHENOM

High school sophomore Julienne Saliou recently concluded the most impressive swim season that has ever been achieved by a Harborfields swimmer. At the New York State Girls Swimming Championship, she finished in seventh place in the 100-yard freestyle and ninth place in the 100-yard backstroke. She is the first swimmer in Harborfields girls swimming history to finish in the top 10 in New York State.

Additionally, Julienne qualified for nine county events this past season and received All-League status for the 200-yard medley and 400-yard freestyle relays. She placed second in the county championships in the 100-yard backstroke and was the County Champion in the 100-yard freestyle, earning her All-County titles in both. She also broke two school records. Congratulations!



## TOP STEM SCHOOL

On National STEM Day, Harborfields High School was recognized as one of the top 500 science, technology, engineering and mathematics schools in America and ranked fifth on Long Island.

Annually, Newsweek magazine partners with STEM.org Educational Research, or SER, to evaluate the region's schools' programs and select those that create a dynamic and engaging learning environment.

"Children are natural STEM students," according to Newsweek.com. "We need to make sure that innate drive, curiosity and creativity aren't lost along the way."

At Harborfields, students begin coding at Washington Drive Primary School and Thomas J. Lahey Elementary School to foster a passion that they can further explore upon entering middle and high school.

The district's Technology 2.0 initiative equips every high school student and teacher with a Chromebook which allows them to integrate technology into the classroom daily. Additionally, students are constantly encouraged to explore STEM-related internships outside of school at BAE Systems in Greenlawn and Brookhaven National Laboratory.