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Levittown LEADER

The Class of 2020 Gets Its *Chance to Shine*



(From left) Members of MacArthur High School's Class of 2020: Mackenzie Fielding, Kristen Heimink and Sofia Escobar.



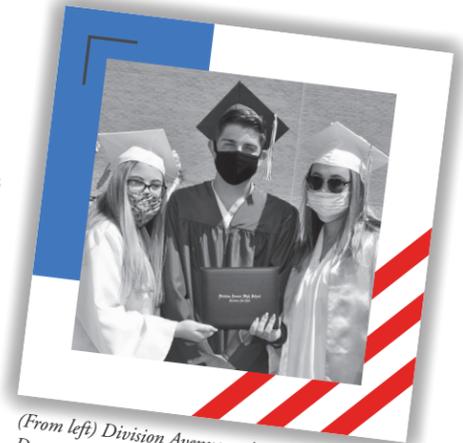
MacArthur High School graduate Peter Hesse proudly walks across the platform as his name is announced.



Division Avenue graduate Leah Draluck walks across the platform as her name is called.



Twin brothers Timothy Giorlando (left) and Paul Giorlando graduate from MacArthur High School together.



(From left) Division Avenue seniors Gabriella Donovan, Richard Gladitz and Casey Dwyer officially graduate.

MacArthur High School graduate and homecoming queen Olivia Esposito walks across the platform as Principal Joseph Sheehan, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Tonie McDonald and Board members applaud.



When Division Avenue and MacArthur high schools' seniors left their school buildings in March, they never imagined it would be their last time walking out the doors. Senior year is a momentous time for any high school student, but amid a global pandemic, plans were halted and students received an unexpected ending to their high school careers. Through it all, the members of the Class of 2020 showed their resiliency and positivity. Building administrators and staff members banded together to give the soon-to-be graduates a proper celebration and the farewell that they deserved, with a virtual graduation ceremony on the district website and in-person ceremonies.

six feet apart from others to adhere to social distancing regulations. Words of encouragement and an abundance of praise were given to the graduates through speeches from building principals, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Tonie McDonald, valedictorians, salutatorians and class presidents. Dr. McDonald acknowledged the graduates who would be serving in the military and commemorated the Class of 2020 with a rock garden on the side of Levittown Memorial Education Center.

While following New York State COVID guidelines for in person gatherings, each high school held smaller commencement ceremonies on the field at Levittown Memorial Education Center on July 27 and 28. The traditional graduation space at Hofstra University's David S. Mack Sports and Exhibition Complex was swapped for a large white tent which was stationed on the grass for graduates and their family members. Although the seniors were unable to be with their full graduating class, the small, intimate ceremonies were a special way to celebrate the last four years of hard work and everlasting memories.

"There are two trees behind me, and they represent the graduating classes of Division and MacArthur," she said. "Over time, these trees' canopies will intermingle as a reminder of our shared experience."

Keeping with commencement traditions, the graduates were invited to walk across the platform as their names were announced. Family members, building principals, Dr. McDonald and Board of Education members applauded each student as they proudly strolled across the platform in their cap and gown. The proud graduates exited the field and walked to the rock garden. In placing their rocks with their names inscribed on them, the Class of 2020 left their imprint on the Levittown Public Schools forever.

Central and building administrators, Board of Education members and high school faculty helped facilitate the ceremonies. Each graduate and their maximum of two guests sat together



Members of MacArthur High School's Class of 2020 show off their beautifully decorated graduation caps.



Division Avenue High School graduates Kenneth Gonzalez (left) and Elias Escobar.



Salutatorian Jacqueline Testamark performs the national anthem at Division Avenue High School's commencement ceremonies.



Jessica Gavin smiles as she is officially named a graduate of Division Avenue High School.



Division Avenue graduate Shannon Hetzel places her rock in the rock garden.

Graduates Honored With Rock Garden

With an unexpected end to their senior year, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Tonie McDonald and central administrators sought to do something special to commemorate the Class of 2020. With the help of the district's grounds department, two trees were planted next to each other on the side of Levittown Memorial Education Center. The location was transformed into a rock garden where each 2020 high school graduate placed a rock with their name on it in the garden created for their school. In the fall, plants will be added, creating a lasting memory of the Class of 2020.

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EMILY FUCHS: VALEDICTORIAN

Emily was recognized as a Commended Student in the National Merit Scholarship Program, is an Advanced Placement Scholar with Distinction and graduated with the AP Capstone Diploma. She served as a student liaison for the past two years, representing Division Avenue High School at the district's Board of Education meetings, and has been involved in various organizations. These include being the president of the Math Honor Society, Science Olympiad team and Student Council. She was also a member of the Mathletes team and the Art, National, Social Studies and World Language honor societies. Emily served as a peer leader and was a student-athlete on Division Avenue's soccer and track teams. She will attend the University of Notre Dame where she will study architecture.



Division Avenue's Valedictorian Emily Fuchs.



Division Avenue's Salutatorian Jacqueline Testamark.

JACQUELINE TESTAMARK: SALUTATORIAN

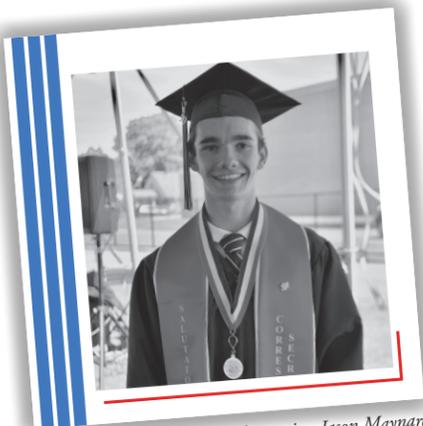
Jacqueline is an AP Scholar with Distinction who is not only academically gifted but is also musically talented and sang the national anthem at each of Division Avenue's intimate ceremonies. She received the lead role in Division Avenue's musical production of "Mamma Mia," was part of the school choir and brought her singing talents to the All-State Music Festival in 2018. She was also a member of the Tri-M Music Honor Society and was the vice president of the Thespian Honor Society. Jacqueline was a valuable member of Division Avenue's varsity soccer team and was a Student Council representative. She will attend Yale University where she will double major in political science and history.



MacArthur High School's Valedictorian Evan Peters.

EVAN PETERS: VALEDICTORIAN

Evan is a National AP Scholar who played an active role in his school community. Among his many extracurriculars, Evan was part of the school's Mathletes team, the school development committee, Science Olympiad and the World Language Honor Society. He served as a member of the homecoming court, was the student government class president, co-captain of the quiz bowl team, president of the Math Honor Society and vice president of the National Honor Society. He was also a valued member of the school's track team and spent many hours giving back to the Levittown community. Evan earned the distinction of Eagle Scout, the highest honor one can receive in the Boy Scouts of America, and was a camp counselor in the district's Camp Invention program since its inception. He will attend Georgetown University McDonough School of Business to study operations and information management.



MacArthur High School's Salutatorian Jason Maynard.

JASON MAYNARD: SALUTATORIAN

Jason is an AP Scholar with Distinction and was an exceptional student-athlete on the school's cross-country track team, where he served as captain for three years. Among his many athletic accolades, he earned All-County recognition for cross-country and track and qualified for the New York State championships. Jason was also a member of the school's National, Math, Tri-M Music and World Language honor societies; Key Club; environmental club and was the student government's corresponding secretary. He will attend Stony Brook University, where he will study biochemistry.

A list of the Class of 2020's top college acceptances

- Binghamton University
- Boston College
- Columbia University
- Cornell University
- Georgetown University
- Hofstra University
- New York Institute of Technology
- Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
- Savannah College of Art and Design
- St. John's University
- Stony Brook University
- Swarthmore College
- University of Notre Dame
- Yale University

Class Stats

- Candidates for graduation: 572
- Diplomas granted: 535
- Graduation rate: 94%
- Total Advanced Regents Diplomas: 71%
- Attending four-year colleges: 70%
- Attending two-year colleges: 17%
- Attending trade/tech schools: 2%
- Military service and workforce: 9%
- Seal of Biliiteracy recipients: 72



Kiersten Horbach graduates from MacArthur High School with her parents by her side.



MacArthur graduate Hugh Kelleber walks across the platform when his name is announced. Hugh will be playing lacrosse on a full scholarship at Cornell University.



Members of MacArthur High School's Class of 2020 place their rocks in the rock garden.

Members of Division Avenue High School's Class of 2020 have their names announced one by one during their respective ceremonies.



(L-R) Class President Nataly Rodriguez, Valedictorian Emily Fuchs and Salutatorian Jacqueline Testamark serve as key speakers during Division Avenue High School's commencement ceremonies.



Division Avenue graduate Kyle Fabre walks across the platform.