

# NY MILLS

May/June  
2020

## UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

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calendar, schedule of  
upcoming events and  
more District news

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VIRTUAL  
PUBLIC HEARING  
TUESDAY, JUNE 2  
6:00 P.M.

BUDGET VOTE  
TUESDAY,  
JUNE 9, 2020  
by Absentee Ballot

**MISSION:** "Through combined efforts of students, staff, parents, and community members, our mission is to foster the confidence, knowledge, cognition, and character necessary to instill a strong work ethic, to create an environment of tolerance and respect, and to ignite an attitude of inquiry and enthusiasm for learning that will enable students to become productive, responsible citizens."

## Message from the Superintendent

Dear Residents,

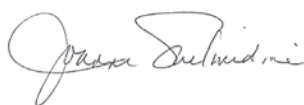
To say that this has been a unique year would be a huge understatement. The financial and educational impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will be felt by this district for years to come. As the budget process moves forward, we are acutely aware of the Governor's ability to evaluate the state's revenues four times throughout the New York State fiscal year and make adjustments to school aid based upon those revenues. The 2020-2021 New York Mills Union Free School District budget presented to you represents careful and deliberate planning by the Board of Education and the District administrative team. As with years past, school districts across the state continue to combat the myriad variables that challenge us to continue making difficult decisions today that will position this district in a financially stable position in years to come.

Priorities of this budget remain focused on providing a vibrant, relevant educational program for students while balancing the fiscal realities of our taxpayers. Even with the challenges that confront us, this budget continues to support our mission of providing a quality education for all students.

Our proposed 2020-2021 school budget is \$15,055,005. This budget proposal reflects an increase of 2.78% to the tax levy, which increases our revenue by \$216,909. Again, we are proud to report that we were able to stay under the NYS tax cap limit. The budget includes a capital outlay to upgrade our home and career classroom to reflect the changes in curriculum that have transpired over the past several years. The revenue proposed in this budget, coupled with the difficult decisions by the District and uncertain financial outlook from New York State, allows us to propose a consistent, responsible budget for the 2020-2021 school year.

A public hearing will be held remotely at 6:00 p.m. on June 2, 2020. The annual budget vote will be held, by absentee ballot, on Tuesday, June 9, 2020. This year's school budget vote includes the election of one member to the New York Mills Union Free School District Board of Education. After all that we have faced this spring, we should remain proud of the program and opportunities we provide our students. Thank you for your continued support of our district and our students.

Respectfully,



**Joanne Shelmidine, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent of Schools

### BUDGET AND BOARD OF EDUCATION VOTE

Please vote on the school budget and Board of Education member via **absentee ballot**. To acquire a ballot, please contact the NY Mills District Clerk, Stefany Scharf.



# Budget Components

## ADMINISTRATIVE COMPONENT

The administrative component consists of overall management activities including board of education, superintendent's office, business office operations such as central data processing, payroll, purchasing, BOCES administrative expenses, insurance, printing, mailing, personnel, legal and auditing services, and building administrative costs.

Function or Account	Budget 2019-20	Proposed 2020-21	Difference
Board of Education	\$26,950	\$30,250	\$3,300
Central Administration	\$194,390	\$200,422	\$6,032
Finance	\$180,698	\$180,698	\$ -
Legal Services	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$ -
Personnel	\$54,285	\$58,435	\$4,150
Records Management	\$5,289	\$9,580	\$4,291
Public Information	\$12,234	\$25,000	\$12,766
Other Central Services	\$167,240	\$167,240	\$ -
Other Special Items	\$193,381	\$203,575	\$10,194
Curr. Dev. & Sup.	\$151,772	\$158,915	\$7,143
Supervision - Regular Sch.	\$280,071	\$300,879	\$20,808
Employee Benefits	\$265,333	\$264,526	\$(807)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,571,643</b>	<b>\$1,639,520</b>	<b>\$67,877</b>

Administrative  
Component  
is 10.89%  
of Budget

## PROGRAM COMPONENT

The program component consists of funding the instruction of and educational support services for the district's 570 students. Transportation of students, athletics, and co-curricular activities are also included in this budget component.

Function or Account	2019-20	2020-21	Difference
Legal Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Instruction	\$7,458,427	\$7,715,444	\$257,017
Other Dist. Transportation	\$459,699	\$421,005	\$(38,694)
Garage Building	\$52,813	\$52,569	\$(244)
Employee Benefits	\$2,790,663	\$2,843,661	\$52,998
Other Transfers	\$9,500	\$9,500	\$ -
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,771,102</b>	<b>\$11,042,179</b>	<b>\$271,077</b>

Program  
Component  
is 73.35%  
of Budget

## CAPITAL COMPONENT

The capital component consists of maintenance of buildings, upkeep of grounds, and electricity, heat, water & sewer, and telephone services. Funds are also included for the lease of school buses, payments on the capital project, and for refund of taxes for claims against property assessments.

Function or Account	2019-20	2020-21	Difference
Operation of Plant	\$434,835	\$422,963	\$(11,872)
Maintenance of Plant	\$365,991	\$359,262	\$(6,729)
Refund of Taxes	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$ -
Lease of Buses/Purchase	\$175,782	\$254,772	\$78,990
Employee Benefits	\$190,999	\$198,396	\$7,397
Debt Service	\$1,027,913	\$1,027,913	\$ -
Transfer to Capital	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$ -
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,305,520</b>	<b>\$2,373,306</b>	<b>\$67,786</b>

Capital  
Component  
is 15.76%  
of Budget

<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>\$14,648,265</b>	<b>\$15,055,005</b>	<b>\$406,740</b>
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Total Budget  
Increase  
2.78%



**THIS NOTICE IS MANDATED BY NEW YORK STATE  
New York Mills Union Free School District Budget Notice**

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2019-20 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2020-21 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2020-21 School Year*
Total budgeted amount, not including separate propositions	\$14,648,265	\$15,055,005	\$14,790,233
Increase/decrease for 2020-2021 school year		\$406,750	\$141,968
Percentage increase/decrease in proposed budget		2.78%	.969%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		1.81%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$7,802,490	\$8,019,400	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	0	0	
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **	0	0	
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy	0	0	
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$7,802,490	\$8,019,400	\$8,019,400
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$144,250	\$247,122	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$7,694,312	\$7,796,558	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$7,658,240	\$7,772,278	
I. Difference: (G - H); (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$36,072	\$24,280	
Administrative component	\$1,571,643	\$1,639,520	\$1,639,520
Program component	\$10,771,102	\$11,042,179	\$11,032,179
Capital component	\$2,305,520	\$2,373,306	\$2,118,534

\* Provide a statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2020-21 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law.

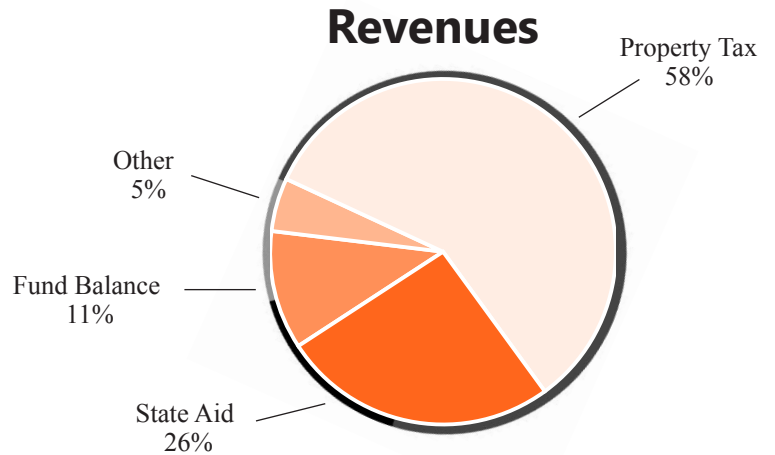
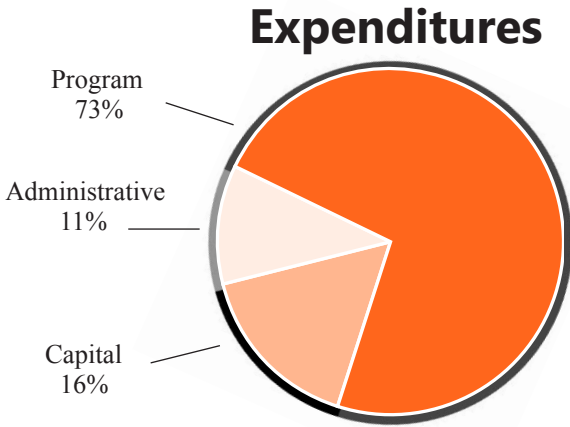
** List Separate Propositions that are not included in the Total Budgeted Amount: (Tax Levy associated with educational or transportation services propositions are not eligible for exclusion and may affect voter approval requirements)	Description	Amount

	<b>Under the Budget Proposed for the 2020-21 School Year</b>
<b>Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>\$658</b>

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2020-21 by the qualified voters of the New York Mills Union Free School District, Oneida County, New York, will be by absentee ballot. An absentee ballot may be obtained by contacting the District Clerk at 315-768-8127, or email at [sscharf@newyorkmills.org](mailto:sscharf@newyorkmills.org). All absentee ballots must be received in the Office of the District Clerk by 5:00pm on June 9, 2020.

<sup>1</sup>The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.





## BUDGET PROPOSITIONS

**PROPOSITION 1** - RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the New York Mills Union Free School District is hereby authorized to expend the sum of \$15,055,005 as a general fund appropriation for the 2020-2021 school year and to levy the necessary tax therefor.

### Tax on True

The tax on true value for the district in 2020-21 will be approximately \$21.14.

### Tax Levy Increase

The tax levy increase for 2020-21 is projected to be 2.78%.

Note: Rates are estimated based on current information available. Final equalization rates will not be set by the State of New York until August. In the two previous years, the final tax on true was actually lower than projected at the time of budget development.

### Absentee Ballots

Ballot Applications for absentee ballots must be received by the School District Clerk on or before May 26, 2020, if the ballot is to be delivered by mail, or on or before June 2, 2020, if the ballot is to be delivered personally to the voters. Absentee ballots must be received by the School District Clerk not later than 5 p.m. on the date of the election, June 9, 2020.

### Voter Eligibility Requirements

A voter must meet the following eligibility requirements to vote in school elections:

- Be a citizen of the United States.
- Have been a resident of the school district for a minimum of 30 days prior to the vote, including those who rent. Section 2018-C of the Education Law may require all persons who vote to provide one form of identification or proof of residency.
- Be at least 18 years of age.

### BOE Candidates

There is one (1) 5-year vacancy for the school board (2020-2025):

1. **Gayle Kilburn**

2. **Steven King**



# BOE Candidate Personal Statements

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## Gayle Kilburn

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My name is Gayle Kilburn and I am running for the New York Mills Board of Education. I have a daughter Gabby Cruz who is graduating this year and a son Leo Cruz who is in 9th grade. I live in Yorkville and the choice was strictly based on the desire to have my children complete their high school education at New York Mills Union Free School; in a community based on traditional beliefs, family values and a commitment to education.

I have a Master's Degree in Education and currently work as an Assistant Registrar at Utica College. The past 30 years I have traveled a road filled with many experiences. I worked in the insurance industry for more than 20 years where I was able to gain knowledge of the importance of communication, budgets, project management and overall teamwork. Living in different school districts I have seen what works and doesn't work. Working in higher education I not only see what students need to be successful, but what the college does to implement programs for that success.

During these unprecedented times, I am realizing that I have so much more to offer. In the past I have sat on the Board of Directors for North Star All Star Cheerleading and held the position of Administrative Secretary for Utica College's Professional Staff Advisory Council from 2017 to 2019. These experiences and knowledge have made me focus on being a strong leader and I know I will bring a fresh perspective grounded with tradition, value and commitment working to continue to improve communication, educational programming, safety and collaboration within the school district.

I hope I can count on your vote on June 9.



**Gayle Kilburn**

## Steven King

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I am running for election to my second term on the New York Mills Board of Education. I served 17 years as a PTSO officer (Treasurer and Parliamentarian), and 15 years as the president of the Music, Arts and Drama Boosters. I also served as an officer of the School Foundation, sat on the District Steering Committee, several Building Project Committees and pretty much any school committee that I was able to. In 2014, I was elected to the Board of Education. Since my election, I have gone to countless hours of training with both the New York State School Board Association (NYSSBA) and the Oneida, Madison, Herkimer School Board Institute (OMHSBI). I have represented the Board of Education and the District as a NYSSBA voting delegate for the four years and was on the OMHSBI Executive Committee for the two years, where I sat on the programming committee. I have served on the Board Policy Committee, the Community Relations Committee and the Finance Committee, and was the Board of Education Vice President.



**Steven King**

I am a firm believer in the value of public education and keeping our district whole. My number one concern as a Board member is the safety of our students and staff. Learning cannot happen if people don't feel safe. My second priority is ensuring that all students are afforded every opportunity to succeed. Our district needs to continue offering classes and activities to both engage our students and prepare them for any pathway they choose as they continue on in life. I am always open to new and innovative ideas and I vow to continue to listen to your concerns.

I live in New York Mills with my wife of 38 years Roberta A (Bobbi) King. Our two daughters graduated from the New York Mills Union Free School District; Jennifer (class of 2000) and Kristie (class of 2008).

In these extraordinary times, experience matters. I ask for your vote.





## Amid the Pandemic, New York Mills Stays Connected

Despite the unprecedented circumstances we are in, the New York Mills community has been finding lots of creative ways to stay positive and connected with each other. During the last week of March, our PTSO put on a “Virtual Spirit Week” with themed-days that encouraged reading, PE activities, art, school spirit and wearing pajamas! On April 3, families and teachers participated in a “Marauder Pride Appreciation Event,” creating posters with uplifting messages and displaying them in their windows and on social media.

Our faculty and staff are working hard to make at-home learning and communication go as smoothly as possible. They have been adding lots of great resources to our website, creating fun videos, taking us on virtual field trips and more. We are proud of our students and families for adapting to this unfamiliar, temporary way of learning, and we can’t wait until we are all together again!

## Fourth Graders Make Toys for Rescue Dogs

On March 5, our fourth grade classes had the opportunity to make dog toys out of repurposed t-shirts and tennis balls as part of our efforts to conduct random acts of kindness. Students watched a short video tutorial and worked together to create more than 30 dog toys for a new, local rescue organization, House of Paws. Students had fun making the toys and hope that the dogs at House of Paws enjoy them! A special thank you to NYM alumna Amy Topor for donating the tennis balls and her time to help us with this project.



## National Junior Honor Society Students

The eighth graders listed below have been accepted into the National Junior Honor Society. Acceptance was based on careful consideration of scholarship, citizenship, character, leadership and service. The induction ceremony will take place at a later date.

Frank Calhoun  
Siddalee Daniels  
Abigail Evans  
Jayla Jordan  
Samantha Jordan

Lauren Kulpa  
Hailey Mahardy  
Lamanh Nguyen  
Victoria Odarchuk  
Emily Pavlus

Congratulations to these exceptional students!

VIRTUAL SPIRIT WEEK





## Engineering byDesign/STEM Program Updates

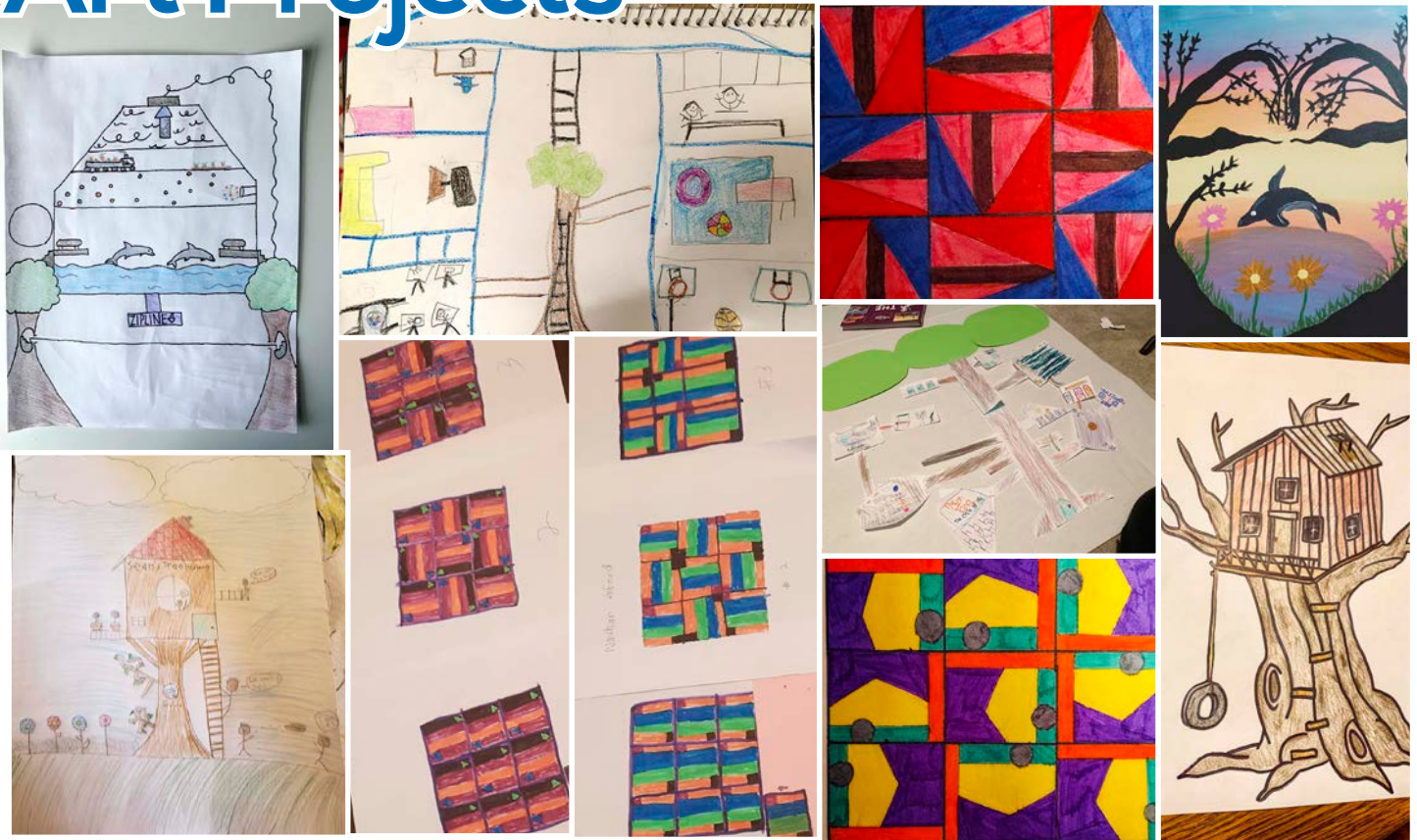
We have had a very successful year thus far and students are doing a phenomenal job. They are becoming great problem-solvers and discovering different ways of finding alternative, creative solutions to obstacles, all while working collaboratively with their peers.

To help parents and children learn from home, I have been updating my Google Site and Facebook page with resources that will aid in your child's learning and curiosity. As we continue to create future innovators, I want to thank everyone for their continued support of our new program. If you would like to help out, we would greatly appreciate any donations for when we get back into the classroom. Supplies can be dropped off in the main lobby on week days between 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Scientifically yours,

*Miss Massoud*

# Art Projects



Art students have been staying busy at home working on projects and experimenting with various different mediums, styles and themes.





# Marauder Pride



## New York Mills Sophomore Releases Video Game

*Written by Mr. Eramo*

Three years ago, Danil Donchuk had a goal -- to become a professional video game designer. Very soon, his dream will become reality. On May 22, Danil will be releasing his own video game, "The Taller I Grow" to the Microsoft Xbox Store. Very few people reach this level in the game world, let alone a 16-year-old.

Three years ago, Danil stated that he wanted to be a videogame designer. He quickly took to writing text-based computer games in Python to learn basic concepts. Eventually, Danil moved on to making computer games with graphics using a Python library called Pygame. During this time, Danil always focused on what was happening in the code rather than on the game screen, a skill that would suit him well later on. He learned core gameplay ideas during this time that would be built upon with each and every game he made.

After creating multiple games on his own in Pygame, Danil moved to a more robust and professional game engine called Unity. Unity, which runs on C#, a computer language different from Python, had a steep learning curve but Danil was up to the task. Danil learned by doing. He wrote multiple games that highlighted different aspects of what Unity could do. After a year of working on a space exploration game in Unity, Danil was ready to shift his focus.

One weekend, Danil took part in a "game jam" in which participants had 48 hours to write a videogame from scratch given a central idea. The central idea of this game jam was "connect". From this, "The Taller I Grow" was born. A simple six-level puzzle platform in which a character named Bip had to connect and disconnect from his surroundings to complete a level. This would eventually be expanded into a full 30 levels with new gameplay mechanics, art and overall aesthetics introduced, all coded and created by Danil himself.

However, being a videogame designer is more than just writing code, Danil has become a businessman. He has started his own game design studio, Noobles Studio, completing all the required paperwork to form a sole proprietorship. He has created his own website at [nooblesstudio.com](http://nooblesstudio.com). He has been in constant communication with Microsoft in order to meet all of the requirements to get the game published on the Xbox store, various independent game publications for exposure and personally handles all marketing on various social media platforms.

Danil also worked tirelessly in the creative realm of the game ensuring that the overall theme matched his vision. He designed all of the character and level art from notepad sketches to full pixel art animations. He imagined the story's

narrative and concept and made sure players were motivated to help his character Bip complete all 30 levels. He also had input on how music and sound effects could enhance the gameplay experience.

Throughout this whole process, Danil made multiple iterations of his game, fixed bugs, took criticism, had successes and massive setbacks. All the while, his approach has been that of a professional. That's because Danil is a professional video game designer.

Teachers always talk about wanting to see students apply their knowledge, be creative, self-motivated and most importantly drive their own knowledge forward. Danil has epitomized this over the past few years. When he gets home from school each day, he applies what he has learned and creates for Xbox. Really, to say that is an understatement. The vast majority of what Danil has applied, he has researched himself. We, his teachers, gave him a foundation, but Danil has done what only a very small percentage of people can do; he has taught himself. As a teacher, this is exactly what you hope for from a student. Danil is not stopping either, as he is already breaking ground on his second Xbox game, "Stasis Valley."

If Danil were an athlete, this would be the equivalent to winning a national championship. If he were a singer, this would be like getting a #1 song on iTunes. This is a huge accomplishment and the start of what looks like a very promising and rewarding career in the video game industry. "The Taller I Grow" will be in the Microsoft Xbox Store for \$4.99 or for free on PC through Danil's website starting May 22.





## An Ode to Drama Club from Mrs. Lovecchio

Since auditions last December, the New York Mills Drama Club spent nights and weekends hard at work, practicing the art of musical theatre and preparing for their performance of the musical "Anything Goes." The cast, comprised of students in grades 7-12, were two weeks away from opening night when COVID-19 almost took away their chance to perform. Thankfully, with the help of the entire school, their parents, grandparents and many others, the show did go on!

The night of March 13 was a Friday the 13th that the cast and crew will never forget. At the end of the school day, the cast and crew heard the announcement that school was closing and all extracurricular events would be cancelled until further notice. At that moment, the New York Mills pride and support kicked in.

Opening night also became closing night as the cast and crew of "Anything Goes" performed to a small audience of close family members. The excitement of opening night and support of those who are close to the New York Mills musical family encompassed the theater. Students scavenged through their houses to find last minute props and costume pieces. Parents rushed to sew costumes onto bodies and gather flowers and gifts for the cast to make the experience memorable.

The cast closed the show that evening with comments from the audience that will reverberate forever in their hearts -- "They deserved a bigger audience, they were AMAZING!" Amazing is an understatement when it comes to the work that the students showed that day! "Anything Goes" was the show, and everything went without a hiccup or flaw. Congratulations to the New York Mills Drama Club on the superb work they did and for proving that not even Friday the 13th and COVID-19 could stop New York Mills.

Congratulations to the senior cast members, Amanda Costello, Gabriella Cruz, Alexis Lamb, Anthony Robles, Michael Robles and Alyssa Malinowski, who deserve recognition for their years of hard work and talent.

Thank you for your dedication to New York Mills. This chapter is closed, now go write "The Story of Your Life."







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### Board of Education

Jacqueline Edwards, *President*  
Janet Wroblecki, *Vice President*  
Alicia Albright  
Scott Carman  
Kimberly Gyore  
Kristin Hubley  
Michelle Jordan

### Administration

**Dr. Joanne Shelmidine**, *Superintendent of Schools*  
**Mary Facci**, *K-12 Executive Principal*  
**Brent Dodge**, *K-12 Principal*

### Visit us on the Web

<http://www.newyorkmills.org>

## Class of 1970 & 71 Reunion Information

Our committee members have put a lot of time into having a great class reunion of the classes of 1970 & 1971 at the Roselawn Restaurant on Saturday 8/8/20, 1pm- 5pm if we are able to at this time. If the present conditions associated with COVID-19 do not improve enough by June 30, 2020 our reunion committee will have to postpone our special event until August 2021. For additional information please contact any committee member at [NYMreunion7071@outlook.com](mailto:NYMreunion7071@outlook.com):

Bill Girvan  
Paul Dudajek  
Richard Ross

Mike Barretta  
Rick Joswick  
Bill Lachut

Tom Jeff  
Lou Ann Lachut