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Levittown LEADER

PUSHING THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

UNSUNG HEROES HAVE COME TO LIGHT ACROSS THE LEVITTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS DURING THIS UNPRECEDENTED TIME IN HISTORY.

When the school doors closed in mid-March due to the coronavirus pandemic, the district found a way to move forward one day at a time. Many people played a valuable role in bringing the Levittown Public Schools to a new normal and have exceeded expectations to support our students. Among these individuals were central and building administrators, custodians, computer department personnel, school nurses, school

staff, security guards, teachers and transportation personnel.

Leadership has been on full display in each of our central and building administrators from the start of this health crisis. They have maintained transparency when communicating and updating the community on COVID-19, monitored cases, adhered to health and safety guidelines, provided support for Levittown educators and staff, and more. We applaud them for being true role models and for making the best of a challenging situation.

School staff members, ranging from office personnel to security monitors, have also made strides during this pandemic. As a result of their efforts, our

school operations continue to function successfully and they have continued to work hard with smiles under their masks. From answering phone calls related to student scheduling changes to checking the temperature of every individual who steps into the building, these unsung heroes continue to make a difference in our schools and are there when needed.

"On behalf of the Board of Education, we would like to express our gratitude to all the administrators, faculty and staff for their hard work, dedication and perseverance during this extremely challenging time," said Board President Peggy Marenghi. "You have let our students know that they are cared for and safe. Thank you all for being great role models."

District role models are also found outside of the school buildings. Our transportation

crew has played an important role in getting students back to our buildings in a safe manner. These unsung heroes have worked hard to maintain health and safety protocols on a daily basis, such as diligently cleaning the buses. Without their efforts, many students could not return to in-person learning. Their dedication does not go unnoticed, and we praise them for making the health of our students a priority during this pandemic.

Learn about more of our unsung heroes on Pages 2 and 3 and follow the district's Instagram account @levittownpublicschools to meet additional members of our team who have stepped up during this challenging time. Without the hard work of all of these individuals, the Levittown Public Schools would not be where it is today.



A ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR OUR UNSUNG HEROES

Many hardworking individuals have gone above and beyond during this current health crisis and, as a district, we are grateful for the teamwork that has occurred to get our buildings to a new normal. Here are just a few of the extraordinary unsung heroes who have stepped up during this pandemic.

COMPUTER DEPARTMENT

With the reliance on technology more prevalent than ever before, the hardworking members of our computer department sprang into action and quickly adapted to the demand during this pandemic.

At the start of the school closures, the team worked countless hours to support students, parents and teachers to transition to the online platform Edmodo. They helped develop training videos, answered thousands of support calls, ensured website updates at all hours of the night, configured hundreds of laptops for families in need, transitioned to virtual Board of Education meetings, helped create the process for the 2020 budget vote and developed enhancements for the district website that allowed for the posting of dozens of virtual student ceremonies.

During the summer, the team did not slow down. They worked with administrators and teachers on selecting and installing webcams in secondary-level classrooms, helped support teacher training efforts, configured Google Classroom, upgraded internet bandwidth, helped provide PowerSchool support for the elementary remote program and worked with school counselors to develop Cohort A/Cohort B schedules for the middle and high schools. At the start of the school year, they answered hundreds of phone calls to support remote families at home and helped to configure 5,000 Chromebooks in just a few days.

"We are so lucky to have each and every one of them supporting the technological needs of our programs," Assistant Superintendent for Instruction Todd Winch said. "We can never thank them enough for their efforts."

CUSTODIAL AND SECURITY STAFF

Since the start of the pandemic, the custodial and security staff has played an important role in maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all students and staff. Without these unsung heroes, it would be difficult to reopen the schools and, as a result, in-person learning would not be a possibility.

Among their many responsibilities, custodians have moved furniture to adhere to health guidelines and have worked diligently to keep all school spaces clean. Security guards have continued to make safety a priority in the schools and have taken on the critical role of taking the temperatures of each individual that enters the buildings.

"Being one of the largest school districts in Nassau County, these unsung heroes have had the monumental task of implementing the various procedures and protocols that were created to ensure the health and well-being of students and staff in all of our schools," Director of Facilities Chris Milano said. "These new procedures had to and continue to be carried out with a high level of efficacy under very tight timelines in order for our schools to function. In my opinion, it is largely to their credit that our in-school infection rates are low and our buildings are able to provide consistent in-person instruction."

Since the pandemic closed down the schools last year, our teachers have faced adversity and have moved forward with grace and determination to support our students. This has been an unprecedented time for everyone and especially for educators who have had to adjust lessons, rely more on technology and find new ways to keep students on track. Transitioning to fully remote instruction last spring was an adjustment that our teachers took on while learning something new each day. This continued into the summer as teachers honed their technology skills to prepare for the 2020-2021 school year.

"Despite the challenges of the pandemic, our teachers have really stepped up to the plate this year to provide students with a strong academic and emotional support system," Superintendent of Schools Dr. Tonie McDonald said. "Whether remote or in person, they have found creative ways to teach lessons and have continued to put our students first. I applaud them for embracing this new normal and for all the hard work that they put in on a daily basis to support our learners."

TEACHERS

Health care professionals have been on the frontline of this pandemic and deserve high praise. This is true for our school nurses as well who have played a critical role in keeping our students and staff safe and healthy since the first day of school.

To prepare for schools reopening in September, the school nurses worked through the spring and summer writing health and safety protocols. They spent endless hours reading through guidance memos from New York State regarding how to keep students and staff safe in school during the health crisis. Today, the school nurses have adapted to their new daily role in the building. They have done an exceptional job monitoring cases and contacts for students and staff while maintaining a line of communication with the Department of Health.

"I am in awe of the professional group of nurses that work in Levittown," Director of Instructional Support Services Michele Ortiz said. "This year they have taken on additional responsibilities with focus and determination ... they are running two offices, communicating with families with a smile on their face and offering a sense of reassurance to all. They have truly been a source of knowledge and strength for all."

SCHOOL NURSES

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CALLING ALL ALUMNI!

SEEKING NOMINATIONS FOR 2020-2021 HALL OF FAME

The Levittown Public Schools is seeking nominations for its annual Hall of Fame, which honors the district's best and brightest alumni who have become leaders in their fields of work, study or athletics.

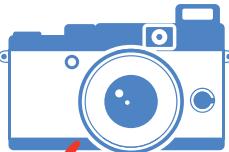
Nominees must have graduated from either Division Avenue, General Douglas MacArthur or Levittown Memorial high

schools a minimum of 10 years prior to being nominated. Candidates must demonstrate outstanding qualities of citizenship and leadership and have made significant contributions to society. In addition, nominees must demonstrate these qualities in a manner that will inspire the students of the Levittown Public Schools in

their pursuit of their careers and lifestyles.

Current employees are excluded. Once a person has been nominated, they will remain in consideration for three years, if not immediately selected. Nominations can be made by visiting the district website at levittownschools.com and must be received by Friday, Feb. 12.

School Snapshots



Abbey Lane Elementary School

- Members of the Abbey Lane Elementary School Student Council celebrated the season of giving by hosting their first "Night of Lights" event where they collected more than 150 toys for the John Theissen Children's Foundation. Due to the pandemic, the event required all attendees to stay in their vehicles as they enjoyed the drive-through spectacular.

Division Avenue High School

- Senior Nikhil Keer was selected by the New York State Education Department as one of only 25 seniors from throughout the state to be nominated in the prestigious 2021 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program. The U.S. Presidential Scholar honor is one of the nation's highest for high school students.

East Broadway Elementary School

- Students in Jennifer DeLuca's first grade class read a Scholastic

Science Spin article about the process of making crayons. Students then recycled their old and broken crayons and created new ones.

Gardiners Avenue Elementary School

- Third graders learned about the United States government and completed their own flip book. Students showcased their knowledge of the jobs, location and people involved in each branch. The flip book was made in conjunction with a PowerPoint presentation, videos, lessons and other activities on the United States government.

Lee Road Elementary School

- Third grade students in Jennifer Lores' class engaged in festive lessons as part of their writing and math units. The students learned about the power of persuasive writing through a Christmas challenge where they had to persuade their reader to agree with them on where Santa Claus

should vacation. During math, each student created their own Multiplication Menorah featuring multiplication equations on each candle.

General Douglas MacArthur High School

- Under the direction of band director Joseph Romano, band students filmed themselves performing "Jingle Bells." The clips were edited together into a YouTube video for a full musical performance and also featured MacArthur staff members and building administrators.

Northside Elementary School

- Third grade students in Susan O'Daly's class read "Balloons Over Broadway: The True Story of the Puppeteer of Macy's Parade," by Melissa Sweet. Each student then created their own balloons using markers, tape and construction paper and wrote their own persuasive paragraphs to try to convince Macy's to use their balloons in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

Jonas E. Salk Middle School

- Students showcased their creativity in the school cafeteria with a paint night, sponsored by the school's recreation club. While maintaining social distancing,

Mike Scully, a Levittown resident, instructed the students on how to paint a snowman and provided step-by-step instructions as they followed along.

Summit Lane Elementary School

- Fourth graders conducted research and created projects about how holidays are celebrated around the world. In Christine Pase and Michelle Matos' class, the students presented their research by crafting a present with information about their researched country on it. In Casey Nash's class, students made a presentation about their researched country using Google Slides. The class practiced writing to inform by incorporating text features such as captions, headings and sidebars.

Wisdom Lane Middle School

- Physical Education Chairperson Christopher Letts and physical education teachers Eric Bradley, Kim Fusco and John Randazzo created workout videos with different exercises that can be done at home or in the school gymnasium for remote and hybrid Wisdom Lane students. A projector was set up in the gymnasium to display the workout videos on the wall for the teachers and in-person students to follow while stationed 12 feet apart. Remote students follow along with the video live with the in-person students.



Winter 2021

Success for Every Student!



Levittown LEADER

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