

# BRENTWOOD BULLETIN

PUBLISHED BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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## CELEBRATING OUR AP SCHOLARS

Twenty-three Brentwood High School students achieved excellent scores on their Advanced Placement exams, showcasing excellence in the classroom once again here in our community.

“Our students strived for and scored at extremely high levels,” BHS Principal Dr. Dashana Dulin said. “Sitting through the course and getting through the dedication and commitment to complete the coursework is absolutely extraordinary.”

To be an AP Scholar, a student must have

received scores of 3 or higher on a minimum of three AP exams. Sixteen students were recognized as AP Scholars by the Board, including Juliana Ayala, Aleen Castro, Cristian Chaparro, Lisette Chavarria, Dua Hanif, Ericka Henriquez, Valerie Henriquez, Thomas Idrobo, Joshua Paraboo, Angel Perez, Joel Perez, Julissa Perla, Minnahil Tariq, Deasia Valedmar, Joshua Vasquez and Julissa Vasquez.

The Board also recognized six students who were named AP Scholars with Honor, a distinction earned by students who received a

3.25 average on their AP exams with scores of 3 or higher on four of those standardized tests. These students included Raquel Acosta, Javed Chowdhury, Gabriela Merino, David Ramirez, James Tapia and Jonathan Tavarez.

Lastly, a special recognition was presented to Katherine Pena, who was named an AP Scholar with Distinction. To earn this accolade, Pena received a 3.5 average on her AP exams and scored 3 or higher on five of the exams she took.

The students were honored at the Board of Education meeting on Jan. 19.

### Minnahil Tariq: Regeneron Semifinalist

Senior Minnahil Tariq did not envision herself as a fan of the sciences until she took an honors biology class in her freshman year. As she mentioned at the Jan. 19 Board of Education meeting, it was her mother’s gentle nudge that kept her on the path towards the research program at the high school which would eventually lead toward greater heights.

Tariq was named a Regeneron Science Talent Search semifinalist in January, marking the third consecutive year that a Brentwood High School student put forth a project worthy of such recognition. Her project, “Evaluating the

Invasive Macroalga, *Dasyshiponia japonica*, on Long Island Coasts and Assessing Its Effect on Carbon Sequestration, Nitrogen Loading and Climate Change,” was a comprehensive effort to understand how an invasive red seaweed species is causing adverse effects on Long Island life.

Referring to her project, Tariq noted that the red seaweed “creates red tide blooms and algae blooms which lead to economic issues in fisheries and tourism industries. It doesn’t originate from [Long Island] because it’s mostly found in Eastern Asia and Japan, specifically.”

With the aid of Dr. Rebecca Grella, Tariq took to studying the red seaweed further in hopes of turning the invasive species into a positive contributor to Long Island life. By comparing it to native forms of seaweed and algae on Long Island, she was able to further analyze the levels of carbon, nitrogen and phosphorus in the species. The red seaweed invader, in her studies, took in a far greater amount of carbon from the environment than the native species.

Tariq suggested the possibility of the red seaweed taking “the carbon out of the water and

converting it into a biomass” that can be recycled into biofuels.

Noting the importance of the research program, Tariq recognized the Board of Education for its support of the program and the students who are engaged in the sciences at Brentwood. She did, however, have one more important group to thank at the meeting: her parents.

“My dad would wake up at 5 a.m. every weekend just to drive me to Sunken Meadow,” Tariq noted, to laughter and applause.



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# WXBA-FM IS STILL THE SOUND OF BRENTWOOD

In the DiPietro Learning Center of Brentwood High School, the sounds of music can be heard. Classics like Elvis Presley's "Blue Suede Shoes" mix with the sounds of Lesley Gore and the Beach Boys. Then, all of a sudden, the music drops; voices are then heard discussing a wide variety of topics and conducting interviews on the symbolism of butterflies and moths or describing various internet trends.

The scene described plays out on a frequent basis at WXBA-FM, Brentwood's radio station which labels itself as a free-format entity with a playlist dedicated to the old-school songs of yesterday. Located on the dial at 88.1 FM, WXBA-FM serves a dual purpose as both a terrestrial radio station and an educational center for students to learn about public speaking and greater forms of communication.

Station manager Justin Lippmann, who student-taught in the music theory program in 2018, is the teacher of the Communication in Music class that is housed in the station. He noted that both communication and music play a significant role in the success of the class.

"It's important," Lippmann stated, "for the students to get to know each other. The more comfortable they are with each other, [the better] they can speak on the radio with each other."

Lippmann added that merely speaking on the radio is not enough. The students must be able to describe music that they are listening to, whether it is on their phones or by utilizing the wall of records housed in the on-air studio and the record players that connect to the main feed.

"I start with music as a common

ground," Lippmann said. "Part of what I do is try to expose them to music they might not have heard before. How can you dive deeper [into music] and share those thoughts with everyone?"

Music theory is just the beginning in the program, as the students also develop a sense of style and personality on the radio station in subsequent classes. In the third quarter of the year, Lippmann allows the students to turn the music down and point the microphones up so they can speak about whatever they want – with some notable requirements.

"I design the format based upon specific themes," Lippmann said. "At first, I'll do scripts because the students should be trained not to use explicit language. They can talk on the radio about what they want but it should be somewhat informative."

That point brings the story back around to the discussions and amateur podcasting being done by the students currently. It is a point of emphasis that the students enjoy as much as the music.

"I love that I'm able to randomly talk about things that come to mind," senior student Janay Dunston said. "Talking isn't something that scares me. I grew up on music. I love the records and love listening to them while I'm doing homework."

Arbaz Khan, who moonlights under the radio persona of "DJ Airbags," believes that



*Station manager Justin Lippmann, who runs the class and the setting, talking to one of the students.*

the open-forum discussion aspect of the class can provide a great escape.

"If you're not having a good day," Khan said, "you can come elaborate and talk about it on a show. It helps you stay free."

Lippmann is happy with the progress that the students have made thus far and knows that the future is bright for the radio station. "We're getting a renovation plan to have us go broadcast from live events. I'm excited to take this to the next level," he said.



# Laurel Park Unveils Modernized Library for 2023 and Beyond

Laurel Park's library leapt into the 21st century thanks to a yearlong renovation project that was recently completed. The library now consists of two rooms, one which houses the actual books for the students to pick out and one that encompasses an interactive media learning environment.

The modernized library opened in January with a special Book Tasting initiative led by Laurel Park's library media specialist, Angelica Diaz, in which the students at the school got to experience the

new library and pick out books to read.

"The book tasting," Diaz said, "is for them to try out different books and to see how to pick a book that's right for them. With the tasting, they can look at the cover of the book and the pages and the summary to see if they would like to read it."

The former library, according to Diaz, "was very old and too dated for the kids. These renovations have brought the library upwards to the standards of today's generation."

Dr. Eric Snell, principal of Laurel Park Elementary School, praised the work that was done by the entire staff in the building to get the library up to code and ready for reopening.

"The addition of the STEAM room connected



to the library," Dr. Snell stated, "is a tremendous resource for Laurel Park learners. I am extremely proud to be able to provide my students and faculty with these amazing resources."

The renovation began with asbestos abatement and an installation of tile flooring, led by Plant Facilities Director Miguel Cruz. Head custodian Appolinar LaGrandier helped to paint the library and remove the old shelving units as new shelves and furniture were ordered by senior office assistant Martha Trachtulec. Diaz and teacher assistant Vanessa Lodato designed the furniture on its arrival, and special counsel was provided by retired Brentwood librarian Barbara Mascara.



## Preparing for the Future at the Brentwood Business Institute

At 9:30 every weekday morning, Wall Street erupts with a flurry of applause and activity as the New York Stock Exchange opens for daily business trading. Meanwhile at the same time in a classroom at the Ross Building of Brentwood High School, students interested in business have already been buzzing with activity for two-plus hours.

All this is possible thanks to the Brentwood Business Institute, a classroom-turned-trading room floor thanks to the dedication and hard work of local community members and Brentwood graduates. The project was the brainchild of business education teacher Avaril McNamara, who worked with several other faculty members and administrators over the span of a year and a half.

"We worked tirelessly to bring the plan to fruition," McNamara stated. "Students

were involved in the design and elevations" in the planning process, he said.

The Brentwood Business Institute opened at the onset of the 2022-23 school year thanks to main sponsor GPI (Greenman Pederson Inc.), which was spearheaded by Brentwood alumna Vanessa Cifuentes. The room also features a stock ticker sponsored by Teachers Federal Credit Union as well as murals designed by two other Brentwood graduates, Monica Villatoro, '21, and Juan Delgado, '22.

"When I walked in on the first day of school," senior student Carlos Lanza noted, "I was pleasantly surprised. Everything is nice and spacious and looks more professional than what it used to look like."



Fellow student Jacob Morocho praised the business vibe of the room, pointing to "a smartboard in the front and the stock ticker in the back" that "help us to be more communicative as a group."

Senior Shania Moonilal-Gonzalez also noted the major changes, particularly for DECA competitions, where there is more room for teamwork. "You really feel like you're in a business setting," she said.

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM



## BHS Cast Performance of 'Grease'

The high school theater company's performance of "Grease: The Musical" captivated the audience at the Sonderling Center Auditorium on Feb. 10 and 11. Here, Kenickie and the crew sing about his new car, "Greased Lightning."

## Fans Cheer on BHS Fencing Team

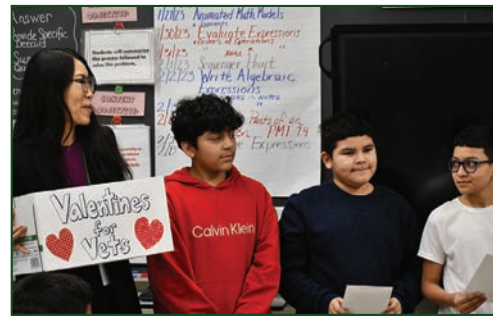
The Ross Center gymnasium saw the first-ever home playoff meet for both the boys and girls fencing programs on Feb. 7. The boys team reached the county semifinals in coach Mike Corona's final year shepherding the program.



## East Elementary School Superheroes

East Elementary School unveiled its new school motto surrounding the concept of "HEROES" on Feb. 1. The special assembly saw children's songwriter Janice Buckner perform an original song written for the school and those who value the motto of

"Honesty, Empathy, Respect, Ownership, Effort and Safety."



## East Middle School Valentines for Vets

Students at East Middle School hold a box of Valentine's Day cards specifically to be delivered to local veterans. The cards were collected on Feb. 10 during the school's career day sessions and presented to Suffolk County legislator Samuel Gonzalez.

## Freshman Center Northwell Career Fair

Students at the Freshman Center listen to a presentation regarding a potential career path in Northwell. The students were able to learn about the fields of nutrition, cardiology and others at the special career fair in the gymnasium on Jan. 20.



## Hemlock Park Elementary Students at Winter Concert

Hemlock Park Elementary's chorus performed a rendition of Bruno Mars' "Count on Me" at the school's winter concert on Dec. 21, 2022. The concert also featured instrumental pieces on handbells and ukuleles and was one of many concerts around the district this winter.

## Jocelyn Rojas, Wrestling Champion

Sophomore Jocelyn Rojas stood atop the podium as Brentwood's first Long Island girls wrestling champion after winning her

class at the championship meet in January. Jocelyn did not allow a single point all tournament and scored two pinfall victories on her way to the title.



## Laurel Park Students With McGruff and SCPD

First grade students at Laurel Park Elementary School pose with Suffolk County sheriffs and McGruff the Crime Dog following the completion of a special personal safety program on Dec. 14. The students all received certificates for completing the four-week program that taught life skills and recognizing behaviors that can lead to the prevention of bullying.



## Northeast Elementary School Blessing Bags

Students in Ms. DiMassi's third grade class at Northeast Elementary School hold up their "Blessing Bags" to present to those in need during the holiday season. The class

# and Our Schools

wrote out inspirational quotes while filling the bags with sundries for the less fortunate in the community.

all schools participate by wearing purple and purporting the idea of kindness around the schools and the community.

Hartmann as the students counted down to the 100th day of school.



**Oak Park P.S. I Love You Day**  
Students and staff at Oak Park Elementary pose in front of the purple and white balloon arch on Feb. 10, also known as P.S. I Love You Day. The districtwide celebration of mental health awareness saw



**Pine Park Count on Parents Week**  
Parents, staff and students pose for a picture in the Pine Park gymnasium to kick off "Count on Parents" Week on Feb. 13. The celebration included a special virtual assembly with YouTube star Jack

## Southwest Elementary Winter Story Night

Students listen to the reading of a story about snow globes during Southwest Elementary's Winter Story Night. The arts and crafts project saw the students create their very own snow globes with their teachers and parents helping them to complete the task.



## Cheerleading Flies With Confidence Into National Championships

The music hits and the Brentwood varsity cheerleading team begins practicing their routine. About 45 seconds into the session, the music stops. Head coach Tanisha Pessoa looks at her team and tells them to ignore the camera and the attention that is being displayed in this Thursday night practice.

"Fly with confidence," Pessoa continually repeated. "There is no such thing as a shy cheerleader."

Brentwood's varsity cheerleading team has been flying under the radar for years, but the program is quickly becoming a national mainstay. The team competed

at the UCA National Cheerleading competition in February for the third time in the last four seasons.

"There is a level of passion and commitment that I feel when coaching the kids of Brentwood," noted Pessoa, a Class of 2000 graduate, "that is almost indescribable. When we put on those Brentwood uniforms, we know the responsibility that comes with it."

So do the cheerleaders, including senior captains Erin Wolynetz and Mariella Wood. Wolynetz, whose mother Jill is the Brentwood JV cheerleading coach, has been cheering Brentwood to victories for her entire junior high and high school career.

"Everyone starts from somewhere," Wolynetz said after practice. "We've been working really hard and I'm excited to go back to nationals."

"To go again this year as seniors," added Wood, a two-year varsity cheerleader, "means that our hard work is paying off. We're eager to show what we can do."



However, this year was the program's first time competing in the "Game Day" category, a compilation of the cheers that the team would normally reserve for sporting events with the element of crowd participation and leading. Hence, Pessoa's comment about no shy cheerleaders. As if that was not daunting enough, the routine was required to be only three minutes maximum.

"Months and months of training for three minutes of glory!" Pessoa explained. "Each and every team member will say that it is 100% worth it. What I want more than anything, even a national title, is for my girls to know that they are worth it. I want them to know what it means to don that uniform and represent their hometown."



# Community Embraces Tree-Lighting Extravaganza Once Again

Snow – fake snow, that is – blew through the cold Brentwood air on Dec. 9 as children of the community sang “Let It Go” and met several of the stars of the hit Disney movie “Frozen.” Meanwhile just a few feet away, Ralphie the Pig posed for photographs and Santa Claus appeared in a bright-red convertible.

In other areas, Brentwood High School students sold apparel to fundraise for their senior class. Tables were set up with crayons and paper for children to write letters to Santa, with an awaiting mailbox for them to drop in those letters and the hope of receiving the gifts they would like for the holidays. The Grinch posed willingly for pictures and refused – somewhat out of character – to attempt to steal the festivities.

The spectacle that was the Ninth Annual Tree Lighting Extravaganza took over the parking lot at Brentwood High School in an evening that welcomed the winter season and the holiday spirit to the community. Brentwood celebrated in style with different stations up and down the walkway between DiPietro, Ross and Sonderling.

Holiday songs were performed in the main event of the night by the Brentwood High School Chamber Choir as well as Class of 1991 alumna Jennifer Ortiz. The Board of Education and High School administration thanked those in the community who had come out to support the event, which saw close to 1,000 people in attendance.

In the middle of it all stood the tree, waiting to be lit in bright colors to usher in the holiday season. With a final countdown, the Brentwood UFSD administration flipped the switch and turned the lights on for all to see. The tree dazzled in blue, green, purple, red and yellow in a sign of true unity and togetherness as Brentwood showed the true meaning of the holiday season.

