

Outreach

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SELECTED FOR *Elite* Innovation League

Mineola School District has been selected to join the elite Digital Promise League of Innovative Schools, a national coalition of school district superintendents that fosters collaboration between education leaders and entrepreneurs, researchers and thought partners. Members represent nearly 3 million students across 25 states whose experiences reflect the diversity and shared challenges of public education in America. In the last three years, only 46 school districts in the nation have been chosen to participate in this prestigious league.

The league represents a “vibrant ecosystem of educators” who aim to accelerate the pace of change in public education nationwide. New members are selected for their vision, track record, and commitment to creating and implementing new ways of reaching and engaging learners.

The district’s first league meeting was held in Washington, D.C. on Oct. 5-7. During that time, Dr. Nagler had the opportunity to visit DCPS schools, listen to guest speakers and work with colleagues on shared priorities.

Participation in the league is not a one-year deal and comes with a long-term commitment to remain active.

“To be among this exclusive selection of individuals and to consider them fellow collaborators can, and will, only result in increased opportunities for the students of Mineola. It is truly an honor and the community should be proud.”

- Dr. Nagler, Superintendent of Schools

INNOVATION AWARD

The New York State School Boards Association has awarded the Mineola School District a certificate of recognition for the Be the Change for Kids 2014 Innovation Awards to honor the district’s science lab initiative. As a recipient, the district received a \$5,000 grant to enhance its STEAM science labs in grades 3-6. Superintendent of Schools Michael P. Nagler, Ed.D. received the award on behalf



of the district at NYSSBA’s 95th Annual Convention & Education Expo on Oct. 1 in Albany.

According to NYSSBA, the Be the Change for Kids award seeks to promote programs that make a positive difference. Focus is placed on those programs that give students the tools needed for future success. The award looks to highlight districts that have progressive educational programs that can be replicated, sustained and adapted, lead students to better opportunities, enrich students’ ingenuity and/or prepare young learners for futures in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) careers.

The science labs in our elementary schools are not common to every district and truly seek to create college and career readiness using mobile devices, hands-on skills and critical thinking. Mineola is continuously supporting the Next Generation Science Standards with full integration of the Common Core Learning Standards through science, technology, engineering and mathematics, as well as the arts. The district is developing students’ abilities to use inquiry strategies while addressing their 21st-century skill sets of collaboration, communication, creativity and critical thinking, and plans to further enhance these skills with its new STEAM initiative.

FULL STEAM AHEAD

Called STEAM, the district has enhanced its STEM program to officially include the arts this year. “We’ve been doing this all along, but now we are just calling it out,” Dr. Nagler said of the change. The initiative will be very similar to what has already been happening in classrooms, but will involve the added arts component, especially in areas like social studies. The district has supported the initiative with the purchase of greenhouse materials for a seventh-grade project and 3-D printers that will bring student creativity to life. The high school has also expanded its offerings to include an Exploring Computer Science course that will expose students to the fields of coding and robotics-style skills.

Mineola is one of the only districts on Long Island to embrace the Next Generation Science Standards and has already been giving students systematic exposure to STEAM-related professions across all grade levels.

Mineola Union Free School District
121 Jackson Avenue
Mineola, New York 11501

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Full-Day Pre-K

For more than 20 years, the district has been providing its community with a fee-free, part-time/half-day pre-K program. Now, thanks to the partnership the district has forged with its Willis Avenue lessee, Harbor Child Care, the Board of Education is thrilled at the opportunity to offer a full-day Universal Pre-K program to its residents at no additional cost to taxpayers or those utilizing the program.



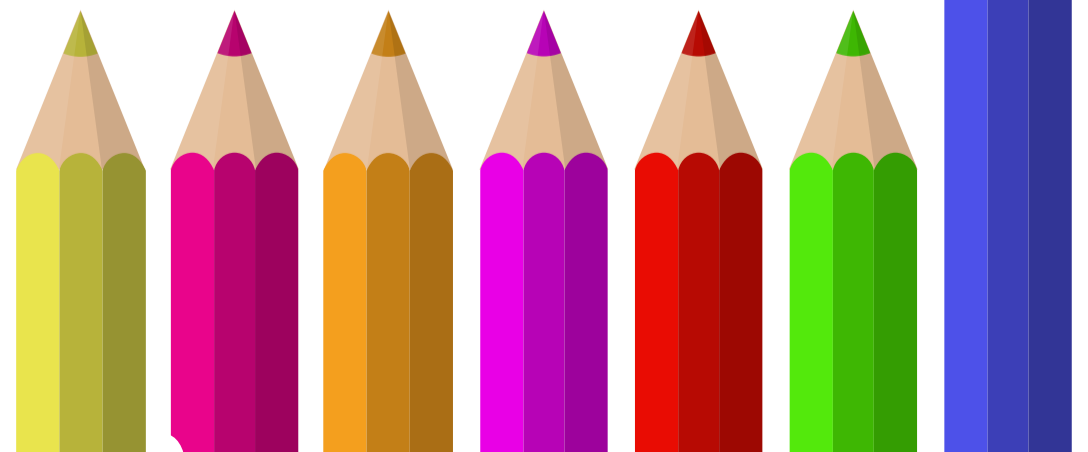
Through the use of a yearly \$145,800 state-supplied grant, Mineola was able to offer 54 full-day spots to students enrolled in its pre-K program. Utilizing a lottery system, parents were given the option of full-day at Harbor Child Care, or half-day AM or PM pre-K at either of the two primary schools (Meadow and Hampton). All 54 full-time slots have been filled, and approximately 90 additional students have been enrolled in the district's half-day program for the 2014-15 school year.

"I think the community really wanted it," Assistant Superintendent Patricia Burns said of the full-day program. "Through Harbor Child Care and this UPK grant money, we were able to fund it without any tax impact. It's really a win-win for Mineola families."

The half-day program at Meadow and Hampton is utilizing two and a half district-hired teachers who can each teach an AM and PM section of pre-K. Due to a restructuring of teacher contracts specific to pre-K, the district is able to offer five sections of pre-K five days a week rather than the two or three days per week offered in the past.

New this year, the half-day program will begin using Frog Street, a highly interactive, Common Core/research-based program that focuses on math and ELA as well as the development of crucial fine and gross motor skills and the social-emotional growth of early childhood learners.

In addition to the full- and half-day programs for pre-K, the district continues to house the Kornreich Early Childhood Center at Jackson Avenue for 3-year-olds. The Kornreich program is fully funded by the Kornreich family and brings a truly unique opportunity to our families. If you are interested in learning more about the Kornreich Program please contact Lisa Jamison at 631-427-3700 (press 2, then dial ext. 4610).



Mineola High School already offers a plethora of Advanced Placement and college-level courses for its students. Now, this year, the district is experimenting with the offering of an online-only course in AP Psychology for interested students.

Facilitated by social studies teacher John Fretz, the course is technically run through BOCES in a framework provided by the Florida Virtual School. Mr. Fretz has the ability to make the course unique for Mineola by changing/altering content as needed and offering a personal touch through the addition of video to support instruction.

"Since we have the iPads for grades 3-9, I really want to change the way we make digital content...I want to create content that engages kids differently," Superintendent Michael Nagler said. With this in mind, the district has been working with an outside company to create videos that are not only engaging, but also highly visual and informative. Mr. Fretz has been utilizing this company to create videos for the AP Psychology course.

Although the class will never formally meet, the course will utilize an online learning management system called Brain Honey as a forum for students to submit assignments and actively participate in the course. The online course is technically open to all students, but is most appealing to 11th- and 12th-graders who may be looking to obtain additional college credits. There is no dedicated school time for the course, so students must be fully committed to complete the work on their own time.

"Part of our overall goal is to extend students' participation in school by extending the classroom beyond four walls," Dr. Nagler said of the addition. "This was the next logical step for us."

Mineola currently offers four classes through Adelphi University for college credit at the high school, and is looking to partner with Queensborough Community College as well to offer additional college courses in January.

Right now, the online courses are only open to Mineola students, but the district is hoping to eventually offer its online courses to out-of-district students for a small fee.

How did you contribute positively to a global society this summer?



"I picked up toys at my neighbor's house."

Michael Herrera
Meadow Grade 2

"I helped my brother build a giant sand castle."

Catalina Dumindin
Hampton
Kindergarten



"For the Girl Scouts, we made pots and planted flowers throughout the community."

Samantha Allen
Grade 4



"I worked on this research project that will hopefully show how pesticides and leachate from mulch affect the environment in terms of toxicity and endocrine disruption."

Monika Dharia
Grade 12



"My grandma's church has a yard sale fundraiser every year. I helped set up and sell, packed items and carried large items to people's cars."

William Beatty
Grade 7



"I helped my Daddy paint Mommy and Daddy's bedroom."

Steven Garbarini
Hampton Kindergarten



"Girls are oppressed around the globe, so I volunteered in Mumbai, India to teach sixth-graders math and English for two weeks over the summer. I did it through Aseema, whose goal is to advocate equal education for all."

Sanskriti Bimal
Grade 11



Mission:

The mission of the Mineola Union Free School District is to inspire each student to be a *life-long learner*, pursue excellence, exhibit strength of character and contribute positively to a global society.

AP Scholars

More than 70 current and former Mineola High School students have been recognized by the College Board as AP Scholars due to their outstanding success on Advanced Placement exams. Students took AP exams in May 2014 after completing challenging college-level courses in the district in a variety of subjects.

According to the College Board's website, the AP Program offers willing and academically prepared students the opportunity to take college-level courses while still in high school, and to earn college credit, advanced placement or both for successful performance on the AP exams. The College Board recognizes several levels of achievement based on students' performance on these exams.

Congratulations to the following students:

NATIONAL AP SCHOLAR

Granted to students who receive an average score of at least 4 on all AP exams taken, and scores of 4 or higher on eight or more of these exams.

Joyce Hwang Kristen Sze-Tu

AP SCHOLAR WITH DISTINCTION

Granted to students who receive an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams.

Pamela Alvarez	Douglas Hale	Mersim Redzematovic
Mallory Brady	Jane Hostomsky	Joyce Rhim
Courtney Capobianco	Joyce Hwang	Kristen Sze-Tu
Anthony Caruso	Kyle Jenkins	Jake Tavernite
Monika Dharia	Jessica Kern	Shannon Timlin
Christopher Farrell	Kristin Moro	
Kristina Goncalves	Caroline Mueller	

AP SCHOLAR WITH HONOR

Granted to students who receive an average score of at least 3.25 on all AP exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams.

Emily Abrams	Amy Marino	Scott Shannon
Alisha Cheung	John Murray	Ansel Shibu
Clare Connaughton	Ana Oliveira Gomes	Craig Vande Stouwe
Catherine Cunningham	Cristina Pinto	Sophia Villa
Rebecca Katinas	Nadia Razick	Michael Woytysiak
Nathaniel Levy	Charolotte Ring	

AP SCHOLAR

Granted to students who receive a score of 3 or higher on three or more AP exams.

Raymond Agrelo	Leo Gorry	Eneyda Morales
Pallak Anand	Nicholas Iadevaio	Thomas Moran
Gabriel Anjo	Ryan Kelly	Vithushan Nimalan
Kathryn Barnwell	Arya Lahijani	Dominic Paggi
Rebecca Bastos	Sarah Lee	Lauren Pucci
Kelly Behan	Christopher	Nirmal Sabu
Bruno Benitez	Limazopoulos	Brandon Sia
Elizabeth Brown	Erek Lucio	Christina Vafiadis
Gregory Canell	Emmett Maloney	Anand Varghese
Rebecca Chiu	Mallory Mayfield	Joseph Wales
Jacob Escobar	Emma McGeown	Allison Yarri
Quinn Ginsberg	Nicole Mengler	
Jennifer Godinho	Cristina Mirao	



NATIONAL MERIT SEMIFINALIST

High school senior Nathaniel Levy has been named a semifinalist in the National Merit Scholarship Program for 2015. The Mineola School District has consistently had students selected for this honor, demonstrating its continued dedication to academic excellence. In addition to this latest recognition, Nathaniel has also been named an AP Scholar with Distinction by the College Board and scored a 2290 out of 2400 on his SAT.

Semifinalists represent the top one-third, or about 16,000, of approximately 50,000 high scorers who took the PSAT/NMSQT, which has a total of 1.5 million entrants, according to the National Merit Scholarship Program. Students are ranked with a selection index score based on their combined scores in critical reading, writing and math. Semifinalists can compete to be named a finalist and continue in the process to receive corporate and college-sponsored scholarships, as well as the esteemed National Merit Scholarship. Those advancing to the finalist stage will be notified in February of their standing.

The Mineola School District congratulates Nathaniel on this impressive achievement and wishes his continued academic success in the future.

COMMENDED FOR ACADEMICS

Four seniors have been named Commended Students in the National Merit Scholarship Program. Approximately 34,000 students throughout the nation received this honor, which is based upon the exceptional academic promise they demonstrated on the qualifying test used for program entry. Although they will not continue in the 2015 competition, these students placed among the top 5 percent of more than 1.5 million students who entered the competition by taking the PSAT.

The district congratulates the following students: Monika Dharia, John Murray, Craig VandeStouwe and Michael Woytysiak.



When you ask Yahoo! what it means to be a life-long learner, its best answer is: "Life-long learning is attitudinal; one can and should be open to new ideas, decisions, skills or behaviors...it throws the axiom 'you can't teach an old dog new tricks' out the door...it provides opportunities at all ages and in numerous contexts – at work, at home and through leisure activities, not just through the formal channels such as school." Creating life-long learners is at the core of everything we do here in Mineola. Share in our joy as we celebrate students who are encompassing aspects of our mission in each newsletter. The students on this page are just a few of the shining examples of students who are becoming life-long learners.

eSpark Challenge

eSpark is a nationwide iPad application that uses quests and challenges to supplement students' ELA and reading comprehension. Mineola was the first district on Long Island to partner with eSpark, which currently serves more than 60,000 K-8 students. The company has been enthusiastic in receiving quality feedback from the district's staff and students on ways to improve their design and become more appealing to users.

After garnering much feedback from grades 5-7 at the middle school last year, eSpark determined that the students weren't really finding the application too "fun" and that there were ways to make it better. So in the spring, fifth-grade students were tasked with creating a better design for the application.

"eSpark gave us nothing to strive for, nothing to motivate us – no badges to earn or ways to make it harder," current sixth-grader Serena Koshy said.

After staff reviewed dozens of student presentations, six finalist groups were chosen to present their ideas directly to eSpark in a teleconference with the company's design team in Chicago. "I thought it was a great way for them to get opinions directly from their consumers and adapt it to something we would like better," fellow sixth-grader William Winski said.

William and Serena were part of the first-place team, which also included Meghan Heckelman and Taylor Ruiz. For their placement, each team member received a certificate of recognition from eSpark and a second teleconference with the design team, who offered their congratulations and requested clarification on their ideas.

Meghan expressed some of the concerns presented by her team. "We realized that on all the tests we took through eSpark, it would tell you when you were wrong, but not give you the correct answer or an explanation of why your answer was wrong," she said. "The application would force you to repeat the entire challenge and you would never learn what you were doing wrong."

Their ideas included adding avatars; offering

something to strive for – for example, making the avatars customizable based on points earned from completing challenges and quests; creating contests in which classmates could compete against each other; and adding a way to track student progress.

Impressed with the feedback and skill set of the Mineola students, eSpark offered four middle school students the opportunity to complete a summer internship that would assist the company in further evaluating and improving their product. After submitting a video and undergoing an application process, current sixth-graders Sarah Faley, Alexandra Mora and Jillian Parrino and current eighth-grader Kelly Koo were chosen for the internship, which required a minimum commitment of four hours per week for six weeks. For their efforts, the four each received a \$100 American Express gift card.

"I wanted to give eSpark some feedback in addition to what the challenge winners shared," Sarah said of her decision to participate.

"From the internship, I learned the importance of being responsible and organized," Alexandra said. "I felt really mature to be doing an internship because it is something older people do."

These four students were the only ones chosen to be part of eSpark's internship program, which had them testing new material, providing input on new designs and presenting research projects that would influence change in the eSpark product. All meetings were done through Fuse, a Skype-like program that allows users to talk and see each other while presenting information.

Although the students haven't seen too many of their ideas incorporated into the application yet, they have seen some small improvements this year that stemmed from those ideas. Those already integrated were the addition of music, being able to chat or email one's teacher through the app, and an avatar who hi-fives.

"Although our ideas, which we worked very hard on, haven't all been incorporated, I understand that it's a process and it may take time," William said.



"We felt like such professionals."

- Meghan Heckelman

"It was a great learning experience."

- Taylor Ruiz

"I learned that you really have to start back at the basics before getting to the end result."

- Jillian Parrino

New Teachers in Town



JENNIE FAHEY

High School – STEM Instructional Leader

- Bachelor's degree in adolescent education math from SUNY Cortland
- Master's degree in school counseling from Queens College
- Joins us after nine years as a math teacher in the Baldwin School District



NATALIA FARRES

Meadow Drive – Kindergarten Immersion Teacher

- Bachelor of Science in family studies from University of Maryland
- Master of Special Education from Dowling College
- Joins us from Brentwood School District where she served as a bilingual/special education teacher
- Also does early intervention for children with disabilities for a private agency



KATHERYNE MORALES

Jackson Avenue – Third-Grade

Dual Language Teacher

- Bachelor of Arts from Queens College
- Master's degree in elementary education with a bilingual extension from Queens College
- Taught first-grade dual language in Riverhead School District
- Has worked with BOCES to provide ESL services for immigrant families



KERRY ANN MURPHY

Mineola Middle School – Math and

Special Education Teacher

- Bachelor's degree in adolescent math education/special education with a minor in Spanish from Molloy College
- Certification in advanced math 7-12 and students with disabilities math 7-12
- Previously student taught in Baldwin and Lynbrook school districts



SAMANTHA SANCHEZ

Meadow Drive – First-Grade

Spanish Immersion Teacher

- Bachelor of Arts in psychology from Adelphi University
- Master's in childhood education from Adelphi University
- Student-taught and served as a substitute for the district last year
- Grew up in a Spanish-speaking household



New and IMPROVED

Thanks to the community's support of the budget, the district completed some capital upgrades over the summer. Those that were finished included a science lab at the high school and a long-overdue cafeteria at Jackson Avenue. Finishing touches were put on the fuel station, and the middle school auditorium renovation is currently underway. Every district needs to invest in projects like these, and the Board's fiscal foresight has enabled Mineola to encompass these projects in the regular operating budget and without the need for an additional bond. These photos offer an inside look at the completed projects.



Alumni Spotlight

JESSICA NAPOLITANO, CLASS OF 2005

A self-proclaimed overachiever and lover of math and science, Jessica Napolitano just completed her Ph.D. in biomedical science from The Ohio State University's College of Medicine. A Mineola High School Class of 2005 graduate, her love of math and science began back in elementary school when a teacher entered her group's "world-changing invention" into the ExploraVision Contest hosted by Toshiba.

"I was 10 at the time," Jessica recalled. "I didn't know what we were doing was research, but I knew that I really loved it." Their invention came in first in the country that year.

From there, high school biology teacher Sue Kennedy further reinforced Jessica's love of science, first as a freshman and again when she was a senior in AP Biology. "I had a number of great teachers, but Ms. Kennedy was hands-down my favorite," Jessica shared. "She really fostered my love of science and was challenging but very enthusiastic. She just thought everything was so cool, and so I thought everything was so cool, too."

After graduating among the top 10 of her class, Jessica went on to attend College of the Holy Cross in Massachusetts as a biology/pre-med major. With a requirement of completing a service project each year, it was here that Jessica really fostered a love for helping others. She traveled to New Orleans to help rebuild after Hurricane Katrina and went to Africa to assist with Habitat for Humanity, to name a few of her humanitarian efforts.

Halfway through her years at Holy Cross, a professor at the college, whom she considers a mentor to this day, helped streamline her future plans. This professor strongly emphasized research and gave Jessica an opportunity to attend a conference that altered her course of education. "I knew I wanted to be a doctor and help people," Jessica said. "But I fell in love with research and began to see it as a whole new outlet for me to combine my love of science and service."

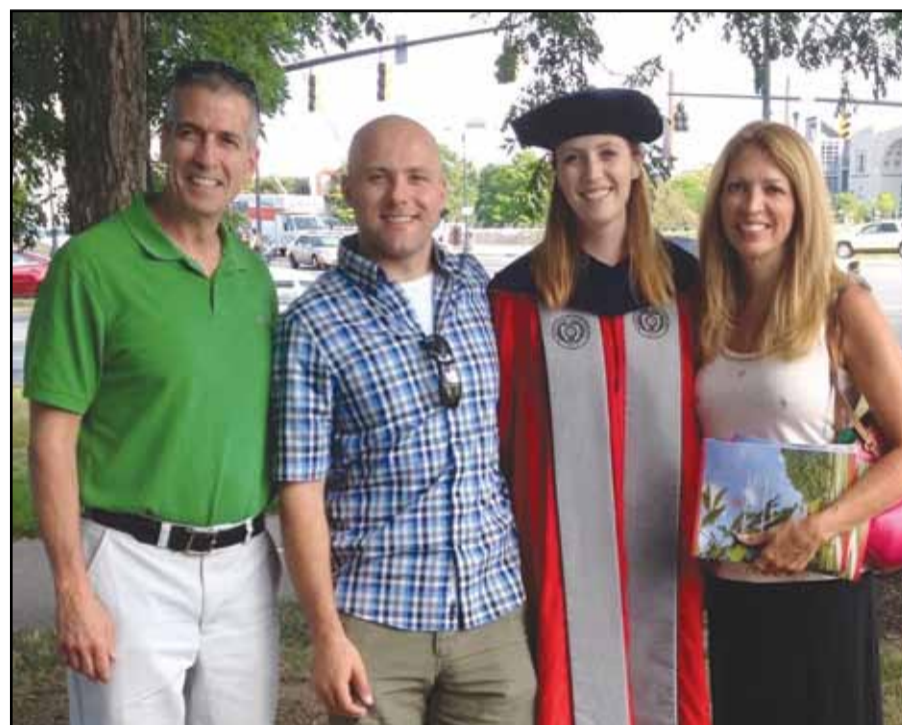
With that, she declared biochemistry as her minor and knew that she would continue on to earn her doctorate.

After reviewing almost a dozen options, Jessica went on to complete her doctorate in five years at Ohio State. "I really loved the atmosphere there," she said. "I'm grateful to Professor Bellin for pushing me out of my comfort zone."

Immediately after her graduation in August 2014, Jessica began a postdoctoral fellowship at Columbia University's Institute of Human Nutrition. She is working under a two-year grant, funded by the government, to assess how diet can determine a person's susceptibility to certain diseases. Once her two-year fellowship has expired, she will be required to apply for funding for her own lab to continue her research.

In the future, Jessica hopes to remain at Columbia University, earning the position of a faculty member while opening her own lab, training her own students and teaching. As a secondary option, she may explore working with the Environmental Protection Agency or the National Institute of Health.

Jessica recently moved to Sunnyside, Queens and is engaged to be married in April 2015. Her fiancé, Andrew, is a neuroscientist. The



"I really love Mineola. And I'm really jealous that they now have a research program – it's fantastic that they have that for students."

two met during their time at Ohio State and are big Ohio State Buckeye fans. In her spare time, she likes to garden, work out, bike ride and try new foods. "I'm just really excited to be back in New York and to rediscover the city after being gone for 10 years," she said.

In her closing thoughts, the Class of 2005 alumna shared, "I really love Mineola. And I'm really jealous that they now have a research program – it's fantastic that they have that for students."



Madison Brady and Tara Maloney received awards for their participation in the Girls Varsity Volleyball Invitational Tournament.

The girls varsity volleyball team hosted their annual invitational tournament on Sept. 13, an all-day event where they were joined by seven other teams – Sewanhaka, Port Washington, Carle Place, Bellmore-JFK, Malverne, Great Neck North and Valley Stream South. Mineola battled their way past Port Washington in the semifinals and ultimately beat Great Neck North in the championship match, claiming the tournament champion spot. Starting setter Madison Brady was honored with the All-Tournament Player award, as she offers her team a priceless contribution by cleaning up their passes and assisting more than 90 percent of their kills. Tara Maloney was awarded as Tournament MVP, recognizing her as the top player in the event. The tournament ran seamlessly thanks to parent volunteers and Mineola's JV players, who offered both their time and baking skills. Congratulations to the Lady Mustangs!

The Mineola boys and girls cross-country teams opened their league competition at Bethpage State Park on Sept. 16, where they faced Conference IV opponents Oyster Bay, Island Trees and Carle Place. The girls had strong performances from senior captain Deborah Gabbay and junior Claudia Serna. Both runners PR'd for the 4K race. The boys were led by senior captains Douglas Demagistris and Christopher Mueller and had solid contributions from sophomores Matteo Itri and Michael Cappeller. They lost a close race to Oyster Bay by a mere 10 points, but had overwhelming victories over Island Trees and Carle Place.

The golf season started with an impressive 8-1 win against Hicksville High School. Leading the way was senior captain Christopher Fischer, who shot a 1-under-par 35 for a school record. Other winners were seniors James Wiercinski and Jack Dennehy and freshmen Christopher Wiercinski

and James Graf. The team continued their winning ways by defeating Carle Place 7.5-1.5. Winning scores were recorded by Fischer, James Wiercinski, Chris Wiercinski and Graf; Dennehy had a tie.

The winnings unfortunately came to a halt with a loss to Herricks High School, with both teams winning three matches and ending in a final score 6-3. Once again, Fischer, James Wiercinski and Graf won their matches. To date, these three individuals are undefeated, leading the way to the Mustangs two-win, one-loss season.

Future matches will be conducted on top private courses against the likes of Cold Spring Harbor, Locust Valley and Roslyn. This year's team is young but hardworking. Under the playing example of last year's qualifier to the county championships, Christopher Fischer, the team is headed in a positive direction.

Mustang Football Defeats Valley Stream South 21-0

The Mineola varsity football team defense dominated Valley Stream South in the home opener, with the Falcons never advancing past Mineola's 30-yard line. Leading the defense were senior linebackers Eric Guardado (eight tackles, six assists), Edien Hincapie (six tackles, five assists) and safety John Clancy (three assists). It was a total team effort, as defense linemen Luigi Athan, Christopher Brenes, Matthew LaFaye, Anthony Sarno and Victor Tineo controlled the line of scrimmage. Defensive backs Peter McCormack and Christopher Lockwood played very well, combining for eight tackles and only allowing two completions. Linebackers Benjamin Carbone, Kyle Dunleavy, Matthew Kosowski and Brian Smith also played very well.

Quarterback James Gerstner provided the offense for Mineola, running seven times for 130 yards and two touchdowns. His second

touchdown was an amazing 70-yard run, breaking five tackles and outrunning the rest of the field to the goal line. WR/TE Brian Smith also gave the team a much-needed offensive boost when he returned the second-half kickoff 97 yards for a touchdown to give Mineola a 14-0 lead. Robert Lang did a great job kicking off, punting and kicking extra points where he was three-for-three. Philip Ciuffo also helped the team out by filling in at center for the injured Michael Bowen.

In boys varsity soccer, the Mustangs entered the second week of the young season looking for their first league points after dropping their first two non-league games. Mineola opened up the league season with a convincing 3-0 win against perennial soccer power Cold Spring Harbor. The Mustangs avenged a 5-1 loss from last season by stunning the Seahawks with three second-half goals from sophomore Brandon Mendes, junior Alexis Brenes and senior Daniel Pardo. Goalkeeper Andrew Pereira recorded his first shutout of the young season. After losing a close 1-0 draw at West Hempstead, the team rebounded with a strong showing in a 3-1 victory over visiting Valley Stream North. Daniel Pardo, an All-County selection as a junior in 2013, notched a hat trick, while Brandon Mendes tallied two assists. The Mustangs were tied 1-1 at halftime but were too much for the Spartans to handle in the second half. Great defensive play by senior Eric Lopez and the rest of Mineola's defensive corps kept the opponent off the scoreboard in the second half.

The girls varsity soccer season also opened in exciting fashion, as the team defeated Floral Park Memorial High School on Sept. 13 at Hofstra University. Seniors Samantha Venus (goalie) and Catherine Cunningham led the Mustangs to the 4-0 victory.

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