

SOUNDINGS

Hendrick Hudson School District

Back-to-School Edition

Hen Hud Welcomes Students for the 2011-12 School Year



The Hendrick Hudson School District welcomed back some 2,700 students for the 2011-12 school year on Wednesday September 7, 2011.

“The first day of school is a time of new beginnings and fresh starts,” remarked Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Daniel McCann. “It is such a great day to be an educator--from smiling students to excited parents, today is a special day for so many people.”

Hen Hud students were greeted by both familiar faces and new personalities. From newly appointed B-V Principal, Joshua

Cohen, to veteran teachers like, Jennifer LeFevre, students at B-V entered the building with eager smiles and the promise of an exceptional academic year.

Across the district, students at Blue Mountain Middle School arrived to meet new Assistant Principal Margaret Podesta while science teacher Sean Bugara talked about the new interactive touch tank that will be up and running in a few weeks for the Living Environment class.

Throughout the day, students around the district became reacquainted with old routines while meeting new friends and gearing up for the academic year ahead.

While September 6th may have been the first official day for staff, teachers had begun coming in several weeks prior to get their rooms in order and prepare for the new year.

“For the last few weeks of August, more and more teachers began coming in to get classrooms in order. It was great to see the excitement and positive attitude of everyone in preparation for today,” said McCann.



Hen Hud officials used Tuesday, September 6, 2011 as a conference day to welcome back staff and introduce new staff. The day featured performances by the Hen Hud Cheerleaders, and a moving rendition of the national anthem by BV third grader, Fiona McGovern.

Staff also viewed a short video, “Celebrating What is Right In the World,” by Dewitt Jones. Jones, a renowned photographer, created the video to teach about what a powerful force having a vision of possibilities can be.

“The conference day provided an opportunity for our whole district to come together to celebrate a new year,” said Dr. Alice Gottlieb, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Personnel.

“We were delighted to welcome twenty-one new people to the Hen Hud family: two administrators, nine teachers, a nurse and three teaching assistants,” she concluded.

“We are excited to welcome back our entire school community. From teachers, to administrators, to support staff, parents and students, everyone is happy to be back and looking forward to the year ahead,” concluded Superintendent McCann.



Seniors Recognized for Musical Talent By New York State



The Hendrick Hudson School District was recently notified five of its High School students had been selected to take part in the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) All-State Winter Conference in Rochester, NY this December.

As a testament to their hard work, superior musical ability and talent, NYSSMA has selected senior Claire Leyden to participate in the Woman's Choir performance while seniors Clarice Mayo and Sunhwa Reiner were chosen to perform with the Mixed Chorus in the prestigious competition this winter.

In addition to the students selected to represent Hen Hud at the festival, Sarah Ann Duffy and jazz guitarist Lee Meadvin were selected as alternates for the festival. "With only one guitarist chosen to perform at the festival each year, we are extremely proud and humbled that Lee was chosen as an alternate," remarked Hen Hud Band Director Benjamin Acrish. "This is an incredible honor."

The NYSSMA Winter Conference is highly selective and competitive, open to music programs across New York State. Students from around New York auditioned this past May, and those with the very highest scores were selected to participate.

The NYSSMA Winter Conference will take place in Rochester, New York from December 1, 2011 through December 4, 2011. Students will travel to Rochester and spend three days rehearsing with the best singers and performers from New York State. Over the course of the festival, students will work with renowned choral conductors for three days of intense rehearsals culminating with a performance of some of the most beautiful choral repertoire pieces available to our High School musicians.

"It is extremely difficult and rare for more than one student to be selected for the chorus ensembles and to have four is unbelievable! I believe this is a testament to our teaching staff and the dedication of the students and their families," remarked High School Principal, James Mackin.

In order to compete in the NYSSMA All State festivals, students need to have successfully competed in the NYSSMA solo festival and

receive a score of one hundred on a level six solo. Students from the district start competing at the NYSSMA solo festival in third grade at a level one.

No stranger to NYSSMA festivals, Hen Hud has sent on any where from one hundred to one hundred and fifty students a year to compete in the solo competitions. The last time Hen Hud had this great a showing in an All State festival was in 2009 when three students represented the High School at the festival.

Five Hendrick Hudson Seniors Named as Commended Students

James Mackin, Principal of Hendrick Hudson High School, announced five seniors: Claire Leyden, Lee Meadvin, Jack Reuter, Cassandra Rogers, and Benjamin Toll, have been named as Commended Students in the 2012 National Merit Scholarship Program.

"Once again, our students have demonstrated the Hendrick Hudson High School is an academic powerhouse," remarked Mackin. "These students have worked diligently through their entire academic careers, never shirking from a challenge and raising the bar both for themselves and their classmates."

Mr. Mackin presented a certificate of commendation from Hendrick Hudson and the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, which conducts the program, to these scholastically talented students. Commended students placed among the top five percent of more than 1.5 million students who entered the 2012 competition by taking the 2011 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Qualifying Test.

"Hen Hud has some of the best and brightest teachers and students in Westchester County," said Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Daniel McCann. "Our students continue to exceed expectations and make us proud," he concluded.



Community Donations Fund Sensory Gym at Frank G. Lindsey Elementary Schools

The Hendrick Hudson School District accepted two donations at the September 21, 2011 Board of Education meeting from the Cortlandt Community Volunteer Ambulance Corps and the CVS Foundation. Both donations helped fund a sensory gym at Frank G. Lindsey Elementary School.

The grant came as a result of the District's newly formed special education grant writing team under the leadership of Caroline Almeida, Assistant Director of Pupil Personnel Services.

The sensory gym at Frank G. Lindsey includes items such as suspended swings, rolling scooters, trampolines, balance beams, mats, climbing and jumping apparatus, and large yoga-type balls.



This equipment is typically used by physical therapists to help students with physical disabilities build strength, increase range of motion, and improve gross motor and coordination skills. It is also used by occupational therapists for students with sensory processing disabilities to provide proprioceptive and vestibular input that can help students respond appropriately to sensory input, leading to greater focus in the classroom.

The gym will be used throughout this year and for many years to come to provide a great environment for our students with disabilities to receive therapeutic services.

"We are thankful to the Cortlandt Community Volunteer Ambulance Corps and to the CVS Foundation for their generous contributions," remarked Ms. Almeida.

"Once again our community has demonstrated they are partners with our school system," said Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Daniel McCann. "We are thankful for their help and their continued support as we seek to increase opportunities and programs for our special needs students," he concluded.

Mathew Swerdloff Receives Extra Mile

Director of Technology for Hen Hud, Mathew Swerdloff, was presented with the Extra-Mile award at the September 21, 2011 Board of Education meeting.



In each school district there are countless people who operate behind the scenes to ensure the technology that makes our lives easier, more convenient and enables us to communicate almost instantaneously, is up and running. Sadly sometimes we do not even notice the seamlessness with which things run—until they don't.

From overseeing our network, to making sure our phones are online, to demonstrating the latest technological innovation to hit classrooms, Mathew Swerdloff is our man not only behind the scenes but in our classrooms and schools touting technology and its many benefits. Mathew works each day to make sure our schools and community are on the forefront of the latest technology trends.

Since Mathew's arrival in Hen Hud in 2004, he has worked endlessly to improve our technology infrastructure while advancing our technology education program.

Through the Instructional Technology Academy, Mathew created in-service courses taught by and for teachers on a variety of instructional technology topics. This program has grown each year. With over 30 courses offered this year to staff, including classes on weekends, online, in person and in a hybrid format, Mathew has opened the door to technology to every member of our school community—parents, administrators, teachers, aides, support staff, secretaries, and our crew and custodians.

Mathew has also worked to make technology a basic part of the day for our students and teachers. Since joining the Hen Hud team, he has revamped the district website, making it easier to navigate and ensuring it is up to date with the most accurate information. He has even worked with our teaching staff to develop web pages for individual classes.

As a result of his efforts and commitment to technology integration, Mathew was recognized last year by The New York State Association for Computers and Technologies in Education (NYSCATE) with the *Outstanding NYS Leader* award.

A committed professional, Mathew is working on his doctoral degree in Instructional Leadership at Western Connecticut State University.

We are fortunate to have such a consummate professional able to address the ever-growing needs of our district's technology program.

For his extraordinary leadership in technology education to enhance learning for all students, we honor him with the Extra-Mile Award.

Implementing the Vision

A message from Dr. McCann, Superintendent of Schools



On behalf of the Board of Education and the Hendrick Hudson School District, welcome back! I hope each of you had a relaxing and fulfilling summer filled with family, friends and some great memories!

While many of you were off enjoying your summer break, countless individuals worked behind the scenes here at Hen Hud to ensure our buildings and grounds were ready for opening day.

Additionally, the Board of Education along with District Administration worked throughout the summer on a number of important initiatives including guidelines for implementing New York State's Annual Professional Performance Review standards which is a different, more streamlined way to evaluate our teaching staff throughout the district.

As you may be aware, planning is also underway to present a bond referendum to district voters on December 14, 2011 seeking authorization to upgrade and enhance a number of our facilities.

The Bond referendum was born out of our *Strategic Plan* which was updated this past Spring. The plan calls on the district to *"identify exemplary and innovative programs in the arts, sciences and technologies."*

The plan includes significant upgrades and enhancements to science classrooms at Blue Mountain Middle School as well as renovating the auditorium and upgrading the fine arts spaces at the Middle School.

The plan also calls for the creation of an 850 seat Community Performing Arts Center to be situated between Frank G. Lindsey and the High School. Work at the high school also calls for turf fields and upgrading a number of science

Important Dates

October 19
Board of Education Meeting*
Board Adopts Bond Referendum

October 21
HHHS Hall of Fame Induction

October 22
STEP Together
Homecoming Football Game

October 24
BMMS PTA Meeting

October 26
Board of Education Meeting

November 3
Elementary Report Card Conferences

November 7
B-V PTA Meeting

November 8
Superintendent's Conference Day
School Closed

November 9
Board of Education Meeting

November 10
SEPTA Meeting
HHHS Guitar Concert

November 11
School Closed- Veteran's Day

November 14
FWS PTA

November 17
HS Orchestra Concert

November 18
B-V Family Fun Night

November 22
Board of Education Meeting

November 24 & 25
School Closed

November 30
FWS Concert

classrooms as well.

While still in the planning phase, the Board of Education along with Enrique Catalan, Assistant Superintendent for Business and I have been meeting with stakeholders, staff and community members.

On September 14, 2011 we hosted a community meeting which was attended by over 120 members of the public who provided input and their thoughts on the proposal.

We listened to their concerns and thoughts and continue to revise the plan based on those considerations.

We are confident we will be able to balance the need for our students to have spaces and facilities that are commiserate with their abilities while ensuring the community can support such an ambitious endeavor.

Much more information will be forthcoming about this project, and I urge you to watch the district website for updates and information. There will also be a special edition of Soundings this November dedicated to the referendum.

In the meantime, thank you for your support and we wish you a happy, safe and productive school year.
Sincerely,

Dr. Daniel McCann
Superintendent of Schools



Hen Hud Teacher Visits India on Fulbright-Hays Scholarship

Gretchen Flintosh, a teacher at Furnace Woods Elementary School, is a member of a group of U.S. elementary school teachers and educators who recently visited India on a Fulbright-Hays Seminars Abroad program.

The program, funded by the U.S. Department of Education and organized by the United States-India Educational Foundation (USIEF), provides short-term study and travel seminars abroad for U.S. educators in the social sciences and humanities for the purpose of improving their understanding and knowledge of the peoples and cultures of other countries.

"The time that I spent in India this summer was unparalleled to any other trip I have taken. On a multitude of levels, India is filled with beautiful complexities and paradoxes that one needs to experience firsthand in order to understand. Concurrently, sounds, sights, and smells flood a person's senses; they change whimsically and without forewarning. The religious and linguistic diversities that exist within the country speak to the unique nature of Indian peoples and their respect for differences," remarked Flintosh.

"Our aim through this program was to give the group a taste of Indian art, culture and heritage, along with providing a direct understanding of the challenges and remarkable ways of the education system in India," said Mr. Adam J. Grotsky, Executive Director, USIEF.

"I am grateful to have spent time in such a deeply spiritual and ancient place and encourage others to partake in travel to a nation embodying such incredible history. Rooted in antiquity, India is quickly soaring ahead in our modern world and is a country rich in more ways than one can count," said Flintosh about her trip.

"I think the group went back with a lot of good memories, positive experiences and productive lessons which they can now impart to their students back in the U.S. I appreciate the group's patience and cooperation during the five-week long program," added Mr. Grotsky.



"When Gretchen received notification of her Fulbright Scholarship last spring, she realized a life-long dream. She loves to travel, and to spend a full summer in India takes that experience to the next level. In addition, as a teacher of our English Language Learners, the

more exposure she has to the many cultures of her students, the more effective she can be," said Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Personnel, Dr. Alice Gottlieb.

The program also focused on contemporary but important issues in economic development, environment and ecology, education, gender, and Indo-American relations. The group was introduced to India's geographical diversity through the field visits which took them to eight Indian cities: Shimla, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Madurai, Chennai, Bhubneswar, Kolkata, Varanasi, and Agra. Visits to schools, colleges and museums, rural areas and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) working on developmental issues in both rural and urban settings provided a balanced perspective on India's socio-cultural fabric.

Frank G. Lindsey Flag Day



On Wednesday, September 14, 2011 students and staff at Frank G. Lindsey Elementary School took part in the annual flag raising ceremony. This year's ceremony was more poignant than usual since it followed the 10th anniversary of the September 11th attacks.

During the ceremony, Principal Donna Torrisi spoke about the importance of guiding students in a positive direction and reminding them to be good citizens.

She also spoke about how students have a duty to be good to each other, their families and friends and to never forget those people in the armed services who continue to fight for freedom and justice the world over.

As part of the ceremony, students read poems about the flag and learned about the symbolism of the stars and stripes. "It was a great time to talk to our students about what the flag means and what it has meant to citizens over the years," remarked Torrisi.

As the flag was raised, students paid tribute to the many lives that were lost and forever changed on that fateful day ten years ago. Students were reminded of all the families who lost loved ones and the soldiers that continue to fight for our freedom.

"As we prepare to give the best to our students, there are others giving their best for each of us. We owe a debt of gratitude to those who have served and continue to serve our country in the armed forces," concluded Torrisi.



The Hendrick Hudson School District began the new school year with two new administrators; Mr. Joshua Cohen as Principal of Buchanan-Verplanck Elementary School and Margaret Podesta, Assistant Principal at Blue Mountain Middle School.

Mr. Cohen comes to Hen Hud with a strong background in educational leadership and a proven commitment towards student achievement and success. From developing a bullying prevention program through teaching students effective problem solving strategies to utilizing the latest in educational trends and strategies, such as Literature Circles, Cohen is an innovative educator and a tested leader.



Prior to his arrival at Hen Hud, Cohen served as an Assistant Principal at Gayhead Elementary School in the Wappingers Central School District for two years.

“Josh is an exceptional individual, and we are excited he will be joining our Administrative team,” said Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Daniel McCann. “While many challenges lay ahead for him at B-V, we are confident he will transition into his new role and help continue to move B-V forward in a positive direction.”

“It is with great enthusiasm that I join the Hendrick Hudson community as principal of Buchanan-Verplanck Elementary School. I am thankful for this opportunity and will work diligently to help students maximize their potential,” remarked Cohen.

Blue Mountain Middle School also started the year off with a new face in the administration office. Former Furnace Woods teacher and longtime district employee Margaret Podesta was appointed Assistant Principal of Blue Mountain Middle School earlier this summer.



As a member of the Furnace Woods faculty for over twenty years, Margaret is an effective educator and consummate leader, steadfastly focused on student achievement and success. Her experience working with a diverse staff over numerous grade levels and through the Horizon program made her an ideal candidate to fill this important role.

Throughout her career, Mrs. Podesta has sought greater challenges and opportunities to expand her role and lend her expertise. From serving on the district wide curriculum writing committee to presenting workshops focused on technology to assist instruction, Podesta has been at the forefront of the latest in education trends.

“Through the process, Margaret impressed us with her knowledge of curriculum and instruction, her respect for colleagues and love of children, and her grace and warmth,” remarked Dr. Alice Gottlieb, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Personnel. “By the end of an intensive day of interviews, Margaret emerged as the strongest candidate in a very talented pool of educators.”

“I am so thrilled and truly honored to be joining the Blue Mountain Middle School community. I have always been so proud to be a teacher

in this wonderful district, and now I can’t wait to start my new journey as a school leader. What an exciting time,” remarked Podesta on her appointment.



The State of the Strategic Plan, Fall 2011

Dr. Alice Gottlieb, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Personnel

The Strategic Plan for the Hendrick Hudson School District is a living, breathing document. Much more than a binder of plans on a dusty bookshelf, it is the collective vision of our community for our schools. Who do we want to be? What challenges are we facing? What can we do together to reach our dreams?

During the 2010-11 school year, groups of parents, teachers, administrators, and community members came together to ask these hard questions, and to draft the second version of our Strategic Plan, to guide our work for the next five years.

Six new Strategies came out of the first Strategic Planning Team meeting in the late spring, 2010. Early in the fall, nearly 60 people joined to research possibilities for each new Strategy, and then to write Action Plans to achieve the objectives of our plan.

The Six Strategies Are:

- We will identify exemplary and innovative educational programs and facilities in Athletics.
- We will improve the public perception of the accomplishments of the Hendrick Hudson School District.
- We will integrate 21st Century Learning Skills into our curriculum.
- We will effectively use data to inform instruction.
- We will develop strong and on-going relationships and partnerships to support the district with financial and other resources.
- We will create a climate that models, supports, and reinforces respect, responsibility, and active participation in the community.

In addition to these Strategies, we continue to work on plans that evolved from our first Strategic Plan, including work in curriculum development, and on parallel plans in the arts, science, and technology. Every member of our learning community is involved in this work, from the teachers and administrators who make it happen, to the families and community members who provide support for our children in so many ways, to the children themselves, our most important resource. We are quite ambitious in the work we set out for ourselves; we are confident that this hard work will help us “maximize the potential” of each student.

The New School Year Brings New Faces to Hen Hud Classrooms

June is always a bittersweet month, while many of us say our good-byes for the summer, some say good-bye to our schools as they enter a new phase in their life; retirement. While we are certainly sad to see so many wonderful faces and great educators leave our schools, we are equally excited to welcome a new and eager cadre of professionals waiting to make their own mark on our schools and embrace the Hendrick Hudson family. Please join us as we welcome the following new staff members to the Hendrick Hudson School District for the 2011-2012 school year.



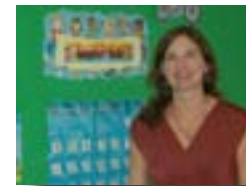
Amy Bitondo, Special Education Teacher at Frank G. Lindsey Elementary School, is dually certified in both special education and childhood education grades 1-6. Amy has worked as a special education teacher in Eastchester, NYC and Long Island. She received both her B.A. and M.S. from Pace University and has an Advanced Certificate in Applied Behavior Analysis.



Marcia Brant, Special Education Teacher at Hendrick Hudson High School, is dually certified in Special Education and Social Studies. Marcia most recently has worked at Broadalbin-Perth high school as a consultant teacher. Previous to this position she has taught both 7th and 8th grade Social Studies and even taught in the Hawaii Public School System. Ms. Brant received her B.A. from Brigham Young University in Hawaii and her Masters of Education from Mansfield University in Pennsylvania.



Amy Ceconi-Cavaliere, Long Term Substitute Special Education Teacher at Frank G. Lindsey, is dually certified in Special Education and Elementary Education. Amy has been a consistent and reliable substitute for Hen Hud since January 2008 and has filled partial long term assignments in the past. Amy received her B.S. in Elementary Education from Florida International University and her M.S. in Education, Counseling and Personnel Services from Fordham University.



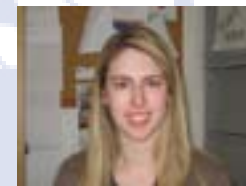
Rachel Heese, Speech and Hearing Handicapped teacher at Frank G. Lindsey Elementary School, has provided diagnostic and therapeutic services since 1998 in agencies such as Westchester Center for Educational and Emotional Development, Cerebral Palsy of Westchester, JCC of Mid Westchester and HTA of New York and TheraCare in New Rochelle. Rachel received her B.A. in Communication Disorders from the University of Houston and her M.S. in Communication Sciences from Hunter College.



Michael Iseman, Health Teacher at Blue Mountain Middle School, is dually certified in both Health and Physical Education. Michael’s experience includes teaching physical education at Stephen Gaynor School in NYC and more recently health education at Washington Middle School in Harrison, NJ. He received his B.S. in Health and Physical Education from the University of Delaware and his Masters in Childhood Special Education from City College of New York.



Phyllis Moschetti, Nurse at Blue Mountain Middle School, is a registered nurse with experience in both school and hospital settings. Her experience includes working at North Salem Middle and High Schools, Putnam Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, Putnam Hospital Center, Danbury Hospital and most recently Rye Brook School District. Phyllis received her Associates from Dutchess Community College and is presently working on her B.S.N. at Western Connecticut State University.



Lauren Rosenberg, Library Media Specialist at Blue Mountain Middle School and Furnace Woods Elementary School, was appointed last May. Prior to coming to Hen Hud, Lauren was employed as a part-time library media specialist at Clarkstown High School North and in New York City at the York Avenue Preschool. She received her B.A. in History and minor in Journalism from Brandeis University in M.A. and her Masters in Library and Information Science, School Library Media Program from L.I.U. She holds certificates in Archives and Record management and Public Librarianship.



Kristen Sheehan, Special Education Teacher at Frank G. Lindsey Elementary, is dually certified in both Elementary and Special Education. Kristen most recently has taught at the Anderson Center for Autism in Staatsburg, NY since September 2008. Prior to that, Kristen taught special education grades Kindergarten to Fifth grade in Hawaii in the Ka’ala Elementary School in Wahiawa Hawaii. Ms. Sheehan received both her B.A. in Psychology and her M.A. in Educational Psychology from Marist College.



Victoria Villa, Special Education Teacher at Buchanan-Verplanck Elementary School is dually certified in both Elementary and Special Education. Victoria has several years of experience at Hendrick Hudson which includes subbing, a full year substitute special education teacher and most recently as a Teaching Assistant at Buchanan-Verplanck. Ms. Villa received both her B.A. in English and M.S. in Education from Mercy College.

Hendrick Hudson Mission Statement

2010-2016

The mission of the Hendrick Hudson School District, a dynamic, innovative, and supportive educational community, is to ensure each student is an engaged, passionate learner who achieves his or her maximum potential and contributes to society.

This is accomplished in a system characterized by

A culture of the highest expectations for all;

A rigorous, articulated curriculum;

Diverse, effective instructional strategies and resources;

An educational environment that is challenging, creative, exploratory, accessible, and nurturing; and

A fully engaged, supportive community.

Visit us on the web at
www.henhudschools.org
for the latest news and information

Hendrick Hudson School District Administration

Board of Education

Marion Walsh, President
William Oricchio, Vice President
Mary-Pat Braggi
Laurie Ryan
Barbara Pettersen
Charles Thompson
Carson Jacobs

District Administrators

Dr. Daniel McCann
Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Alice Gottlieb
*Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum,
Instruction, and Professional Personnel*

Enrique Catalan
Assistant Superintendent for Business

Kathleen Coughlin
Director of Pupil Personnel Services

Mathew Swerdloff
Director of Technology

Thomas Baker
Director of Athletics

Anthony Merlini
Director of School Facilities, Operations and Maintenance

James Christie
Interim Supervisor of Transportation

Clare Carey
Food Services Supervisor
Rick McCormack
Public Relations Coordinator

Contacting us is Easy

District Office Building
61 Trolley Road
Montrose, NY 10548
(914) 257-5100

**Buchanan-Verplanck
Elementary School**
160 Westchester Avenue
Buchanan, NY 10511
(914) 257-5400

**Frank G. Lindsey
Elementary School**
57 Trolley Road
Montrose, NY 10548
(914) 257-5500

**Furnace Woods
Elementary School**
239 Watch Hill Road
Cortlandt Manor, NY 10567
(914) 257-5600

**Blue Mountain
Middle School**
7 Furnace Woods Road
Cortlandt Manor, NY 10567
(914) 257-5700

**Hendrick Hudson
High School**
2166 Albany Post Road
Montrose, NY 10548
(914) 257-5800