



SEAFORD EDUCATION *Spotlight*

SUMMER 2024
www.seaford.k12.ny.us

*Yesterday's traditions,
today's achievements,
tomorrow's goals*

Class of 2024 REBOOTS FOR THE REAL WORLD

As they head to college, careers and the military, graduates from Seaford High School's Class of 2024 are bringing life lessons from notable television icons with them. This year's commencement ceremony was held on June 15 at LIU Post's Tilles Performing Arts Center, and the theme across all of the speeches was TV characters who served as role models.

These icons ranged from those of a time when families gathered in the living room to watch the latest episode of a sitcom, to the present-day era of

streaming and binge watching.

It was from the latter that Principal Nicole Schnabel drew inspiration, sharing advice from Ted Lasso. It's a character she admires for his relentless kindness, contagious optimism and honest vulnerability.

Valedictorian Umika Hathiramani invoked Mr. Feeny from "Boy Meets World" and his words of wisdom that leaving school with a desire to succeed in the world isn't enough – they must also strive to change it.

"We are always asked what it is we want to be, but it's important to think about who we want to be," she said. "What are our core values and principles? Do the experiences we chose speak to our character, personalities and morals? True success is not measured by titles and accolades, but by who we become and the lives we touch along the way."

Salutatorian Angelina Belgiorno encouraged her fellow graduates to embrace curiosity, using Dora the Explorer as her example. She also noted

continued on page 2...



continued from page 1

Class of 2024

REBOOTS FOR THE REAL WORLD

Dora's unwavering commitment to friendship, as she was always joined by her monkey sidekick, Boots.

"Community is powerful," Angelina said. "The collective efforts of our community have raised us, supported us and contribute to our ability to walk across this stage."

Superintendent Dr. Adele Pecora's choice was wise puppet Kermit the Frog, whom she noted embodies many of the same traits as a Seaford Scholar.

"This character is famous for saying, 'Dreams are where we want to go, and life is how we get there,'" Dr. Pecora said. "Pretty profound for a frog. The beauty of dreams is that they imbue possibility and hope."

Dr. Pecora presented each graduate with a laminated bookmark with the Seaford Scholar logo, inspirational words from Kermit and a small good luck frog.

The ceremony opened with senior members of the chorus performing the national anthem and the Seaford Alma Mater. Ms. Schnabel paid tribute to Angelina Dominguez,

who tragically passed away during her junior year, and presented her family with a diploma and 2023-2024 yearbook. She also recognized graduates who are joining the military.

Following the presentation of several awards, it was time for the 178 seniors to graduate. Assistant principals Alex Mantay and Dr. Raphi Morey announced every student along with his or her accomplishments at Seaford High School and future plans. A high-five from the Seaford Viking awaited each graduate.

Before the traditional cap toss, Ms. Schnabel offered one more piece of advice from Ted Lasso.

"Do you know what the happiest animal on Earth is?" she asked. "A goldfish. You know why? It's got a 10-second memory. We can define our lives by mistakes or something we wish never happened, or we can define our lives by how we work toward moving forward. Don't get hung up on the negative. Be that goldfish who already forgot about it."

Graduation Award Recipients

Seaford Middle School/High School PTSA Academic Award

Umika Hathiramani
Angelina Belgiorno

SASA Student Leadership Award

Alejandro Lopez
Brad Matrai

United Teachers of Seaford Scholarship

Isabella Buran
Mary Saporito

Anthony J. Varuolo Student Council Award

Kieran Calderaro

Patriot Award

Amanda Beadle
Angelina Fernandez
Jillian Gross
Alexandra Podesta
Daniella Stek
Michael Wittenstein

Viking Valor Award

Taicheka Mardy



Valedictorian, Salutatorian Embrace Seaford's Community Spirit

When Umika Hathiramani was attending Seaford Manor Elementary School and Angelina Belgiorno was beginning her education at the Harbor School, they had no idea about the close friendship that awaited. From eating lunch together in middle school, to taking the same challenging courses in high school, to being named the top-ranked graduates of the Seaford High School Class of 2024, their journey together has spanned several years.

Umika, named valedictorian with a weighted grade point average of 104.653, will attend Boston College, where she plans to major in marketing and business analytics in the Carroll School of Management. She hopes to pursue a career in financial services and dreams of working at Google.

In college, Umika plans to join an Indian hip-hop fusion dance team and also participate in 48-hour community service retreats. She chose Boston College because of its tight-knit community, which was evident during campus tours.

"I'm looking forward to meeting new people and exploring a new area," she said. "I'm excited for the academics there. They have a lot of interesting classes both inside the business school and outside of it."

Angelina, whose GPA of 104.557 earned her salutatorian honors, is off to Northwestern University in Illinois. She will major in biology and global health studies. Her ultimate goal is to attend medical school and become a physician, but along the way she would like to have a global-health study aboard experience in South Africa and take part in a maternal health program in London.

"It's an environment with a

lot of ambitious students but it's not competitive," Angelina said of Northwestern. "I'm excited to become more independent and learn new skills."

The pair have taken numerous college-level courses over their high school careers, including Advanced Placement Research which will earn them the AP Capstone diploma.

Umika is president of the Library Advisory Committee and Books and Bagels, and a member of the National Honor Society, Freshmen Mentors, Leos Club and the stage crew. With the honor society, she was involved in numerous community service projects, such as visiting local nursing homes. Outside of school, she volunteers with Children's Hope India, teaches classes at the Seaford Public Library about Diwali and has earned Bronze and Silver awards with the Girl Scouts.

Angelina plays the flute in the marching band, is a member of Freshmen Mentors, the Mural Club, the Science Club and stage crew, and is social media manager for Student Alliance. She is a manager of research for an environmental science magazine, The Young Environmentalists, and had a fellowship at Columbia University's Journal of Science, Tech, Ethics and Policy. Her passion for helping the environment is why she has joined service projects to clean up litter at Tackapausha Preserve.

A standout high school memory



for Umika is the annual homecoming parade, as she enjoyed seeing people line the streets in their Seaford green. For Angelina, attending the Seaford 9/11 Candlelight Memorial ceremony each year was a special moment because it brought the community together for an important purpose.

Both graduates have been named AP Scholars with Distinction and to the Principal's List of Honor. Umika earned the Principal Recognition Award and New York State Senate Youth Leadership Recognition Award, and Angelina received the National Hispanic Recognition Award from the College Board.

"Seaford High School has taught me so many skills, but the one that stands out is leadership," Umika said. "I joined so many clubs and was able to gain leadership positions."

"High school has prepared me by making me a community-oriented person," Angelina said. "I love having a supportive community behind me and that's something I'll always look for in my life."

Postal Patron Local
Seaford Union Free School District

Board of Education: Lisa Herbert, *President* • Trisha Matulewicz, *Vice President*
Jimmy Chwe, *Trustee* • Heather Umhafer, *Trustee* • Melissa Whidden, *Trustee*

Dr. Adele V. Pecora
Superintendent of Schools

Season Finale for Fifth and Eighth Graders

This year's moving-up ceremonies in Seaford had a first and two lasts. Seaford Harbor Principal Jennifer Bisulca, who came to the school in September, gave her first graduation speech, while it was the final address for retiring principals Debra Emmerich of Seaford Manor and Daniel Smith at Seaford Middle School.

Harbor's fifth grade moving-up ceremony on June 20 marked a milestone for the youngsters, who completed the foundational years of their education. Ms. Bisulca referenced the message that is shared every morning on the daily announcements, "Let your light shine bright."

"What does that really mean?" she asked. "As you prepare to embark on the next chapter of your Seaford journey at the middle school, I want you to think about that – how can I let my light shine bright? And I am sure you will come up with some creative ways!"

Ms. Bisulca had some suggestions for ways they can let their light shine bright, like helping a fellow sixth grader struggling with their locker, walking into the cafeteria and joining someone who is sitting alone, or joining a club or sport.

After 14 years as principal of Manor, Ms. Emmerich reflected on moments she shared with the students over the years, including "Polar Express" day in kindergarten, dressing as dalmatians for

the 101st day of school in first grade, the second grade poetry café, third grade recorder concert, fourth grade walk to Washington Park and the Thanksgiving Day float parade this past year.

"We have recalled some wonderful memories," she said. "These wonderful experiences taught us valuable lessons – treat others the way you want to be treated, be kind, dream big, be a leader, believe in yourself, be grateful and never give up."

Seaford's graduating eighth graders will take some words of wisdom with them to high school, the final pieces of advice from Mr. Smith after his 14 years at the helm of the middle school. He noted that this year, they were tasked with serving as role models for the student body, and they should have the same mentality in the next phase of their schooling, even if they aren't the oldest students in the building.

"Carry your memories and lessons from the past three years with you to high school," he said, "and never forget what you have learned here."

Mr. Smith also thanked the middle school's faculty and staff, noting that it was the fruits of their labor that made the moment possible. He encouraged students to find that special teacher after the ceremony was over and let him or her know about the difference they made.



Sign Up for District Email Notifications

If you are a Seaford resident and would like district email notifications, please visit the following site and follow the directions to sign up: <https://goo.gl/cPVv59>. For assistance, please email Debbie Langone at dlangone@seaford.k12.ny.us.

Follow us!

The Seaford School District is on Instagram
@SeafordUFSD

Notice to Residents:

As a reminder to all community residents, dogs are not permitted on school properties. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.