

Merrick Messenger

LEGACY PROJECT CELEBRATES DISTRICT'S 100th Anniversary

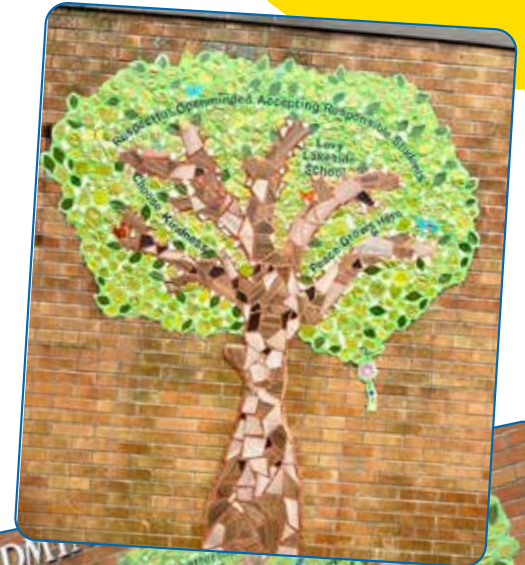
To further commemorate the district's centennial anniversary in a more permanent way, students and staff created a mural celebrating 100 years of educating students in Merrick.

Consisting of three mosaic trees – one for each school – the mural lines the southern entrance brick wall to the central office administrative building.

Each tree is unique, complete with special nods to the Birch, Chatterton and

Lakeside communities. Sixth graders from the classes of 2023 created a different tile for inclusion in the project. The tiles were then painted by every student in each building. Staff assisted as well.

As part of the process teachers, administrators, staff and parents placed the tiles, with design and installation assistance from mural developers, Ben's Bells.



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MERRICK GRADUATES CLASS OF 2023

In ceremonies filled with pomp and circumstance, celebration and song, Birch, Chatterton and Lakeside schools graduated their sixth grade Classes of 2023.

BIRCH

Birch School graduated its sixth grade Class of 2023 beneath an arch of black and gold balloons on the Brookside stage on June 14.

Student Council co-presidents Hayley Bennett and Eric Vaglio greeted guests and recalled memories from their time at Birch.

"Our years at Birch have been full of special accomplishments," Vaglio said.

"We planted greenery in the front of the school and made fun and enjoyable spirit days for classes to enjoy," Bennett added. "We are grateful for all of the dedicated teachers, staff and administrators that have helped us to succeed."

"And while we are sad to see our time at Birch come to an end, we know that we will enter Merrick Avenue Middle School ready to meet any challenge and accomplish any goal," Vaglio continued.

Board President Jill Levine recalled how the graduates navigated through COVID-19 learning protocols.

"You showed you are strong, you are flexible, and you are resilient, and you are very courageous," she said. "These incredible strengths are now a part of

you, and I have no doubt that they will help you succeed even more in your future."

Principal Kerri Galante referenced a student pop culture favorite, "Stranger Things," when talking about qualities to seek out in a friend.

"As you embark on your search, consider trustworthiness," she said. "Someone who will keep their promises and your confidence. Find those who will bring out your best self, encourage your differences, root for you and allow you to go crazy when you need to. Decide who will protect you – in good times and bad – despite your flaws, stand up for you unconditionally and who would never expect you to do something that makes you feel uncomfortable or disregards your values."

PTA co-President Rachel Charney recited a special poem about time spent at Birch.

Kelley Merkle, the Merrick Faculty Association building chairperson, presented a donation to the Make-A-Wish Foundation on behalf of the Class of 2023.



CHATTERTON

In a bright auditorium full of blue and yellow fanfare, Chatterton sixth graders celebrated their moving-up ceremony on June 15.

Members of the color guard handed over duties to the Class of 2024 ahead of the ceremony during a presentation of flags.

Principal Dana Bermas mentioned the school's steadfast objective in educating the whole student.

"Through schoolwide activities and class lessons, it was our intention for you to realize that you have the ability to elicit change in this world," she said. "Ongoing themes of kindness, perseverance, positivity and a sense of belonging were our focus. It was never just about the academics, but rather how to become productive members of society and how to be a good person that others can count on."

Merrick Board President Jill Levine echoed the sentiment about the value of being a student in the district.

"A Merrick education is the beginning of a bright future," she noted. "Your future is very bright. You have proven what you can do here at Chatterton School, and we cannot wait to watch you flourish as you move onto middle school and beyond."

Sixth grade PTA representative Felicia

Cilibrasi referenced the students graduating during the district's centennial year.

"You are the most recently graduated class – the youngest Chatterton alumni," she said. "Remember and embrace the core values taught here at Chatterton – values not only of kindness, but also of compassion, empathy and inclusion."

Student Council President Mason Wan said he always looked up to members of the group as he went through Chatterton.

"They also seemed so prepared and willing to help others," he said. "When my fellow Student Council members and I were given this opportunity ... I think we have done everything in our power to make this school better."

James Keenan, a sixth grade teacher and building representative for the Merrick Faculty Association, announced a donation being made to the Ronald McDonald House on behalf of the Class of 2023.

Dr. Richard Nasto led the sixth graders in "I'll Always Remember You," "Life Is a School Day" and "The Chatterton Song."

Sixth grader Marcus Cilibrasi wrote the lyrics to "Life Is a School Day," a parody of the song, "Life Is a Highway."



LAKE SIDE

In a ceremony filled with songs and celebration, Levy Lakeside School graduated its sixth grade Class of 2023 on June 16 in the Brookside auditorium.

Principal Libby Trencheny reminded graduates that the school community has instilled what it means to be a ROARS student – respectful, open-minded, accepting and responsible.

"As you enter MAMS and then high school ... you will meet all kinds of people," she said. "Continue to be respectful of others, open-minded toward other perspectives and opinions and accepting of all the qualities that makes each one of you unique and special."

Rocco Suraci and Rina Goldmark recalled memories from each grade level. "When we started fifth grade there was a major change to our school day," Suraci noted. "We began switching classes for subjects. Fifth grade teachers worked their hardest to make sure we were ready for the workload of sixth grade, and we truly appreciated that because sixth grade was so much more than we expected."

Board President Jill Levine offered two of her favorite phrases to students. "Things are not always easy, but they are always worth it," she began. "Go do great

things; we know you can and we know you will. And if those things are not as great as you had hoped they were at first, just always keep trying."

PTA President Melissa Warshaw encouraged students to reflect on memories they have created over the last seven years.

"I hope that you remember the friends who you have made and the teachers who have helped you along the way," she said. "As well as the field trips, Halloween parades, sports nights, Boosterthons, peace and friendship days and ice cream days – I hope that those memories will forever bring a smile to your face."

Jennifer Meschkow, the Merrick Faculty Association building representative, announced that they would be donating to the Hewlett House in honor of the Class of 2023.

"I have always believed that an elementary school is a very special place," she said. "It is the place where the building blocks of your education actually start. It is the place where you often meet some lifelong friends. It is a place where you learn how to get along with each other and a place where you learn how to be a student."



Peace & Friendship Days

Spread Cheer

Birch, Chatterton and Lakeside Schools celebrated Peace & Friendship Days in June. Everyone enjoyed various activities, field day events, carnival games, face painting, treats and more.

The day was a community effort between building staff, PTA members and parent volunteers.



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