

Summer 2016

# Lynbrook School News

A PUBLICATION OF THE LYNBROOK SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Soaring Into the Future



Bonds that go back to kindergarten cemented the Lynbrook High School Class of 2016 as they gathered together one last time to celebrate their graduation. A surge of nostalgia, pride and expectation filled the air as they walked onto the field in a brilliant wave of green and gold.

Salutatorian Gabriel Ajzenman encouraged his classmates to continue to go the distance. "As we move on, I urge you to all take risks and leave your comfort zone," he said. "Happiness does not come from the dollars you earn, but from how inspired you are each day by what you are doing. Find your passion

and you will reach your full potential."

Valedictorian Andrew Meersand urged his fellow graduates to leave some room in their hearts for the unimaginable. He recounted a story about how perseverance after one of his greatest failures led him to an unexpected mentorship with a Harvard

research professor who helped shape his future. "So what's the lesson in this?" he asked. "You have to be in it to win it."

Principal Joseph Rainis recounted the long list of accomplishments that this class will be remembered for and offered them some final words of encouragement and advice, which he drew from basketball coach Jim Valvano. "Lead

with your heart, take healthy risks, remember where you come from, recognize who you are, and remain grateful for the challenges you will face and the support you receive along the way."

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Melissa Burak congratulated the graduates on taking full advantage of the educational rights this country affords them. And as they prepare to make their way in the world, she encouraged them to continue to seize opportunities, be courageous, strive for excellence, be innovators, and most of all, be thankful.

As diplomas were dispensed, administrators and members of the Board of Education congratulated the graduates. Then, as tradition dictates, the proud graduates tossed their caps in the air and marched off the field to a thunderous round of applause.





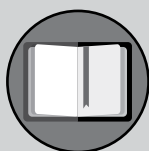
# SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

## IN A CLASS OF THEIR OWN

*The LHS Class of 2016 made its mark as leaders in the classroom, in the concert halls and art arenas, on the athletic fields and in the community.*

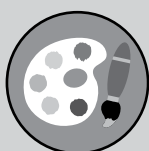
### ACADEMICS

- Accepted at more than 230 colleges and universities and offered more than \$9 million in scholarships
- 91 percent earned Regents diplomas, 73 percent earned Regents diplomas with advanced designation with honors, and 20 percent earned advanced Regents diplomas with mastery in math and science
- 22 fall AP Scholars, nine AP Scholars with Honor and four AP Scholars with Distinction
- Four National Merit semifinalists, three finalists and one scholarship winner
- 111 National Honor Society members
- 12 Intel entrants, one Intel semifinalist, one Intel ISEF qualifier, one I-SWEEP honorable mention and six NYSSEF award winners, including Best in Fair
- Senior Horizon staff members earned more than 25 awards at state and local press competitions



### THE ARTS

- One All-National musician
- Four All-State musicians
- Eight All-County musicians
- Two chosen to perform in Long Island String Festival Association concerts
- 27 members of the Tri-M Music Honor Society
- 29 members of the National Art Honor Society
- Seniors offered nearly \$1.6 million in art scholarships



### ATHLETICS

- Two Honorable Mention All-Americans
- Three Academic All-American athletes
- Two National Football Foundation Scholar Athletes
- One National Soccer Coaches Association Excellence Award winner
- Two All-State athletes
- One Academic All-State athlete
- One All-Long Island athlete
- 17 All-County athletes
- Three All-County Honorable Mention athletes
- One County Champion
- One Nassau County Soccer Goalie of the Year
- 11 Nassau County Scholar-Athletes
- Two Nassau County Unsung Heroes
- 22 All-Conference athletes
- Eight Academic All-Conference athletes
- Two All-Division athletes
- One News 12 Scholar-Athlete



### COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

- One regional vice president of the SkillsUSA Leadership Program
- One national and one state Prudential Spirit of Community Award winner
- Four Girl Scouts Gold Awards
- Two Eagle Scouts



## Seizing Opportunities VALEDICTORIAN: Andrew Meersand

In many ways, Lynbrook High School valedictorian Andrew Meersand defies description. At first glance of his resume, one might be tempted to label him with stereotypical adjectives, but anyone who knows him knows that there is nothing stereotypical about him.

Bound for Harvard University in the fall, he hopes to study mechanical engineering. Not surprisingly, Andrew is an AP Scholar with Honor, a National Merit finalist and a member of the National Honor Society. He achieved national recognition when he was named a semifinalist in the 2016 Intel Science Talent Search and a finalist in the 2016 Intel International Science and Engineering Fair. His award-winning research dealt with developing and testing a novel robotic hand-like prosthesis that works using pneumatic fingers. He developed his passion for robotics as a member and later captain of the robotics team, and also competed on the Mathletes team. If we stopped here with his story, all evidence would point to a verdict of left-brained.

But Andrew has proven himself to be as

comfortable in the spotlight as he is in the laboratory. As a lead writer and performer for his school's Class Night skits, he will likely be remembered as much for his colorful role as the Owl in the seniors' "Winnie the Pooh" skit as for his science honors.

As captain of the Robotics Club, he was the host with the most when his school welcomed robotics teams from all over the tri-state area for the NYC/Long Island FIRST Tech Challenge, which was met with great success.

Andrew is also captain and founding member of the boys swim team. Combining his passion for swimming with his keen skills of persuasion, he led a successful initiative to introduce a boys team at his school by speaking at a Board of Education meeting and circulating petitions.

"One of the most significant things I learned while at Lynbrook High School was to seek out opportunities," he said. "I pursued my interests with passion, but I also learned that I have the ability to create new opportunities for myself and others."



## Pursuing Passions SALUTATORIAN: Gabriel Ajzenman

Underneath Lynbrook High School salutatorian Gabriel Ajzenman's quiet demeanor flows a deep river. His interests run the gamut from math and science to theater and baseball. To all these interests, he has brought a genuine form of passion and commitment, which combined with his stellar academic record, earned him admission to the University of Pennsylvania in the fall.

An AP Scholar with Honor and a National Merit semifinalist, Gabriel is also a member of the National Honor Society and Tri-M Music Honor Society. He has proven himself to be an able leader as managing editor of Horizon, captain of the Mathletes team and president of the Science Olympiad team. He has been active in science research, submitting projects to both the Siemens Competition and the Intel Science Talent Search.

"I am most proud of my science research project," he said. "I enjoyed creating statistical models to analyze player performance after signing free agent contracts. I hope baseball teams can utilize my findings in the future."

Among his most memorable high school experiences were the years Gabriel spent in Mrs. Mantikas' math classes. "She always made math class interesting, whether we were studying trigonometry or derivatives."

Gabriel has also made his mark in the music world. He played cello in the chamber orchestra

and has participated in NYSSMA music festivals. Active in the Drama Club, he most recently played a lead role in his school's production of "Beauty and the Beast," delighting audiences with his emotive performance.

"My parents have always been there with me throughout my life," said Gabriel. "They encourage me to be the best I can be and have provided invaluable guidance over the years."

As he prepares to leave the halls of Lynbrook High School, Gabriel offered a sound piece of

advice for entering freshmen looking to make the most of their high school experience. "Do not feel pressured to do everything and anything," he said. "Find a few activities you are truly interested in and pursue them with passion."





# Moving On Up

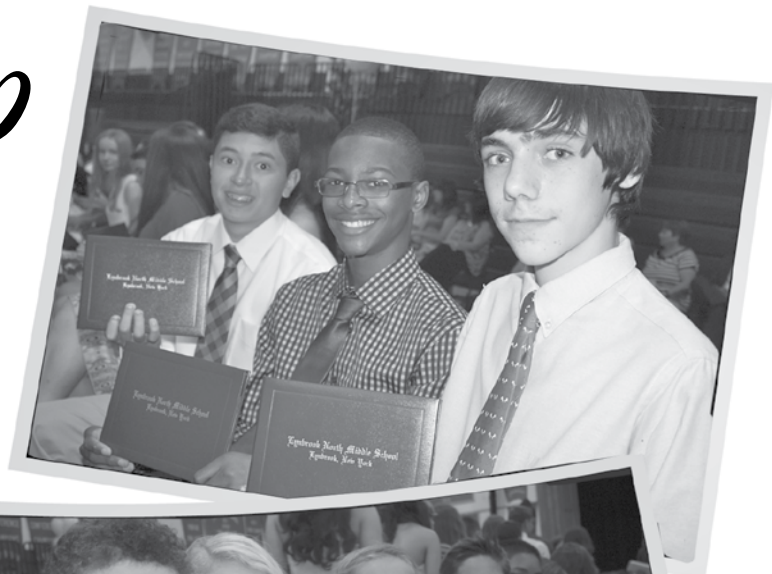
## Looking Back with Pride and Ahead with Hope

Proud Lynbrook eighth-graders and their parents came together on the evening of June 21 for two graduation ceremonies to mark the end of one more memorable chapter in their lives.

With the successful completion of middle school behind them, Lynbrook North and South Middle School graduates turned to look forward to the new challenges

and adventures that await them at the high school. Principals Caryn Blum and Sean Fallon congratulated the graduates, and student speakers offered words of encouragement and advice.

Then, dressed in their finest, the students rose one by one to come to the podium to receive their certificates of promotion, marking the successful completion of middle school.



## Climbing the Lynbrook Ladder of Success

*Elementary graduations came in all shapes and sizes, with each school adding its own special touches to bid farewell to its graduating class.*

### Presenting the LHS Class of 2028

Wearing rainbow-colored mortarboards that reflected the color of each kindergarten class, the district's youngest graduates delighted their families with a festive show of music and poetry. They concluded with a big finish, holding up rainbow-colored letters that spelled out the word "kindergarten." Every face beamed with pride as Ms. Postman presented them as the LHS Class of 2028.

### Moving On Up

In a time-honored Marion Street tradition, the entire school gathered on the field to give the fifth-graders a hearty sendoff as they received their official certificates of promotion. While the

familiar strains of the school's official moving up song filled the air, the graduates filed out of their seats as the underclassmen moved up to symbolize their passage to the next grade. Then the newly initiated sixth-graders held up letters that spelled out "Good-Bye Marion Street."

### Looking North

Anticipation filled the air as West End fifth-graders prepared to take their first steps on their journey to North Middle School. The festivities began with the presentation of awards, followed by a nostalgic slideshow. After all the diplomas were presented, the graduates turned to face the audience, singing a self-penned song titled "These Special Things." They then left

their elementary years behind, dancing to the uplifting beat of "Can't Stop the Feeling."

### Bidding a Fond Farewell

Dressed for success, the proud graduates of Waverly Park School filed into the auditorium to a hearty round of applause. They brought smiles to the faces of their parents as they recited an original poem recounting their fondest memories. Then, as part of a longstanding custom, the students read their "last will and testament," with each graduate bequeathing a special memory to their school. They concluded the ceremony with a musical slideshow, summing up their sentiments with a few spirited verses of "You're My Best Friend."



# Oh, What a Year It Has Been!

Celebrating highlights from a year of achievement and innovation.

### Finance and Operations

A ribbon-cutting ceremony at North Middle School for the new state-of-the-art music rooms highlighted the district's continued commitment to maintaining and improving facilities.

On the financial front, the district received recognition for excellence in financial reporting from two international financial associations.

### Innovative STEAM Instruction

Innovations to support science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics abounded.

The district received national recognition when staff members gave a presentation at the National School Boards Association conference, detailing how high school students are designing adaptive toys for patients at St. Mary's Hospital for Children. A collaborative relationship with Hofstra University's Center of Innovation has been providing technical and engineering expertise. Through a partnership with Operation SPLASH, students are conducting research to help protect local estuaries. The high school played host to the NYC/Long Island FIRST Tech Challenge robotics competition qualifier, and students competed for the first time in the Long Island Regional Science Bowl. South Middle School was recognized as a Microsoft Associate Showcase School for its innovative use of the district's One-to-World Tablet Initiative. Fourth- and fifth-grade girls made connections with local female professionals at a workshop titled "Girls and STEAM Careers."

### Academic Excellence

- Ninety students were named Advanced Placement Scholars. One earned a National Merit Scholarship, with three finalists and four semifinalists named in the competition.
- There was one semifinalist in the Intel Science Talent Search, one Intel ISEF qualifier, one I-SWEEP honorable mention, one NYSSEF Best in Fair, and two honorable mentions in the ExploraVision competition. Twelve seniors submitted Intel research and eight submitted Siemens research.
- Thirteen North Middle students earned awards at the NCC Science Fair, and three South Middle students were named finalists in the Bright Schools STEM Competition.
- The high school newspaper Horizon won close to 40 awards at state and regional competitions, including a gold award for best all-around publication.

### Achievement in the Arts

- The NAMM Foundation named Lynbrook Public Schools a 2016 Best Community for Music Education.
- The district had one All-National, four All-State and 94 All-County musicians, as well as 11 chosen to perform in the Long Island String Festival Association concerts.
- Performing groups earned one Gold with Distinction, three Gold and one Silver rating at the NYSSMA Major Organization Festival.
- Seniors were offered nearly \$1.6 million in art scholarship awards.
- A Marion Street fourth-grader was named the winner of the New York State PTA's logo design contest.

### Athletic Accomplishments

- In the fall varsity season, two teams won conference titles and seven teams earned Scholar-Athlete honors. Nearly 50 individual awards were earned, including two All-State, one All-State Scholar-Athlete, two state qualifiers and one Conference Coach of the Year.
- In the winter varsity season, five teams earned Scholar-Athlete honors, one team earned county honors as most improved, and one team earned section honors for sportsmanship. Nearly 30 individual awards were earned, including one All-American athlete and three state qualifiers.
- The middle school kickline team won the Long Island Championship.
- In the spring varsity season, there were three conference championship teams and eight scholar-athlete teams. More than 60 individual awards were earned, including two Honorable Mention All-Americans, three Academic All-Americans and two Conference Coaches of the Year.

### A Community of Caring

Around the district, students put their talents to work to benefit local food banks, including Love Heals, the Go Fly a Kite Foundation, the American Cancer Association, Long Island Blood Services, Share Our Strength, MADD, ALS Ride for Life and more. Two individuals received national recognition for their charitable work.

In support of tolerance, Lynbrook North and South middle schools and West End School were named No Place for Hate Schools by the Anti-Defamation League. The High School Gay-Straight Alliance hosted a panel discussion about LGBTQ+ issues and resources.

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Lynbrook, NY 11563

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## Communication Corner

### BOND REFERENDUM UPDATE

The Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Melissa Burak wish to thank the more than 1,000 community residents who participated in an anonymous survey conducted by the Board of Education and Administration.

The survey data will play an important role as the Board and Administration work to formulate their options to address the facility needs at Lynbrook High School and the district. The results of the survey will be shared when the Board presents its options to the community in the new school year.

### CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE

Bids were awarded for bathroom renovations at Marion Street School, South Middle School and the high school. Work will take place over the summer. Other summer projects include the North Middle parking lot, South Middle gym floor and high school lighting and ceiling replacement. The Atlantic Avenue window project, the North and South boiler projects and a North bathroom renovation are awaiting approval from NYSED.

### #GIVEAHOOTFOR...

Follow Dr. Burak's Twitter account, @LynbrookSupt. Look for weekly tweets with the hashtag #GiveAHootFor...



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