



FALL 2023

Commack Courier

National Merit Scholarship Competition



In photo from left to right: Standing: Timothy Russo, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; James Y.; Dr. Jordan Cox, Superintendent; Jonathan Z.; Nicole Kregler, Director of Counseling, and Carrie Lipenholtz, Principal. Seated: Jack D., Sofia A., Eunice J., and Alyssa P.

Commack School District is proud to announce that six students were selected as Semifinalists in the 2024 National Merit Scholarship Program. Congratulations to Sofia A., Jack D., Eunice J., Alyssa P., James Y. and Jonathan Z.

ented students now have the opportunity to continue in the competition. Winners for 2024 will be announced beginning in April.

The National Merit Scholarship Competition (NMSC) honors students with exceptional academic capability and who possess the potential for success in rigorous studies. These tal-

Good luck to our students as they continue the rigorous application process to become a finalist. Finalists compete for a \$2500 scholarship or one of the college and university or corporate-sponsored scholarships.

Commended Students




Congratulations to Kevin M., Maya K., Saharsh R., and Mitchel G. (not in photo), four of the 34,000 Commended students named nationwide!

These students were recognized for their intellectual abilities, achievements and for their exceptional academic promise by the National Merit Scholarship Program. Being recognized by this organization's competition is a very high achievement and the Commack School District is proud of our talented students!

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Commack Staff Superstars!

Chapter School Psychologist Of The Year Congratulations Dr. Leggio



Congratulations to CHS psychologist Dr. Heather Leggio recently won the Suffolk County School Psychologist of the Year Award given by the New York Association of School Psychologists. The award recognizes excellence in the provision of school psychological services, presented by local chapters to individuals who spend the majority of their time (75%) providing direct services to children and their families.

Dr. Leggio will be entered as a nominee for the NYASP Frank Plumeau School Psychologist of the Year Award. We are so proud of Dr. Leggio and grateful to have her in our schools!

In photo, from left to right: School Psychologists Dr. John Kelly (retired), Dr. Justine Duncan, Dr. Heather Leggio, Dr. Stephanie Levine, and Andrea Allen, Commack High School Assistant Principal.

Teacher Leader Award Way to go Ms. Krone!



It is our pleasure to announce that you Margaret Krone was recognized as New York State Association of World Language Administrators 2023 Teacher Leader Award recipient! Ms. Krone is Commack's Lead Teacher of World Languages. Her hard work and dedication for world

languages inspires students and makes her stand out as a role model.

NYSAWLA is a professional organization that supports World Language leaders with professional development, advocacy efforts, access to resources and development.



September Commack Stars!

Lindsey Persichilli,
Jessica Scott, and
Dr. Heather Leggio

October Commack Stars!

Laura Rizzo and Rich
Suchopar

To read about our
Stars, visit the
Commack Website!



The Commack Star Award is a new initiative to honor employees who embody the very essence of excellence in the Commack Schools. These exceptional individuals go above and beyond in their roles, consistently demonstrating a shining example of dedication and professionalism.

Nominated by their peers, these Commack Stars inspire and uplift others, whether it's students or fellow staff members, fostering an environment of growth and success. Their positive

attitude and unwavering commitment to their roles, co-workers, students, and the broader community are a source of motivation for all.

These staff members exhibit quality and care in all they do, be it in teaching and learning or supporting students and staff. Their unwavering willingness to take the initiative and go the extra mile for the betterment of the Commack Schools makes them true stars in every sense!

ALL-STATE CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to our CHS student musicians, selected to perform at the NYSSMA All-State Winter Conference and our Alternates. These talented musicians were chosen to represent CHS at the NYSSMA All-State festival! We are so proud of their accomplishments and musical talents.

Participants:

Ava G. – Bb Clarinet 2 – Symphonic Band
 Brooke B. – Soprano 2 – Mixed Chorus
 Chloe G. – Violin 2 – Symphonic Orchestra
 Julia L. – Soprano 1 – Mixed Chorus
 Katherine H. – Bb Clarinet 2 – Symphonic Band

Alternates:

Alexa W. – Soprano 1 – Chorus
 Anna R. – Cello – Orchestra
 Lindsey E. – Soprano 2 – Chorus
 Jin K. – Cello – Orchestra
 Meghan S. – Soprano 1 – Chorus
 Nathan H. – Double Bass – Orchestra
 Olivia A. – Bb Clarinet – Band
 Tone C. – Flute – Band



The All-State Winter Conference is a highly prestigious event that brings together some of the most talented and accomplished student musicians from across the state of New York. Only those who demonstrate exceptional musical proficiency and artistry are selected to participate in this conference.

CHS Renovations

Commack High School renovated and updated spaces around the building this summer. These new state-of-the-art facilities will provide students with opportunities to learn and grow in a variety of ways. Highlights of updated areas include the library, cafeterias, courtyards and new courtroom. The library was updated to include new seating areas and quiet study rooms where students can learn, collaborate, and create. The cafeteria features a modern design where students can now enjoy their meals in a comfortable and inviting setting. The courtroom is a unique addition to CHS. It is a fully functioning courtroom where students can learn about the law and the judicial system. It is also used for mock trials and other educational activities.



Future Engineers



Students in Mrs. Ryback's School Wide Enrichment classes at Burr spent the month of September engineering their way into a new school year. They built things like Pom-Pom launchers and Magnificent Things. These students are engineers in the making!





Frank Palopoli
Director of Facilities

Frank Palopoli is Commack's Director of Facilities, overseeing our buildings and property. Frank is a resident of Commack and a former School Maintenance Crew Leader in the district.

Most recently, he served as the Director of Facilities for the New Hyde Park-Garden City Park School District. He said, "I'm very excited to be back with the Commack School District. We are doing great things here and I look forward to contributing to that success in my new role as Director of Facilities."

Mr. Palopoli has experience managing district facilities, engineering, procurement and construction projects, as well as creating and implementing new staff safety plans and procedures. He is a graduate of the United States Coast Guard with honors and attended Hofstra University's two-year course for school district and commercial building facilities management.

Welcome to Commack!



Alise Pulliam
Executive Director for Instructional Technology

Alise Pulliam, our new Executive Director for Instructional Technology, is off and running - developing opportunities for teachers and administrators to incorporate technology into the curriculum to enhance teaching and learning for students and staff districtwide. She also coordinates professional development and training in new technology and software.

A graduate of SUNY Oneonta and SUNY Stony Brook with both a Masters Degree and Educational Leadership Certification, Alise was formerly the Director of Digital learning, Innovation, and Instructional Technology at Connetquot Central School District.

"I have embraced the mantra of "every student, every day" throughout my career and I look forward to bringing that same spirit to the students of Commack through technology integration, innovative educational experiences, and personalized learning. I am eager to continue the great work the administrative staff has already put in place for the students, staff and faculty."

Wood Park Back To School Bash!

Wood Park's first annual Back To School Bash was a huge success! There was something for everyone and the children enjoyed face painting, carnival games, dancing to the DJ, and winning prizes. Families enjoyed delicious food and spending time with their friends and community members. The event was a great way to kick off the new school year and to celebrate the Wood Park community. Thank you to the Wood Park PTA for coordinating an amazing back to school event.



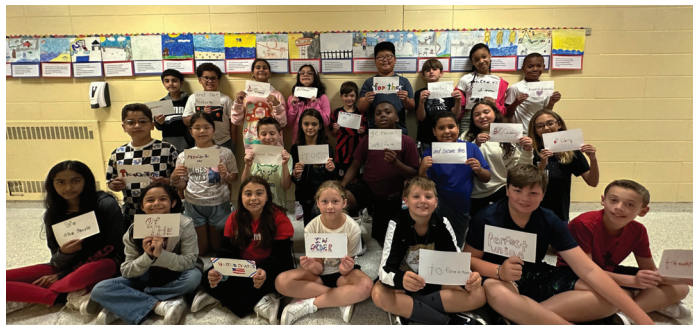
Sawmill Zen Den

The Sawmill Counseling Department created a warm and welcoming room entitled the "Zen Den." This space contains comfortable chairs, stuffed animals, sensory items, puzzles, games, a ping pong table, a tent and campfire set up. The Zen Den is available for students who are experiencing significant anxiety, sadness, loss or frustration. Our mental health providers assist students within this location in order to achieve emotional regulation.

Constitution Day Celebrations



North Ridge



Sawmill

Students across Commack School District celebrated Constitution Day this year by honoring the foundational document of the United States. They wore patriotic colors, learned about the Constitution's history, and respected the flag and other symbols of American democracy. They also paid their respects to those who fought for our freedom.

At Sawmill Intermediate School, students participated in a variety of activities to learn about the Constitution and its importance. They read the Preamble aloud, discussed its key principles, and created artwork to celebrate the document.

At North Ridge Primary School, students held a special patriotic song ceremony outside to commemorate Constitution Day.

Soccer Under The Stars!



On October 11, 2023, Commack School District held its second annual Soccer Under The Stars event. This event is held to honor our frontline workers and community first responders. Both the boys and girls varsity soccer teams participated in the event with games against Bay Shore.

As a result of yet another weekend of rain, the high school was not able to celebrate its Homecoming Parade on October 7, the crowning of the King and Queen, and performances by the Marching Band and the Cougarette kickline. Homecoming 2.0 merged with Soccer Under The Stars for one fabulous combined event.

A gala event with lots to see and experience, from shopping at the Commack Spirit Village, the Spirit Parade, a tribute to honor our hometown heroes, and of course the boys and girls soccer games and the postponed halftime show!

Superintendent Dr. Cox spoke on the importance of this event to him. As the son of a veteran and brother of a first responder, he understands the sacrifices made by frontline workers every day. Commack was delighted to honor Suffolk County police officers,

EMTs, and military service people at the event.

Between the varsity soccer games, there was a halftime performance featuring our award-winning Marching Band and Cougarette Kickline team. Additionally, the Homecoming king and queen were crowned, and CHS class float winners were announced. During the halftime break of each varsity game, there were halftime games with the Commack Soccer League teams.

The night of Commack High School's Soccer Under The Stars and Homecoming 2.0 was filled with community togetherness, fun, and a sense of pride. The school united to honor its community heroes and celebrate its classes. Many thanks to the Commack Soccer League for donating the lights for the event. These games hold special importance to the Commack administration and students, and it showed in the outpouring of support and participation. Commack's varsity soccer teams swept the opponents with both games ending with a 5-0 win! But the real highlight of the evening was the sense of community spirit that was palpable in the air. People of all ages and backgrounds came together to celebrate Commack's first responder heroes and what they do for our community.

Indian Hollow Dot Day



Mrs. Waldman's first grade class celebrated International Dot day. After reading, *The Dot* by Peter H. Reynolds, they used their imaginations and created a picture with their own single black dot. The Dot is the story of a caring teacher who dares a doubting student to trust in her own abilities by being brave enough to "make her mark." What begins with a small dot on a piece of paper becomes a breakthrough in confidence and courage, igniting a journey of self-discovery and sharing, which has gone on to inspire countless children and adults around the globe. The students followed Mr. Reynolds advice "Just make a mark and see where it takes you."

Long Island Scholar Artists

Congratulations to Commack High School students Faith F. (left photo) and Dara G. (right photo), recipients of the 2024 Scholar-Artist Awards! These awards are given by the Long Island Arts Alliance. Scholar Artists are chosen from five disciplines: Visual Arts, Music, Theater, Dance, and Media Arts. Faith was singled out for her talents in Dance, and Dara for her many Theater skills. Their dedication to their art and academics is unmatched and we are so proud of their accomplishments!



Offering congratulations to Faith are Mark Stuckey, Director of Art and Music, teacher Dana McNeill, and CHS Principal Carrie Lipenholtz.



Kudos to Dara! In photo with Mark Stuckey, Director Art and Music, her teacher Mary Ellen Desmond, and CHS Principal Carrie Lipenholtz.

CMS Welcomes New Entrants!

Did you know that over the past two years, Commack Middle School has welcomed approximately 130 new students to the district? In an effort to support new students and connect them to the school community, the Counseling Center has planned a variety of engaging activities and informational events throughout the year.

After a special orientation event in August, new students were welcomed to CMS with a "Meet and greet breakfast," where they had the opportunity to "get to know one another" and connect with current CMS students. Following the breakfast, students were invited on a Community Bus Tour led by CMS student leaders. During the Community Bus Tour, students had the opportunity to see the community, parks, local places, schools and more!

Additional activities and events throughout the school year will include: a CMS Scavenger Hunt, MYP Introductory Activities and Courtyard Chats.



CMS also has a Buddy Program that partners new students with returning CMS students to help build comfort and familiarity in the school. Each new student is assigned a buddy that supports them in finding their way around the school and explaining the "ins and outs" of life as a CMS student. These buddies will serve as a continued support throughout the school year and beyond.

Through these welcoming and supportive efforts, CMS student leaders continue to represent themselves as caring and principled individuals who are positively impacting the lives of their peers.

And Here We GO!



Students are back in the groove of an exciting new school year!

We are thrilled to welcome our students and staff, both old and new, for a year filled with educational growth, fun extra-curricular activities and clubs, athletics, events, and new friends.

Commack is committed to providing students with a well-rounded education that will prepare them for success in college, career, and life. We will continue to provide our students with the support and encouragement they need to grow as individuals and reach their full potential.

We know it will be a great one!



Stop, Drop and Roll!



Students in the primary and intermediate schools met with Commack Firefighters to learn about the different types of fires, how to prevent fires, and what to do in case of a fire. They also learned that the most important action to take is to get away from the fire, evacuate the building as quickly as possible, call 911, and if all else fails, stop, drop, and roll!

The fire safety lessons that these students learned are important for everyone to know. By reinforcing fire safety rules, students can help to keep themselves and their families safe.

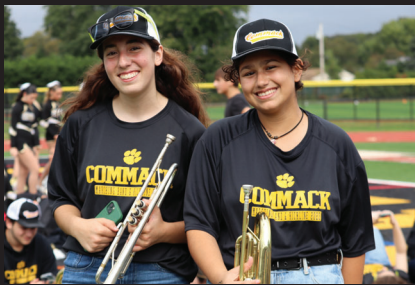
Thank you to our local volunteer firefighters for keeping us safe and for this wonderful educational program.



Let's Go Cougars!



#CommackPride



Homecoming 2.0



Notice of Nondiscrimination

The Commack Union Free School District does not discriminate on the basis of an individual's actual or perceived race, color, religion, creed, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship status, age, marital status, partnership status, disability, predisposing genetic characteristics, sexual orientation, gender (sex), military status, veteran status, domestic violence victim status or political affiliation, and additionally does not discriminate against students on the basis of weight, gender identity, gender expression, and religious practices or any other basis prohibited by New York State and/or federal non-discrimination laws in employment or its programs and activities. The District provides equal access to community and youth organizations.