

BETHPAGE

Newsletter

WINTER2020

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A Full Circle Approach TO WELLNESS

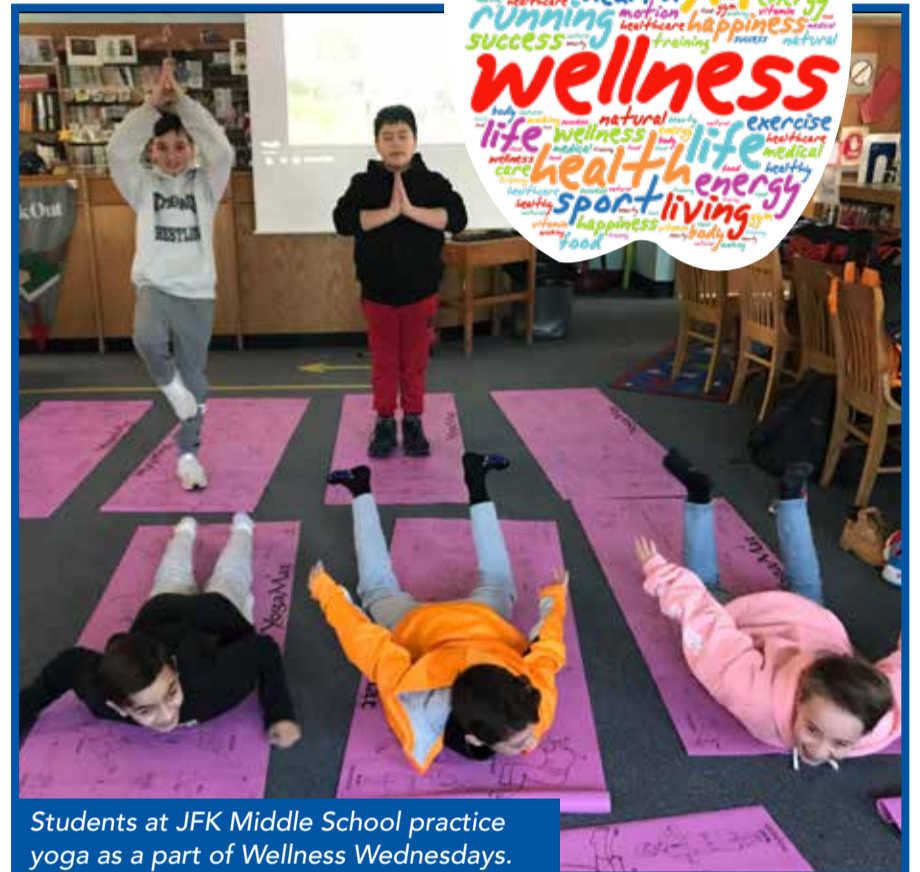
The Bethpage School District is taking a trifold approach to health, addressing physical, emotional and social wellness among students. Collectively referred to as the health triangle, these three aspects are interconnected and need to be in balance for optimal overall well-being. In Bethpage, the district is taking strides to ensure our students are provided with the needed instruction and resources for each of these components.

#WEAREMINDFUL

Bethpage schools are implementing emotional health in various ways, particularly through mindfulness. The practice of purposefully paying attention to the present moment has been shown to increase attention in students and improve academic performance.

At JFK Middle School, mindfulness was introduced back in 2015. Since then, efforts have evolved to include two mindfulness rooms, professional development courses and a robust social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum. The mindfulness rooms are painted in soothing colors and include a multitude of sensory-pleasing elements. They offer an escape for students who may be dealing with stressful situations to decompress during the school day.

The idea came to fruition with the help of Ms. Erin Hayes, the former social worker at Central Boulevard Elementary School and JFK Middle School who now serves as the assistant principal at JFK Middle School. Bethpage High School also has a mindfulness room for students, which



Students at JFK Middle School practice yoga as a part of Wellness Wednesdays.

was implemented with the help of school psychologist Suzanne Vera, school social worker Christine Kennedy and Chairperson of Art Elena Cardo.

“I’ve learned that mindfulness practices have many benefits, including helping students improve their peer relationships and increasing their ability to manage stress and anxiety,” Ms. Hayes said.

At both JFK and Central Boulevard, students partake in weekly Mindful Monday exercises led by support staff over the loudspeaker. JFK has also been conducting Wellness Wednesdays, in which students visit the library during lunchtime to participate in

mindfulness exercises twice a month. Library media specialist Michelle Phillips utilizes a variety of tactics, including yoga, during the meetings.

Students are also taught to focus their attention on the positive side of things and are introduced to various tools such as coloring therapy and meditation for them to use in their mindfulness practices.

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Staff members are also receiving training in mindfulness and how to better assess students who may be at risk. Staff can utilize their training in ways that focus on the emotional well-being of students. Throughout

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② A Full Circle Approach *TO WELLNESS*

(continued from cover)

the district, teachers are participating in morning mindfulness exercises. The few minutes before the first bell rings allow them to settle into a positive mindset that can then be transferred to students.

Last year, staff members in the district participated in the More Than Sad program. Sponsored by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, the program teaches educators to recognize signs of mental health distress in students and when to refer them for professional help.

“We understand that teachers and counselors are on the front line,” said Director of Guidance Tom Kenny. “They’re the ones who see students on a regular basis and need to identify students that may be in need.”

The Second Step program has been adopted in grades K-5 throughout the district. This SEL program helps to transform schools into supportive learning environments. It provides units

on skills for learning, empathy, emotion management, friendship skills and problem-solving. At the high school level, ninth grade students are using their physical education periods to participate in a broad range of SEL programs. They receive approximately 20 lessons over the school year, occurring every other week.

Next year, a new course called Recharge: Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction will be introduced for grades 10-12. The hybrid course will utilize online learning, as well as in-person meetings each month. It is based on Yale University’s eight-week mindfulness course that has helped tens of thousands of people worldwide cope with the stresses of life.

For the sophomore class, Challenge Day is an interactive SEL experience that has positively affected hundreds of communities across the country. Trainers work with a group of

100 students and 25 staff members and encourage them to put their traditional school roles aside and share a part of who they really are. Now in its 13th year at Bethpage, the experience helps students realize that many peers and adults in their school and community have overcome similar struggles to those they are facing.

“The end result of Challenge Day is a tighter community of students willing to share their experiences and support one another,” said Bethpage High School guidance counselor James Benjamin.

CONNECTING WITH THE PHYSICAL

The physical component of the health triangle is being addressed through several new initiatives. A training room has been constructed at JFK Middle School and the existing high school training room was renovated to include a Game Ready Machine, which combines ice and compression therapy to aid athletes’ recovery. Sabina Konrad was hired as the new athletic trainer at JFK and is on-site daily, during and after school hours, for games and practices.

“With all of the potential injuries that can occur with our student-athletes, we felt it was important to have medical personnel on-site during their practice times,” Athletic Director John Franchi said.

Continuing to emphasize the importance of being active, the district has continued its partnership with Adelphi University in which physical



education students come to Bethpage to lead before-school exercise programs for second graders. Not only are Bethpage students offered extra opportunities for physical activity through this partnership, but the Adelphi students gain valuable experience in their field, making the program mutually beneficial.

Looking ahead, the Summer Strength and Conditioning Program will be offered at Bethpage for the third year. Tom Piccirillo, head strength and conditioning coordinator for the program, is hoping for even greater participation from the community. Open to all students in grades 9-12 in the district, the program is free to all and offers several services, including strength and conditioning, athletic development, speed and agility training and injury reduction measures. It runs from July through August, utilizing both the fitness center and main turf field at the high school.

Bethpage has fully adopted these social-emotional learning, mindfulness and physical wellness strategies and continues its dedication to supporting healthiness in the school environment and community.



Educators from JFK Middle School participated in various workshops on wellness at their Superintendent’s Conference Day this past fall.

INNOVATION IN BETHPAGE

Bethpage Schools are dedicated to offering innovative educational opportunities. From Robotics Club to a coding Hackathon, students have many outlets to learn new skills and work in teams to achieve success.

Discovery With Robotics

Robotics Club consists of a team from both JFK Middle School and Bethpage High School. The middle school RoboEagles are a part of FIRST Lego League, a global robotics competition that is built around theme-based challenges, while the high school RegalEagles are members of the FIRST Robotics League.

The RoboEagles will be competing in a qualifier event in which they will have three runs with their robot to be able to tackle as many missions as possible. They are also required to prepare a research presentation, reaching out to experts to solve an issue of their

choice. They will additionally create a poster based on the FIRST core values, which are discovery, innovation, impact, teamwork, inclusion and fun!

At their FIRST Robotics League competition in March, the RegalEagles will be tasked with protecting the mythical FIRST City from an incoming asteroid shower by building autonomous droids. In addition to the robotics, the RegalEagles will complete and present an application for the Chairman's Award. This distinction is given to the team that best represents a model for other teams to emulate, embodying the missions of FIRST.



JFK RoboEagles Ankur Raghavan and Miraj Shah with adviser and coach Stella Gatanas and Director of Technology Andrew Choi.



FROM BETHPAGE SCHOOLS

Students at Bethpage High School, JFK Middle School and Kramer Lane Elementary School have the opportunity to participate in student-run live TV productions. Students are involved in all steps, from adjusting camera angles to perfecting lighting.

At the high school level, student broadcasters deliver the news each morning, including weather updates and sports announcements. JFK conducts a longer form, weekly broadcast. Students engage their audiences by playing games on air, highlighting videos from notable events and featuring guests from the school or community. Kramer Lane hosts a monthly broadcast. Student correspondents announce birthdays, give weather updates and include fun facts for their audience.

Students are able to express themselves in a creative way that informs their fellow classmates on important topics. The live TV broadcasts also offer an opportunity to have a specific role and responsibility in achieving a common goal.



Faculty advisers Jonathan Wibben and Allison Schmidt with student anchors, field reporters and technology assistants on the set of "Good Morning Kramer Lane."

COMPUTER LITERACY IN GRADES K-12

Bethpage schools have been utilizing kidOYO to support their computer literacy classes. KidOYO is a project-based learning approach used to educate students from grades K-12 in computer programming.

At Bethpage High School, AP Computer Science Principles students are taught core skills and knowledge for careers that use computers. Topics include cybersecurity, computers and society, how software works, mastering computer programs and analyzing various data. KidOYO supports the AP Computer Science Principles curriculum, offering a place for students to practice and excel in computer literacy.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Mike Spence stressed the importance of students being well-versed in the world of computer literacy and coding. "Everything we do, from opening social media to requesting an Uber, depends on somebody in the background putting in a code," Spence said. "We want to be sure our students are prepared upon graduation for the computer-based landscape of the current workforce."

Bethpage also participates in events to exhibit the skills students have acquired through the computer literacy program. For the first time this year, both JFK Middle School and Bethpage High School will compete in a Long Island Hackathon. The Hackathon is a competition in which teams must use their knowledge of internet languages to win micro challenges against competitors.

"The competition requires students to work together, think strategically and implement the coding skills they've acquired from their computer literacy classes," Director of Technology Andrew Choi said.

In addition to the Hackathon, schools throughout the district participated in the annual Hour of Code event this past December. Hour of Code is a global movement that aims to inspire students to feel empowered by newly found skills and fight stereotypes in the industry.



Elementary students are exposed to computer literacy and technology in the STEM Lab. Here, a team builds and programs Milo the Space Rover.



NEWS AROUND THE SCHOOLS: Excellence, Achievement and Service Abound

STUDENTS SHINE AT BUSINESS COMPETITION



Bethpage High School students competed in the Virtual Enterprise International Long Island Regional Business Competition & Exhibition on Jan. 9 at LIU Post. Virtual Enterprise is an organization that partners with schools to provide meaningful hands-on career experiences with a task-based curriculum.

Two companies from Anthony Murray and Nancy Simpson's Virtual Enterprise classes at Bethpage High School competed: A.C.E.S. and Food for Thought. A.C.E.S. is a subscription-based company to help teens fight vaping addiction and provides access to addiction counselors, personalized advice and self-help. Food for Thought is a party planning and catering company with a focus on allergy-friendly food options.

Student members of A.C.E.S. include: Jake Bonelli, Daniel Cunningham, Bryan Hanley, Anthony Ippolito, Erica Marciante, Justin Patlias, Gibron Rahman,

Maxim Safranov, John Santoro and Bryan Weber.

Student members of Food for Thought include: Aaliyan Ahmad, Peter Arrabito, Rodney Colon, Patrick Dalton, Samuel Donohue, Nicholas Firth, Nicholas Griffin, Victor Guidotti, Patrick Hanley, Carly Issing, Emily Miller, Isabella Raber, Nicolas Ragusa and Jillian Zapata.

Bethpage was recognized with gold awards in the sales materials and employee manual categories, as well as silver in the company branding competition. The district congratulates the students on their achievements.



LEGO CHALLENGE

Students from JFK Middle School participated in a lunchtime Lego Challenge! Groups of students signed up in teams and were given challenges to complete in a short amount of time. They were tasked with using Legos to complete various missions, like building the

tallest structure or constructing a boat. The boats were even tested in water to ensure they were able to float!

The competition allowed students to work together in a group and apply critical thinking to achieve a common goal. Library media specialist Michelle Phillips organized the competition and was the judge for the event.

DRAMA PROGRAM SUPPORT



The Bethpage Educational Foundation donated \$10,000 to support enhancing the drama program within the Bethpage School District at all levels. John McTigue, treasurer of the foundation, presented the check to Board Vice President Sandy Watson, Board Trustee James McGlynn and Superintendent of Schools David Schneider at the December Board of Education meeting. The money will be used to improve and add microphone infrastructure to accommodate the growing drama programs.

The Bethpage Educational Foundation has provided grants and funding for various programs in the district, including STEM courses. The district thanks the foundation for its continued support.



'ALMOST, MAINE'

Members of the Bethpage High School Masquers Guild, Stage Crew and Audio-Visual Club staged a production of John Cariani's "Almost, Maine" in November.

"Almost, Maine" is a play comprising nine short plays that explore love and loss in a remote, mythical almost-town called Almost, Maine. The production crew was comprised of Bethpage High School teachers. They were: Anthony Murray, director; Michelle Kovacs, producer; Michael McCourt, stage designer; and Robert Verdi, technical director.

The cast and crew included approximately 50 students ranging from grades 9-12. The show was a great success and proudly displayed the many talents of our Bethpage students.



'FROZEN, JR.'

Recently, John F. Kennedy Middle School debuted the enchanting modern classic of Frozen, Jr. from Disney. Frozen, Jr. brought Elsa, Anna, and the magical land of Arendelle to life onstage. The show featured all of the songs from the animated film, plus five new songs written for the Broadway production. With a cast of beloved characters loaded with magic, adventure, and plenty of humor, Frozen Jr warmed all in attendance at each performance. The play featured over 80 JFK students and two different casts!

Private/Parochial School Transportation Reminder

Parents of students attending private or parochial schools should note that the deadline to submit your transportation request is April 1. For more information, please call 516-644-4040.

Kindergarten Registration

The district is conducting kindergarten registration for its three elementary schools for the 2020-21 school year. Children born before Dec. 1, 2015, are eligible for enrollment.

Parents should contact the main office of each school before registration to receive paperwork that can be completed in advance: Kramer Lane: 516-644-4500; Central Boulevard: 516-644-4300; Charles Campagne 516-644-4400.

To determine your child's school, please call 516-644-4040. Registration will take place at the respective schools during normal school hours.