

Commack Courier

A Board of Education
Publication

Intel International Science & Engineering Fair Competing on the World Stage

Three Commack High School students - Sean, Pragati, and Ethan - represented Commack and competed in the prestigious INTEL International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF), held in Phoenix, Arizona. There were a total of 1,447 projects from 80 countries and 1,800 high schools on the judging floor. Two of our three students came home placing in their respective categories.

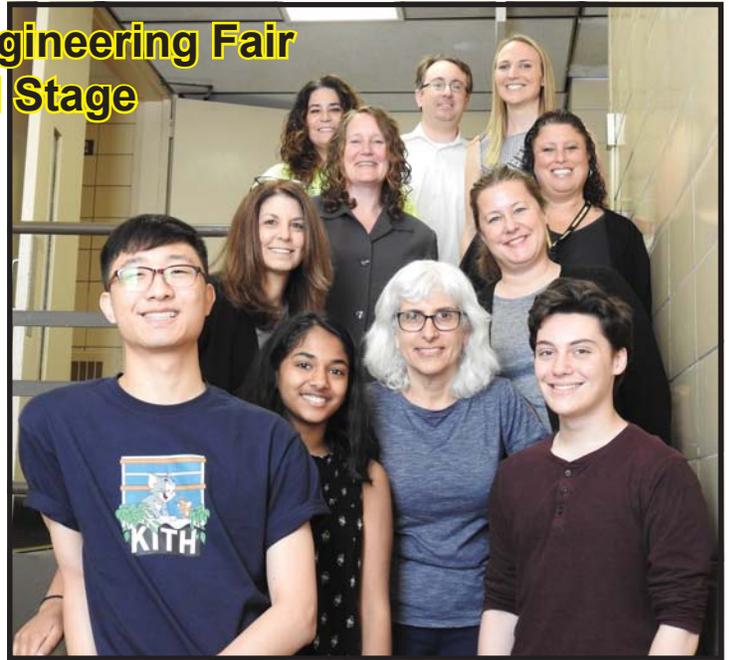
The trio went through a rigorous week of practicing for the competition's judges, studying and taking IB finals, (which happened to fall the same week). They also got to enjoy some of the Phoenix sights and took in a Diamonds baseball game. At the awards ceremony on Friday, May 17, Pragati was awarded fourth place overall in Plant Sciences and Ethan won third place in the Geological Society and American Geosciences Institute Special Award in Earth Science.

The students worked very hard and succeeded in winning at local and state-wide compe-

titions to earn a spot at ISEF.

- Pragati's project: Identifying Differential Expression and Conserved Alternative Splicing (AS) Events in *Zea mays*
- Sean's project: Receiver Noise Performance Optimization and Artificial Neural Network Based Target Localization Method for Multi-Static Passive Radar Systems
- Ethan's project: U-Pb Geochronology of Fossilized Horse Teeth from the Barstow Formation, California

The students were accompanied by their science research teachers/mentors Dr. Lorraine Solomon and Jeanette Collette. Ms. Collette said of the trip/students, "It was an incredible experience for our students, they were able to meet like-minded high school students from all over the world. The bonds they formed and the memories they made will last a life-time. I am just glad I was able to be a part of it."



Sean, Pragati, and Ethan are congratulated by their science research teachers and mentors Dr. Lorraine Solomon, Jeanette Collette, Jeanne Suttie, Andrea Beatty, Dr. Stephanie O'Brien, and Dr. Daniel Kramer, Principal Leslie Boritz, and Director of Science Dr. Alison Offerman-Celentano.



For a daily blog
of our students at IESF,
please visit:
www.commackschools.org/ISEF2019.aspx

National Merit Scholarship Winner



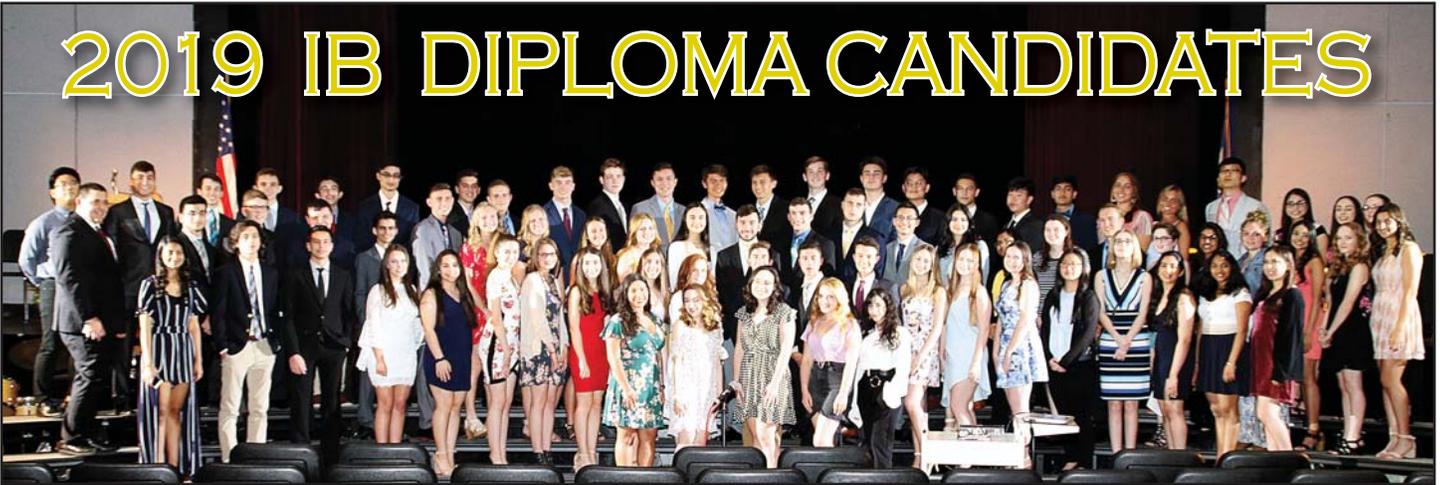
Commack High School senior, Deniz Sinar, was named a 2019 National Merit Scholarship winner. The competition is based on very high academic achievement and other requirements. Only 2,500 winners are chosen for the \$2,500 scholarship from a field of 1.6 million students who applied.

Deniz loves science, and will study biological engineering at Cornell University in the fall. She is a member of Commack High School's top cohort academic group and is pursuing an International Baccalaureate Diploma. Deniz has selected our school's most challenging classes such as Higher Level Math and Chemistry. From the Cold Spring Harbor

labs, Hofstra University Summer Science Program to Columbia University Science Honors Program. Deniz is busy pursuing her greatest passion, microbiology. Her ultimate goal is to improve the condition of our environment, so that all living things may thrive.

We were honored to have NYS Senator Jim Gaughran, Chair of Education Committee, visit the High School on the day we took Deniz's photo. He will be issuing a proclamation as well. In photo, from left to right: Guidance Director Nicole Kregler, Principal Leslie Boritz, Senator Gaughran, Deniz, Board of Education President Steven Hartman, and Superintendent of Commack Schools, Dr. Donald James.

2019 IB DIPLOMA CANDIDATES



This year, 86 Commack High School seniors completed the requirements for the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program. This rigorous, two-year program of study includes fulfilling coursework at the highest level, writing an independent research paper, and participating in and reflecting on actions they took in the service of others in their local and global communities. Candidates celebrated their achievements with a ceremony that highlighted their accomplishments. The evening featured student-based performances showcasing their diverse talents and the learning that has occurred in various IB subject areas. Congratulations to the IB Diploma Class of 2019!

Commack High School's Top Cohort Group

Congratulations to the Class of 2019! The 78 seniors on this page and the following pages have distinguished themselves by achieving weighted averages in excess of 100%, qualifying them for membership in the A++ cohort group. Many of these students have received full or partial scholarships to attend college, and have already earned college credits by participating in college level, International Baccalaureate (IB), or Advanced Placement (AP) courses taken at Commack High School.



At the Senior Awards Ceremony, students were recognized by Principal Leslie Boritz for Outstanding Academic Achievement. Those students are: Kyle Murphy, Nicholas Semetsis, Ruslan Burns, Karina Maldonado, Jenna McClusky, Jenna Theodorellis, and DeVaughna Tulloch.

[Click here for photos from the award ceremony](#)



Karen Abruzzo
Carnegie Mellon
University



Nicolas Amoruso
University of California
Santa Barbara



Samantha Appollo
Towson
University



Julia Bereche
The George Washington
University



Miles Bi
University of Houston

Class of 2019 Top Cohort Group



Jason Brigandi
University of Michigan



Ruslan Burns
Boston College



Kathy Cao
Johns Hopkins University



Michael Casey
The George Washington University



Gabriel Chan
Columbia University



Kristen Chao
Johns Hopkins University



Sean Coveny
Binghamton University



Rebecca Cuomo
University of Michigan



James Cutrone
Binghamton University



Daniel Czop
Marist College



Gabrielle D'Agostino
Barnard College



Stephen Damato
University of California Los Angeles



Emily Della Pietra
Princeton University



Sara DePietri
University of Connecticut



Abbey Dummler
Clemson University



Gabrielle Ebbrecht
Fordham University



Aria Eghbali
Binghamton University



Gillian Evers
Hofstra University



Stephen Ferrara Jr.
United States Air Force Academy



Grace Fitzgerald
Wake Forest University



Hannah Giambertone
SUNY College at Oneonta



Jared Gresen
University of Maryland College Park



Eliana Gruvman
Fordham University



Angela Gullo
Indiana University at Bloomington



Jared Habermehl
University of Maryland College Park

Class of 2019 Top Cohort Group



Jamison Homatas
Vanderbilt University



Julianna Horz
Purdue University



Angela Ji
Cornell University



Katherine Kelly
Hofstra University



John Kennedy-Bauza
Binghamton University



Maheen Khan
Stony Brook University



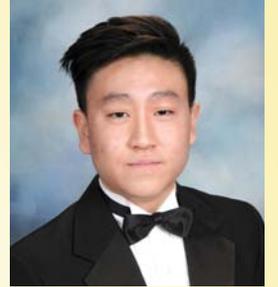
Hannah Kim
Stony Brook University



Susan Krage
Eckerd College



Dennis Langrock
Providence College



Joon Lee
University of Michigan



Joshua Lee
Harvard College



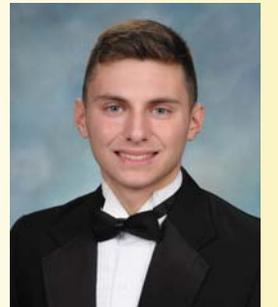
Delina Levine
*University of Maryland
College Park*



Jordyn Lieberman
Tulane University



Christopher Madsen
Temple University



Michael Mangi
Utica College



Nicholas Mangi
Utica College



Michele Martin
Hofstra University



Frank Mastroianni
Northeastern University



Emma Matz
Stony Brook University



Jenna McCluskey
*Case Western Reserve
University*



Amanda McMahon
University of Connecticut



Brittany McNeill
*University of
Rhode Island*



Patrick McNelis
Villanova University



Brian Mirman
*Indiana University
at Bloomington*



Snowiya Multani
Stony Brook University

Class of 2019 Top Cohort Group



Pragati Muthukumar
Massachusetts Institute of Technology



Sean Pak
Johns Hopkins University



Victoria Parangelo
Hofstra University



Victoria Pensiero
Columbia University



Danielle Ranucci
Princeton University



Christopher Ritter
University of Florida



Rachel Rosenthal
University of Florida



Catherine Rotelli
University of Connecticut



Hayden Roth
Binghamton University



Yasemin Sahin
Columbia University



Julianna Seifert
Cornell University



Nicholas Servedio
Stony Brook University



Hannah Sharifian
Adelphi University



Deniz Sinar
Cornell University



Teja Sundar
Binghamton University



Delani Swenson
Syracuse University



Carly Tamer
Northeastern University



Jenna Theodorellis
Binghamton University



Bryan Tompkins
University of Virginia



Angelina Trotta
The University of Tampa



Alexa Varlamos
University of Massachusetts, Amherst



Vincent Vozzolo
Stony Brook University



Anthony Woods
Binghamton University

**CONGRATULATIONS
TO THE
CLASS OF 2019**

[Click here for photos from graduation](#)

NYS Scholarship for Academic Excellence

The New York State Scholarships for Academic Excellence provide up to \$1,500 per year for up to five years of undergraduate study in New York State. Each year, 8,000 scholarships are awarded to top scholars from New York State high schools. Awards are based on student grades in certain Regents exams.

Fourteen Commack High School seniors were

recognized this year. They are: Gabriel Chan, Delina Levine, Kathy Cao, Emily Della Pietra, Ruslan Burns, Deniz Sinar, Jamison Homatas, Hayden Roth, Joshua Lee, Patrick McNelis, Victoria Parangelo, Angela Ji, Emma Matz, and Grace Fitzgerald.

In photo with the students are Director of Guidance Nicole Kregler (left) and Commack High School Principal Leslie Boritz.



Top Honors on National Language Exams



Sofia DiMauro earned a perfect score on the National Latin Exam. Congratulating Sofia are: Director of Guidance Nicole Kregler, Guidance Counselor Courtney Meyer, Latin teacher Jody Kass, and Principal Leslie Boritz.

This year several of our World Languages students demonstrated outstanding achievement on the National Latin and National Italian exams.

Just shy of 128,000 students worldwide took the National Latin Exam. Eight of our growing Latinists placed silver or bronze on their respective level exams. In particular, one student stood above the rest by earning a perfect score! Freshman Sofia represents our entire country as one of only 442 students to earn a perfect score on the Introduction to Latin exam, out of 22,509 students who participated in the United

States, Australia, Belize, Canada, China, France, Georgia, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Jordan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russia, Singapore, the Solomon Islands, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, Taiwan, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and Zimbabwe! Congratulations discipulis!

We also want to celebrate our eleven students of Italian who earned a gold, silver or bronze medal on the National Italian exam! This year, some 5,500 students throughout the U.S. sat for this challenging language and culture assessment. Bravissimi a tutti gli studenti!

Promoting High School Journalism Award

Senior Danielle Ranucci was awarded the prestigious Hank Logeman/News 12 High School Journalism Award. This award is given to the student who does the most to promote high school journalism on Long Island.

An avid writer, Danielle's storytelling ability and natural curiosity about people led her to journalism. She attended the Stony Brook University Robert W. Greene Summer Institute for High School Journalism, and the Columbia Scholastic Press Association Summer Journalism Workshop.

Danielle credits her success to the experience she gained through leading the school newspaper, *The Courier*, and the school's literary

magazine, *Etchings*.

Christina Semple, adviser of *The Courier* since 2001, shared that Danielle is only the second Commack High School student to ever win this award. The publication has been honored with over 400 awards for writing, art, and design since 2001. "Danielle has covered a variety of stories throughout her time on the newspaper staff. She never backs down from a challenge in reporting. It has been a pleasure to watch her skills grow and flourish over these past four years," said Semple.

Danielle will be attending Princeton University in the fall as an English/Comparative Literature major with a certificate in Creative Writing.



Charles Schulz, Coordinator of English, Danielle, and English teacher and journalism advisor, Christina Semple, in the school's Journalism suite.

Superintendent's Message

I'm proud to say it's been another banner year for our students and staff! As you browse through these pages, you will see many of the awards and accomplishments achieved by our talented students. What you won't see are the efforts that go on in the classrooms and buildings that lead to these successes, and the collaboration between our administrators, teachers, and support staff to ensure that all children reach their goals. Of course, we could not do this without the support of our parents, the PTAs, and our community. We appreciate and rely on these volunteers, who dedicate their precious time and talent for the benefit of our children.



Dr. James

The Board of Education and I thank each of you for passing a fiscally sound budget that maintains programs, athletics, and extra-curricular activities. Our Board of Education is once again whole with five trustees, and we welcome new Board members Susan Hermer and Justin Varughese. We are thankful that these dedicated people will lead us as we advocate for our children in the year to come.

The summer months are already booked for planning and renewal. Our facilities department will be busy with many projects, and our teachers and administrators will refine curricula to best prepare our students for success.

As we prepare for a new school year in September, we welcome new staff members, and bid farewell to the 50 veteran educators and staff members who are retiring. We thank them for their endless dedication to our children – they will be missed.

Know that we will continue our efforts to assure the finest, well-balanced programs for all of our students, and I wish you and your family a restful and safe summer.

Sincerely,

Dr. Donald James
Superintendent, Commack Schools

Free Summer Lunch Program

Children who qualify for free lunch during the school year can participate in the Summer Food Service Program. Meals will be provided to all eligible children free of charge. For Income Eligibility Guidelines and program locations, please go to the Lunch page on the Commack Website.
www.commackschools.org/LunchMenu.aspx

WHAT'S HAPPENING!

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

Wednesday, September 4, 2019

Back to School Packets & the 2019-2020 School Calendar will be posted on the website!

Visitations and Open House Dates are posted on the website!

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS

Thursday, August 22, 2019
Hubbs Administration Center - 8:00 p.m.

Thursday, September 12, 2019
Hubbs Administration Center - 8:00 p.m.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Check out our Community Events page for summer fun activities and camps for kids
www.commackschools.org

Breakfast Program Waiver

Consistent with past years, the Commack Union Free School District has applied for a waiver of the school breakfast program. This waiver was requested after a poll of primary, intermediate, and middle school parents determined that the large majority of families would not avail themselves of a breakfast program. Interested parties may address comments or suggestions to the attention of Laura A. Newman, Assistant Superintendent for Business, PO Box 150, Commack, NY 11725.

Nondiscrimination Statement: This explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly. In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

High School Science Honors

Congratulations to our talented science research students for their performance at the prestigious Long Island Science & Engineering Fair (LISEF). Our younger students participated in the JV Division and our upper-level researchers competed in the second round of LISEF. First place winners qualified to travel to Phoenix in May for the International Science and Engineering Fair (see page 1). We are so proud of all of our winners as well as our amazingly brilliant science research team consisting of Ms. Jeanette Collette, Dr. Lorraine Solomon, Ms. Jeanne Suttie, Dr. Daniel Kramer, Ms. Andrea Beatty and Dr. Stephanie O'Brien.



ISEF Division

- Sean, 1st Place, Computer Science
INTEL Excellence in Computer Science Award
- Pragati, 3rd Place, Cellular and Molecular Biology
- Kathy, 3rd Place, Earth and Environmental Science
The Association for Women Geoscientists Award
- Ethan, Honorable Mention,
Earth and Environmental Science American Meteorological Society Award
- Chapin, (with Avinash and Kyle), Honorable Mention, Environmental Engineering
NASA EARTH System Science Award
Stockholm Junior Water
- Yasemin (with Samuel), Honorable Mention, Physics
Yale Science and Engineering Award



JV Division

- Gavin and Amy, 3rd Place,
Cellular and Molecular Biology
- Kevin and Rohan, 3rd Place, Computer Science

SAAWA Science Fair 2019

At the South Asian American Women's Association our students received the following awards:

- Zeynup and Maryum,
1st Place, Biology
- Sean, 1st Place, Physics
- David and Michael,
3rd Place, Chemistry
- Kevin and Rohan,
Honorable Mention,
Environmental Engineering



NYSSEF Andromeda Division

Our students competed in the Andromeda Division of the New York State Science and Engineering Fair (NYSSEF). These young scientists represented us with projects that researched Alzheimer's Disease diagnosis methods, Parkinson's Drosophila tremor treatments, a Non-Newtonian vehicle side impact damage reduction system, and using plant extract to inhibit carbon steel corrosion.



Congratulations to:

- Charlson - 2nd Place, Computer Science
- Louis - 2nd Place, Chemistry
- Gabrielle - 2nd Place, Engineering
- Mia - 3rd Place - Biology

The Neurological Surgery P.C. Health Science Competition

A first-time contest for high school students, this fair was geared towards projects that had impact in the medical sciences, awarding \$80,000 to student researchers.

Congratulations to:

- Charlson - 2nd Place,
Biomedical Engineering
(\$4,000)
- Gabriel - 8th Place,
Biomedical Engineering
(\$500)
- Christine - 6th Place,
Biology and Medicine and
Health (\$500)
- Elizabeth and Emma - 7th



Place, Biology and Medicine and Health (\$250 each)

In photo with the science students are the High School science research teacher/mentors Jeanne Suttie, Daniel Kramer, Jeanette Collette, Lorraine Solomon, Andrea Beatty, and Stephanie O'Brien with Principal Leslie Boritz and Director of Guidance Alison Offerman-Celentano.

High School & Middle School Science Honors

WAC Invitational Science Fair

The most competitive high schools on Long Island come together each spring for the WAC Invitational Science Fair. The Research Association that sponsors the fair is a non-profit corporation run by research instructors from the top twelve research programs in Nassau and Suffolk counties. The fair is staffed with professional judges and Commack had 30 projects represented this year, placing in five of the eight eligible categories and receiving one special award.

- Kathy - The WAC Lighting Foundation Sustainability Award and 1st Place, Earth and Environmental Sciences
- Ethan - 3rd Place, Earth and Environmental Sciences
- Delina - 1st Place, Physics and Astronomy
- Mariam - 3rd Place, General Biology
- Kristen, Kimberly, and Maheen - Honorable Mention, General Biology



- Theresa - Honorable Mention, General Biology
- Nathan and Ruth - Honorable Mention, General Biology
- Michael and Joseph - Honorable Mention, General Biology
- Louis - 2nd Place, Chemistry
- Gabi - Honorable Mention, Prototype Engineering
- Adam and Shawn - Honorable Mention, Prototype Engineering

LI Science Congress

Congratulations to our amazing young science researchers for their performance at one of the most competitive science fairs on Long Island. The senior division of Long Island Science Congress had 749 projects from 71 schools with 1,073 students participating. The junior division had 380 projects with 663 students from 42 schools in attendance. Our winners are:

Senior Division:

- Nathan and Ruth - Honors - 3rd Place

Junior Division:

- Ashley, Harry, and Kevin - Highest Honors & Most Distinguished Categorical Project in Microbiology and Genetics
- Zeynep and Maryum - Highest Honors & Most Distinguished Categorical Project in Microbiology and Genetics
- Justin, Aspen, and Nicholas - High Honors & Most Distinguished Categorical Project in Animal and Plant Biology
- Defne, Karen, and Shreya - High Honors
- Avi, Robin, and Heetaek - Honors

Commack Middle School:

- Bryan - 2nd Place and the Murial Karp Memorial Award
- Saharsh - 3rd Place

LI Science Congress Senior Division



LI Science Congress Junior Division



LI Science Congress Junior Division and NYSSEF Commack Middle School

NYS Science & Engineering Fair

- Bryan - 3rd Place, Physical Science
- Saharsh - 2nd Place for Physical Science
- Alexandra and Emily - 1st Place, Behavioral Science



High School Science Honors

Molloy Science Fair



Narumichi, Thomas, and Jayson won Honorable Mention at the Kathy Belton Science Fair at Molloy for their project: "Comparing the Effectiveness of Drones to Ambulances in terms of Transporting Blood."

In photo with the students are teacher/mentors Jeanne Suttie and Jeanette Collette.

STANYS Teacher of the Year



Commack High School science teacher, Dr. Stephanie O'Brien, was named Suffolk Science Teachers Association of NYS (STANYS) Teacher of the Year. "The honor is so richly deserved for this outstanding educator," said Director of Science Dr. Alison Offerman-Celentano. Dr. O'Brien is a NYS Master Teacher, and the recipient of many awards and honors. Congratulations to this exemplary teacher!

Published & STANYS High School Science Award



Commack High School senior Kathy's "Prediction of Tropical Cyclone Genesis from Mesoscale Convective Systems using Machine Learning" article was published in "Weather & Forecasting." Kathy also won the Suffolk Science Teachers Association of NYS (STANYS) High School Science Award.

In photo with Kathy are teacher/mentors Dr. Daniel Kramer, Jeanette Collette, Dr. Lorraine Solomon, Director of Science Dr. Alison Offerman-Celentano, and Principal Leslie Boritz.

Most Influential Teacher



Commack High School chemistry teacher, John O'Donnell, was honored by former student, Samantha Lauro, (Class of 2015) who just graduated in the top 1% of her class from the Rochester Institute of Technology, majoring in chemistry. She received the Outstanding Undergraduate Scholar award which allowed her to honor John as her most influential high school teacher at a ceremony in March at RIT, all expenses paid. You just never know how your actions affect the people you meet in life!

Prudential Spirit of Community Awards



Commack Middle School seventh grade students, Athena and Jillian, were selected as local and state honorees for the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards recognizes outstanding volunteer service and dedication. The scope and time of their selfless efforts to help others put them within the top ten percent of all honorees considered for selection in New York State, earning them the state-level Prudential Spirit of Community Certificate of Excellence Award.

In addition to her Certificate of Excellence, Jillian is also the recipient of the President's Volunteer Service Award. This award, presented on behalf of President Donald Trump, recognizes Americans who have volunteered significant amounts of their time to serve their com-

munities and their country. Jillian is a founding member of a family run group called, "Kids 4 Causes." Jillian participates in fundraisers and volunteers time to support different non-profit organizations, providing adaptive bicycles for those with handicaps, making pillows for hospital patients, to name a few. She and her team have raised \$5,000 for Kids 4 Causes. Jillian was inspired by the classic starfish story, that one person, one step at a time, can make a difference.

Athena helped to raise over \$10,000 for the Crohn's and Colitis foundation. Over the past four years she has been tirelessly working with her "Team Miou," fundraising and organizing the annual "Take Steps Walk." Athena's efforts were so impressive that she was nominated to be the spokesperson or "Shining Star" of the 2017 walk.

Poetry Honors for Middle School Students



Two seventh grade students, Bianca and Brooke, took first and third place respectively in the 20th Annual Huntington Youth Writes Contest. Their poetry pieces were selected from 900 entries.

As winners, their work will be published in a journal and celebrated at an upcoming ceremony. Both students are in Toni Cohn's English language arts class and in Kari Rivara's Writer's Studio enrichment course.

In photo, from left to right: Kari Rivara, Bianca, Toni Cohn, Brooke, and Charles Schulz, ELA Coordinator Grades 6-12.

Italian Poetry Contest



The American Association of Teachers of Italian hold an annual poetry contest, which is attended by Commack High School and Middle School students. More than 100 language students competed from Long Island.

Congratulations to Commack High School students (in photo above):

James - 1st Place - Level V

Michael - 1st place - Level IV

Grace - 1st place Level III

Olivia - Honorable Mention - Level III

and Commack Middle School students:

Eli - Honorable Mention

Madeline - Honorable Mention

**Now Accepting Nominations for
Commack's Alumni of Distinction Awards**

**Information and Nomination Form
on the Commack Website**

www.commack.k12.ny.us/AlumniRegistration.aspx

Homecoming is October 26th!

Police Commissioner Hart Visits for Women's History Month



Commack High School hosted a very special guest during Women's History Month, newly appointed Suffolk County Police Commissioner Geraldine Hart, the first female police commissioner in Suffolk County history. In an intimate setting with sixteen female students, Commissioner Hart spoke frankly about her career and the sometimes difficult experiences she encountered as a female agent in the FBI. The students asked insightful questions, which the Commissioner answered willingly. She was personable and made quite an impression with her encouraging manner and her focus on the importance of setting goals and achieving them.

A Northport High School graduate, the Commissioner was determined to

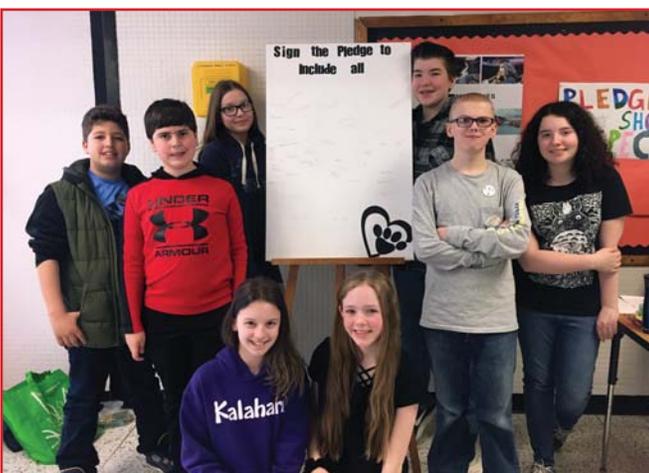
become an FBI agent. She shared her story about being accepted into the FBI, then shortly thereafter was notified that her acceptance was rescinded because of something in her background check. Not one to give up on her dream, she pursued the matter and found out that a grant she had received was reported as an unpaid school loan. She cleared that up, and her dream became a reality. She advised the young women in the group to "Be yourself, and look for opportunities to learn and grow." She encouraged them to choose a career that will make them happy, and to perhaps become police officers, as there are only about 9% female officers on the force currently.

During her career in the FBI, she

worked in the New York City office on several high-profile organized crime and gang cases, including the Lucchese organized crime case, MS 13 cases, and the investigation of Police Chief James Burke. She spoke of the balance between the importance of being a mom and having a career, and ways to do both. After collaborating on a case with the SCPD, there developed a new and unusual cooperative relationship between the FBI and the SCPD, and she was tapped for the Commissioner's job in April of 2018.

Commissioner Hart is a role model to emulate for today's young women, and we are thankful she took the time from her hectic schedule to spend with our students.

Respect & Inclusiveness



The Best of Buddies Club at Commack Middle School led a school-wide event in honor of Disabilities Awareness Month. During lunch periods club members invited fellow students to sign a canvas with his or her name pledging their promise to be inclusive and show respect to the entire school community regardless of anyone's ability level. Students were reminded to always be a buddy and show respect!

Learning to Sign



During Disabilities Awareness Week, High School American Sign Language students Kerri, Arianna, and Sara read and signed a story for the children at Indian Hollow. The ASL students visited other primary classrooms and schools as well.

The children in Mrs. Fox and Mrs. Waldman's classes learned the sign for "I love you."



ACCIDENTS ARE 100% PREVENTABLE!

SADD - Stop Distracted Driving -

Members of the Students Against Destructive Decisions Club (SADD) and former health class students attended Impact Teen Driving training and talked to their peers about "What do you consider lethal?" and the dangers faced when you're behind the wheel of a vehicle.

Here are some of the chilling facts:

- The #1 killer of teens in America is reckless and distracted driving, killing more teens each year than drugs and suicide combined
- 75% of crashes have nothing to do with drugs or alcohol
- 50% of teen deaths could have been prevented with a seatbelt
- Texting is 23 times more dangerous than talking to a person in the car
- When there is a teen driver with two or more passengers in the car they are twice as likely to get in a crash
- Teens are 2x more likely to cause a fatal crash.



Psychologist and SADD Advisor Heather Leggio, with student presenters Izza, Sarah, Eliana, Jenna, Allison, and Emma, and Health teacher Denise Garcia.

Hands on Learning Planting Apple Trees



In early April, dwarf apple trees were planted at all four primary buildings to support a newly-designed apple unit in science for our second grade students. With the help of our buildings and grounds crew, students took turns with trowels to fill in the hole around the new trees.



In the fall, all of our second graders learned how apple trees grow and reproduce, the parts of an apple, how bees pollinate, and how important bees are to the birth of new apple trees. They also investigated how seeds travel by solving a fun, mystery lesson about how a lonely tree came to be in a field all by itself.

Director of Science, Dr. Offerman-Celentano shared, "The apple trees will allow our future students to connect their learning in the classroom with actual living examples right on their campus. The students will get to see firsthand how an apple tree grows, produces flowers and eventually, apples!"

Business is Booming!

The Commack Chapter of The Future Business Leaders of America attended the annual state conference in Binghamton, NY, on April 10-12th. The events in this conference are extremely competitive and our students competed against the best New York State has to offer. All students that placed 1st - 4th earn a place to compete at the National level in San Antonio, Texas at the end of June.

In addition, the Commack Chapter received 2nd place for the FLEXFBLA Campaign and earned the most ribbons we have ever received for outstanding work above and beyond.



- Ariana – 3rd Place in Job Interview
- Ariana and Michael – 4th Place in Hospitality Management
- Jason - 1st Place in Business Plan
- Jason and Hayden – 1st Place in Entrepreneurship
- Adam – Outstanding Intern Award
- Aria - 4th Place in Economics
- Aria and Dennis – 3rd Place in Marketing
- Dennis – 2nd Place in Help Desk
- Jake - 1st place in Public Speaking and 2nd Place in Sales Presentation
- Drew and Aaron – 5th Place in Sports Marketing
- Vincent and Angelo - 4th Place in Global Business
- John and Madysen– 4th Place in Business Ethics
- John – Finalist in Public Speaking 1
- Angelo, Vincent, and Hayden – Finalists for Social Media Campaign

No Taxation Without Representation! CMS Students Reenact the Boston Tea Party



Members of the Middle School's Student Government went to Boston for their annual field trip this year. Both students and club advisers experienced the history of the city of Boston, and the group was able to learn about historic moments in American history as they walked the Freedom Trail through Boston.

They were able to reenact the thrill and excitement of the Boston Tea Party, as they threw "tea" overboard at Griffin's Wharf.

Commack's Teachers of the Year



Congratulations to Stephanie Zwiebel, a Commack Middle School ENL teacher, who was named Commack's Teacher of the Year (TOTY) 2019. She truly believes that each student is a wonder, and helps her students develop both emotionally and intellectually. Her goal is to teach them to possess the strength and bravery to help them conquer obstacles and challenges that will present themselves through their lifetime and of course, to learn English!

Teachers are nominated from all schools. The Primary Level TOTY is Justine Buonovolonta, the Intermediate Level winner is Luci Kemnitzer, Middle School is Stephanie Zwiebel, and the High School TOTY is Margaret Krone. Congratulations to all of our nominees!

Lisa Sorgie
Christine Schultz
Angela Boyle
Justine Buonovolonta
June Guarrera
Luci Kemnitzer

Tom O'Gara
Mark Burr
AnnMarie Ferreri
Linda Garcia
Donna Phillips
Laura Suchopar

Stephanie Zwiebel
Barbara Lazcano
Margaret Krone
Christina Semple

Silver Anniversary & Retirement Celebration



The District celebrated the 25th anniversary of dedication and service of those named below, and the retirement of 50 of our teachers, administrators, and staff members. For those retiring this year, we miss you already! As a group, you have over a thousand years of experience and knowledge that we are losing. Our best wishes for a happy and healthy next chapter in your lives!

Silver Anniversary Honorees:

Gloria Donohue, Patricia Emola, Matthew Keltos, Barbara Kory-Barry, Douglas Marks, Deborah Misiti, Jacqueline Oster, Orna Szency, Elizabeth Tanzi, Robert VanDyke, and Arlene Wynn.

Retirement Honorees:

Antoinette Anzalone, Leila Atkinson, Grace Barrett, Nina Bryant, Mark Burr, Carolyn Burton-Gajda, Lorraine Campbell, Carol Celeste, Louise Cetrangol, Diane Cohen, Eileen Cullen, Christina

DiGangi, James Di Luggo, Joseph Duffy Jr., Patricia Emola, Susan Fanwick, Joan Gallagher, Susan Glover, Linda Hansen, Roberta Harris, Catherine Hayes, Camille Horak, Maria Hughes, Paul Infante, Frederick Kamerer, Carolann Lally, Benny Leggio, Susanne Lercher, Helen Long, Alice Marques, Amy Mazur, Angela McNierney, Angelina Napoli, Christine Natali, Lucy Oliveto, Doreen Papp, Ellen Richardson, Rosa Roman, Angela Rooney, Linda Rudes, Janet Schoenemann, Randi Seideman, Deborah Slesinski, Lorraine Solomon, Victoria Stack, Carol Tierney, Dino Vassino, Jayne Wall, and Arlene Wynn.

Community Service Project - Building and Beyond

Ms. Kaplan and Mr. Trebour's Building & Beyond classes introduced students to developing hands-on engineering/manufacturing skills while building projects. Projects this year included pencil holders, wooden cell phone speakers, electronic buzzer games, wooden toys, tool-boxes and more.

As part of a community service project, the students created toys including spinning tops, triangle peg games and puzzles. The toys were presented to The Child Life Program of Good Samaritan Hospital, Department of Pediatrics.

As stated by Kate Fenton, Director of the Child Life Program, "Community support for hospitalized children and families is the best medicine of all! By generously donating the handcrafted toys you helped to entertain and comfort children during their hospital stay. Toys and gifts are often used throughout the year for therapeutic play with a Child Life Specialist, as birthday presents for patients, as rewards after completing a test or procedure, and simply as relaxation and distraction for a child struggling with illness and hospitalization."



Excellence in Nursing Award



Congratulations to Paula Saltzman, longtime dedicated nurse at Wood Park Primary School, for receiving the prestigious Award for Excellence in School Nursing for 2019.

The New York State Association of School Nurses recognizes nurses in the State who excel in their practice of school nursing. As part of the award, Mrs Saltzman was able to award a \$500 scholarship to a graduating senior who is pursuing a nursing career. In photo above, Mrs. Saltzman presents the award to Nicole, who will be attending SUNY Brockport in the fall. Also in photo are Jordan Cox, Executive Director of Instructional Services, and Commack High School Principal, Leslie Boritz.



A Flat Stanley Adventure!



After reading *Flat Stanley* and seeing the live production at the John Engeman Theater in Northport, each first grader at Indian Hollow created his/her own Flat Stanley to send on a trip.

Students wrote to a relative or friend in a different state and asked for Stanley to be taken on adventures with the recipient. Our Stanleys visited some amazing places including: Ontario, Canada, Scottsdale, Arizona, Las Vegas, Nevada and Whidbey Island,



Washington to name a few!

Maybe Flat Stanley will come and visit you!

S.O.S. - Save Our Species Chalk Walk

On May 17, the nation observed Endangered Species Day, which "recognizes the national conservation effort to protect our nation's endangered species and their habitats." In an effort to give voice to the endangered species of the world the Middle School Art and Science Departments sent out an S.O.S. Working together, through creative artistic expression, the students raised awareness of the importance of protecting these fragile species for present and future generations.

Each grade level was assigned a different part of the biosphere representing land creatures, water creatures (ocean, sea, rivers, lakes, ice) and creatures of the air. Students worked alone or in groups during their art or science periods, during lunch, or after school. The rear sidewalk of the school became the canvas for the original works. To see the photo in color, please visit the Commack Website to view the entire **Commack Courier** in full color.



Dedicated Teachers on State Standards & Practices Board



In photo, from left to right: Barbara Gerson, Director of Mathematics, Leslie Boritz, High School Principal; Derek Pope, Math teacher; Grace Barrett, Art teacher (retiring); Michael Larson, Middle School Principal; Paul Infante, Director of Fine and Applied Arts (retiring); and Jordan Cox, Executive Director of Curriculum & Instruction.

The Commack School District is pleased to recognize Mr. Derek Pope and Ms. Grace Barrett for their roles as participating members of the New York State Professional Standards & Practices Board for Teaching. The Board's mission is to advance and support quality teaching and student learning in New York State.

Mr. Pope and Ms. Barrett work with other educators in an advisory capacity to the New York State Board of Regents and the Commissioner of Education in areas such as teacher leadership, mentoring, professional learning, moral character requirements, and numerous other initiatives for the arts. This is a volunteer position that requires traveling to Albany six times a year for two-day meetings with all 27 committee members from around the state.

The District wishes to thank Ms. Barrett and Mr. Pope for their dedication to teaching and to our students.

Administrator of the Year

Nina Bryant, Commack's Assistant Director for Special Education, has spent her entire career in the Commack School District. Her dedication to the children here includes the better part of 40 years working very closely with students, parents, and staff. The Council of Administrators and Supervisors (CAS) recently recognized Nina as an outstanding Long Island educator and presented Nina with an Administra-

tor of the Year Award.

Nina is an expert in her field and a dedicated and hardworking professional advocating for children with special needs. She has given her heart and soul to the students and their families and is a champion for children in all respects. Nina is retiring this year and we thank her for all she has done for everyone in the Commack School District. We will miss you!



Congratulating Nina (center) are Frank Agovino, Assistant Principal at Commack Middle School; Dr. Kristi Keingstein, Special Education Director; Nina, Paul Infante, Director of Fine and Applied Arts (also retiring), and Michelle Collison, Wood Park Principal.

Sawmill Continental Math Team First in the U.S.



Sawmill's third grade Continental Math League team tied for first place in the nation for the Euclidean Division and are national winners. Five students earned perfect scores on all three meets and are also individual national winners (top photo).

This is the second time in the last 15 years that this unbelievable feat has been attained by our talented Sawmill students! Mrs. Tancredi-Zott, Dr. Ruffini and the co-advisors, Mrs. Dick and Mrs. Petrone, are "beaming with pride!" Hard work and effort have been displayed by each student who made the morning commitment.

Sawmill's fifth grade National Science League team also had a wonderful year placing second in the nation! The team spent weeks strengthening their science skills as they worked on various labs to prepare for the meet. One student, Jaslyn, scored 39 out of 40 possible points. She received a medal for being the team's top scorer.



From Rolling Hills to the Rainforest

Thanks to the Rolling Hills PTA Arts-in-Education Committee, the students experienced an in-school field trip and learned about the importance of the Rainforest.

Donna Waldenburg from the Long Island Center for Arts and Sciences explained how the loss of the Rainforest affects the animals, plants,

and even the possible medical cures found there to the first grade classes. One of the creatures they learned about was the Blue Morpho butterfly, noting how they can camouflage for protection. The children had the chance to make their own butterflies to remind them of the importance of protecting this valuable resource.



School Bus Safety Lesson

Teaching students about school bus safety is an important topic, especially in the primary grades. At Indian Hollow Primary School, there was a unique lesson taught by the young ladies in Brownie Troop 1986, who made a special presentation to the students about bus safety on one of the school's Spirit Days.

They discussed the importance of being a "School Bus Safety Smartie" on the ride to and from school and they reminded the students about the rules everyone must follow on the bus.



Fairy Tales Tell the Story of Building Good Character



Second grade students in Ms. DeVita and Ms. Bowden's Character Matters workshop at Wood Park Primary School performed a delightful school-wide play for all of the students, staff, and families. The Character Matters play was a fun and hilarious musical that helped students explore building good character through song and dance. The students performed in three phenomenal shows on May 14. Having the opportunity to be a part of such a fun and creative experience they will never forget!

Biography Day - Students Dress the Part!

Third graders in Michelle Dick's class at Sawmill Intermediate School played the part of their favorite historical character on Biography Day.

Parents and guests were invited to "Guess who we are" from the hints provided by the students' dress, handmade doll characters, and carefully researched biographies and clues on the posters they created. Visitors and students alike enjoyed this special experience.



Commack Graduate Nominates Former Teacher for Harvard Honors

Derek Pope, a math teacher at Commack High School, was named a "Distinguished Teacher of 2019" by the Harvard Club of Long Island.

"This award honors teachers who transform lives," explained Dr. Judith Esterquest, Chair of the Distinguished Teacher Selection Committee. "Devoted teachers like Derek Pope offer Long Island students deep expertise, extraordinary talents, and countless hours of attention. By capturing the minds and imaginations of our children and preparing them for challenges that were unknown even a few decades ago, these teachers shape the future of our country."

Derek Pope was honored at the Harvard Club of Long Island's annual University Relations Luncheon, along with eleven other teachers from across Long Island.

"Effective teachers are typically very well-versed in their subject matter, or truly enthusiastic about teaching," commented Matthew Ciurleo, a former Commack High School student who is expected to graduate from Harvard College in 2022. "Mr. Pope is exceptional because he excels at both." He added, "Mr. Pope's ability to simplify complex mathematical lessons, and guide stu-

dents in understanding how challenging math concepts have real-world application, creates a highly engaging and interactive learning experience."

When Commack Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Donald James, learned of this award, he commented that "Derek is a leader in the math department and on the forefront of instructional strategies to promote student inquiry and engagement. His innovative teaching style promotes true understanding of difficult concepts and motivates his students to succeed." Dr. James continued stating "He is an asset to his coworkers and the Commack School District, a NYS Master Teacher, and an excellent mentor who sets the highest example of teaching for all to emulate. We are #CommackProud that his work and dedication are being recognized by the Harvard Club of Long Island."



In photo with Derek Pope are Barbara Gerson (right), Director of Mathematics, and Leslie Boritz, Commack High School Principal.

Commack High School teachers have been well represented in recent years by Harvard's Distinguished Teacher Award program for their excellence both in the classroom and as lifelong mentors to their students. Prior honorees have included Barbara Gerson, Christina Semple, and Richard Kurtz.

Little Free Library Grand Opening!

A ribbon cutting ceremony marked the official start of the Little Free Library (LFL) in front of the Wood Park Primary School. Thanks to Wood Park's PTA, reading teachers, the Site Based Management Team, and our District Facilities Department, an adorable little schoolhouse is ready to welcome readers to "Take One, Read One, and Replace It."

The first Little Free Library was constructed in Wisconsin by Todd Bol. Today there are more than 75,000 LFLs in all 50 states and in over 80 countries.

Commack Librarian Joanne Kelleher was on hand and donated more new books. She told the children, "Every time you open the door on your library, you become part of a community of readers around the world."

Principal Michelle Collison is very excited to share books with the community and our children, and hopes that everyone will enjoy a new way to find an enjoyable book to read aloud or alone.



Take One, Read One, and Replace It!

Burr Brings Music and Joy to the The Children's Center



Music is a universal language that speaks to everyone. Two fifth grade classes from Burr Intermediate School, led by Amy Dank, music teacher, entertained the children and staff at the Children's Center with song, rhythm, and a story told through percussion and sound. It was an extraordinary event in which music was the language that united our two schools of students.

The dynamic Mrs. Dank prepared everything, and according to Donna Forbes, Assistant Principal at Burr, Mrs. Dank, "Taught the Burr students to sing, play instruments, work as a collective group and engage them in such a way that they were able to use these creative talents to entertain a very special group of students and their teachers. The true joy in the room was incredible."



The students performed the book "Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain" through actions, percussion instruments, and unique sounds.

Commack's College Athletes



Congratulations to our graduates who are going on to play collegiate sports!

*For a full list and for all the accomplishments of our talented scholar-athletes, please visit the Athletic Page on the Commack Website:
www.commackschools.org/cougarathletics.aspx*



A Parting Gift:

Planting the Seeds of Peace

The second grade class at North Ridge Primary School created a book mural as a last-gift to the school with the help of artist Cathy Russell, through the PTA Arts-in Education Program.

Students worked in the art room with Mrs. Lally and Mrs. Russell. "We chose this book cover honoring the work of

Wangari Maathai," said Mrs. Lally. "She is the first woman from Kenya to win the Nobel Peace Prize for her work in educating women on how to plant trees, assisting in their survival."

In photo are North Ridge Principal, Kathy Rihm, second grade students, and art teacher Carolann Lally.

Keep in Touch with Us!

Update your Information Before School Begins in September

Parents!

Parents and guardians are automatically enrolled in our email notification system. Messages are sent via home and cell phone, email, text, and push notification (if you have the [SchoolMessenger App](#)). Please make sure your contact information is up to date on the Parent Portal. You can control how we contact you (your preferences) via the app - find out more about this and other information just for parents in the Parent section on the Commack Website.

Community, Staff, and Parents!

Community members and parents can hear about community events, fundraisers, District Board of Education and Budget meetings, get sex offender notifications and more by signing up for [Community Connect Email](#). The link to sign up is under the Community News button on the home page of the website.

Another major means of improving our communications is the new [Commack Schools App](#) - have you downloaded it to your smartphone or tablet? It is available at the App Store or Google Apps and is another way to stay "in-the-know" about District or school happenings through push notifications right to your device. The app also makes navigating the District website more efficient by having targeted links for each school like lunch menus, calendars, and teacher websites.

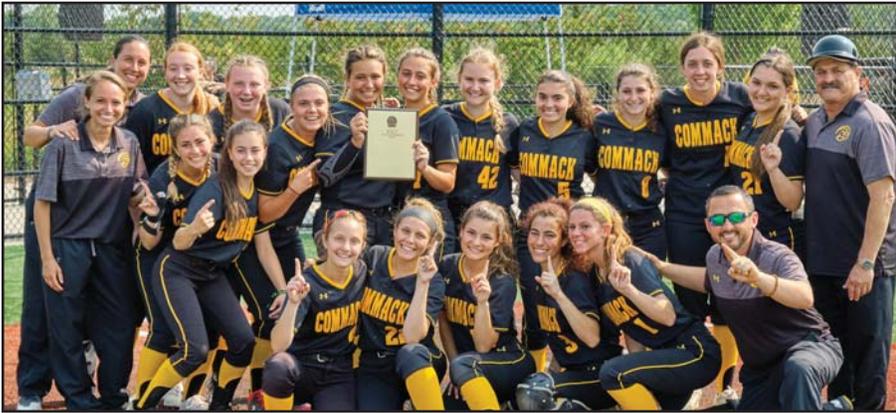
Everyone!

Check the Commack Website for latest and greatest about our students and staff and for general information.

Follow us on Twitter and Instagram and see all the wonderful people, events, and programs in the Commack Schools!

*Twitter: @CommackSchools
Instagram @CommackSD
www.commackschools.org*

Suffolk County Softball Champions

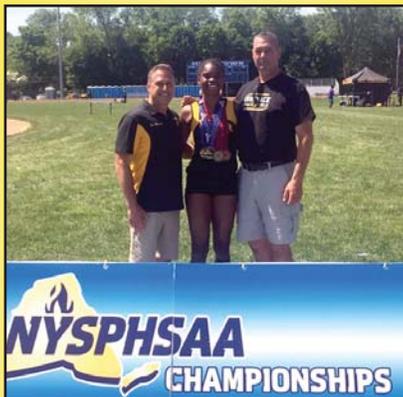


Congratulations to the Girls Varsity Softball Team and Coach Harold Cooley on winning the Suffolk County Championship 5-2 over Longwood. Commack was the 10th seed in the playoffs but the girls spirit and teamwork triumphed!

Kudos to:

- **Emily Haber** - Suffolk County Individual Badminton Champion
- **Joey Slackman** - Suffolk County and New York State Wrestling Champion, High School All American
- **Steve Vasile** - Suffolk County Discus Champion
- **Coach Jim Desmond** - Suffolk County JV Baseball Coach of the Year
- **Coach Jesus Valdes** - Suffolk County Badminton Coach of the Year

A Record Breaking Season for Alissa



Alissa has racked up the awards this year! She is the County Champion in both the Long Jump and Triple Jump events, #1 in New York State in the Long Jump and Triple Jump, double division, and #2 in the U.S. in the Triple Jump. Alissa is an All-American, and is on the All Long Island Track Team. She has broken record after record this year and she just soars over the competition!

Dellecave Award - Commack's First



Congratulations to Katie Kelly, a three-sport athlete, who won the prestigious Suffolk County Butch Dellecave award. Katie plays soccer, basketball, and lacrosse, and was also named a News12 Scholar Athlete this year. She spends countless hours doing volunteer work and maintains a 101 weighted average. Katie will play lacrosse for Hofstra in the fall.

Suffolk County Badminton Champs



Both the Boys and Girls Varsity Badminton Teams were the League 1 and Suffolk County Champions. The girls team went undefeated for the third straight season with a record of 16-0 (54 in a row) and they won the League 1 championship for a 5th straight year. The boys also had a great year going undefeated with a record of 16-0.

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.



Commack Courier
www.commackschools.org

Commack Board of Education:
Steven Hartman - President
Jarrett Behar - Vice President
Trustees: William Hender, Susan Hermer, and Justin Varughese

Superintendent of Schools:
Dr. Donald A. James