

# Bethpage Union Free School District

# BETHPAGE

## NEWSLETTER

### *A Community Comes Together*

Like many Long Island towns, the Bethpage community was battered by Hurricane Sandy. The school district had to close for an unprecedented full week of classes due to power outages, downed trees, roof damage and mandatory evacuations that impacted a significant number of staff members. However, the community came together to assist one another in many ways, large and small.

Bethpage was among the first districts on Long Island to return to full classes in all buildings. The Associated Press included a story on Bethpage's reopening that was picked up by the national news. The happiness of returning students created a powerful picture for the nation to see. However, schools were closed again for the nor'easter, which brought several inches of snow to Bethpage in addition to more downed trees and power lines.

During this time of crisis, the district attempted to keep everyone informed via ConnectEd, its website, listserv and email messages. Knowing that many people were without power and many had poor cell phone service throughout that week, we

asked those who received the message to try to assist us in spreading the word about school openings and what programs would be available.

We saw numerous acts of kindness everywhere. The school district opened as a warming center and offered free movies, refreshments, use of the Internet and a place to recharge cell phones and laptops. The Bethpage Fire Department organized a free hot meal for residents in need with great assistance from many local businesses that were eager to help. Residents and staff of the Bethpage School District raised over \$6,000 to assist those staff members whose homes were lost or damaged. The Bethpage Public Library opened as a warming center for the week, as did the Bethpage Senior Citizen Center. On a historic day, the district was forced to combine BHS and JFK into one building due to a power outage, and students and staff from both buildings collaborated for a terrific day that will long be remembered. The school district has



also welcomed several new students who have been displaced from their home schools in Long Beach. Throughout Bethpage, neighbors could be seen helping neighbors by cleaning debris, sharing generators, shoveling snow and cooking for those in need.

So in this season of Thanksgiving, as hard-hit and inconvenienced as we all were, it is important for all of us to remember how fortunate we are to reside and work in a community where the spirit of generosity is so pronounced. As difficult a time as it was, the bonds of this community grew even stronger.

## Pilot Program: Online Course Offering

Bethpage High School is currently one of a limited number of districts on Long Island offering a pilot program that allows students to participate in an online Advanced Placement Government and Politics class. Taught by veteran AP Government teacher Robert Verdi, the idea for the course stemmed from a meeting Superintendent Terrence Clark had with high school students who shared their desire for online course offerings. The AP Government and Politics class was chosen as the perfect class to spearhead the program, and Mr. Verdi welcomed the challenge.

"I've spent the last several months taking everything that is in my head and typing it out into words, finding support materials online and creating videos that contain mini-lectures for students to view," Mr. Verdi said of the course, which is run through OpenClass, a free Google-based service that creates a secure network for students.

Approximately 13 seniors are enrolled in the online course, which has proven to be an ideal number for its pilot year. Students are required to complete quizzes on each topic, supply short answers or essays to questions, and be involved in chat

room discussions that ask students to think beyond the text they have read and engage in intellectual debate.

"I'm trying to make this as interactive as possible for students," Mr. Verdi said of his online curriculum. "I don't see this format going away, especially as we see a lot of expansion in curriculum and offerings."

By taking this course offering online, students are able to free up their schedules, enabling them to take additional AP courses and thereby allowing them to maximize the credits they can earn for college.

"The Bethpage School District encourages all high school students to take at least one AP course in order to better prepare themselves for college-style coursework," Mr. Verdi explained. "This course goes a step further and prepares them for the online offerings that are increasingly being utilized especially for 101-level courses at colleges around the country."

Bethpage High School has historically been ranked by the Washington Post as one of the finest high schools in the country based upon its students' involvement in AP exams.

### *A History of Success on AP Exams*

- BHS offers 17 Advanced Placement courses.
- In 2012, BHS administered 591 AP exams to 311 students, which accounts for almost one-third of the student population taking advantage of AP.
- In 2011, 86 students were named AP Scholars by earning a score of 3 or higher on three or more AP exams.
- Approximately 70% of graduating seniors receive college credit for their AP courses.

Bethpage Union Free School District  
Bethpage, New York 11714

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 37  
Bethpage, NY



## A Message from the Superintendent

Dear Community Resident,

Notwithstanding the recent storm, we are off to a great school year here in Bethpage! We received notice that our current fourth- and fifth-graders were among the highest performing students in the entire state on their most recent ELA and math state assessments. Bethpage High School was categorized as a High Performing School, the highest ranking awarded by the New York State Education Department. The school spirit being demonstrated throughout our schools is incredible. JFK just had its Fall Festival, homecoming pep rally, Halloween Dance and two very successful TGIF events.

We continue to concentrate on the many changes and mandates being introduced by NYSED. As many of you know, we have implemented the new state-mandated curriculum known as the Common Core, which can be summarized as "less is more." The goal of Common Core is to teach fewer topics but go into greater depth, and to demand mastery before moving on to the next topic or skill. NYSED is also revamping all of the current state assessments and is likely to make further revisions to them next year.

The teachers and staff have been working hard to transition to this new educational landscape. They are writing lesson plans and preparing units that delve deeper into subject areas. Parents are a major partner, and we thank the PTA, along with the Bethpage Congress of Teachers and the Bethpage Administrators' Organization, for co-sponsoring the upcoming Parent Academy, a program that introduces parents to these sweeping changes in curriculum and assessment.

It should be noted that Bethpage was one of the few districts to have the new Annual Professional Performance Review plan in place for last year, and I am happy to report that all of our teachers were ranked either "highly effective" or "effective" under this new rigorous evaluation system. In addition, NYSED has approved our current plan; thus there will be no disruption to our state aid.

I also want to thank all of the employees in the district. As we have settled labor contracts with all of the unions, every employee has accepted a zero percent increase in salary at some point in the years covered by their settlement. They have all been willing partners in assisting us to craft responsible budgets in these tough economic times.

The public report from our independent auditor shows that we are in better fiscal shape than most districts in New York State. At the same time, the public School Report Card from NYSED shows that we are among the highest performing districts in the state. Bethpage students are currently enrolled in Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Brown, MIT, Cornell, Georgetown, University of Pennsylvania, West Point, NYU, Julliard, Bentley, Boston College, Stevens Institute of Technology, Tufts, University of Michigan and many other great academic institutions. I think we should all take pride in these endorsements of our community. We continue to seek ways to improve in the areas of maximizing operational efficiencies while providing a first-rate instructional program to our students.

Sincerely,



Terrence Clark  
Superintendent of Schools

## A STRONG START FOR 2012-2013

Superintendent of Schools Terrence Clark held his annual Superintendent's Conference Day for all teachers and staff of the district on Aug. 30. The annual tradition serves to recap the highlights from the prior school year and to inform faculty of the advancements and challenges that lie ahead.

*Among the 2011-2012 successes that Mr. Clark shared with staff were:*

- *100% of teachers who were rated under the new APPR standards received a score classifying them as effective or highly effective.*
- *Fourth-grade students were ranked No. 1 in Nassau County for their scores on the NYS ELA assessments and No. 5 in Math.*
- *Third-grade students were ranked No. 5 in Nassau County for their scores on the NYS ELA assessments and No. 12 in Math.*
- *Eighth-graders were ranked No. 9 in Nassau County for their scores on the NYS ELA assessments and No. 14 in Math.*
- *Bethpage High School was named a High Performing School by the State Education Department.*
- *Bethpage High School was ranked 494 out of 26,000 high schools nationwide.*
- *The 2012-2013 budget had a 70% approval rating from resident voters.*

For these accolades, he thanked all teachers and staff who contributed to the successes.

Looking to the future of Bethpage Schools, Mr. Clark shared the district's plan to "embrace a cloud" for 2012-2013, meaning that by utilizing newly installed technology, teachers will be sharing information through use of the "cloud," a mechanism for storing and retrieving information quickly across multiple devices. He also announced that all students will be getting their own district email this year and that several teachers will be integrating the Khan Academy, which offers online programs and support, into their classrooms.

The challenges ahead include the continuation of the tax cap, integration of the Common Core standards, new guidelines for APPR and the ongoing tax certiorari issue. With regard to APPR, Mr. Clark shared with teachers that the New York State Education Department has said that Bethpage's APPR plan is "among the best they have received."

"We are all in this together," Mr. Clark expressed. "This is not something we fear here in Bethpage."

At the conclusion of his address, teachers and staff retreated to their buildings, where they engaged in professional development workshops and put the finishing touches on their classrooms before opening day.

# Bethpage HS Named a Reward School

New York State Education Commissioner Dr. John King, Jr. has announced that Bethpage High School has been designated a Reward School for the 2012-2013 academic year. This prestigious statewide designation classifies Bethpage High School among the highest achieving in the state, as it represents one of only 67 schools throughout Long Island and 250 schools throughout the state to earn this distinction.

The New York State Education Department bestowed the award based on high student performance on state assessments and overall academic progress. Bethpage is now eligible to compete for a Commissioner's Schools Dissemination Grant of up to \$150,000 to further advance students' educational opportunities.

## AP SCHOLAR SUCCESS



Thirty-five current students at Bethpage High School have earned AP Scholar Awards for their exceptional achievement on Advanced Placement Program exams. Students took AP exams in May 2012 after completing challenging college-level courses in the district. The College Board recognizes several levels of achievement based on students' performance on these exams.

The College Board's AP Program provides willing and academically prepared students with the opportunity to take rigorous college-level courses while still in high school, and to earn college credit, advanced placement or both for successful performance on the AP exams. About 18% of the more than 1.8 million students worldwide who took AP exams performed at a sufficiently high level to also earn an AP Scholar Award. Congratulations to the following Bethpage students:

**AP SCHOLAR** (Granted to students who receive scores of 3 or higher on three or more AP exams): Jessica Ayala, Gabi Feliciano, Leaf Gross, Kirsten Jedd, Elizabeth Klauer, Patrick Kobel, James Limpert, Gina LoPresti, Rima Madan, Nick Maresco, Molly Reilly, Joseph Renna, Taylor Russo, Lauren Suran, Kyle Tengco

**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): Tyler Albert, Andrew Aquino, Amanda Arnold, Keren Benalcazar, Brittany Bungert, Kelly Chan, Jessica Cipolla, Jessica Dabrowski, Luke Norris, Courtney Radcliffe, Dylan Reggio, Amanda Rich, Jessica Seiter

**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): Usman Asif, Lauren Birck, Akash Dagur, Anthony Giordano, Chang Jeong, Lucas Levy, Nisha Shah

# All That Jazz<sup>3</sup>



(L-R) Band director James Stehlik, Luke Norris and Principal Michael Spence

Bethpage High School senior Luke Norris was selected to perform in the 2012 All-State Jazz Ensemble, which is part of the All-State Music Festival at the New York State School Music Association's Winter Conference. The festival, which will be held in Rochester in December, will feature high school student-musicians from throughout New York State. Luke, who has been playing for eight years, was one of only two tenor saxophonists selected from the entire state. This is the first time BHS has had a student selected for this prestigious ensemble.

## COMMENDED STUDENTS

The district is proud to announce that three students have been named Commended Students in the 2013 National Merit Scholarship Program. Congratulations to the following deserving students: Jessica Dabrowski, Patrick Kobel and Nisha Shah.

Approximately 34,000 Commended Students throughout the nation have been recognized for their exceptional academic promise. Although they will not continue in the 2013 competition for National Merit Scholarships, Commended Students placed among the top 5 percent of the more than 1.5 million students who entered the 2013 competition by taking the 2011 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test.

Jessica, Patrick and Nisha will be able to share their accomplishments with the colleges and universities to which they apply.



# Focusing on Nutrition



For this year's nutritional program, the district has implemented new federal standards. Schools across the country are responsible for adhering to these new standards, derived from the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA). The changes are intended to create healthier options on the standard lunch menu and ensure that districts use the new "choose my plate" food guidelines (as opposed to the former food pyramid).

In addition to adhering to all of the new proportional mandates, the district has taken the process a step further by requesting student and staff feedback on the new program. To accomplish this, students, staff, administrators and food service coordinators have been meeting regularly at each building to conduct nutrition focus groups.

"We are trying to adjust our menu to meet the needs and tastes of our students," said Assistant Superintendent for Business Joseph Marchesiello of the food service plan. "It's really incredible how educated students are about nutrition, and this forum empowers them to be part of the process."

Pictured above are students who participated in a recent focus group at Charles Campagne School. Focus groups have also been held at JFK Middle School and Kramer Lane Elementary School and future meetings are planned for each of the remaining buildings.

The entire food service program, including lunch menus and an FAQ, can be viewed on the district's website. Details on the program will also be featured extensively in the district's winter newsletter.

# THE PREAMBLE CHALLENGE



In recognition of Constitution Day, JFK Middle School students participated in a Preamble Challenge contest. Over 50 students successfully memorized and recited correctly all of the words in The Preamble to the Constitution. One student from each grade level was announced as a contest winner for reciting the words correctly in the shortest amount of time. The overall grade level winners of the contest were:

- Amanda O'Neill – Grade 6 (7.9 seconds)**
- Jeremy Miller – Grade 7 (6.6 seconds)**
- Amy Kappel – Grade 8 (6.5 seconds)**

The students were awarded certificates for their accomplishments and had a special lunch with Principal Mr. Schneider and Assistant Principal Mr. Fullerton. Congratulations to all of the students who participated.

# The New Faces of Instruction

Prior to the first day of school, all new instructional team members were formally welcomed to the district during the annual new teacher orientation. The daylong orientation featured breakfast, welcoming remarks from

central administrators and district directors, a bus tour of the community, including a stop at local supporter Cablevision, and time for incoming staff to get acquainted with their new principal and school.

"Anything you need, any of us here will always be willing to help you," Superintendent of Schools Terrence Clark said in his opening remarks to the new staff. His sentiments were echoed by the administrators and directors who spoke before him, in addition to their own words of encouragement and congratulations.

*The district would like to welcome the following individuals who were chosen after a rigorous application and selection process:*

### BETHPAGE HIGH SCHOOL

- Francesca Calio
- Meaghan Costello
- David Gordon
- Teresa Piazza
- Kathy Spears
- Gia Stagliano

- Mary Dickinson
- Eric Felsten
- Michael Ierano
- Daniel Kramer
- Julianna Laluna
- Eric Marianno
- Casey Schmieder
- Kerin Walsh

- Lindsey Drankwalter
- Denise Fischetti
- Laura Fitzgerald
- Christie Fotenos
- Christine Geller
- Kelly Marvullo
- Natalie Masotto
- Christine McGuire
- Ann Pomeranz
- Lindsay Rich
- Donna Scocca
- Gabriella Seeliger

- Maria Steck
- Karen Szczesny
- Andrea Zarcone
- Kristina Zuar

### CHARLES CAMPAGNE

- Allison Robb
- Daniella Witt

### JFK MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Jamie Bula
- Gabriella Buscemi
- Ryan Catterson

### CENTRAL BOULEVARD

- Rosemarie Crossan
- Jennifer Dodge

### KRAMER LANE

- Kerilyn Rossini
- Kerry Ann Wessinger
- Jonathan Wibben





# Eagles Soar<sup>5</sup>

## at Homecoming

Amid a seasonable fall day, the Bethpage Eagles Varsity football team fed off of the energy from the crowd to land a 26-21 win in their homecoming game against Lynbrook on Oct. 13. The victory marked the end of a perfect day, which began with a pride-filled parade down Stewart Avenue. Highlights of this year's parade included the thematic class floats of Fiesta Freshmen, Simpson Sophomores, Jack Sparrow Juniors and Super Mario Seniors. Homecoming King Sean Ryan rode solo, as his queen counterpart, Megan Jacovelli, was taking part in a volleyball tournament.

Following the parade, spectators enjoyed the facilities by grabbing lunch at the concession stand and purchasing Bethpage pride goods, such as sunglasses, shirts and blue and gold scarves, in support of community groups and school clubs. The game kicked off with a rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner," sung by select senior vocalists, and an enthusiastic cheer from the varsity cheerleaders to get the crowd pumped.



# News Around Our

## Getting to Know You

Students throughout the district returned to school with smiles on Tuesday, Sept. 4. Each of the elementary schools honored the day by engaging in getting-to-know-you activities with the students, discussing classroom rules and expectations, and giving a tour of the building to kindergartners. At the middle and high school levels, subject area teachers reviewed class guidelines, the syllabus and expectations, as well as dove right into some content.



Students at Charles Campagne arrived to school toting their backpacks, smiles and classroom supplies.



Kramer Lane School students dove right into utilizing the district's interactive white boards by completing an introductory assignment on the board.



Central Boulevard Principal Steven Furrey welcomes students as they travel through the hallways.

## SIGNS OF SCHOOL SPIRIT



Students and staff at CBS kicked off the school year by sporting their school spirit. Donning t-shirts with the district colors and eagle mascot, students proudly beamed with Bethpage pride. Pictured are some students showing their pride on Spirit Day.



## 21st Century Scholars "Fall" into Kindness

Fifth-grade students at Central Boulevard School kicked off the school year with a 21st Century Scholar session on being bully-free. Hosted by teachers Mrs. Tierney and Mrs. Glassman, the two-session activity, titled "Fall Into Kindness," earned students scholarship points in the 21st Century Scholars program. Points are carried with students through middle school and high school and count towards scholarship opportunities during their senior year.

Fall into Kindness activities focused on the district's year-round efforts to make all schools bully-free. Students created announcements centered on the theme of being an "upstander," rather than a bystander, and read them over the school's loudspeaker. They also created posters emblazoned with anti-bullying messages, which have been hung throughout the school.



# Elementary Schools

## ANTI-BULLYING *for You!*

Kindergartners and first-graders at Charles Campagne Elementary School were treated to a special anti-bullying program titled "Bully Frog." The program, which is based upon the "Bully Frog" series of books created by Long Islanders Ginger Lieberman and Roni Benson, follows a frog that bullies other frogs at school and how he changes his behavior to exhibit positive character traits. Hosted by the authors themselves, the program is an age-appropriate reminder for students to adopt positive character traits such as respect and empathy to become "upstanders" in their school and community. The event included a colorful and interactive PowerPoint presentation, as well as provided packets which will be distributed to classrooms as reinforcement to the program.

This is the first year that the Bully Frog program was brought to the school. It incorporates components of the newly adopted Dignity for All Students Act, which aims to create a school environment free from discrimination and harassment.



## Getting a Grip



Presented as a multi-screen, multimedia video to second-through fifth-graders at Charles Campagne Elementary School, "Get a Grip" focused on teaching students about self-control. Utilizing age-appropriate content, the video used current cartoons, music and testimonials to foster positive character education in an engaging, fun and relevant way.

The video, presented by Isaac and John who were visiting from California, explored the various definitions of self-control and all the areas to which it could apply, such as saving money, patience and goal setting. In its first year at the district, the program was shown at each of the three elementary buildings and served as a critical component of the Dignity for All Students Act, which aims to create a school environment free from discrimination and harassment. This presentation was integral, as it illustrated character traits, such as empathy, that students are expected to mimic every day in their school and community.

## OPERATION: *Lifesaver*

A representative from the Long Island Rail Road visited with students in grades K-5 at Kramer Lane Elementary School to review railroad safety. Held in conjunction with the district's Red Ribbon Week, the program served to reinforce key safety tips and precautions when on a train or near train tracks. Titled "Operation: Lifesaver," the representative used a video and PowerPoint presentation to portray key concepts.



# WORKING TOGETHER WITH Project Adventure

Seventh-grade students at John F. Kennedy Middle School in Bethpage participated in a Project Adventure field trip at the BOCES Outdoor Center. The trip, which was conducted as part of the school's character education program, was designed to guide groups of students through a series of activities that promote skills of critical thinking, problem solving, communication and collaboration. Many of the activities challenged the students to work together as a team to accomplish a common goal. These lifelong skills of cooperation, critical thinking and problem solving are needed inside and outside of the school environment.



## District Conducts Independent Safety Survey

As a precaution to ensure student safety, the Board of Education commissioned an independent environmental consulting firm to test the potential toxicity of vapors from the Bethpage Plume. Although the Department of Environmental Conservation claimed the district's schools were not within the scope of the vapors, members of the Board of Education and administration wanted to be certain that the health of their students and staff was not at risk. As a result, J.C. Broderick Environmental Consulting performed tests at the two district schools (Bethpage High School and Central Boulevard School) closest to the growing plume, which stems from contaminated sites at the Northrop-Grumman property.

We are pleased to report that in August, Broderick concluded that the levels of volatile vapors were "magnitudes below" acceptable levels, as established by the New York State Department of Health.

"There is nothing more important to us than the health of our students and staff," Superintendent of Schools Terrence Clark said in his summary of findings at the September Board of Education meeting. "I commend the Board for being so diligent."

Residents can view the complete findings on the district website at [www.bethpagecommunity.com](http://www.bethpagecommunity.com).

## A RED RIBBON PLEDGE



During the month of October, students and staff focused on health and wellness with a variety of activities to celebrate National Red Ribbon Week. Recognized during the week of Oct. 22 this year, the program highlights drug prevention and the importance of not only leading a drug-free life, but also making good decisions. Throughout the week, students districtwide were invited to take part in theme days and numerous age-appropriate activities that highlighted important messages in a fun way.

At Charles Campagne Elementary School, students studied the history of Red Ribbon Week. They learned that it all began with Special Agent Enrique Camarena, who, after spending more than four years in Mexico on a case for drug trafficking, went missing one day in February 1985 as a result of his knowledge about the illegal drug-related operation. A week was then designated in his honor to serve as a time to bring drug awareness to the nation's youth. The Charles Campagne students designated a display at the school's entrance to agent Camarena's honor, and each took a pledge



to remain drug-free and to always exhibit good character.

At Central Boulevard Elementary School, students in grades K-5 sang the Sesame Street Muppets' "We Are Anthem" song, which included lyrics about staying strong, being confident and achieving one's goals. Students in grades 2-5 also participated in the "Get a Grip" program, an interactive multimedia



presentation that focuses on self-control. (More information on "Get a Grip" can be found on page 7.)

As part of the celebration at Kramer Lane Elementary School, students participated in fun activities, such as "Crazy Hat Day," as a means to make saying no to drugs fun. For the elementary schools, the messages focused not only on drug prevention and awareness, but also on the power of positive choices. This was the theme of student-created posters, which hung throughout the school as reminders on the importance of remaining drug-free and always making good decisions.

This week of interesting and informative activities proved to be a success at each of the district's schools.

