



# The Panther Press

Winter 2023

MILLER PLACE UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

www.millerplace.k12.ny.us

## Class of 2023 Student Presidents Reflect on Their Experiences and Goals for the Rest of the Year

*Members of the Class of 2023 have truly experienced it all. Their version of high school is one unlike any other class ever—it's vital we hear their voices and document their perspectives. We interviewed the Class of 2023 Senior Class President Gianna Benavides and Executive Council President Alexandra DeAmario.*

### *What have been some of your favorite highlights from your senior year?*

**Gianna:** Spirit Week and Homecoming Week. It was a great environment for everyone to be together once again and get involved. And it was so much fun to get together after clubs and sports and create something that was lasting and cool.

**Alexandra:** We'd never had a pep rally before—at least not in years. We were very determined to get the pep rally back. It would be a key moment for our class. Last May, we went to Principal Slavin and made a PowerPoint about how responsible our class was. The treasurer came with me; together we convinced Principal Slavin to bring back the pep rally. It was a great moment for our class and something that future students will be able to enjoy.

### *What are you looking for the Class of 2023 to accomplish during the latter half of the year?*

**Gianna:** We want to lower the cost of prom. We have a senior prom fashion show. The senior class makes baskets from several local businesses and puts them up for raffle. We are selling roses during our theatrical production of *Anastasia*. There will be a student and teacher, March-Madness style ping pong tournament where we will be selling popcorn. All of our money is raised so that we can lower prom tickets. We want them to be as affordable as possible.

**Alexandra:** We also have the variety show, which takes place in March. All students in every grade can make a skit, sing, show off their talent. It's very fun to watch. A lot of the schools



Gianna Benavides



Alexandra DeAmario

watch it and the audience votes for the best online. We are also planning our prom for June. We booked it way ahead of time, and it will be the day before graduation. We're still working on a theme.

### *What messages and advice do you have for the Class of 2024 and beyond?*

**Gianna:** Enjoy the time that you have. It all goes by so fast. And join student government! Anyone who wants to get involved should do it. It's a lot of work, but it is so much fun.

**Alexandra:** Have no regrets. Make the most of your senior year. I try to make everyone count. And be friends with everyone. I just put myself out there and found that joining clubs opens up so many opportunities. Just one thing can open so many doors.

## HERE ARE SOME OTHER EXCITING SENIOR ACTIVITIES STILL TO COME THIS SPRING

- Variety show run by the senior class and executive council
- Senior prom and senior prom fashion show
- Senior academic awards and scholarships ceremony
- Senior athletic awards night
- Graduation walkthrough district buildings
- Senior barbeque
- National college commitment day
- Yearbook signings day
- Signing of the Class of 2023 wall painting

# A Message from the Superintendent

As we move into the second half of the 2022-23 school year, I want to reflect on the first half and the strides our students are making. We were able to have a traditional school opening in September with over 2,400 students returning to our classrooms. Since that time, our students have been thriving as they returned to in-person instruction, interscholastic athletic teams, and clubs as well as concerts and field trips and community organization events. As a result, our students are thriving as their lives return to normalcy. As always, I look forward to working with students, parents, guardians, and staff to continue to improve on our student success and continue to make Miller Place the best possible District.

Mr. Seth A. Lipshie  
*Superintendent of Schools*



## SOME HIGHLIGHTS THUS FAR INCLUDE:

- Implementation of a new portal, "Portfolio Plus." Parents and guardians can conveniently and timely access their child's report cards, transcripts and state assessments.
- As part of secondary students' academic communication and educational experience, all students in grades 6-12 have been issued a District Gmail account.
- Laddie A. Decker Sound Beach School, Andrew Muller Primary School and North Country Road Middle School grade 6 students participated in a new reading program; Into Reading (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) was rolled out. The program features meaningful and interesting literature and high-quality guided reading material.
- Andrew Muller Primary School students in first and second grade learned about Neurographic art and how students can express themselves through abstract work.
- Laddie A. Decker Sound Beach School students competed in math in the Eastern Suffolk SumDog Challenge along with 66 other classes from 15 different schools. LADSBS students held half of the top 10 positions in both the Individual and Whole Class categories.
- North Country Road Middle School Seventh grade science classes participated in a classroom-based citizen science project designed to advance NASA research on growing plants in space.
- Miller Place High School students in Spanish Levels II & III exchanged letters in Spanish with Seabury Hall School students in Hawaii. Miller Place High School World Language students studied Hispanic Culture and Cuisine in Mesoamerica's past and present. Featuring guest speaker Patricia Sandover-Parker of Guatemala.
- Honors Chemistry and AP Biology classes had an opportunity to Skype a scientist on the topic of Brain Chemistry.

## IN-DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

- North Country Road Middle School students participated in Red Ribbon Week celebrating living a healthy life free of drugs and violence.
- Miller Place High School Mathletes hosted the 2022 American Mathematics Competition. The competition provides an opportunity for high school students to challenge their analytical thinking and mathematics skills.
- Several staff training courses were made available as part of the Superintendent's Conference Day in November. Approximately 65 Miller Place School District staff members volunteered to be first responder certified in Narcan training and Stop the Bleed training. These trainings were facilitated by Port Jefferson EMS.

## FIELD TRIPS

- Students in AP Biology had the opportunity to go on a field trip to Stony Brook University to participate in a Bacterial Transformation Lab, as part of the Seventh Grade Ecology Unit. Students went to the Mt. Sinai Harbor/Satterly Landing to learn about impacts on a wetland ecosystem. Fifth grade students went to The Bronx Zoo and second grade students went to the LI Children's Science Center.

## DISTRICTWIDE

- All buildings are running in-person clubs for students to participate in extracurricular activities.
- Secondary students were recognized for academic excellence with the induction of four different honor societies: Miller Place High School and North Country Road Middle School honored students for their overall academic excellence in their induction to National Honor Society ceremonies. Our most decorated music students were inducted into the Tri-M Honor Society. Our World Language scholars were inducted into the Foreign Language Honor Society.



## *A Message from the Board of Education*

As we embark on the second half of the school year it gives us all a chance to start again with renewed energy and setting goals. If you have not had a chance to read our updated goals, they can be found on the district website under the Board of Education tab. They center on four key areas: Academic Excellence, Health and Wellness, District Finances and Communication and Collaboration. I am excited to say that we have taken many steps towards meeting these goals and will continue to critically examine ways in which we can improve to bring the best possible education and success of our students. We have had an extremely successful first half of the school year.

Our students are excelling academically, artistically, athletically, and socially. It gives us great pride to see how our student body has overcome challenges of the past few years, and the growth that is occurring for them both academically and socially. Our teachers, administration, and faculty, as well as your support from home and our community, deserve the highest accolades for helping our students achieve their highest levels. The Board of Education would also like to remind our community that we are approaching the time of year in which the district develops the budget for the next school year. We encourage all community members to attend all upcoming budget meetings, and workshops. Community input is a vital part of this process as we strive to develop a budget that is financially responsible, and one that continues to provide the academic excellence that we have all come to expect.

I am looking forward to a successful second half of the school year! On behalf of the entire Board of Education we are Miller Place Proud!

Sincerely,

Lisa Reitan  
Miller Place School District Board of Education President



## Miller Place High School Science Students Compete in the Boyceville Invitational Science Olympiad

In December, Dr. Skolnick's science students participated in the Boyceville Invitational Science Olympiad Competition hosted by Boyceville High School, Wisconsin. There were 148 teams that entered the competition. Miller Place had 15 teams compete with all teams finishing in the top half and 4 teams placing in the top 25 percent.



# AROUND OUR SCHOOLS

## A FIELD TRIP TO REMEMBER

Who doesn't look back fondly at their school field trips, particularly when they were to an exciting destination like a science museum? Recently, Andrew Muller Primary School students had their own exciting field trip that will surely be looked back upon fondly. Students from kindergarten through second grade traveled to Brookhaven National Laboratory or LI Science Center.

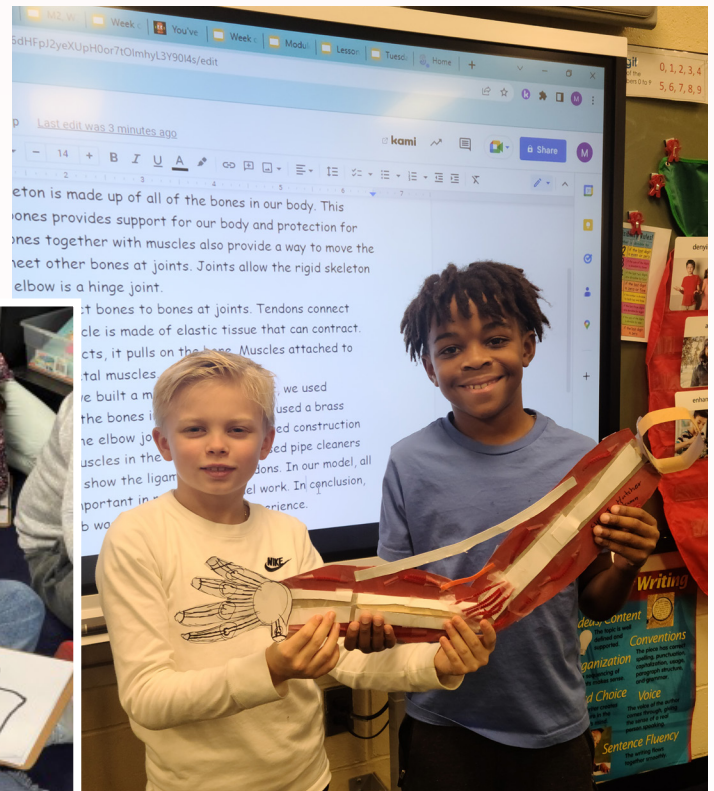
Our second-grade students studied topics such as animal tracking, blocks and marbles (physics), and properties of matter while our first graders learned intro to measurements, sound and light. Meanwhile, our kindergartners learned about the physics of toys.



## SCIENCE LESSONS SHOW THE INGENUITY OF LADSBS STUDENTS

It was a “semester of science” at Laddie A. Decker Sound Beach School! In one lesson, Ms. O'Connor and Ms. Krumholz's 4th grade class used Ozobots—learning tools designed to introduce coding to young students—to create their own mini Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Students practiced their coding skills using Ozobot's color sensors, using them to direct the bots to change speed, direction, and make unique moves. After some trial and error, the students made the necessary engineering adjustments to have a successful Ozobot Parade!

In another lesson, fourth graders in Ms. Skoblicki's class created model limbs for a “Walk in the Park” science unit. Students used everyday materials to create a functional arm.





# AROUND OUR SCHOOLS

## NCRMS STUDENTS SHINE IN A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Whenever educators at North Country Road Middle School can help our students make a connection between experiences in the classroom to an event beyond the walls of our school, we do our very best to make it happen. An event in December provided the perfect opportunity for our grade seven students.

Ms. Himmelmann and our new grade-seven English teacher Ms. Mahan planned to read the play *A Christmas Carol* as the grade does every year, but with a brand-new opportunity included. An inquiry was made to Theatre Three about having our students attend a live performance of the play in Port Jefferson. A late substitution created an opening for us to attend on Friday, December 23rd. While in the planning phase, it was a surprise to find out that two of our grade seven students, Skye Greenberg and Jennifer Salvia, were part of the cast for this year's production! Another great connection for our students, which enhanced the experience interacting with a classic holiday tale. We are so very proud of Skye and Jennifer and hope to include this experience for our future seventh grade students.



## MILLER PLACE HIGH SCHOOL HOLDS ANNUAL OAK AND OAR CEREMONY

In January, Miller Place High School recognized eighteen outstanding students at its 22nd annual OAK (Outstanding Acts of Kindness) and OAR (Outstanding Academic Recognition) ceremony. Students were recommended by staff members for performing inspiring acts of kindness or demonstrating excellent work ethic in their classes.

OAK award recipients are recommended for their gestures of kindness and displays of compassion—all without expecting anything in return. OAR award recipients, meanwhile, are recommended for achieving academic excellence by maintaining high scores, improving their scores or taking harder courses and rising to educational challenges that may be outside of their comfort zone. Congratulations to all our OAK and OAR recipients!



### 2023 OAK Recipients

- Olivia Bloom
- Elianna Charbonnier
- Eileen Duffy
- Klarissa Escobar
- Justin Forlano
- Jacob Huwer
- Lucas McGuire
- Sara Mendes
- Joseph Ritieni
- Natalie Shurbet
- Jay Sun
- Skye Welch

### 2023 OAR Recipients

- Christopher Barton
- June Colletta
- Mathilda Dottori
- Eileen Duffy
- Jacob Huwer
- Aidan Maloney
- Maya Murphy
- Adrian Tamayo

*"We are so proud of these eighteen model students who have shown acts of compassion and lent a hand to their peers in need or achieved remarkable academic performance. These accomplished students represent the best of our Miller Place community with outstanding pride and character. They are positive role models for their peers and continue to impress their teachers and faculty each day."*

- Superintendent of Schools Mr. Seth Lipshie



# MUSIC & ART NEWS

## Miller Place Goes to the Peak Music Festival

Last fall, fourth grade students in Ms. Most's class had the opportunity to attend the Suffolk County Music Educator Association's 14th Annual Peak Music Festival. The exciting festival included ukulele workshops, musical theater, singing games, folk dance and so much more. We had a great time!



## Sculpture Students Celebrate Holiday by Making Incredible Gingerbread Houses

Just before the holiday break, students in Ms. Stasi's sculpture class had a few days to pair up and create a unique gingerbread house. Artistic goals for the tasty dwellings included sturdiness of the structure, having a creative theme, and craftsmanship. A school-wide vote was held and the winners were Gwen Smith and Lucy Chang's beautiful "Camper" house, which is pictured here. Congratulations!

## Art Students Visit Premier Long Island Art Museum



The Heckscher Museum, located in Huntington, is one of the best art museums on the Island. It is always a special occasion when our students have the opportunity to visit. On a recent trip, Miller Place High School students were able to explore and interact with contemporary works on display at the museum during a closed-access tour. Students were challenged with analyzing the artwork to understand the deeper meanings and subtle decisions made by the artist. They discussed comparisons and differences in works within each artist's mini-series as well as the themes found throughout the entire exhibition. Additionally, we have students who have expressed interest in entering their work in the Long Island's Best Young Artists juried exhibit at the Heckscher Museum.



# ATHLETICS CORNER

## MILLER PLACE SENIOR ANTHONY NAPLES TAKES HOME THE GOLD ON THE GREEN

Miller Place student athletes continue to impress on all the fields of play. Miller Place High School Senior Anthony Naples won first place at the Suffolk County Individual Golf Championship after two days of competition at the Spring Lake Golf Course in Middle Island. Anthony shot par 72 on the first day, putting him tied for fourth place. Day 2 was met with rain and harsh weather, but Anthony persisted and shot a one over 73. He came back three shots from behind to tie for first place with a 145, 36-hole aggregate.

The competition came down to a tense, one-hole playoff, referred to as “sudden victory” in golf. Anthony won a tee flip and stepped up first, driving an impressive 280-yard tee shot directly down the green before making par after a clear path to the hole and winning the outright title.

“Anthony is a stellar golfer and we’re very proud of his tremendous accomplishment in the Suffolk County Individual Championship. Congratulations to Anthony on such a great achievement,” said Superintendent of Schools Seth Lipshie.



## GIVING BACK OVER THE HOLIDAYS

The spirit of the holidays was alive and well at Miller Place. The Miller Place robotics team 514 wrapped about 75 Christmas gifts for a local charity group, Christmas Magic. Miller Place robotics team coach Ms. Warren has been involved with Christmas Magic since high school and thought it would be a great idea for the team to participate before the busy build season kicks off next month.

Christmas Magic is funded solely by private donations and word of mouth. With very low overhead costs, donations are earmarked towards gifts. The success of the program lies in volunteers who handle everything from shopping for gifts and wrapping presents, to the delivery to shelters and groups and hosting energetic parties. From its inception, the program has had a special relationship to high school and college sports programs in Nassau and Suffolk.



## MILLER PLACE UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

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