

Happy Spring Millbrook! I hope you all enjoyed your spring break and were able to relax, spend time with the people you love, and enjoy some sunshine.

There is much to look forward to here in the Millbrook Central School District! Shortly we will be moving towards full-time, in-person learning, for families who make that choice. Full-time, in-person will begin on April 12 for Elm Drive & Alden Place and April 19 for MS & HS. Remote learning remains an option for families who do not wish to have their children return to in-person learning for the remainder of this school year.

Whether our students are in-person or remote, it is important to remember that we are all **BLAZERS!** As always, thank you for your ongoing support. Things are looking brighter and brighter!!

Stay well. Stay in touch. Have fun! Laura



Anson Named Finalist for Prestigious Award

Millbrook Middle School Math Teacher, Leslie

Anson is a finalist for the 2020 Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) at the elementary level. The award recognizes excellent teaching and leadership and is considered one of the most prestigious honors for teachers, according to the New York State Department of Education.

Anson, who teaches 6th and 7th graders, is not one to boast, but she is proud to be one of two finalists.

"I didn't expect to make it to this point," Anson said. "It is nice to be recognized for something I am so passionate about."

Every student is able to be successful and this sometimes requires Anson to think outside of the box when planning lessons. She often includes multisensory activities to meet the needs of all students.

"I want to constantly challenge my students," she said. "The learning is never finished – both for me and my students."

Anson aims to show students where math skills will be important in the future.

"My goal is to make math real," Anson said. "There is student discussion, students moving around, students playing games, and students becoming problem solvers."

Anson and the other finalist, Lynda Brennan from Suffern, must complete a rigorous process to demonstrate excellence in content knowledge,

effective uses of instructional methods, and assessments to improve student learning. The PAEMST National Review and Selection Committee will determine the winner.

"I love being able to make a difference in my students' lives even if it's just making them feel good about math," she said. "I would describe myself as extremely dedicated to my students."

If Anson wins she will join an elite group of teachers who can influence state and national Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics teaching.

"The responsibility makes me feel inspired," Anson said. "I hope this recognition inspires my students to find a passion and I am happy that I can lead by example."

Millbrook Central School District Superintendent Laura Mitchell is proud of Anson's achievement.

"We are extremely fortunate to have Leslie here in Millbrook and we are very proud of her good work and this extraordinary accomplishment," Laura said.

"We need more opportunities to honor our remarkable teachers, especially during this challenging time," Frances Wills, a member of the Board of Regents said. "Ms. Anson's students are fortunate to have a teacher with a passion for excellence."

MOCK TRIALS PROMOTE ETHICS & PROFESSIONALISM

Students at Millbrook High School looking for a taste of how court trials work can get it by participating in the Mock Trial Competition sponsored by the New York State Bar Association (NYSBA).



The NYSBA creates a mock civil or criminal case every year, which is then tried throughout the season under the guidance of teacher Cynthia Rosenzweig who has participated in the program since 2017. The current captains, Rachael Alaimo and Skyler Fountain, are the founding members of the initiative at Millbrook.

The trials, which accurately mimic a real trial, begin at the county level with high schools across Dutchess County representing a side.

Each team includes three students acting as attorneys representing either the plaintiff or defendant, and three additional students acting as their side's witnesses. A local judge or attorney presides over the case which lasts about two hours.

"The mock trial follows the general sequence of a real trial with opening statements by both sides, direct and cross examinations of three witnesses for each side, closing arguments by both sides," Rosenzweig said. "Each team participates in at least six trials which are conducted on a weekly basis."

"The trials teach the 20 students, who have an interest in law, about the justice system, ethics, professionalism, communication skills, legal writing, the art of persuasion, and thinking on their feet," Rosenzweig said.

"Most of the students are particularly interested in law, and all think it's fun," she said.

Yager Retires with Over 32 Years of Memories to Boot

Millbrook Middle School Science Teacher, Bill Yager, has recently retired from his role after spending over 32 years working in the Millbrook Central School District.



Yager, a 1983 Millbrook Blazer graduate, pursued a career in education thanks to his teachers. During college, he worked as a substitute teacher in the District and volunteered with the school band and athletics. After graduating SUNY Cortland, Yager continued to work as a part-time substitute, which eventually turned into a permanent position.

"Being able to work with the educators and coaches whom I looked up to as a student was what drew me to work and stay in Millbrook," Yager said. "I was fortunate to have many outstanding educators while I was a student here."

Yager enjoyed spending 22 years in fifth and sixth grade general education, but true passions were rooted in

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Yager Retires^{cont'd}

outdoor education, science, math, engineering, robotics, and technology integration. Those areas allowed students to create challenging hands-on and inquiry based problem-solving activities. In 2011, he was offered the opportunity to teach these interests at the middle and high school levels.

"I was also fortunate to be given the opportunity to create a STEM elective for 6th grade students focusing on reverse engineering, problem-solving, the design process and robotics," he said.

While science can be a tough subject, Yager found that creating inquiry-based activities got students engaged and excited about science. He loved seeing their eyes light up when they discovered something for the first time.

"When students are motivated and engaged with kinesthetic activities, this helps students understand challenging concepts because they have experienced it," Yager said. "I love that students at this age are naturally curious learners."

Throughout his tenure, Yager supported students in co-curricular activities, such as the Living History program at Alden Place Elementary where he and students cooked dinner in a cast iron Dutch oven and slept outdoors in Revolutionary War style clothing and canvas tents. Yager also created an overnight outdoor education and team building program at Norrie Point for fifth and sixth graders, as well as a robotics club at Alden.

"I hope to be able to continue to support the students at these events," the proud teacher said. "We are lucky to have such a talented group of students here."

Yager's fellow teachers Nicole Barnes, Dawn Harkenrider, Erin Hicks, and Leslie Anson planned some great tributes during their colleague's last week of school. One included placing a cardboard cutout of him in different locations accompanied by a sign reading, "Don't worry, come close! You can be within 6 ft! Give me a hug, take a photo or sign the back of me! I'll miss you! Love, Mr. Yager."



"I had to do a double take because I saw myself standing in the office with people getting their picture taken next to it," Yager said. "It reminded me of Flat Stanley."

Anson and the other teachers kept social distancing in mind when coming up with celebrations for Yager.

"We didn't want Bill's career accomplishments to go unnoticed," Anson explained. "The photos and signatures developed naturally as everyone wanted to pay tribute to Mr. Yager."

A student Yager had in his first of year of classes saw a picture of the cutout online and reached out to Yager to catch up.



"That evening we were able to catch up on 32.5 years and some memories," he said. "It was a truly unbelievable and remarkable experience triggered by the cutout."

Family matters and the challenge of providing hands-on learning in the middle of a pandemic were factors in Yager's decision to retire. He will spend his free time giving back to the community and exploring hobbies such as antique machinery. He will always cherish his Millbrook Memories.

"Retiring was not an easy decision," Yager said. "It was a great run. Thanks for the memories Millbrook!"

MOCK TRIALS PROMOTE ETHICS & PROFESSIONALISM^{cont'd}

Many of the students involved enrolled in an elective course Rosenzweig taught called Trial Techniques. This course focuses on preparing a case, rules of evidence, and making opening and closing arguments. However, the course is not required to participate in mock trials.

"There are no prerequisites – participation is open to all high school students," the teacher said.

"The students typically meet in person for practices and trials, but the pandemic moved everything to virtual", Rosenzweig said.

"This year, we meet remotely via Google Meet for daily practices," Rosenzweig said.

Fountain, now a senior, and her classmates are seasoned veterans of the trials.



"We went into it not knowing one thing about mock trials," Fountain said. "It's sweet to see how we've come so far."

The trials are a great learning experience for Fountain, who not only was educated on the ins and outs of a trial, but she also honed in on her performance and memory skills as she portrayed a witness.

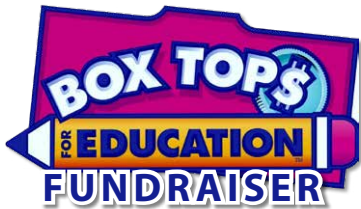
"It encompassed a lot of things – acting, using your brain, and solving the case," she said. "It's a real puzzle you have to solve."

BE IN THE KNOW WITH THE PTO

Our next Public Meeting
will be held virtually on
Monday, April 12 at 7pm.

<http://meet.google.com/ceg-rkdd-ity>

Have questions?
Email PTO President Loredana Ingenito
at ingenito7779@gmail.com



Use the **Box Tops App** to scan your store receipt, find participating products and instantly add cash to your school's earnings online. **Be sure to choose Millbrook Central School District, Millbrook, NY** when you scan your receipts.

From playground equipment to technology to library books, Millbrook can use this money to help teachers and students get the supplies they need.

