



# It's Elementary

## VALLEY STREAM UFSD THIRTEEN

SUMMER 2013



## Celebrating Academic Success

### *Congratulations Graduates!*

There was a sense of pride and emotional celebration in the air as sixth-grade students at James A. Dever, Howell Road, Wheeler Avenue and Willow Road elementary schools gathered together to participate in their moving up ceremonies. Family members and invited guests joined members of the Board of Education, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Adrienne Robb-Fund, administrators and staff in congratulating the students on their academic achievements and wishing them continued success as they move on to seventh grade.

Each school's ceremony was filled with students sharing fond memories and listening to words of wisdom and advice about the future. "As you move on to seventh grade, remember the most important thing about you is you," said Dr. Robb-Fund. "Everyone is celebrating all you have achieved. We look forward to hearing about all of your accomplishments yet to come."

Following several beautiful musical performances that showcased the students' musical talents, the moment everyone had been waiting for finally arrived.

One by one, the students were called to walk across the stage and receive their certificates signifying the completion of the elementary program. The ceremonies concluded with the students proceeding down the aisle while family members and guests showered them with applause. The celebration continued as students gathered one last time for photos with friends and classmates. To view photos of each school's graduation ceremony, visit the district's website at [www.valleystream13.com](http://www.valleystream13.com).



## MOVING UP TO FIRST GRADE

Kindergarten students throughout the district proudly celebrated their readiness to move up to first grade during their kindergarten moving up exercises.

Each ceremony included several musical performances, followed by the kindergartners walking across the stage to receive their certificates of completion accompanied by applause from the audience. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Adrienne Robb-Fund, who attended each of the ceremonies, congratulated the students on their successful completion of kindergarten and their advancement to first grade.



## *A Message From Your* SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Dear Residents,

It is the middle of the summer. Our schools are busy places filled with children attending summer recreation, summer music and a variety of programs designed to enrich or maintain academic learning. Our schools are also filled with the sound of construction. We have been fortunate to be approved for a New York State Energy Performance Contract Program that will allow us to replace all of our boilers to energy-efficient, dual-fueled boilers permitting us to use gas or oil, depending on which rate is lowest at the time.

We continue to implement the New York State Common Core Learning Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics. These national standards are rigorous and are intended to cultivate critical thinking and academic independence, so that students are college and career ready.

Our students continue to learn new vocabulary, engage in scientific inquiry and focus on projects to help others in our community and elsewhere.

Our children are fortunate to live in a community that holds high expectations for the students' success in all areas of learning. We have a dedicated staff that is guided by the tireless efforts of our Board of Education, seven volunteers who have dedicated themselves to the children of our district.

It is a privilege and honor to work on your behalf and for the children and families of Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen.

Sincerely,  
Adrienne Robb-Fund, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

## *Thank You and Congratulations*

The Board of Education and administration wish to thank the district's most recent retirees for their years of dedicated service to the students of Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen: Antoinette Pomerantz, classroom teacher, and Paula Groothius, speech language teacher. Best wishes are also in order for the following classroom teachers who were awarded tenure: Jillian Mendes, Jennifer Navarra and Megan Ross.



(Left to right) Retirees Antoinette Pomerantz and Paula Groothius.



(Left to right) Tenured teachers Jennifer Navarra, Jillian Mendes and Megan Ross.

## **2013-2014** BOARD OF EDUCATION

On July 8, during the Board of Education annual reorganization meeting, Dr. Sean Douglas and Debra Evans were elected as president and vice president, respectively. Antoinette Pomerantz was also welcomed as the newest board trustee, joining Jeanne Greco Jacobs, Dr. Frank Chiachiere, William P. Stris and Joseph DiSibio.



Front row (l-r): William P. Stris, President Sean Douglas, Ph.D., Vice President Debra Evans. Back row (l-r) Jeanne Greco Jacobs, Joseph DiSibio, Antoinette Pomerantz, Frank Chiachiere, Ph.D.

## **Advocating for Children**

Dr. Frank Chiachiere, a trustee on the Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen and Valley Stream CHSD Boards of Education, was selected as a lobbyist to represent Nassau County school districts when he joined several hundred school board members from across the nation in Washington, D.C. The purpose of their trip was to attend workshops on effective advocacy, meet with veteran lobbyists who have met with Congress in the past and advocate and raise awareness about issues of importance to Long Island schools. While in Washington, Dr. Chiachiere met with Sens. Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand and Rep. Gregory Meeks.

Dr. Chiachiere used the opportunity to discuss several issues of importance to Long Island schools, including: the devastating

financial impact of the federal sequestration to school districts; opposition to further expansion of charter schools and expanded implementation of standardized assessments; the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and Early Childhood Education; and federal laws which authorize Congress to provide federal funds for programs. He also discussed No Child Left Behind, the impact of unfunded/underfunded mandates and the ongoing struggle faced by Long Island school districts to create budgets that support quality education without overburdening the taxpayers.

"It was an honor to represent Valley Stream and other Long Island school districts in Washington, D.C.," stated Dr. Chiachiere.

# Inside Our District

## Celebrating a Milestone

The Wheeler Squealer celebrated its 25th anniversary. The newsletter is the voice of the Wheeler Avenue School student body and provides a unique venue for student publication. Under the guidance and direction of club founder and faculty adviser Guy Jacob, fifth- and sixth-grade journalists capture the moments that leave indelible marks as they craft articles about the special events and everyday happenings that shape their elementary school years.

A tried and true educational venture, the Wheeler Squealer has stood the test of time. Each issue takes on a new, aesthetically pleasing look. The Wheeler Squealer published a historically relevant crossword puzzle for the first time.

An extension of the school curriculum, the club is student-centered, differentiated, open-ended, student interest-based and multidisciplinary. Unusual in elementary school settings, this student publication celebrates the talents and creative energies of young minds as it pays homage to the people who help make their world meaningful.



## Ducklings Are Born

Howell Road Elementary School students culminated their science curriculum with a firsthand observance of the life cycle of ducks.

First-grade teacher Danielle Vitulli arranged for the delivery of fertile duck eggs. All four first-grade classrooms set up incubators using glass tanks and gooseneck lamps with incandescent bulbs. Students read about the birth process using science journals available in the classroom.



The first part of the lesson involved diligent care to maintain the required temperature and environment for the eggs. Using elements of the Common Core Learning Standards, students utilized their reading, math, research and observation skills. Eleven of the 12 eggs successfully hatched.

Students were taught the proper methods for feeding, maintaining and handling the ducklings to help the birds maintain their wild instincts. Each room was equipped with a small swimming pool for the ducks to enjoy during feeding time. This hands-on science experience enabled students to observe the rapid physical growth of the ducklings.

The healthy birds were turned over to a local farm for proper care until they are mature enough for safe release.

## Generations United

It was a meeting of generations as the James A. Dever Elementary School Community Service Committee sponsored its 16th annual Seniors Meet Juniors concert and brunch. Senior community residents, along with other senior relatives of Dever students, were invited to enjoy a concert performed by the very talented James A. Dever band, chorus, jazz ensemble and orchestra. The students presented carnations to their senior guests and served as escorts for the event. The concert music was entrhralling and captivated both seniors and students alike.



Senior guests listened with rapt enthusiasm to "A String of Pearls," which many remembered from Glenn Miller's Big Band era, while the juniors moved in their seats to the "The Incredibles," composed by Michael Giacchino and heard a moving rendition of "Home," composed by Alan Chang, Michael Bubl  and Amy Foster-Gillies. Following the concert, the appreciative guests enjoyed a sumptuous brunch courtesy of the PTA. The seniors expressed their appreciation for being included in a tradition that reminded everyone that music is the common thread that unites regardless of age.

## Talent and Grace Rewarded

The Willow Road Dance Team demonstrated their impressive dancing talents and competitive spirit during the Dancing Classrooms of Long Island Colors of the Rainbow Team Match and Festival at Sachem North High School. After competing against several talented teams from across Long Island, the team from Willow Road earned a bronze medal for their outstanding performance. The Willow Road dancers are all fourth-grade students who learned to dance as part of a 10-week physical education program under the supervision of physical education teacher Peter Gatto. Competition rehearsals were held three times a week during recess and before school.

Team members included Patricia Aniagba and John McCarthy, Jillian Cosme and Ryan Restivo, Ahmya McMillan and Eric Hernandez, Natalie Sanchez and Alberto Gonzalez, Kyla Schimmenti and Ryan Walfisch, and Katelyn Zamot and Mac Simeone.



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# An Important Lesson on Internet Safety

All Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen sixth-grade students gathered in the auditorium of James A. Dever Elementary School to participate in a serious Internet and social media safety lecture conducted by an FBI Special Agent.

The message was direct and clear. A slideshow with several video clips depicted the ramifications of letting down one's guard with online predators. Students were warned to be careful about sharing their personal information, particularly in social media forums. The presenter went on to warn students of the lasting problems created by the foolhardy posting of photos, videos and other private information. Following the presentation, students had the opportunity to ask questions and share their experiences.



## Words and Strategies to Learn By

The district's theme for the 2012-2013 school year was ACE (Academics, Communication and Emotional Learning). As an extension of that theme, a district vocabulary word and learning strategy was highlighted each month, both in the classroom and for use during in-home reading and activities. As part of the introduction of the Common Core Learning Standards, the words and strategies were selected to improve learning, expand students' vocabulary and to enhance students' reading comprehension. Classroom lessons incorporated both the words and the learning strategies, while parents were also encouraged to use these learning tools at home to reinforce and expand upon what was being taught in the classroom. Parents are encouraged to continue to use these words and strategies when reading with your children or enjoying activities together:

	<u>Word</u>	<u>Strategy</u>
SEPTEMBER	Curiosity	Setting
OCTOBER	Explore	Building Fluency in Math and Reading
NOVEMBER/ DECEMBER	Persistence	Practice
JANUARY	Reflection	Close Reading
FEBRUARY	Collaborate	Memorize
MARCH	Evidence	Summarize
APRIL	Perseverance	Rereading
MAY	Crescendo	Visualizing
JUNE	Texture	Compare



## Beautiful Me PROGRAM

Beautiful Me is a program designed to educate females by promoting appreciation for their genuine qualities, accurate self-awareness and the satisfaction achieved from helping others. The program was provided by the Hance Family Foundation in memory of their three daughters Emma, Alyson and Katie.

The Beautiful Me program consists of three one-hour sessions designed around three core content areas: Emma's Example, Alyson's Art and Katie's Kindness. The teacher guides conversations to also include important friendship-building skills and key concepts necessary for building positive self-esteem.

Forty-nine district teachers volunteered to be trained by the Hance Family Foundation. This program will continue next year.

## Working Together to Prevent Bullying

Throughout the school year, anti-bullying initiatives take place districtwide. Character education is an integral component of the daily curriculum that teaches students self-respect, respect for others and provides the tools to prevent bullying.

One such program that teaches students how to become bully prevention activists is "No Name Calling Week" held in each of the four elementary schools. The program reminds students that bullying and name calling are always the wrong choices and teaches them how to make the right choices. During "No Name Calling Week," morning announcements include a topical thought for the day, which can lead to further classroom discussion. This program, along with others, provides students with the lifelong skills needed to stop bullying and stay safe.



### BOARD OF EDUCATION