

# The Elmont Phoenix

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## GREEN AND WHITE GALORE *The Elmont Community Comes Together*

By Sebastien Piquion and Munahil Sultana

On Saturday, October 17, the Elmont community came together as a family and showed its love and support for Elmont Memorial High School and its students. The air was filled with passion as parents, students, and faculty paraded down Dutch Broadway, passing the elementary school and cheering with admiration and spirit for our beloved Elmont Spartan Football players. Every extracurricular club and program at Elmont had a specific chant that could be heard from blocks away. As the parade approached the high school, the cheers gained momentum and the parade members marched - community members, parents, alumni, and constituents all cheered alongside one another. Banners and floats filled the street, each displaying a unique

aspect of Elmont and its clubs. Hearts pumping spirit through their veins and smiles on their faces, the parade reached the school, signaling it was almost time for the main event - the homecoming football game - to start.

Although Wantagh High School won the game, the amount of spirit and support from the community and the school was quite uplifting. A member of the Varsity Football Team, Aaron Ruthman, said:

“Wantagh came out to be the better

team at the end of the day, but we’re Elmont. We’ll bounce back next week and win. We always do.” The new principal, Mr. Dougherty, was

more than happy to report his thoughts on his first homecoming at Elmont: “I just think everybody did a great job, the students, the staff, Ms. Justin, and the Assistant Principals.

Everyone poured their heart and soul into the event and the outcome was beautiful, so I’m very proud to be a part of it.”



During half-time, the winners

of the Homecoming Court were announced, causing cheers to break out across the bleachers. Leanna Faulk, candidate for Homecoming Queen, and member of the Homecoming Court reported on the event by stating, “[Homecoming] was awesome. I’m so proud for Kayla and I know she really deserved it. I’m really happy for her.” Elmont congratulates Joseph Olawoye and Kayla Babb on being crowned the Class of 2016 Homecoming King and Queen.

Homecoming was truly a special event; the court was beautiful, the game was energetic, and the environment was filled with spirit. Homecoming causes not only the school, but the Elmont community as a whole, to come together.

## A LITTLE PEP IN YOUR STEP *Elmont Students Cheer Each Other On*

By Ekele Ukegbu and Tochi Ukegbu

On October 9, 2015, Elmont Memorial High School held its first Pep Rally of the school year. Based on the positive reactions from the students, the event was a huge success. The sports teams were all lined up and ready to go. Excitement was in the air.

The Pep Rally began with the Marching Band continuing its tradition of playing the “Star Spangled Banner.” The Junior High Cheerleaders kept the mood upbeat with a routine to Beyonce’s “Flawless.” Next up, the Junior High Dance Team executed their hip hop dance; this was the performance that seemed to resonate with the students the most. The Junior High Sports Teams were the first to parade proudly wearing their jerseys. The enthusiasm and excitement on their faces could be seen from across the football field. Having the entire school applaud your athletic skill can bring about feelings of immense elation.

The Junior Varsity Teams

were next. The Junior Varsity Cheerleaders, coached by Ms. Costanzo, performed an outstanding routine which included the very popular song “Where Are U Now” by Justin Bieber. The Junior Varsity Soccer Teams marched alongside their coaches, Mr. Jeudy (Boys Soccer) and Mr. Keeshan (Girls Soccer) with looks of confidence on their faces. All team coaches, such as Ms.

Trupiano and Mr. Straub, of Girls Volleyball and Boys Volleyball respectively, must be thanked for working so closely with Elmont’s talented athletes.

As always, the best was saved for last. The Varsity Dance Team completed an absolutely phenomenal routine to a reggae remix. The applause that followed was held for quite sometime. The Varsity Cheerleaders Team,

coached by Ms. Spitalieri, is also a force to be reckoned with. With the addition of new and improved pink pom poms, the cheerleaders provided the crowd with a powerful routine. The Varsity Teams received the same positive responses as the teams before them. It was evident, however, that the senior class was anxiously waiting to hear who was voted into the Homecoming Court.

Delayed by some technical issues and planes overhead, anticipation only grew. But, finally, Principal Dougherty announced the names of the five young men and the five young women that comprised the elected Homecoming Court. All students who were nominated have a special quality that sets them apart from the rest of their class. We congratulate you all! But a very special congratulations to the Class of 2016 Homecoming Court.

We hope that the spirit that rang throughout the bleachers during the Fall Pep Rally can be seen and heard throughout Elmont this school year!



(L-R) Class of 2016 Homecoming Court after the Pep Rally announcement, including: Mark Barthelemy, Princeton Gagahan, Joseph Olawoye, Yasir Lawrence, Lerone Clark, Kayla Babb, Brianna London, Maya Holder, Leanna Faulk, Christal Thompson (Photo credit: Ms. Marino).

## THE SPIRIT OF ELMONT: *Students Get Excited For Homecoming*

By Alanis Smith

Traditionally, students at Elmont, alongside most other high schools nationwide, celebrate “Spirit Week” before the big homecoming game. Students are invited to dress up and participate in certain themed events, as well as continue the excitement and school spirit that the Pep Rally brought about the week before. Spirit Week has long been a tradition embedded into our school’s history, so this year’s creative demonstrations of spirit proved to be nothing short of what was expected. The week began

with “Hat Day”; throughout the halls, students and teachers were observed fancifully adorning the top of their heads with crowns, snapbacks, and even pizza hats. When the school day drew to a close and the winners were announced, both the seventh and ninth grade were tied at second place,



while the seniors were victorious. On Pajama Day, many rocked their best “just rolled out of bed” fashions; onesies, flannel pants, and fuzzy slippers were suddenly all the rage. Following a trend, the seniors, ninth graders, and seventh graders,

respectively, maintained the top three positions. The remainder of the week featured the Dress for Success and Green and White spirit days. It was only on the last day that there occurred an unexpected change in events, when the seventh graders earned first place. This year’s Spirit Week was a grand occasion for all of those involved. Not only is the week influential in boosting students’ delight for their respective grade-levels, but it is also a unifying event promoting a harmony between upperclassmen and underclassmen.

# Elmont Phoenix

## ELMONT MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL

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 Assistant Principal..... Mr. Burke  
 Assistant Principal..... Ms. Calabrese  
 Assistant Principal..... Dr. Thomas

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# EDITORIALS

## POSING FOR THE CAMERA *Have Photographs Lost Their True Meaning?*

By Beatrice Hyppolite

Ansel Adams, a world-renowned photographer and environmentalist once stated, "A great photograph is one that fully expresses what one feels, in the deepest sense, about what is being photographed." Adams truly took the time to admire photographs of the objects that inspired him most. It has been 70 years since his statement and with the rise of technology, digital photography has reached an all-time high. Apps, such as Instagram and Snapchat, have encouraged users to capture interesting moments from their daily lives and to share them with the world. But, has the constant need to post pictures decreased the value of photography?

The art of the "selfie" is one that has been practiced and perfected in recent years. It allows people to broadcast themselves in a positive way. Selfies give people the power to choose how they look. The increased popularity of social media platforms has only encouraged online users to become more comfortable with themselves. The human body is an art within itself. However, when it becomes quite obvious that a lot of effort has been put into a picture, the art begins to look mediocre. When an Instagram account is flooded with only selfies, we begin to lose interest. The value is lost. Pictures are taken for granted.

Holding a physical copy of a picture adds sentiment (Seniors, think about your

graduation/senior portraits). Feeling the glossy sheet of picture paper brings more substance and weight to a photograph. In conjunction with modern times, it is apparent that the photographers of Instagram know exactly when to add the right filter or to adjust the lighting. I admire this talented quality because it shows the true role that photographers take on in order to make sure their masterpiece is the best for the public eye. But, I have also felt these pictures leave me to wonder if they would have been cherished more if I could hold them physically in my hand. In this day and age, there is only one thing that humans care about: convenience.

Little to no hassle is created when it comes to digital photography and this may be the cause of the problem. Because pictures are much easier to manage and photograph (you don't even need a camera, but simply a cell phone nowadays), people take for granted what was once considered an inspiring art. Photographs can bring tears of joy and sorrow. They create admiration and inspiration. But, it seems as though photographs will never be as valuable as they once were when photography was still a new concept. Photography still has a major impact on the world. Craftsmanship is still a requirement for the masters of art. And yet, you can't help but wonder: Are photographs still as great as Adams had once described?

## INTROSPECTION ABOUT THE ELECTION *Can Early Campaigning Be Beneficial?*

By Augusta Uwamanzu-Nna

Campaigns, debates, canvasses: political activities that have become ubiquitous with the start of the next election phase. This unfortunately creates the impression that the upcoming Presidential Election is around the corner. Ensnared in all the political buzz, many fail to realize that the 2016 election is in 2016, which is approximately one year from now. This fact is jaw-dropping and highlights the intricate American electoral system. But, exactly why do potential nominees start planning prospective Presidential campaigns up to 600 days before the actual Election Day (a time long enough for a woman to conceive and bear two children successively)?

Yes, completing tasks as early as possible is advantageous and beneficial. However, as cliché as it may be: too much of a good thing will inevitably become bad. Beginning electoral campaigning close to twenty-one months before the actual election is not entirely beneficial. *Slate* reporter Alec MacGillis notes that this "permanent campaigning is truly on the verge of devouring [Americans]." Many Americans become disaffected by the incessant campaigning as the race for President detracts attention from potential domestic and foreign issues. These drawn out timelines bring acrimony between politicians, annoying phone calls, and door-knocking activists. Funds obtained for campaign efforts are amounting to billions of dollars as noted in the 2008 election. This is concerning to Americans, as these funds are all dedicated to one thing: winning a political election.

Yet, the importance of the executive office to our country's success necessitates prolonged campaigning periods to select an apt President and a charismatic leader.

Analysts from the *Wall Street Journal* do note that long campaigns are useful for assessing candidates' skills and endurance. This should be useful for the present campaign phase as efforts by both Democratic and Republican candidates have surprisingly engaged many Americans. From Democratic frontrunner Hillary Clinton relating to Americans by learning the whip to noted entrepreneur Donald Trump running on the Republican ticket, the present race has appealed to many Americans who are typically indifferent to politics. This is supported by the popularity of atypical candidates, especially those of the Republican party. Polls as of early October show that the top three frontrunners of the Republican party are people who have not previously held a political office. This is especially interesting as their favorability suggests that Americans envision the next President differently from the past.

The present preparations for the Presidential elections in 2016 may seem excessively prolonged. However, they are much needed as it is pretty apparent that Americans want change. Whether the change will be electing the first woman President or electing a politically-inexperienced individual, the upcoming election will surely be historical.

## Principal's Corner

Dear Students,

***I couldn't be happier with how the 2015-16 school year has started. It is such a pleasure to be a part of the Elmont community and I am ecstatic to be your principal. We have extremely high expectations for you all and I look forward to helping each student reach his/her fullest potential during and after their time at Elmont.***

***We have had a number of great events so far: 7th Grade Orientation, Senior Barbecue, Spirit Week, and a Superhero-packed Homecoming extravaganza. Congratulations to the Homecoming finalists, court members, and Joseph Olawoye and Kayla Babb for becoming this year's Homecoming King and Queen. All participants did a wonderful job.***

***With 8 months remaining in this school year, I look forward to all the accomplishments, accolades, and fun times that lie ahead. If we remain focused and diligent in our studies and behavior, there is nothing that we cannot achieve.***

Sincerely,  
 Mr. Dougherty

## STANDARDIZED TESTING: SHOULD WE TAKE IT SERIOUSLY? 20% of New York State Students "Opt-Out" of Standardized Tests

By Leanna Faulk

In 2002, the No Child Left Behind Act mandated state testing in 50 states. The United States fell from 18th in the world for math to 31st, in the matter of nine years. Annual state spending for standardized testing rose from \$423 million to \$1.1 billion, according to the Pew Center on the States. Initially, the Department of Education felt that the use of standardized testing would help improve student achievement. On the contrary, the tests have not fulfilled their purpose, but rather consistently generate negative effects on achievement.

According to the *New York Times*, more than 200,000 third through eighth graders in New York opted out of the state tests last year. The "opt-out" movement has not only

put pressure on the state and federal officials who are responsible for said testing, but has also put pressure on the school districts that are then penalized for such low participation rates. If fewer than 95% of a school participates in the examination, then that school can lose a lot of its federal funding. Parents have become so fed up that a "Long Island Parents and Teachers Against Standardized Testing" Facebook page was created. Reasons behind parents allowing their children to opt-out from the exams vary. One of the biggest reasons why parents feel so negatively about the standardized tests is because oftentimes a majority of class time is spent on test preparation and not actually learning the material. Shockingly enough, in 2002, students at Monterey High School in

Lubbock, Texas were prevented from discussing the first anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks because they were too busy with standardized test preparation.

As a student, I realize both the positive and negative effects that the standardized tests have on education. However, I do believe that teachers spend too much time teaching students how to take the test, instead of teaching genuinely. This makes it difficult for students and teachers in subsequent years, due to the lack of knowledge the students have in the actual subject areas. As a current senior, standardized testing plays a major role in my life; the SATs are one of the most important tests in my life. I personally do not see how this exam properly showcases my talents and intellect. Standardized testing

is just one way of determining the current knowledge of students across the country, but the Department of Education should spend time devising solutions for teachers, so they can properly prepare students for tests while not missing out on organic and genuine teaching that surfaces from in-class discussions, passionate moments, and student-generated interest. Like Albert Einstein once said, "Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it'll live its whole life believing that it is stupid." Applying Einstein's idea to standardized testing, a student's true capabilities cannot be measured with a one-size-fits-all test, in a classroom setting that is focused on that particular test.

# WELCOMING ELMONT'S NEWEST TEACHERS

## *Finding Their Way Through Hallways and Lesson Plans*

At the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year, Elmont Memorial had the pleasure of welcoming many new teachers to the building. Coming from diverse educational and professional backgrounds, each new member has different attributes that help contribute to the even greater elevation of Elmont Memorial as a whole. Elmont is a wonderful school, particularly because of the quality of its teachers. On behalf of the students and staff here, we are all so happy to have you.

### MS. CUTRONE

By Sophie Bien-Aimé

Ms. Cutrone, a new edition to Elmont's World Language Department, is not totally unfamiliar to the district. She has been in the Sewanhaka Central High School District since 2009, working at H. Frank Carey High School, Sewanhaka High School, and New Hyde Park Memorial High School, before coming here to Elmont. She received her undergraduate degree at Marist College, majoring in French education and minoring in psychology. For her dual Master's degree in French and English as a New Language (ENL), she attended New York University. When asked what made her become a teacher, Ms. Cutrone expressed that she had "wanted to become a teacher from the age of 7," influenced by her mother's decision to go back to work as one. Ms. Cutrone's favorite thing about teaching is seeing the growth of a student's language ability. She remains very dedicated to her students and does all in her power to ensure her students are getting the best education possible. When Mr. Schuler, who co-teaches with Ms. Cutrone, was asked how he felt about working alongside her, he said: "I love working with her, she's great." Ms. Cutrone appreciates building positive relationships with both her colleagues and her students. For Ms. Cutrone, the support that her department and other teachers gave her made her transition from another school in the district so much smoother because she "felt embraced from the start here at Elmont," and she feels "privileged to work in such a great school."

### MR. MIELE

By Sophie Bien-Aimé

Mr. Miele, Elmont's newest edition to the Business department, has already started becoming very involved in school activities. He works as a technology teacher, advises the Computer Club, and is a frequent supporter of the school's sporting events, as a spectator or a supervisor. Mr. Miele attended Farmingdale for his Associate degree in liberal arts and sciences; then he transferred to SUNY Oswego to earn his Bachelor's degree in science, technology, and teaching. For three years, Mr. Miele had worked at Lindenhurst High School, before coming here to Elmont. When you walk into his classroom, L-4 on the lower level, the first thing he does is shake your hand and learn your name, committing it to memory. The establishment of strong student-teacher relationships is very important to Mr. Miele. An experience that he had with a technology teacher at his own high school was the ultimate reason he decided to start teaching. Because of his teacher's great influence, he strives to create many of the same relationships and nurture many of the same skills that he encountered during his own high school experience. Mr. Miele aims to enable his students to communicate what they have learned to others; he also hopes to plant a seed of interest in a student's mind that may influence their future profession, as his teacher had inspired within him. Mr. Miele also notes that "no one knows how to use a screwdriver anymore," so enhancing understanding is also important. Because technology involves not only science, but other curricular areas as well, teaching technology also gives him a chance to connect what he teaches with the aspects of other subjects.



(L-R) The first meeting for the new teachers was held by Mr. Dougherty on October 7, 2015; teachers present include Ms. Dupas, Mr. Miele, Ms. Pickett, Mr. Dougherty, Ms. DeQueiroz, Ms. Becker, and Ms. Fulgieri.

### MS. DUPAS

By Chiamaka Ubani

Ms. Dupas received her Master's degree in English and her Bachelor's degree in Special Education from Molloy College. Before coming to Elmont, Ms. Dupas taught at Freeport High School for 3 years and Cypress Hills (Brooklyn) for 3 years. Ms. Dupas loves to have fun in the classroom, but she knows when to be serious and expects the same from her students. Ms. Dupas' favorite thing about teaching is the students and the relationships that she builds with them. "The students are great," said Dupas, when asked what she likes about Elmont Memorial High School. She admires our school for saying the Pledge of Allegiance every morning and she loves her new colleagues.

### MS. PICKETT

By Fatima Bhutta

Ms. Pickett is a new math and special education teacher. She loves the students and the colleagues that she gets to work with everyday. Her favorite element of teaching is her students, since they make the lessons more interesting and fun to teach. In order to encourage class participation, Ms. Pickett gives her students extra points for participating and occasionally gives prizes, such as candy. Ms. Pickett received her Bachelor's degree from Molloy College and previously worked at Floral Park High School for the Twilight Program, a new alternative school program overseen by Nassau BOCES. In the next five years, Ms. Pickett still sees herself teaching, but also working towards an administration degree. Ms. Pickett works hard to keep her students entertained and happy while they learn new things everyday.

### MS. BECKER

By Emily-Marie Garcia

Ms. Becker is a new 8th grade Social Studies teacher at Elmont Memorial High School. She is a very gracious teacher who loves teaching students about the importance of history. Ms. Becker received her Bachelor's degree from Queens College and went to Hofstra University for her Master's degree. "My previous teaching experience was at a private school, a little bit further out on Long Island, and I was there for about four and a half years," says Becker. Responding to

### MR. STRAUB

By Chiamaka Ubani

Mr. Straub received his Bachelor's Degree in Mathematics and Secondary Education from Mount Saint Mary College. Before coming to Elmont Memorial High School, he spent a year teaching math at a charter school in the Bronx. Mr. Straub cares about his students in and out of the classroom. He believes that high school is about growing as a person, not only as a student. Mr. Straub said his favorite thing about teaching is seeing the students grow from the very first day to the very last day; he enjoys witnessing that transition first hand. So far, Mr. Straub loves the family atmosphere between the students and teachers here at Elmont Memorial High School.

### MS. DEQUEIROZ

By Fatima Bhutta

"[The students] keep me on my toes. There's never a dull moment," says Ms. DeQueiroz, describing her favorite thing about teaching English - the students who always keep life interesting. Ms. DeQueiroz loves how welcoming Elmont is and sees herself teaching at Elmont for a long time. Ms. DeQueiroz earned her Bachelor's degree in Public Mass Communications from the College of New Jersey and received her Master's degree in English Education from C.W. Post - Long Island University. Before coming to Elmont Memorial High School, Ms. DeQueiroz worked at Touro College; she has also taught English at East Meadow High School and the Bronx Career and College Preparatory High School. Always willing to embark on a new journey, Ms. DeQueiroz came to Elmont to teach.

a question about her willingness to assist students, Ms. Becker states: "I want students to know that I'm always willing to help them out if they have any questions. They can feel free to approach me at any time." Her favorite thing about teaching is finding ways to make learning about history fun. And her favorite thing about her new school? Ms. Becker declares, "What I like about Elmont the most is how everybody gets along. The students seem to get along with one another, have strong rapport with teachers, and it is just a great atmosphere to be in."

### MS. TRAPANI

By Chiamaka Ubani

Who is more perfect to fill the need for a new Italian teacher here at Elmont than Ms. Trapani, who grew up in Italy and moved to the United States after high school. Ms. Trapani has been teaching for eight years. She is on her ninth year and it is her first split between two schools. She teaches Italian at Elmont Memorial for two periods and Spanish at New Hyde Park for three periods. When asked about her educational experience, Ms. Trapani stated that she completed her undergraduate coursework at St. John's University, received her Master's degree at Queens College, and earned her Administrative degree at C.W. Post. What is Ms. Trapani's favorite aspect of teaching? She loves teaching languages, especially her own; she also loves hearing her students speak Italian and she loves teaching about Italian culture. In five years, Ms. Trapani definitely still sees herself teaching. She would love to teach five Italian classes because it's her own language and there's a sense of continuity with each class.

### MS. FULGIERI

By Emily-Marie Garcia

Ms. Fulgieri is the new librarian here at Elmont. She is a warm teacher who enjoys helping students in any way, shape or form. She received her Bachelor's degree from SUNY Oswego and her Master's degree in Library and Information Science from Queens College. She has been teaching for more than five years, stating: "I worked at Holy Cross High School in Flushing and I worked for the [NYC] Department of Education for the last five years." When asked what information she wants students to know about her, she responded: "that I love books, I love helping students, and any help that they need please feel comfortable coming and asking me." Ms. Fulgieri's favorite thing about teaching is when students have an "a-ha!" moment and "they have an understanding about something they didn't know before." So far, she loves that "the kids here at Elmont are great and all the teachers are so helpful and wonderful." So, be sure to stop by the library, as Ms. Fulgieri will be there to help you with your research road bumps, your schoolwork struggles, and your technology troubles.

### MR. AGOSTINO

By Chiamaka Ubani

Meet Mr. Agostino, the new Athletic Director here at Elmont Memorial. A very educated man, Mr. Agostino has an undergraduate degree in Elementary Education from C.W. Post - Long Island University, a Master's degree in Physical Education from Adelphi University, and a post-Master's degree in Administration from C.W. Post. His previous teaching experiences include teaching second grade in Amityville, teaching elementary physical education within the Windham School District, and he spent the last ten years teaching physical education at Harborfields High School. Mr. Agostino would like his students to know that he is caring and that he is always looking out for everyone; he just wants to make a difference. So far, Mr. Agostino loves the kids at Elmont; he loves how respectful and responsive they are to him.

## ALWAYS A BETTER CHOICE COMMITTEE

### *Spelling Out the ABC's of Character Education*

By **Munahil Sultana**

Composed of students, teachers, administrators, and counselors, the Always a Better Choice (A.B.C.) Committee promotes a peaceful and safe school climate, uniting both the faculty and the students. The four advisors behind this operation are Ms. Helfenstein, Ms. Lucey, Ms. Lyon, and Ms. Saulters. The purpose of the A.B.C. Committee is to advocate for bullying prevention, to promote character education, and to discuss anti-violence issues. Not only does the A.B.C. Committee motivate compassionate and responsible students, but it also inspires students to be positive forces

within their society.

The A.B.C. Committee facilitates multiple initiatives for character education, from classroom presentations to school assemblies. The Committee also includes a prestigious program known as Peer Educators. Peer Educators is an extracurricular activity that promotes positive interactions between younger students and their older peers. Older Peer Educators are typically in the tenth, eleventh, or twelfth grade, taking a leadership role by nurturing and assisting the middle school students.

One of the most recent

initiatives for character education that the A.B.C. Committee has created is Model Citizens. Formed by Principal Dougherty in conjunction with the A.B.C. Committee, Model Citizens aims to encourage teachers and administrators to acknowledge positive behavior, such as citizenship, among the student body at Elmont Memorial. Each of the honorees of the Model Citizens program will receive a reward and will be recognized on the public address system at the school. Recent Model Citizens include eighth-grader Nneka Emeagwali and senior Kengsley Jean-Gilles. Nneka found \$100 and returned

the money to the Main Office; Kengsley intervened between two students to prevent an altercation. Congratulations to September's Model Citizens; you are civic and good-mannered and quite deserving of this recognition.

The perfect opportunity to demonstrate positive behavior is during October, which is Anti-Bullying Month. For the duration of this month, be sure to help Elmont Memorial High School remain a positive and safe place by encouraging strong character, promoting kindness, and discouraging bullying.

## IN THE BUSINESS OF BUSINESS

### *Young Leaders Prepare for Auspicious Year Ahead*

By **Alanis Smith**

A quarter of a million high school students, eleven thousand advisors, sixty-five hundred chapters in forty-seven states - all united under one aim: "Bringing business and education together." Under the guidance of Ms. Riso, the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) program here at Elmont is back for what is anticipated to be another stellar year filled with service, leadership, and promise. But, do not take my word for it. Just ask the thousands of students last year who went on to pursue sole proprietorships because of their involvement with

FBLA... or ask the hundreds of thousands of students nationwide who revealed that FBLA had a positive impact on their academic success, at both the secondary and postsecondary level.

Now, just what does it mean to be a part of the expansive network that is the Future Business Leaders of America, you ask? And why have so many students across the nation devoted their careers to standing for its goals and mission? Many among the existing membership reveal: "FBLA has given me the confidence to become a better public speaker!" and "It will be a great addition to my

college resume."

Not only does FBLA seek to enhance students' leadership prowess, but members also further their development of individual projects that contribute to the improvement of their homes, businesses, and communities. This year, the state organization has teamed up with the Wounded Warrior Project, a veterans service organization that provides a myriad of programs to servicemen, servicewomen, and their families, and FBLA has pledged to collectively complete 2,000 hours of community service, as well as raise \$5,000 for veterans.

Additionally, students across the nation are working with the March of Dimes, an FBLA partner for over forty years, to raise funds and awareness about the plight of premature infants.

The experiences that you attain and the relationships that you foster by becoming involved with business and your community are indelible. Think this is the club for you? Think you have what it takes to "bring business and education together"? If so, then join the multitude of students dedicated to their future by joining the Future Business Leaders of America!

## BIG BROTHER/BIG SISTER

### *Helping 7th and 8th Graders Navigate Through Elmont*

By **Malaika Foster**

Big Brother/Big Sister is an organization designed to help acquaint students in the seventh and eighth grade with the ever-changing environment around them. The first year in foreign surroundings can prove to be quite difficult and trying for anyone. Fortunately, for younger students at Elmont Memorial, this is where the upperclassmen of Big Brother/Big Sister intervene on your behalf. Serving as role models, these older students are able to lead by

example and to offer helpful advice and support to the seventh and eighth graders who need it most.

Recently, I was fortunate enough to attend the first meeting of this extracurricular club to observe what the Big Brother/Big Sister program is all about. Held after school in the library by Ms. Pugh, school social worker, and Ms. Williams, school psychologist, quite a few students attended, and it was there that I learned about how the upperclassmen are regarded as "elite" in the eyes

of the younger students. Though many students in the ninth through twelfth grade may not know it, they are especially pivotal in the growth and development of blossoming underclassmen. At the meeting, I listened as the club advisors described the "little alignment process"; in order to see which little brother/sister is suitable for you and how you will be an asset to them, you are first interviewed by Ms. Williams. When you are through with the interview, you are assigned a little brother or a little sister. You have

to make time for your little brother or little sister and make sure that you check up on him or her. Over time, a bond will form between the two of you and it will be a nurturing relationship, as with a real brother or sister.

The Big Brother/Big Sister program is an important one; it helps to guide and motivate Elmont's next wave of sharp, innovative students, enabling them to navigate any experience high school may throw at them.

## SENIOR "BBQ"

### *But, Really a Dance Party...*

By **Michaia Nesbitt**

Bumping, jumping, shaking. These three words sum up what took place on Friday, September 25, at the Senior BBQ. The first senior event of the year kicked off to a marvelous start. The Class of 2016 was greeted with a beautiful display of food and entertaining music. This included two varieties of chicken, macaroni, rice, and chilled drinks. But, the focus wasn't on the barbeque, as one might expect. What seemed to shock everyone the most was when Elmont's very own principal, Mr. Dougherty, joined the seniors on the dance floor. It was a moment not many expected, but one that

was warmly welcomed by the student body.

Not much is known about the

new principal of Elmont Memorial High School. But, what is known is that Mr. Dougherty does not shy

away from an opportunity to dance with the graduating class. A circle of seniors had gathered around the man, who at first seemed as though he strictly meant business, but who began to cut loose in what could arguably be one of the most entertaining moments of the night. His sudden involvement added all the more enjoyment to an already joyful atmosphere. "I always loved to dance," Mr. Dougherty explained with a smile. He continued, "It is fun and in this type of work you don't really have the opportunity to dance. A bunch of students came over and danced with me and it was just simply fun."



# Meet Your New Principal: Kevin Dougherty

## A Formal Introduction

By Aniska Coley

Ladies and gentlemen, a new sheriff is in town. Surely you have noticed him standing in front of the entrance to the senior cafeteria in the morning, or have had the pleasure of shaking his hand in the hall, or have caught a glimpse of him strolling casually by your classroom door. He's probably piqued your interest, this new man in charge. Maybe you've questioned whether this change in management will have an affect on your educational endeavors, your community, or the social structure of Elmont that was upheld during Mr. Capozzi's eight-year tenure. Such queries are only natural considering the importance of our beloved high school to each and every one of us. In order to alleviate the fear of the unknown, Mr. Dougherty agreed to participate in an exclusive student-interview. So without further ado, students and faculty, meet your new principal:



Mr. Dougherty, pictured with student Lerone Clark, at the Pep Rally on Friday, October 9, 2015 (Photo credit: Ms. Marino).

### Q: How is where you're coming from similar to or different from Elmont?

A: "So most recently I was with the Harlem Children's Zone Promise Academy. It's similar in that I am dealing with teenagers and young adolescents and I am educating them. It is different in that it's a different town, it's a different neighborhood, there are different dynamics, [there are] different cultures like subcultures [of] Elmont versus subcultures [of] Harlem. You know, I think even socioeconomically I was working with students coming from really rough socioeconomic backgrounds. I'd say ninety-five percent of my kids were coming from housing projects in Harlem. Elmont is not that you know, it's a suburban community. It's got houses, it's got lawns, it's got all that stuff, so it's different in that sense, [in that] the socioeconomics and the geography are different."

### Q: What new regulations will be administered here while you are principal?

A: "I think making sure that kids are getting to school on time is definitely a focus that I've been working on. And, as you guys have seen, I've been out front every morning to kind of get a read on who is coming late, why they're coming late, and what's happening. I just want to greet you guys and say good morning, but it also gives me an opportunity to see what's happening with the student body. What are new rules...? I don't know. I don't know if there's going to be a lot of new rules. I think you guys are in a really good place already. I think that Elmont has a lot of great stuff happening and I think it's just about working with the team that's here and the students that are here to make Elmont even better, and make it the best school it can be."

### Q: Where do you see Elmont's growth within the next five years?

A: "Every school I've [taught] at and every position I've [held], we've always grown. Whether it was [with] my students as a teacher, whether it was with my school as an assistant principal or principal, we've always grown in terms of levels of achievement; in terms of the school culture improving; in terms of the community being involved. My goal is to make Elmont the best school that we can possibly make it and I want it to be recognized - it's already recognized in many ways - but I really want people to see Elmont as the ideal of what a high school can be. That goes for student achievement; that goes for community involvement and getting the parents involved with the school itself; [that] goes for the level of teaching that is happening [and] the level of structure that is happening in our classrooms; [that] goes for how we conduct ourselves as young ladies and young men in the way that we treat each other and the level of school respect in the school community."

### Q: Why did you choose Elmont?

A: "What convinced me to come to Elmont was meeting the students, and the teachers, and the parents. I had an all day interview. I came for an entire day and I was up in the library for pretty much the whole day from 7:00AM until 3:00PM. First I met with parents, and then I met with teachers, and then I met with students, and then I met with more teachers. But really meeting the people who are involved in Elmont and are in Elmont every single day... there was a certain energy about it and there was a certain...passion for Elmont. People really enjoy being in Elmont and they are proud of Elmont. And that's something, for me, that was very important because I am intensely passionate about educating kids and making sure that kids get what they need. So for me, it was really important to be in a place where the focus was going to be on you guys, and making sure that you guys go to the best colleges and get the best jobs possible."

### Q: What was your favorite thing about high school?

A: "Can I give you two favorites? So one was basketball. We won a state championship; we won a lot of different championships, and that helped me. I went to two different high schools. I moved in between my sophomore and my junior year; I moved from Massachusetts to Pennsylvania. The other thing I liked was not being pigeonholed into one subgroup of kids. You had your jocks, and you had your guys who liked art, and you had the really smart kids...but I flowed in between all of them and I think that I didn't get pigeonholed into one clique over any other one, where I was like, 'I only roll with this crew.' I could go to lunch and hang out with the artistic kids; I could go chill with the basketball players; I could go chill with the kids in the AP classes. I just didn't like the separation and that's something that's been a part of my life forever; not liking when people draw lines and separate themselves. So I think that was another part... really getting to know a bunch of different people from a bunch of different backgrounds and kind of enhancing my experiences that way."

## MR. HOLUB: Celebrating Elmont's Teacher of the Year

By Emily Marie Garcia

Mr. Holub, a veteran science teacher, far exceeds his professional title of "teacher." Mr. Holub, an educator for over 30 years, is also a committed coach, a collaborative colleague, a friend and supporter, a humorist and jokester, and most importantly - Elmont Memorial High School's 2015 Teacher of the Year.

As a child, Mr. Holub wanted to be a pilot, but what inspired him to become a teacher instead was his high school experience and his own teachers. Recollecting his past as a student, Mr. Holub states, "Oh man, I was bad. I used to get in trouble a little bit and I wasn't exactly the brightest student." Joking about some of his own teachers, Mr. Holub recalls: "I had lots of strict teachers. Back then teachers could hit students... No, I wasn't hit. But, it was allowed." Mr. Holub has often thought of taking up singing as an alternate career, but luckily he has honest students who "tell me I can't sing worth a lip," he adds humorously. And how lucky to have students who voted him teacher of the year, too!

According to Mr. Holub, his most successful year of teaching was his first year when he didn't know exactly what he was doing. "It was just learning by fire," he says. "For me to get through that first year and comeback for a second year of teaching, that was probably my most successful. Last year was good too... winning teacher of the year... I guess I was good," says Mr. Holub quite modestly. Although his first year was one of his most successful while teaching, it was also one of his hardest. "Yeah, my first year [teaching]...I was a leave replacement in March, not here, but in a bad school. I'm lucky I survived," he recalls.

Mr. Holub describes his teaching style as eclectic. "I don't sit and lecture; I tend to keep things moving along," says Holub. The best part about his job is the students; his number one highlight of teaching everyday is when he sees students learn. And the worst part of his job? The loads of paperwork! But, he believes his best quality is his sense of humor. "You have to have a sense of humor in order to work here," he laughs.

Mr. Holub also enjoys activities outside of school. His hobbies? "Eating chicken nuggets... No, I try to play golf, but that's just a bad situation right there, I'm not very good at it and not patient enough for it," he jokingly comments. Some of you may not know him as a science teacher, but rather as a basketball coach. "So far, we are doing okay. Last year [we were not] quite where we wanted to be, but this year [our] goals should be a little bit better, a little bit higher." He says his motto is to try to do your best at all times, that's all.

It seems that Mr. Holub was doing his best during the 2014-2015 academic year. Congratulations to you on Teacher of the Year, Mr. Holub, with lots of love from us here at Elmont!

## COLLEGE INFORMATION STATION

### Gaining College Knowledge

By Shaji Rahman

Are you aware of the recent changes in the library? Have you noticed the college pennants that line the walls near the front desk, or the book shelf adorned with college pamphlets? By now, you might have guessed who is responsible for these new additions. It is Ms. Martinez, our beloved librarian, who seeks to help overburdened and stressed out students who frequent the library. When asked about her perspective on students' college readiness, Ms. Martinez replied that students "have no idea what to consider when applying for colleges." For this reason, Ms. Martinez emailed over 100 colleges last June, stating that she was "looking to do some

motivational redecorating for college and career guidance in the library" and that she "would like to have the conversations about colleges begin before senior year." Her thought beyond this project was that university pennants on display would inspire kids to ask questions and gather information. So far, it's been working.

Ms. Martinez noticed the pressure that students experienced when the time came to pursue a higher education. Last year when working with seniors, she noticed that the students didn't have a clear view of which colleges they were interested in, let alone why colleges they were interested in peaked their interest. Thus, she created six sections of the College

Information Station, all of which are divided by region, including: New York State, the North East, the West Coast, the Midwest, the South, and the Ivy Leagues. These six sections contain information provided directly from the colleges, such as: preparing for college, applications, majors and minors, financial aid, student activities, etc. There are also non-fiction books on display, like *1001 Ways to Pay for College* and *The Complete Guide to Writing Effective College Applications & Essays*, as well as test preparation materials. When asked if the brochures could help students find their intended major or career path, Ms. Martinez replied that the brochures could "help students

have a major in mind when going to college" and that "specific majors unique to a certain school can lead to a student selecting that college or university."

It is important that students have an open mind when applying to college and that students refrain from ignoring schools simply because they are seldom heard of. "Juniors must see this station and should start making college choices," Ms. Martinez demands, "so that they have more choices of schools other than the ones their friends always talk about getting into." So, stop by the school library today and begin your college planning now.

## OPEN DOOR FOR THE COMMON CORE

### College & Career Ready Students at the District Fair

By Augusta Uwamanu-Nna

Cars snaked endlessly on Leonard Boulevard culminating at New Hyde Park High School. The serenity of the night was countered by the bustling of students and parents, rushing to reach the warmth of the school gym. Tables were dressed with radiant cloths and lined with enticing brochures. The welcoming smiles of the representatives could not subdue the anxiousness that pervaded the room. Still, all could not help but grin as they walked from booth to booth. The annual Sewanhaka Central High School District College and Career Night

was underway on the night of September 21, 2015.

Frankly, visiting each of the hundreds of schools present that night seemed pretty impossible. Even so, students from all five schools benefited tremendously. Current Elmont senior, Kyana Ifill, enjoyed the myriad of colleges as she was able to learn about many rigorous programs. She notes that her parents' pestering was actually worth it, as she feels "more confident about the application process" and looks "forward to applying to many great schools." The night was similarly influential for junior Julie Nwaogbe, who

saw the fair as "a blessing," as she now knows what she must accomplish this school year to be the quintessential applicant.

The experience of the fair extends past the students and their parents. Emma Ingram, Senior Assistant Director of Undergraduate Admission at Bentley University, never gets tired of speaking with students, especially at the Sewanhaka Central High School District. She sees these fairs as integral to the entire college process in "solidifying your choices and experiencing the school outside from its website." As a

strong advocate of Bentley and specifically the seventy plus colleges that are located in the Boston area, Ingram also enjoys seeing all of the different colleges and simply watching students be the innovators of their futures.

The career night was not only a success for students and parents, but also for the college representatives who saw the drive that characterizes the students of this district. The work of the district Parent Teacher Associations is deeply appreciated and has made these ensuing months easier for many college-bound students, especially those here in Elmont.

## AN IN DEPTH LOOK AT HOW TO INCREASE YOUR PROBABILITY OF COLLEGE ADMISSION

### You Don't Have to be Einstein to Solve This Formula

By Sebastien Piquon

Most students want to attend college. However, much like calculus, the college freshman admission process can be intimidating. But, then again, what isn't?

Fortunately, on September 21, 2015, our district hosted the annual District College & Career Fair at New Hyde Park, where students came into contact with a plethora of different admissions officers from a variety of different schools. Surprisingly, each college or university had their own formula for the ideal student. However, the average formula can be expressed with the following equation: strong academics + strong extracurriculars + uniqueness + passion = college admission.

In this day and age, this equation can be manipulated to an individual's situation, which is where one of the most crucial aspects of the admission process lies: the essay. Describing yourself, your situation, and your passion in

approximately 650-words can be quite difficult for most. But, this essay shows admissions officers who you are as a person, rather than the numbers and statistics that represent you, as seen on your report cards and standardized tests. At our annual District College & Career Fair, admission counselors were asked to offer their best tips and tricks from their admissions experience. Let's take an in-depth look at what admissions officers truly seek:

"Be different, stand out, be purposeful, be passionate."  
-University of Rochester admissions

"Learn and research core curriculum before you do an interview. Always ask for an interview."  
-Columbia University admissions

"Find the right fit for you, don't take in a lot of debt."  
-Rutgers admissions

"Visit the school you are applying to... you'll be surprised to see that the school picks you rather than you picking the school."  
-St. John's admissions

"Research your major, know your route."  
-SUNY University at Albany admissions

"Don't be afraid to talk to us; come and find out things about yourself."  
-Sergeant from the United States Marine Corps

"Make sure you put your best foot forward; show what you can offer - other than grades..."  
-Baruch admissions

"Be open and honest in your application; we are humans too."  
-Hobart and William Smith admissions

"Enjoy the journey, keep in touch with help. Don't be afraid to reach out!"  
-Hofstra University

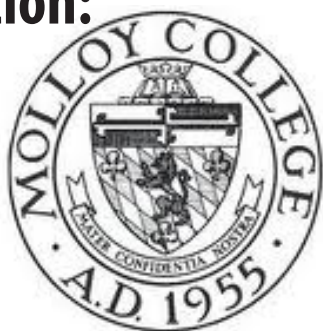
admissions

"People get caught up in the admissions process and simply just give up too easily. They make up reasons why they shouldn't apply. Getting in is a mindset. You must know your passion and articulate it to the best of your ability. The biggest mistake to make is to not apply. One must play the odds!"  
-Harvard admissions

These quotes summarize the best suggestions for the admission process. Overall, the colleges offered similar tips, but each admission officer put his or her own unique spin on this pressing information. The path to college itself is one of the most important paths we will walk and it is always appreciated to have some direction. The final direction comes from our very own Mr. Dougherty: "Be unique, tell your own story, be true to yourself."

## Next Issue's College Section:

In the November/December issue of the *Elmont Phoenix*, look for a College Highlight section. Reporters/writers will interview an undergraduate admission officer from each of the following local colleges: Molloy College, New York University, and Long Island University.



# FACE OFF

*Do you think child stars have it rough?*

**PRO**

**CON**

**By Kimberly Flobil and Ife Tugbobo**

“Do child actors really experience “the struggle?” According to tenth grader Imani Gray, they do. Gray sympathizes with child actors because “their lives have been dedicated to fame and it’s a natural process of stardom for childhood stars to be spotlighted for their negative behaviors.” Child stars do have a hard life because they will have to forever live with the on-screen image they portrayed during their earlier years. In this day and age, fame means having absolutely no privacy. Furthermore, there is constant pressure for these child stars to remain perfect role models, as they often play in movies or on television. The public has a hard time accepting the fact that stars also make mistakes; therefore, we often put child stars on pedestals, placing unattainable expectations on these young ones and their futures. Once these child stars have acted unworthy in the public eye, there is a lot of resentment and judgement. There are so many constant comparisons to the person they “used to be.”

Child stars will have to live with the same image they were brought up playing on screen. Shedding the skin of their former creative character is a long and arduous journey, especially when replays and reruns are a constant reminder of one’s past. For example, Miley Cyrus wanted to branch out from her Hannah Montana role with her controversial music video for the song “Wrecking Ball.” This drastic transformation sparked many controversial conversations about teenage role models, about child stars, and about the exploitation of the female body, to name a few issues. No longer was Miley regarded as the innocent teenager with dual personalities, as she displayed on the Disney Channel, but rather as the infamous young adult responsible for the diffusion of twerking. All of this attention, particularly after her Video Music Awards performance, generated mostly negative criticism about this childhood star.

Child stars have to live with the spotlight constantly shining upon them because of the public’s obsession with the lives of celebrities. Sometimes, the pressures of society can be too much for child stars and teen celebrities. An example of this is Lindsay Lohan, yet another infamous Disney childhood star. Lohan failed to live up to her cutesy Disney beginnings, failing to be a good role model on several occasions, including drunk driving and possessing and using cocaine. Similarly, the childhood star of the *Home Alone* movies, Macaulay Culkin, has had serious troubles concerning substance abuse and illegal possession of controlled substances.

Child stars continuously endure the constant comparisons between the fictional characters they have played in the past and the modern day reality they live in. These individuals live with their former, fictionalized self always looking back in the mirror. The public cannot separate them as humans from the characters they’ve portrayed, forgetting that as the audience, they’ve only seen what has been constructed of this child star, and not the child star’s own, unrelated personality. For instance, Miley Cyrus will always be associated with Hannah Montana, linking her to a teenage girl that never existed, but now is expected to be manifested, no matter how much her career strays from this previous character. That role will always be a part of her and her career, but it should not become what her future actions and projects revolve around.

Oftentimes, the public can forget that celebrities are more than the individuals they’ve portrayed. Celebrities, too, must change and grow as people, whether the public agrees with this transformation or not. But, child stars have clear expectations - and thus limitations - placed upon them by the public eye. Because of the constant criticism and judgment child stars experience living in the spotlight, it seems that the life of a child star might not be as privileged as one might believe.

## THE “NEW” WORLD

*The Story Behind the Greatest Discovery of 1492*

**By Venette Simon**

*In fourteen hundred ninety-two, Columbus sailed the ocean blue.* Known in history as a master navigator and admiral, Christopher Columbus paved the way for broader European exploration and colonization (and for one Monday off from school or work each October).

Columbus Day is celebrated in honor of this extraordinary explorer who sighted America and the Caribbean islands on October 12, 1492. Supported by the Spanish monarchs, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, Christopher Columbus set sail in August earlier that year. His goal was initially to chart a new, navigable and shorter route from Spain to Asia to reach the riches of the continent. Instead, Columbus found himself in the Bahamas, a whole new territory he had no previous knowledge of. Assuming he had landed in Asia, Columbus returned to Spain bearing gold, spices, and Native American captives of whom he believed to be “Indians.” From his expedition, Columbus made the biggest, most important discovery of his time...or did he? Many argue that the discovery Columbus made

was not a discovery at all because he was not the first man to set foot on land in the Western Hemisphere.

Yet, the discovery of the New World was a major milestone for European and American history. Without Columbus, Europeans might not have discovered America until years later, setting back the development of America and her ability to become a major powerhouse in colonization, city-building, and industrialization. Christopher Columbus’ expeditions to the New World exposed the Europeans to a new continent that they had no knowledge of prior to his expeditions.

Because of Columbus, Europeans traveled to and explored the New World, developed colonies and brought with them their innovations which were crucial to the development of America. So, will we continue to deem Christopher Columbus’s “discovery” a fault, or will we continue to celebrate the controversial holiday, seeing as these discoveries shaped history for both Europe and America?

**By Fatima Bhutta**

Child stars do not have it rough, but rather they have many advantages. As it becomes easier to adapt and to adjust to their acting careers, more opportunities can be offered to child stars, so that along with acting, other careers can be pursued. Acting builds confidence and great social skills - something the majority of the teens struggle with immensely. Some children cannot present a project in front of their class, let alone go on stage and give a performance. Acting takes enormous strength and courage. Acting allows a person to become independent, not always relying on others for help, as it is a very internalized process. Actors are able to take problems and real life situations into their own hands, helping them to be more empathetic and sympathetic when these fictionalized situations become a reality. Acting also creates compassion and an understanding of others; when an actor becomes another character they see things differently and become more open-minded. Furthermore, studies show that acting improves academic performance. According to the American Alliance for Theatre & Education, students involved in drama performance “scored an average of 65.5 points higher on the verbal component and 35.5 points higher in the math component of the SAT.”

Although some child stars may feel pressure that those outside of the acting field might not understand, child stars choose this field because it’s what makes them happy. Child stars are often role models for those of their generation; they are able to promote positivity to other children and can address certain issues like bullying. Since they have a big impact on the children who look up to them, expressing themselves is not a problem.

Additionally, child actors have nothing to worry about when it comes to protection. Many laws have been put into place to keep child actors safe from the dangers that can arise from the entertainment industry. Child stars do not have it rough because they are more protected than ordinary school-going kids will ever be (think bodyguards and agents). With regards to acting, child stars are not allowed to be a part of scenes which may cause danger or put them in harm’s way. Filming child actors naked or in any explicit sexual scenes is not allowed. Furthermore, education is mandatory for child actors, as much as it is for any other kid. Oftentimes, child actors receive homeschooling to maintain their education.

Although there may be child actors who can’t handle the fame and pressure of the acting careers they chose (think Lindsay Lohan and Macaulay Culkin), there are many actors who can. For example, Natalie Portman was not only a successful child actor, but also a Harvard graduate. Portman was just twelve years old when she filmed her first movie, *Léon: The Professional*, in 1994. She is currently a 34-year old successful actress, producer, and director with a family. Likewise, in the 1990s, Ryan Gosling, Justin Timberlake, Britney Spears, and Christina Aguilera were all members of the Mickey Mouse Club. Now, all are very famous, very popular, and very successful actors and musicians.

Being in the spotlight isn’t a bad thing; the more an actor influences and wows the audience, the more they will be loved and trusted. If child stars can use their fame wisely, then the pressure will not be too much and the privilege will be great.

## TRAGEDIES THAT SWEEP THE NATION

*Is There Any True Solution?*

**By Fabrice Tondreau**

School shootings have saturated the news in recent years and the entire nation is torn over the topic of how to prevent school shootings from occurring. According to *The Gazette*, since Sandy Hook, it is averaged that there has been a gun fired on school grounds nearly once a week. Though everyone has ideas about gun and violence prevention, no one can agree on a definitive method to solve this fatal issue.

Examining the facts of the most recent shooting in Oregon, most killers have purchased the guns that they used legally. Based on this fact, an obvious solution to this issue would be to put more limitations on the sale of guns. However, many Americans are vehemently against any type of limits on gun sales or gun reform. As seen in recent polls, most people believe gun ownership will prevent crime; but, sadly, these statistics don’t seem to add up. For example, states that have some type of gun restrictions, such as New York and California, have fewer gun-related deaths.

While correlation may not equal causation, these correlations are very suggestive of a possible method of lowering the incidents of school shootings. While gun reform may not be the be-all-end-all, more restrictions on the right to bear arms might be a step in the right direction.

Yet another popular solution presented in the media is giving teachers firearms. This solution could possibly take the power away from the gunman, giving teachers a way to protect themselves and their students. However, this implies that more guns solves the problem, and it also places guns in the close proximity of students - a fearful concept. Irregardless, many teachers may not be wanting of such a heavy responsibility.

To be realistic, these ideas alone might not work, nor will they create an entire wave of reform. However, it is ideas like these that form the building blocks for the changes that we need. The dialogue alone is an important one that generates discussion and impacts policies and laws.

# GATSBY'S GREAT GOLD COAST

## Long Island's Rich History

By Michael Bailey

It is common for an author to use a real life setting in a fictitious novel, but it is rare to be living in a place characterized in a classic American tale. For those who are residents in such an area, it must be utterly shocking to read of the place's "personality" and past history. Living in Nassau County, you shouldn't be ignorant to the fact that Long Island was characterized in the popular novel *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. In *The Great Gatsby*, Long Island is immortalized as a wealthy sector where all of the privileged people go to have parties or just to have residency. In this piece of literature, Long Island plays a crucial role - not just as the setting, but also as the personification of high social life.

The meaning of the "Gold Coast" may have diminished from the Roaring Twenties to present day, but it's great to see our very own neighborhood is fashioned into this classic novel. Come with me, back in time, as we take a ride across Long Island's "Gold Coast," to see it through the eyes of F. Scott Fitzgerald.

### Old Westbury Gardens (Old Westbury):

You may have seen it when you went to that McDonalds that was across the street or when you went on that school trip in the fourth grade to learn about living environment - I know I have seen it before. This is the former home of John S. Phipps, custom made by the architect George Crawley. Phipps' story is a simple one and follows the archetypal pattern of a man with money. Phipps rose up the ladder by knowing someone in Carnegie Steel. The real fun begins with his marriage to Margarita Grace; he promised her an estate similar to the one of her childhood back in England (if it wasn't for research, I would think this story came out of a modern day B-list romance movie with B-list stars). This manor is beautiful with gardens covering every color of the rainbow, with every hue from green grass to purple painted trees. This 200+ acre estate is a feast for the eyes and the senses; the interior is flawless from the floors to the ceilings. Old Westbury Gardens inspired some of the homes you can read about in *The Great Gatsby*. This place has been showing off since the Roaring Twenties and it's still roaring! Visit [www.oldwestburygardens.com](http://www.oldwestburygardens.com) to check out the event calendar and to plan your tour of this historical 1920s mansion.



**C.W. Post (Old Brookville):** Wanting to separate herself from the hustle and bustle of city life, Marjorie Merriweather Post (Post cereal company heiress) moved here in 1921. Sometimes New York City gets too loud, you know? Golf, tennis, horseback riding, and swimming were just some of the activities guests of this serene estate enjoyed on its 25+ acre property. The property was also well known for hosting charity events and social gatherings. In 1947, it seems Ms. Post was tired of living so lavishly (or simply wanted more money), so she put the property up for sale and it was bought by Long Island University to promote education across Nassau County. In 1954, the estate changed its name to the C.W. Post campus, in memory of Ms. Post's father (shameless self-promotion, but sweet). Back then, the property sold for a measly \$200,000 (which isn't even enough to buy a one bedroom condo in the area now). A campus tour won't let you inside the actual mansion though; instead tours of this historic home occur twice a year by reservation. Visit <http://www.liu.edu/CWPost/About/History/Post-Estate> if you are interested in perusing this magnificent mansion turned educational institution.



**Sands Point Preserve/Castle Gould (Sands Point):** Many husbands today must feel really crappy just buying their wife a diamond ring once they hear this story. Howard Gould (shameless self-promotion, yet again), son of a railroad tycoon, Jay Gould, built this house for his wife. He didn't stop there. He also hooked the place up with an equestrian arena, horse stalls, blacksmith shops, a veterinary clinic, a kitchen, a dining room, a greenhouse, a dairy barn and farm, a hunting lodge, guest houses, and a beachfront casino with an indoor pool—AN INDOOR POOL! This demonstrates the very ostentatious social displays of wealth during the time period. I bet he didn't even use all of the amenities, but it is just nice to have all of that space, right? Built to look like Ireland's Kilkenny Castle, Castle Gould's 300+ acres truly imitate that of an ancient castle - limestone and all. Visit [www.thesandspointpreserve.com](http://www.thesandspointpreserve.com) to learn about the cultural history of this legendary home and to plan your next visit.



Long Island today is somewhat like its past, in the sense that there is still that great divide of exorbitant wealth juxtaposed with poverty-stricken communities. Just like in *The Great Gatsby*, where Gatsby's monstrous mansion was just a few miles from the decrepit Valley of Ashes, many less well-to-do areas surround these historic homes. It is obvious that F. Scott Fitzgerald perfectly personified the wealthiest part of the Long Island area during a time when wealth and class were roaring. And residents of Long Island are lucky enough to still have the opportunity to go back in time, to the 1920s, and experience the high life (if only for an hour long tour).

## SUPER SHORT, SUPER SCARY STORY WRITING CONTEST

THERE WAS A PICTURE IN MY  
PHONE OF ME SLEEPING. I LIVE  
ALONE.

HOSTED BY THE ELMONT  
MEMORIAL SCHOOL LIBRARY

ENTRIES DUE  
ELECTRONICALLY BY  
OCTOBER 30, 2015

SCHOOLGY ACCESS CODE:  
5KXPQ-5247Q



By Arianna Lekhraj

George R.R. Martin, author of the popular series turned critically acclaimed HBO television show *Game of Thrones*, once said: "A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies. A man who never reads lives only one." And how true of novels - that have the magical capabilities of taking readers to a dystopian world or an ancient city or a fantasy land or any place - wherever it may be - to escape reality.

Teen Read Week is a yearly event that takes place every October; this year Teen Read Week takes place October 18-24. This reader-friendly week was established by the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). This week targets teens, their parents, booksellers, educators, and librarians, and aims to promote and to encourage reading. This year the theme is "Get Away @ Your Library" which advocates for independent pleasure reading to "escape from the day to day grind" of school, work, and family responsibilities. This is quite easy to do when you have the right book.

Having trouble picking out a book? Don't worry; I have a few recommendations that will have you up and reading in no time. If you like action, I suggest *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins; the fast pace of the novel will keep you on the edge of your seat the entire time you are reading. If you enjoy classic literature, you might want to peruse the pages of *Pollyanna* by Eleanor H. Porter; this heartwarming tale of a young orphan is sure to stir up some emotions within. If you are a fan of science fiction, I recommend *Divergent* by Veronica Roth, which is a personal favorite of mine. Taking place in a post-apocalyptic world, this novel is filled with action-packed events and will certainly leave you wanting more (luckily, it's part of a series). However, if you don't find any of these books appealing, just remember there are a wide variety of choices - no matter where your interests lie - at the public library and at the school library.

So, get involved during Teen Read Week. Pick a book that sparks your interest and enjoy the pleasure of relishing in the magic that every page holds. In the words of fantasy author Lloyd Alexander, "Keep reading. It's one of the most marvelous adventures that anyone can have."

# BANNED BOOKS WEEK: PROMOTING “FREEDOM”

By Momna Choudhry

Banned Books Week is an annual national event that occurs at the end of September and promotes the celebration of the freedom to read. This year, Banned Books Week was September 27 through October 3, 2015. Each year, teachers, librarians, book publishers, and most importantly - readers, advocate for the freedom to seek and express ideas and to freely and openly access information.

Book banning, also known as censorship, usually occurs due to subject matter, language usage, or violent situations. Prolific writers, such as Kurt Vonnegut (author of *Slaughterhouse Five*) and Khaled Hosseini (author of *The Kite Runner*), have

been subjected to censorship. Come to think of it, just about any novel you will read in English class has been banned at one point in time. However, to prevent children from knowing about the world and human nature is unrealistic. Shielding children from the cruel reality of the world doesn't do them any favors. We shouldn't sacrifice our First Amendment rights to censors, just to be protected from what other people consider “right” and “wrong” to read and learn.

So, how did Elmont participate in raising awareness of saying no to censorship? Our school's library staff came up with a fun and engaging contest focusing on censorship and its negativity.

The contest was to choose a piece of literature that has been banned and to defend the literature by writing a short persuasive piece about the value of the novel. From 7th graders to 12th graders, everyone participated. Stephen Chbosky, author of the banned novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, says: “banning books gives us silence when we need speech. It closes our eyes when we need to listen. It makes us blind when we need sight.” Three students successfully gave a speech, made us listen, and gave us insight as to why some of the most popular novels of today should not be banned. The following students are the winners of the Banned Books Contest:

## DEFENDING *LOOKING FOR ALASKA*

By Laila Choudhry

Throughout the course of history, there have been several attempts to restrict the rights of human beings. At every instance, people have always stood up for what they believed in and have protested to keep the rights they were given. Today, one of our most important freedoms is being torn away from us. This restriction is the freedom of passion, of indulgence, of falling in love - with literature. We are being stripped of our right to choose our own books and it's time someone takes a stand.

John Green has always been one of my favorite authors. From *The Fault in Our Stars* to *Will Grayson, Will Grayson*, all of his books have managed to capture the hearts of the readers and to take their breath away (and I'm not just talking about myself). Teens around the globe have been entranced by Green's enchanting spell and his beautifully written words. One of his novels in particular, *Looking for Alaska*, caught my eye. Soon, I was in the world of Miles and facing the endeavors of suffering, of social acceptance, of friendship, and of one of the greatest mysteries of life: “What is the way out of this labyrinth of suffering?” This novel left me in tears at its end; my heart ached - not only for the characters, but for myself. Will I ever again read a novel as meaningful as this one?

Needless to say, I was shocked when I discovered this novel was on the list of “Banned Books.” How could it be that a piece of work so intriguing, so thought-provoking and so perfect, be considered as an inappropriate book to read? There are, I concede, minor parts with suggested sexuality and inappropriate teenage activities. However, in cases like these, all the facts must be looked at before making any rash and unjust decisions - such as banning this book. Sometimes, a novel's inner worth and message can outweigh the minimal inappropriate content. In this case, it certainly does.

*Looking for Alaska* teaches the reader about life's suffering. Everyone has their own struggle and everyone has their own solution. Even if things don't end up well for you, making a change in the lives of others is the best thing you can do. Is it right that because the author attempts to be realistic, the entire moral of the book is concealed from the world? We live in the twenty-first century, a place far different from the past, and we need to promote novels which display the reality of what is occurring in the lives of teens today. We can't just strip away the rights of society for the sake of trying to hide the truth about life. We have come so far as a nation. How can we achieve such milestones, but then surrender and turn our backs to that which we owe our success? Literature is a reflection of life and life is not censored; therefore censorship of literature is nonsensical.

## DEFENDING *PERSEPOLIS*

By Desiree Jean



*Persepolis* is a graphic novel by Marjane Satrapi that tells the story of her childhood living in Iran following the Iranian Revolution. Even though the memoir has won a great number of awards and has been adapted into an award nominated animated film, it was still pulled from the shelves of Chicago Public Schools.

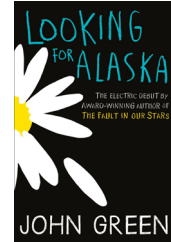
This graphic novel was particularly critiqued for its explicit depictions of torture and offensive language. But, children are constantly exposed to violence and torture scenes in Hollywood movies and on TV. Yet, when the reality of torture in the name of an oppressive nation is addressed, then it's all of a sudden too much? What's next? How about banning books on slavery, so that our children don't have to learn about the unjust history of this country?

This book is very educational because it is an excellent portrayal of a child's life during a country's revolution. *Persepolis* can help shift perspectives and help kids to realize what happens in other countries, and to be cognizant of just how privileged we are here in the United States. Furthermore, this novel shouldn't be generalized based on its mere images, but should be utilized to teach the consequences that an oppressive government can have on a child.

The novel *Persepolis* provides insight into why the censorship of book banning isn't the most mature way to handle these controversial texts. Teachers and parents should be aware that most students can handle these type of novels containing such ideas. I would recommend this book because it is a fantastic, engaging, and powerful work of literature and it should be obtainable to all students, allowing them to be citizens of the world while reading.

## DEFENDING *LOOKING FOR ALASKA*

By Marvia Pressoir



John Green, author of the world renowned *The Fault in Our Stars*, has written yet another magnificent piece of literature. *Looking for Alaska* is a humorous novel that depicts to readers what it feels like to be a teenage delinquent. The novel is insightful, and while it may have its share of inappropriateness, it does teach a lesson about the troubles of succumbing to peer pressure and the importance of independence.

*Looking for Alaska* follows the life of the protagonist, Miles, also known as Pudge, on his journey to find acceptance from his peers. On this journey, he begins to smoke, drink, and participate in other actions that are accepted by the students around him, but which take some time for Miles, himself, to adjust to. This novel relies heavily on its use of profanities, which help to develop the characterization of the main characters, Pudge, Colonel, and Alaska, the titular character of this novel. Without these actions - deemed inappropriate and the chief reason as to why the book is banned - the novel would not be able to convey its message to the readers as it is meant to be perceived.

For this novel, John Green's intended audience is eighth through tenth graders, ages thirteen and older. This age range is either approaching high school or already in attendance, and although given such controversial topics, high schoolers should be able to handle such issues with a mature mindset. The events that occur in the novel correlate to events that, universally, every teenager may encounter during their high school experience. It is important to have literature that demonstrates these types of situations to the high school population, if they have not had the chance to experience or acknowledge these teenage struggles personally. Banning this book, which unlike other novels actually delves into a topic headfirst without sugarcoating, would be withholding information from students who are willing to learn, but who are being dictated by the opinions of others. Although fiction, this novel can teach so much about real life; the censorship of this novel would be a waste of the novel's contemporary connection with teenagers of our generation.

# YOUNG ADULT BOOK REVIEWS

## REVIEW: *OPENLY STRAIGHT*

By Fabrice Tondreau

Bill Konigsberg, writer of novels such as *Out of the Pocket* and *The Porcupine of Truth*, created *Openly Straight*, a coming of age tale of self-discovery with very humorous and modern twists.

The novel's protagonist is young Seamus Rafael Goldberg, or “Rafe.” He is a new transfer student at an all-boys' boarding school, and has been openly gay since the eighth grade. Everyone in his old town in Colorado knew this, as did his mother and father. However, feeling overloaded by his own identity, Rafe keeps his orientation a secret at his new school. It begins as a simple “don't ask, don't tell” policy; if no one asked, then no one needed to know. But, soon he immerses himself in his disguise, lying to those around him and asking his family to play along. He makes friends - some amicable - most over the top, but none prying too much into his old life. Rafe almost succeeds with his plan to masquerade as straight - until he falls in love with one of his best friends at the boarding school.

At the boarding school, Rafe also meets an interesting English teacher named Mr. Scarborough, whom he confides in about everything (excluding his affection for Ben). Every few chapters of this novel has a “History of Rafe,” or a chapter written by Rafe, about Rafe, as an assignment for Mr. Scarborough. Each “history” details something about his past; Mr. Scarborough leaves tidbits of writing advice that not only helps Rafe to write better, but helps him to better understand himself. Without spoiling the ending, don't fret - both romantic and internal conflicts are handled in a real and a humorous fashion.

All in all, this book is astounding. Its humor is definitely for those who can appreciate its refreshing - and at times inappropriate - jokes and moments. *Openly Straight* takes the reader on an emotional journey, with feelings ranging from joy to sadness to confusion and finally back to happiness. It carries the reader through Rafe's life as he confronts his emotions, his morales, and even his past. This tale of self-discovery will definitely make anyone who reads it glad that they did.

In the words of Rafe's English teacher, Mr. Scarborough, when commenting on one of Rafe's writing pieces: “Lots to like about this piece! It made me cry.” Not only is the humor fantastic, but the story itself is deeply moving.

## REVIEW: *INFINITY*

By Shaji Rahman

*Infinity* by Sherrilyn Kenyon is the first book in the *Chronicles of Nick* series. For Kenyon, the inspiration for the titular character, Nick Gautier, was a blend of mythology and religion. Join Nick on his adventures that eventually lead him to a morbidly mysterious world.

Nick Gautier is the novel's protagonist, living in New Orleans with his mother who works at a strip club, and without his father - a convict. Alongside his mother, Nick lives a poverty-stricken life, barely able to afford suitable clothing. In school, Nick does fairly well in his classes, but most importantly he is an all-star Quarterback which helps him to get a scholarship. From Nick's perspective, this scholarship is the key to a new life. But, instead it creates a living hell in his world.

The stress of school, the acts of his mother, the influence of a neighborhood gang; Nick's world becomes a very dark place. After an altercation that involves Nick getting shot, life just seems to get more chaotic. From a scarcity of money to an unnamed benefactor, from dark hunters to zombies, many strange forces arrive in Nick's life, forcing him to man up to defend his family and save his city. Can he do it?

In this coming of age novel, author Sherrilyn Kenyon presents the messages that life isn't fair, that sometimes we choose the wrong path, and that regardless of the amount of despair you feel, you must never give up the hope of making a better life for yourself.

This is the story of a boy who quickly matures to a young man, given the responsibilities he must take on. The tale is powerful, however the plot is a bit confusing. Some events, such as the possession of Nick's mother or the transformation into a dark hunter may lead the reader to confusion. Furthermore, the mix of zombies with Greek mythology isn't necessarily the best, nor most believable, combination.

*Infinity* is recommended for young adults who enjoy fantasy, paranormal, and supernatural fiction. Although this engaging piece of literature does not have an infinite number of pages, it is part of a fourteen book series, if you should get hooked. So what does *Infinity* mean? It “means you keep going and going no matter what happens or what obstacles you meet. Over, under, around, or through. There's always a way. And if you have to chase something to infinity, strap on your big-boy pants, hiking boots, and go.” So, strap on your big-boy pants and power through this #1 *New York Times* bestselling young adult series.

# ARTIST HIGHLIGHT: JESSLYN TORRES

By **Fatima Bhutta**

Jesslyn Torres is a senior at Elmont whose art is known to be inspiring and truly touching. Her love for drawing and art began at the age of 3. Jesslyn recalls that as a child, she would sit around the table with her family, while she and her sister would draw. Her sister's art was complimented, while Jesslyn's art got "nice scribbles." This motivated Jesslyn to be like her sister. Currently, her sister is a professional artist who inspired Jesslyn to follow her dreams of implementing art into her



life. Jesslyn adores working on illustration; this is a different type of art that depicts a story. It is not fine art, but is stylized and can be compared to cartoons. Art classes that Jesslyn has taken include AP-2D, AP Drawing/Painting, Digital Design, and Studio Art. She is currently the president of the diligent and hardworking extracurricular club called "Portfolio Prep." She has also held the position of secretary for Art Club.

An imperfect childhood and constant moving from place to place played a big role in Jesslyn's art and inspiration. Art, for Jesslyn,

is an escape from the world; art is her new world. "Keep moving forward, never be afraid of failure, and don't let it get to you because then it certainly won't ever bother you," says Jesslyn, reflecting on her past. Presently, Jesslyn has been working on several pieces of art that are immensely meaningful to her. The pictures are called concentrations, which are known to be another style of art. Concentrations depict a story that is personal and significant to the artist. Jesslyn doesn't have a real memory of her childhood, since she was always moving.

Reflecting on her past, Jesslyn only sees glimpses of certain parts of her life. She uses these glimpses of her past life to recreate photos

of her flawed childhood. In her concentrations, Jesslyn has blacked and closed herself out to represent the loss of childhood.

However, they say good things come to those who wait; in Jesslyn's case she was patient with life and her desire to be an artist. Recently, Chet Carter from Channel Frederator Network, the studio behind shows like *Fairly Odd Parents* and *Adventure Time*, contacted Jesslyn. She was invited to be a part of their network of artists. Congratulations, Jesslyn, on this enormous feat! This



honor truly demonstrates your dedication and hardwork to your art.

## MARK TIME MARCH AND... 2015 Newsday Marching Band Festival

By **Julie Nwaogbe**

October 14, October 15, and October 19 are very special days for the marching bands on Long Island. The Newsday Marching Band Festival is a three-day event at which many high schools play the hottest hits, the greatest classics, and showcase their best choreography after long hours of tedious practicing for months on end. On October 14, 2015, bands performed songs such as "ABC" by the Jackson 5, "Grenade" by Bruno Mars, "Cheerleader" by OMI, and an abundance of other pieces. The Elmont's High School Marching Band was by far one of

the greatest performing bands at Mitchel Field Athletic Complex in Nassau County. Before the Elmont Marching Band even took the stage, fellow marching bands were chanting "Elmont!" simply because of our credibility and skill-level. The Marching Band performed musical numbers such as "Feel This Moment" by Pitbull and Christina Aguilera, "We R Who We R" by Ke\$ha, and last, but not least, "Bang Bang" by Ariana Grande, Jessie J., and Nicki Minaj. The band's marvelous melodies filled the field as they played, surpassing the level of musicianship

demonstrated by past performing bands.

Special thanks are in order to the band directors, Mr. Henry and Ms. Johnson, for working tireless hours to ensure the band was at its very best. Thank you to Ms. Torres, director of the Elmont Sparks Color Guard, and Ms. Spitaliere, Varsity Cheerleading coach, for bringing your clubs to participate and to add to such an amazing performance. Congratulations to first time drum majors, Lerone Clarke, Amy Vidal, and Tariere Tebepah, for helping the band with all of their necessities and for conducting the

band with such class and grace. Thank you to all the section leaders and remaining seniors in the band for your commitment and dedication to the band for the past five years. And finally, best wishes to the rest of the marching band. Always continue to lighten hearts and create smiles with your excellent tunes and perfect execution. Sensational job!



## SWEATER WEATHER HAS NEVER BEEN BETTER The Finest Female Fall Fashion Item

By **Julie Nwaogbe**

It's that time again! Halloween costumes, pumpkin spice lattes, turkeys on our tables, and an abundance of tissues filling our pockets. Of all of the wonderful attributes of autumn to embrace, one particular element is most definitely a favorite: fall fashion. Unlike other seasons, there are a variety of clothing styles to choose from when it comes to fall. To the untrained eye, fashion in the fall may seem as if it is the same every year, but in fact, it just keeps getting better and better.

Fall fashion is a testament to the belief that history repeats itself. The most common style observed this fall is combat and utility wear. If you're wearing an oversized green trench jacket, distressed jeans, dark plum lipstick, bulky black boots, or anything of the sort, then you are sporting this fall's hardcore, yet very chic style. It's only expected that we alter the tone of our outfits to align with the change in seasons. Warmer seasons call for lighter and brighter clothing. However, colder seasons, like fall, suggest darker and more punk-type outfits.

One fall item we must focus on is the sweater. Despite the fact that they are worn every year (if they weren't,

you would probably freeze to death), the array in the types and designs of sweaters one human being can own is endless. There are oversized sweaters, cropped sweaters, fleece sweaters, knit sweaters, argyle sweaters, ugly sweaters, Bill Cosby sweaters, fringe sweaters, sweater dresses, pullovers, cardigans, vests, and the list goes on and on. Sweaters are a great way to add a unique touch to your outfit while staying warm for the cold months. Clothing is an outward expression of your personality and sweaters are a great way to express your persona.

Furthermore, for an extra warm complement to a fall sweater, so simple, yet so elegant: the infinity scarf. It's very hard to overlook such a major factor of the autumn outfit. When you feel like your outfit is missing something, the right infinity scarf is often the final piece to the puzzle. Much like sweaters, infinity scarves also come in a plethora of designs that bring your outfit one step closer to perfection.

It is imperative that you enjoy autumn while it lasts and you can always enjoy yourself by wearing your finest. So stay warm, wrapped in a trendy sweater and topped off with a cozy infinity scarf!

## OUT TO WIN IT AGAIN Model UN Works Hard to Bring the Trophy Home

By **Isaiah Genao and Ife Tugbobo**

Model United Nations (MUN) is an organization that has taken students to new heights in speaking, listening, and writing. Since 1978, the Elmont MUN team has a longstanding tradition of winning based on our students' skills in these areas of communication. This past year, the MUN Training Class Team has brought in a wide variety of students that will soon demonstrate their promise for success for the MUN team as a whole. Tenth grader Bianca Coley reminisces about the training class in which she describes it precisely as a "rigorous program" that enabled her to increase her awareness of her environment by researching and discussing real world events.

The value in the training class is that prospective Model UN students are able to understand and get a sense of what the actual

United Nations is all about. Every morning at 7:00AM, the team practices for the endeavors they will encounter during their tough conferences. The program is meticulous, but the students involved are selected because they too are meticulous and thorough. Everyone on the team must work hard to be successful at the conferences. The team hopes to continue their winning legacy in these upcoming conferences and aspires to continuously meet their goals. The first prestigious conferences include Princeton (November 19-22, 2015) and Yale (January 21-24, 2016). Student leaders, Leanna Faulk and Isaiah Genao, hope to take the team to great, new heights. They aim to train the new students, as well as the veteran members, to prepare them all for the verbal battle that will ensue - and to strive for perfection.



# SPORTS

## SPARTANS TAKE OFF ON THE COMPETITION *Elmont Spartans vs Bellmore JFK Cougars*

By Tevaun McNairn

On Saturday, October 3, 2015, the Elmont Spartans took on Bellmore JFK at home. With a 30-7 blowout, the Spartans earned yet another win, bringing their record to 3-1. From the start of the season, the coaches and their team knew this year was going to be one that was extremely special. This game only furthered actualized their premonition. At the beginning of the game, senior Harold Elizee scored - not only the first touchdown of the game, but his first touchdown of the year -

with an eight-five yard run, making the score 6-0 in the first quarter. A two-point conversion was successful to Matthew Penalvert by the number one quarterback in the league, Aaron Ruthman.

The next time the Spartans scored was late in the first half with a ten-yard run into the touchdown by Aston Brown, who broke three consecutive tackles while managing to stay on his feet. With a failed two-point conversion, the score remained 14-0. At the start of the second quarter, a thirty-yard lob was sent to star player Brown,

from Ruthman, making the score 20-0. Later, another successful two-point conversion was carried out by Head Coach Hegi and ran in by senior Harold Elizee. The score was 22-0 late in the second quarter when a fifty-yard bomb was launched to Penalvert for an astonishing touchdown. Before the half was over, senior Elizee was able to break two tackles, with another two-point conversion added on, making the Elmont score 30.

And if the crowd wasn't already pumped up enough, the

outstanding half-time performance by the Elmont Memorial Marching Band was definitely a crowd pleaser. Afterwards, the game was basically over when an attempt was made late in the third quarter by Bellmore, with a fifty-yard out route blowing all sorts of coverage, and ending with a successful field goal. And with no further scoring, the game ended at 30-7, in Elmont's favor. Yet another great win for our Varsity Spartans! This is just the beginning of the countless amount of wins to come... Excellent work, Spartans.

## THIS IS FOR SPARTA! *Elmont Spartans vs. Hempstead Tigers*

By Joseph Olawoye

On September 28, 2015, Elmont's Varsity Boys Volleyball Team had finally proved themselves. The match against the Hempstead Tigers took place at Elmont - no better place to start the anticipated streak of wins. When Hempstead entered the gymnasium, there was instant tension between the two teams because of past rivalries and matches. But, the Elmont boys were determined to give it their all on the court. From a coin toss to breaking down the net, each team was relentless and persistent.

The game began with team captains, Joshua Cawley and Joseph Olawoye, at the line to shake hands with their competitors. Play after play, the Spartans executed each move flawlessly, demonstrating all they had learned from their practices and experiences. Elmont had won the first set with a staggering 25-9 score. As expected, Hempstead came back for the next set even stronger. It was clear that Elmont had begun to lose their momentum with regards to teamwork and communication, leading to a set score of 21-25, and making the

overall score tied at 1-1. Motivated, the Elmont captains knew it was time to set the boys straight and get them back on track.

Harnessing the fervor they had in beginning of the match, Elmont beat Hempstead in a steady battle during the third set, ending with a score of 25-18. It only took one more set to seal the deal for the Spartans and to gain their very first win. At the beginning of the fourth set, the Spartans quickly took their defensive stance and changed their approach to the offensive when necessary. Because of this, Hempstead had no chance

of stopping all the balls spiked at them, giving Elmont reign over the fourth set. The points in each of the sets may have been close, but the overall score of 3-1 demonstrated our Spartan Boys Volleyball Team's true potential in winning.

As their outside hitter, Sherwin Jerrick, said "[t]his is only the first of many. We intend to do what we did to Hempstead to all our opponents in our next games." Never cease to represent and win for your school, boys!

## GOOD SEASON, GREAT PLAYERS *Varsity Spartans Have a Chance as LIC Champs*

By Tevaun McNairn

The Varsity Spartans Football Team has clinched a playoff spot with a record of 4-2. With two more games left, the team looks to end the season with a record of 6-2. This hasn't been accomplished in the past two years. With a fast-paced offense and a highly efficient defense, there is nothing that this team can't accomplish.

This is the first time in years that the team, the community, and the coaching staff can actually see a possibility at the championship; this is due to the outstanding camaraderie and chemistry between this winning team and its players - something never witnessed in Elmont history. Is this what our team has been missing all these years? You be the judge when the Spartans finish with a great regular season record and you see them in the Long Island Championship for high school football, sporting forest green and white on the field.

Credit must be given to the amazing coaching staff - Coach Hegi, Coach Kinsley, and Coach Patel. But, really it's the players who deserve most of the credit. Moving up from Junior Varsity to Varsity, #1 quarterback in the county, Aaron Ruthman, makes

the seamless transition as if unfazed - with almost 1,500 passing yards and 16 touchdowns this season. But, he couldn't have done it without #2 wide receiver in the county, Aston Brown, #3 wide receiver in the county, Princeton Gahagan, and #14 wide receiver in the county, Matthew Penalvert. Without these key offensive players, the Varsity Spartans Football Team wouldn't be where

they are today, during this Fall 2015 season. However, star players aren't the only members of the team deserving of credit; without a defense, an offensive line, and a great coaching staff, these players would be a group of immensely skilled boys with no ability to execute. So let's commemorate all the hard working Spartans; we look forward to you bringing home this championship. Best of luck at your away conference game at Westbury, on Saturday, October 24, 2015 at 2:00PM; we hope to see you dancing in the end zone.



# SPORTS

## WHOSE HOUSE? ELMONT'S HOUSE! JV Spartans Demolish Carey Seahawks

By **Isaiah Genao**

With an amazing 2-0 start to the season, Elmont's Junior Varsity Football Team has been putting on astonishing shows for their fans, so far stealing the spotlight from both the Calhoun Colts and the Sewanhaka Indians. Leading the Spartans into the trenches of the September 26 game were Captains Michael Djalo, Mark Flinch, Sebastien Guillaume, and Kaurice Jones. Other players included Joshua Milfort as running back, Emmanuel Flemming playing as defensive tackle, Brian Jean-Baptiste as quarterback, and Jalanni Springer as defensive back. Leading the Carey Seahawks were

Jestyn Compos, Barry Moore, and Dylan Rodriguez.

Throughout the game, the Spartans controlled both sides of the ball. In their opening drive, they possessed tremendous runs from Michael Djalo and Joshua Milfort, who ended the drive with a five-yard touchdown run - straight through the Seahawks defense. With big stops from Klay Dehaney and Emmanuel Flemming, the Spartans continued forcing three-and-out stops to get the ball back. And again, the ball was given to Joshua Milfort on a screen pass for an effortless sixty-yard touchdown pass. In the second quarter, touchdowns came, once

again, from Milfort on an amazing ninety-yard punt return and from Guillaume for a thirty-yard pass into the bottom left of the end zone. Leaving the field with a 28-0 lead, the Spartans held all the momentum.

Coming back after halftime, defensive stars Jalanni Springer and Emmanuel Flemming continued to lead the defense to great stops, preventing the Seahawks from scoring. Carey's defense did surface with equal intensity and Carey was able to score late in the fourth quarter, after the second string was put in. Despite Carey's valiant efforts, the Junior Varsity Spartans obtained yet another

breathtaking win.

Currently, with a 3-0 record, the team is already beating their last season's record; a record of 2 wins and 1 loss. After the game, head coach Kevin Sullivan was asked, "With such a perfect game, what do you plan on doing to practice with the team?" Sullivan responded, "This was a nowhere near perfect game and we need to make sure everyone on the team is meeting perfection goals, not just our starters." Regardless, the JV Spartans played one heck of a game and hope to defeat Kennedy Bellmore during their next away game. Let's go, Spartans!

## CROSS COUNTRY TEAM ON THE MOVE Elmont Runs 4K Track Meet #2 at Bethpage State Park

By **Erika Feurtado**

On September 24, 2015, Elmont's Cross Country Team, led by Coach Graham, ran their hearts out on the 4000 kilometer race at Bethpage State Park in Farmingdale.

The top girls from Elmont were junior Erika Feurtado, sophomore Zhaneia Thybulle, and freshman Lea Stewart. Astounding the crowd, but especially Elmont, Feurtado ran a personal record time of 17:00:72, coming in third place overall.

In fourth place overall, with a whopping time of 17:22:27, was Thybulle. Finally, Stewart came in eighth place overall, with a personal best time of 17:57:56. Further congratulations are

due to Brianna Harris, Christal Thompson, Erykah Camal, and Khalia Whyte for their participation. Lastly, special congratulations to Erykah



Camal on a personal best time of 20:20:51! Good work to the Girls Cross Country Team, for their impressive efforts during such a tedious race.

Additionally, Elmont senior Mark Barthelemy,

sophomore Ethan Elliott, and junior Damahya Coeur were the amazing top runners representing the boys. Barthelemy ran a stunning personal record time of 15:11:86

to come in fifth place overall. Elliott placed eighth overall with an unbelievable time of 15:28:55. In tenth place overall, with a surprising time of

15:51:89, was Coeur. We cannot forget the noble efforts of the rest of the team members, including: Malik Johnson, Brandon Evans, Joshua Phillip, Demoni Gilkes, Tavis Charvis, Joshua Guillaume-



Sam, Uzodinma Kanu, Aaron Clarke and Timothy Melendez. Special congratulations to Malik Johnson, Brandon Evans, Demoni Gilkes, Tavis Charvis and Uzodinma Kanu on their

personal best times.

Great job, Cross Country Team! We applaud you all for never giving up and for embodying the true Spartan Spirit. As you embark onto greater staged track meets, best of luck (and put your best foot forward) for the future!

## GIRLS GETTING VERTICAL Elmont Girls Volleyball on the Rise

By **Saarah Braithwaite**

A new month means newer and greater beginnings for the Elmont Girls Varsity Volleyball Team led by Coach Ianniello. The ladies had a commanding win over New Hyde Park on Thursday, October 1, with an end score of three to one. The Lady Spartans won with set scores of 25-19, 23-25, 25-23, 25-18. Middle blocker, Nicole Ross, had eleven kills and seven aces. Setter, Arianna Sinnerine, added twelve assists and six aces.

The Lady Spartans fearlessly fought for their victory even though the scores were extremely close. During the first set, the girls were pumped as they set themselves up to take the set win. The second set was filled with tension and tenacity for our Lady Spartans, however, they unfortunately dropped a game. Everyone was on the edge of their seats as extraordinary volleys were exchanged between both teams. The spectators from New Hyde Park exclaimed with happiness as their team finished the second set. Coach Ianniello had a rousing talk with the girls between the second and third

set which was more than enough to get the girls back on their feet and ready for the next set. Finally, the Lady Spartans clutched the last set with serves and kills that completely blindsided the Gladiators.

Ross stuck out as the MVP of this game, with eleven amazing kills and seven superb service aces that had the Gladiators staggering to catch their breath. Special thanks to Sinnerine, for keeping the team alive and in the game with her twelve assists. Congratulations are due to the rest of the team for never losing hope and for giving their all to the game.

With such an incredible and breathtaking win, the Lady Spartans are sure to continue to amaze the crowd with their matchless execution for the remainder of the season. Coach Ianniello comments, "This has been the best record for Girls Volleyball since 2010." Be sure to come out and watch the rest of the fascinating games Girls Volleyball has to offer. Keep it up, Lady Spartans, and continue to pulverize the competition!

## POSITIVE PLAYING DURING FIRST GAME Elmont vs. Sewanhaka

By **Gloria Greene and Susanna Sanicharra**

Tuesday, September 29, 2015, was the first Junior High Girls Soccer game of the 2015 season. The team, led by Coach Webster, played Sewanhaka at the Dutchway Complex. The game started at 4:00PM and ended by 5:15PM. When the game began, unfortunately the rain, too, began. Just before the end of the first half of the game did the rain finally cease. But, the rain didn't stop our Lady Spartans from playing the game with all of their effort.

The first half of the game was very thrilling; each girl put 110% into the game. The goalie and the field players tried hard and had a great defense. At the end of the first half, the score was 1-0 with Sewanhaka in the lead. Elmont didn't lose hope;

all the players gathered with Coach Webster and had a pep talk. When the second half of the game began, the Elmont Lady Spartans were even more determined.

The girls put as much effort as they could into the game, but Sewanhaka scored again. The score was now 2-0, with Sewanhaka still in the lead. The crowd was cheering and the players were motivated to win, but the whistle blew signaling that the second half was complete; the game was over.

Sewanhaka won this match, but that didn't stop Coach Webster from saying such wonderful things about her team. "They're a great bunch to coach," she said, "We are just working on keeping positive and learning the sport."