



## Hello Millbrook families!



The Millbrook Central School District is excited to welcome students and staff back for the 2021-2022 school year. The first day back to school for staff is Tuesday, September 7, and the first day back to school for all Blazers is Wednesday, September 8. We are planning for a full-time (5 days per week), in-person learning for all PreK - 12 students. Hope you found time this summer to rest and relax - we have a full and exciting year ahead of us!

**See you in a couple of weeks! Laura, Your Proud Superintendent of Schools**

## Summer Scholars take over MHS

The COVID-19 pandemic altered the educational experience of many students globally. Millbrook's Summer Scholars program provided extended learning opportunities and support for those subject areas where "things may have deviated from typical year," Samantha Holsborg, summer school coordinator said.

Students in grades K through 9 focused on math, reading and writing at Millbrook High School this summer.

Students were "divided into grade-level groups and classes were consistent with the curriculum used during the regular school year," Holsborg said.



45 children enrolled in the program - 27 elementary students and 18 middle school students. Students were divided into classrooms by grade combinations for the younger students. Grades 6-9 had a math class and a combined reading and writing class.

"Our students want to learn and they're excited about it," Holsborg said, adding that the program strived to provide equal opportunity for all skill levels. Students who excelled in a particular subject were moved to the next grade level.

Across all grades, students could be seen raising their hands, answering questions, or working on assignments at their desks.

Levi Van De Water was hard at work on a writing assignment about Max the Cat in his K-1 class.



he is going into his room."

Second-grader Destiny Herring said she enjoys writing most followed by math. "I like to write about books," she said, adding, "I'm reading an Avengers book." Her favorite character is the Hulk.

Collette-Kate Ashong registered for the program because "My little brother wanted to go and I didn't want him to be in the high school alone." But, the two ended up in different classes as she is in eighth grade.



"Max took the pen," he wrote on his paper. When I asked why Max took the pen, Van De Water said, "because

"This is basically an enrichment math program with Mr. Peek. He's reinforcing everything we did last year and he's helping me to relearn topics," she said.



About a dozen of the students were English language learners, Holsborg said. These students participated in regular classes with in-class support from Ms. Holsborg and Giselle Aldarondo.

"It's a wonderful opportunity for them because we were able to extend ENL services and it was a great opportunity for them to practice their skill sets," Holsborg said.

Holsborg is pleased with the turnout and the responses to the program. "It is great to see smiles on their faces while they're interacting and learning with their peers."

## First Flag Retirement ceremony a success!

Students around the nation see the U.S. flag every day, but how many of them truly know what it stands for? Retired U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Doris Zerafa wants to ensure that Millbrook students know the flag's rich history and meaning. So, the food services worker approached Elm Drive Elementary School Principal Michael Setaro with an idea for a Flag Day ceremony in which she'd teach students at Elm Drive and Alden Place about it.



# First Flag Retirement ceremony a success! *con't...*

"I think every child should know what the flag truly represents," said Zerafa, who served 20 years in the U.S. Army Reserves as a counter-intelligence agent. "Being retired from the military, it means so much more to me because I fought for it as did many of my comrades in arms."



So, in mid-June, she and Setaro presented what they hope will be the first of many Flag Day ceremonies at the school.

Two local Boy Scouts presented the flag and folded it properly. There were two flags (one from Alden Place and one from Millbrook Middle School) that were set for retirement. Zerafa took them home to burn them (the proper way to retire a flag).

One of them was presented to Albert Tomkins, whose father, Bill, worked in the district for many years and also served in the military. Bill passed away this spring.

"The ceremony went hand-in-hand with the new civics standards in New York State for history," Michael Setaro said, because it requires students to participate in events that pertain to American history.

During the ceremony, Zerafa's grandson, a student at the school recited the pledge. Students sang at two different points in the ceremony.

Zerafa made it a point to engage the students, asking them questions about the flag, and some knew the answers! For those students who were singing, she asked the music teacher to "have them really listen to the words they are singing and to ask questions if they had any."

Students, families and staff who attended spoke positively about the event. Feedback indicated that students were paying attention as Setaro received several comments about students reteaching their families the proper way to retire a flag at the dinner table that night.

Zerafa herself had such an experience.

A student in the lunch line excitedly described how he taught his mom and dad 'the meaning of each flag fold and didn't forget any.' "I got chills right there on the line," she exclaimed.

"We were very pleased with how our Flag Retirement ceremony was conducted this year," Setaro said. "It's a great foundational event to introduce our youngest Blazers to the civic curriculum and history."



## Orientation at Alden Place

On Wednesday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students from Elm Drive visited Alden Place to see what their days would be like in September when they arrive at Alden for 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade!



The students got to tour the school, sign a basketball and participate in planting their own "Class of 2031" tree! This year's tree was generously donated by Patrick Murphy, owner of Millbrook Gardens. It is a Redbud Tree. The basketball signing and tree planting are a tradition started by Principal Tom Libka 18 years ago when he took the reins at Alden.

Sixty-two students are headed to Alden Place next year - they'll be divided into three classrooms.

