



# Levittown LEADER

## EDUCATING THE **WHOLE STUDENT**

New and exciting programs are being implemented during the 2019-2020 school year including an expanded focus on mindfulness, literacy, high school courses and student behavior.

### More on Mindfulness

Research has shown that those who practice mindfulness are better able to control their emotions, have improved attention rates, greater self-compassion and decreased stress.

This year, the district is expanding this concept in the Middle School 101 program. Sixth graders will participate in more mindfulness workshops, while classroom teachers receive mindfulness training by school social workers. This professional development will help teachers implement mindful strategies within the classroom throughout the year.

### Fostering Literacy Love

A goal for the 2019-2020 school year is to continue fostering a love of reading in all students. The district formed a literacy collaborative group last year where members brainstormed different activities that will encourage students to read outside of school. Since their meetings, the district has established positive ways to keep students engaged in literacy this school year.

Book baggies were purchased for all K-2 students to bring home books each day, and lending libraries will be built

outside each of the elementary buildings. In addition, elementary students will participate in a different activity each month to promote literacy, such as a book tasting, book bingo, scavenger hunt and vocabulary parade.

### New High School Courses

The district continuously seeks to expand student horizons and, therefore, has added five exciting new courses to the high school course offerings. Division Avenue High School and MacArthur High School students may now enroll in Abnormal Psychology, Advanced Placement Statistics, American Sign Language III, Digital Citizenship and 21st-Century Leadership Skills.

### PAX Good Behavior Game

As a district, we are proud of our community partnerships. In the spring, the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services awarded the YES Community Counseling Center with a \$165,000 grant to implement the PAX Good Behavior Game in second grade classrooms throughout the district.

The game is practiced in classrooms nationwide to encourage self-management and self-regulation skills, while also reinforcing and rewarding students for positive behavior. Levittown is the only Long Island school district to receive this special opportunity and is grateful to the YES staff for training our teachers. It is hoped that the important skills PAX reinforces will lead to a decrease in drug use and addiction in the future.



*(Left to right) Lee Road Elementary School second graders Casey Walsh, Brayden Thacker and Antonella Soto with their book baggies.*

### Music Program

Approximately 60 students from grades 2-10 were introduced to a new instrument or continued honing their musical craft during the Summer Music Program. Facilitated by summer music coordinator Iris Bastone, the program offers two half-hour group lessons each week for students. Music teachers Megan Bastos, Jill Castillo and Matthew Nobile created personalized instruction for students in either band or orchestra. For those students who were new to a specific instrument, the summer program provided a head start, while also encouraging continuing student-musicians to practice and strengthen their skills. Students not only enhanced their musical abilities this summer, but made new friends from across the district.

### Marine Biology Camp

Fifty-two students entering grades 5-8 participated in the district's new Marine Biology Camp this summer. Facilitated by Director of Science Kevin McDermott, MacArthur High School science teacher Dr. David Friedman and naturalists from Nassau BOCES Outdoor and Environmental Education program, the students transformed into marine scientists for a week at Caumsett State Park. Students participated in ocean exploration, plankton studies, deep water ecology and Long Island Sound ecology. The students also partook in water quality studies, learned how to surf cast and fish on a boat and participated in a shark dissection, a saltwater marsh hike and a tidal pool exploration.

### Adventures in Local History

Students entering grades 5-8 uncovered Long Island history through the inaugural Adventures in Local History summer program this year. Facilitated by Director of Social Studies and World Languages Steve Costello, teachers Melisa Baker and Dawn Feldman, and student volunteer Andrew Kiphart, the program encouraged the campers to understand the importance of local history through different day trips. Throughout the weeklong program, students explored historical sites and museums across Long Island, such as the Cradle of Aviation Museum, Garvies Point Museum and Preserve and the Vanderbilt Museum. As they visited the various sites, the students participated in tours and hands-on activities. They also learned about important historical figures, the significance of the locations and interesting facts about the past.

### Reading Extravaganza

Students in grades 5-8 participated in the Summer Reading Extravaganza, which emphasized the importance of reading during the break. Fifth graders read "Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library" by Chris Grabenstein, while middle school students read "Restart" by Gordon Korman. Kerin Slattery, director of English language arts, and Michelle Kelly, director of elementary education, facilitated discussion days for students to connect with others, participate in activities relating to their book and share their thoughts. Students received a raffle ticket to win prizes, and those who attended were also entered to win a meet and greet with the author of their book. In addition, all students were encouraged to utilize the Summer Reading Extravaganza webpage to continue the conversation about their book. Both "Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library" and "Restart" have been incorporated into the appropriate grade-level curriculum for the 2019-2020 school year. The program has been so successful that the district has been selected to present it at the National School Board convention this spring.

### Summer Readiness

A new districtwide Summer Readiness program was offered to select incoming kindergarten students this summer. The focus was to support students' academic and emotional maturity, including social and emotional learning, language and literacy skills as well as math and motor skills. The program allowed students to get acclimated to the learning environment, develop a love of learning and enhance their readiness skills to help ensure their success as they advance through the grades.

# A Summer of Learning

In Levittown, learning does not end on the last day of school. Every summer, the district offers several academic and enrichment programs for students to enjoy. This past summer, the district introduced more hands-on programs, which allowed students to bridge the summer learning gap while school was out of session.

### ENL Summer Jumpstart

English Language Learners in grades K-6 engaged in the three-week English as a New Language Summer Jumpstart program, where students participated in various hands-on activities to strengthen their skills. With the help of coordinator and ENL teacher Carol Rimler, the academic and enrichment program focused on physical education, reading and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics). The program also incorporated the required summer reading books. Among the many activities that students participated in, third through fifth grade students created their own foosball stadiums out of shoe boxes, and first and second graders learned about nonliving and living things by growing their own sunflowers, basil and tomatoes. The physical education component of the program was new for 2019 and allowed students to engage in various games and physical activities outdoors, while emphasizing teamwork, taking turns and socialization.

### Camp Invention

Summer exploration continued for more than 100 students during Camp Invention, a two-week summer science program that promoted learning through hands-on inquiry. Open to students entering grades 3-5 and facilitated by program coordinator Siobhan Schneider, the various activities were designed to help children develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, work as a team and think strategically. Among the engaging activities, students participated in a fossil dig and navigation-based projects, created a seaworthy vessel during Deep Sea Mystery and produced their own high-tech farm during Farm Tech. Students also enjoyed the outdoor Camp Invention Games station, which were led by Levittown teachers, with support from high school counselors.

### STEM Camp

The new, two-week Middle School STEM Camp gave 85 middle school students the opportunity to engage in exciting activities in the world of science, technology, engineering and math. The camp featured classes taught by Levittown teachers, with support from volunteer high school student counselors. Students participated in classes such as Mystery Architecture, which was filled with engineering challenges; Tech Design Challenge, which required students to use scientific principles to create functional objects; and Racers and Robots, which tested student knowledge of aerodynamics, friction and mass. The camp encouraged teamwork and collaboration and also featured outdoor teambuilding activities.

### Summer Tutorial Program

Eighty students from grades 2-6 strengthened their reading and math skills during the Summer Tutorial Program. Supervisors and teachers Kristy Quinlan and Janet Jakubowski were instrumental in implementing and overseeing the program. Small group settings allowed for personalized instruction from highly qualified tutors, and students were fully engaged in the Summer Success curriculum which included reading, writing and math activities. They also utilized the computer-based i-Ready Program for reading and math practice and assessments, and were encouraged to read books independently. Each year the program has allowed students to make great strides in their academic abilities and confidence while working with their peers and tutors.

Campers in the Adventures in Local History Camp went back in time while visiting the Old Bethpage Village Restoration.



Campers went aboard a fishing boat in Freeport during Marine Biology Camp.



As a teambuilding game, students had to launch a water balloon into the air and try to catch it with the tarp during Middle School STEM Camp.



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Kindergartners from Northside Elementary School participated in a Johnny Appleseed lesson in honor of his birthday.



East Broadway students celebrated the 95th birthday of lunch monitor Mildred Bowman.



Sixth graders from Wisdom Lane Middle School enhanced their reading skills during an English lesson with the book "Thank You, Mr. Falker" by Patricia Polacco.

# School Snapshots



## Abbey Lane Elementary School

- Students, staff and families enjoyed the school's annual Back to School BBQ. High school art students volunteered their time to help with face painting and some Abbey Lane graduates helped with carnival games.

## Division Avenue High School

- Seniors Syed Ahmed, Emily Fuchs and Ravneek Kaur were recognized as commended students in the 2020 National Merit Scholarship Program.

## East Broadway Elementary School

- The school community celebrated the 95th birthday of Mildred Bowman, a beloved lunch monitor for the past 46 years at the school. The students sang songs and presented her with flowers and cards for her big day.

## Gardiners Avenue Elementary School

- Inspired by the children's book "The Dot" by Peter H. Reynolds, classes participated in lessons and hands-on activities to celebrate International Dot Day.

## Lee Road Elementary School

- Third graders in Melanie Anderson's class visited the school's Mindfulness Room for a lesson on gratitude.

## General Douglas MacArthur High School

- Seniors Julia Gizzo, John Hanna and Thomas McDermott were recognized as commended students in the 2020 National Merit Scholarship Program.

## Northside Elementary School

- Fourth graders showcased their creativity by creating Keith Haring-inspired posters to decorate the hallways.

## Jonas E. Salk Middle School

- Seventh grader Zara Gill will showcase her musical talents as a soprano in the Nassau Concert Choir of the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra of New York in December and May.

## Summit Lane Elementary School

- At the start of the school year, staff members decorated the sidewalk with encouraging messages in chalk for students.

## Wisdom Lane Middle School

- Sixth graders enhanced their reading strategies with a scavenger hunt to identify different signposts in the book "Thank You, Mr. Falker" by Patricia Polacco.

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