



# Bulletin Board

Middle Country Central School District

ISSUE VII OF DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS: ENRICHING THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Partnerships with outside organizations and local groups enhance the overall educational experience for our students in the Middle Country Central School District. Collaborating with community organizations allows us to tap into a wealth of resources and expertise that extends beyond the traditional classroom. Building strong ties with these local groups allows for dynamic programming that facilitates student growth at all levels throughout the District. We provide our students with unique opportunities for hands-on learning and real-world applications of their studies. These give students a better understanding of the world around them and a richer, more meaningful participation in it.



The value of our District partnerships is to raise well-rounded, civic-minded students who contribute positively to the world around them. Community partners offer enriching learning experiences that broaden students' perspectives, giving them valuable insights into various industries, cultures, and community needs. These partnerships not only augment the educational experience, but also contribute to the development of a well-rounded and socially responsible individual. Building on these partnerships fosters a supportive network that is invested in the success of our students. The programs encourage and support good health practices, exploration, getting in touch with a sense of creativity, building community relationships, and celebrating cultural roots.



In this newsletter, we have provided you with a sampling of the many partnerships the Middle Country Central School District shares with the community. Visit our website and follow us on social media throughout the year for more news about our students' efforts to make a positive impact in our community, across our region, and around the world. For more information about community partnerships, scan the following QR code or visit [mccsd.net/bulletinboards](http://mccsd.net/bulletinboards).





# Elementary Level Partnerships

## Our Students Are *Too Good for Drugs*

The Middle Country Central School District is always committed to encouraging our students to make healthy choices. Aligned with this mission, the District partners with YMCA Family Services to provide *Too Good for Drugs*, a universal, evidence-based K-12 prevention education program from the Mendez Foundation. The program focuses on students developing skills to make healthy choices, build positive relationships, communicate effectively and confidently, and resist peer pressure. The lessons take place at each of our elementary schools over the course of 10 weeks. *Too Good for Drugs* teaches five essential character development skills to promote healthy development in students as well as academic success. These include setting reachable goals, making responsible decisions, bonding with others, identifying and managing emotions, and communicating effectively. Interactive activities and developmentally appropriate games help our students visualize and apply the skills they learn so they can integrate them into their daily lives. In our youngest grades, the program introduces and reviews skills to prepare children to make healthy choices and resist unhealthy behaviors in life.



## Foster Grandparent Program

Our Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten Centers proudly partner with the Federation of Organizations to facilitate the Foster Grandparent Program. Grandparents in the community volunteer their time to assist teachers in our classrooms and provide support. The program connects students with seniors who wish to remain active in the community and has the benefit of helping children with tutoring, completing class assignments, and providing emotional support. The goal is to make a difference in the life of a child while simultaneously enriching the life of the senior. With the attention of a foster grandparent, many students overcome their challenges and succeed in school. Our very own Grandma Liz and Grandma Florence work alongside our teachers, giving our youngest students individualized attention. The teachers appreciate the assistance that the grandparents give and everyone enjoys one another's company.

## Middle Country Public Library

The Middle Country Public Library partners with the Middle Country Central School District in a variety of mutually beneficial ways. Our educators collaborate with the library, exchanging important information and resources for students. Many library programs are designed to promote interactive learning and bolster educational supports for students. In addition to having a plethora of children's books and movies available to borrow for supplemental learning, the library hosts tables at the District's Humanities Expo, STEM Celebration, and Middle Country Central School District Art Show each year to share information about library services and programs, and to invite children to get crafty and design bookmarks. Students in our Universal Pre-Kindergarten classes were delighted by their recent visits to the Middle Country Public Library—they explored, created, and had fun with their parents and teachers. Whether our students are interested in art, science, cooking or another engaging topic, there is a program at the library for them.



# Secondary Level Partnerships

## The New York State Bar Association

Newfield High School partners with the New York State Bar Association, which organizes the Suffolk County Mock Trial Competition each year. Active local judges and lawyers are very involved, serving as judges for the competition while a community member attorney helps advise our Newfield High School Mock Trial Team. Mock trial is a tournament-style competition and educational program that teaches students about the legal system in a hands-on manner by simulating a trial. This allows students to learn the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the legal industry. These vital skills can also be applied throughout life; public speaking, active listening, persuasiveness, teamwork, and self-confidence are all attributes that are beneficial no matter what career a student pursues. Students roleplay as lawyers and witnesses during a mock trial to practice convincing the judge of, or against, reasonable doubt. Last spring, the Mock Trial Team won the first round of the Suffolk County Championships.



## AP Seminar

High school students taking the AP Seminar course develop the research, collaboration, and communication skills that are essential for success in multiple subject areas and careers. AP Seminar students investigate a variety of topics. Students write research-based essays and design and conduct presentations both individually and as part of a team. Valuable skills are honed through these practices, including reading and analyzing articles and other bodies of text, gathering information from various sources, viewing an issue from different perspectives, and crafting arguments based on evidence. Last year, the Middle Country Central School District AP Seminar teachers hosted a consortium event

together with the Sachem North High School AP Seminar teachers and students. Experts from all over the country (including Superintendent Dr. Roberta Gerold and Science/Research Coordinator K-12 Dr. Rachel Ndembera) held presentations for the students, who gained valuable insights to help them develop their skills and prepare for their research papers and presentations. AP Seminar students are currently working on their individual research projects and team presentations that involve fascinating topics such as *The Impact of Climate Change on Polar Bears*, *The Use of Radiation as a Treatment for Cancer*, and *The Use of Ritalin to Treat Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)*.

## Brookhaven National Lab

Middle Country Central School District students participated in the Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL) Student Partnerships for Advanced Research and Knowledge (SPARK) program as part of their coursework and environmental research about invasive plant species in the Prosser Pines Nature Preserve. This experience invites high schoolers along with their educators to become visiting researchers on-site at BNL's facilities, which are used by thousands of scientific experts each year. Students were trained to use the National Synchrotron Light Source II (NSLS-II), a state-of-the-art piece of equipment used to collect detailed data. They get to work alongside scientists from around the world while using this top-notch equipment and discussing end results before preparing presentations and defense of their work. BNL is also partnering with the Selden Middle School Scientific Computing Club. A representative from BNL works with our club advisor to challenge our seventh and eighth grade students to engage with large datasets and learn how to use Python, a programming language. The program is intended to provide students with science computing skills needed for entry-level research tasks at the college level or in a research lab.





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# POSTAL CUSTOMER

## Districtwide Partnerships

### Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Middle Country Central School District believes that all students and staff matter and belong. To that end, the District has a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. Students learn best in an environment where they feel a sense of belonging. To highlight this idea, schools across the District are using large maps to tell our global story in a visual way. Each building has created a different display to be hung where everyone can view it. For example, Holbrook Road Elementary School students researched games from around the world, while Selden Middle School students researched famous people of Hispanic origin and their historic contributions for National Hispanic Heritage Month.



### The Friends of Music

Founded in 1981, the Middle Country Friends of Music is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting the many music programs available to our students throughout the entire school District. Members include families, teachers, and administrators. The board is made up of volunteers who work in conjunction with the Music Department to promote the talents of our students. The group advocates for the preservation of music and music-related programs in the District. The Friends of Music co-sponsors the annual POPS concert as well as other fundraising ventures, allowing the District to offer benefits to our music students. You may recognize the Friends of “Moo-sic” cow, sold at concerts to help raise funds for the scholarships!

### The Home-School Connection: PTA and PTSA

The Middle Country Parent Teacher Associations’ and Parent Teacher Student Associations’ strong partnership with the District provides our schools with many different opportunities. We have 17 units: the Middle Country PTA/PTSA Council, the Special Education PTA (SEPTA), one in each school building, and our newest unit, the Pride PTSA. We are the first school district on Long Island to have a Pride chapter for our PTSA. Through fundraisers, the PTAs and PTSAs are able to provide scholarships to our graduating seniors, as well as wonderful and educational Arts-in-Education programs to all of our students, Pre-K through grade 12. To help facilitate the home and school connection, our PTA/PTSA units provide a variety of activities and programs throughout the year, including book fairs, holiday celebrations and family fun nights.

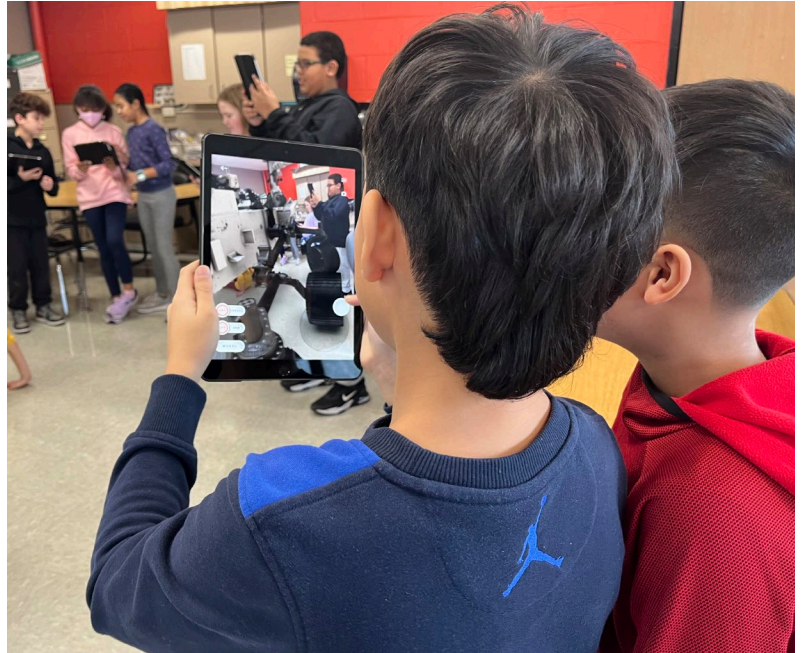




# Districtwide Partnerships, Expanded

## The Cradle of Aviation

Our fourth and fifth grade students continue to benefit from our District's partnership with museum educators from the Cradle of Aviation. Learning comes alive throughout the year as students explore hands-on, STEM-based activities that teach critical thinking in regards to real-world issues in science. In this way, the Cradle of Aviation Museum and Education Center engage students in the rich history of Long Island's aerospace heritage while encouraging the exploration of scientific concepts. With its vibrant exhibits on Long Island's contributions to air and space travel, the Cradle of Aviation and its ever-expanding list of educational programs inspire and motivate students to become the next generation of aerospace scientists and engineers. The science, technology, engineering, and math-based activities foster creativity and equip our students with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the 21st century.



## Stony Brook University Wind Power Research

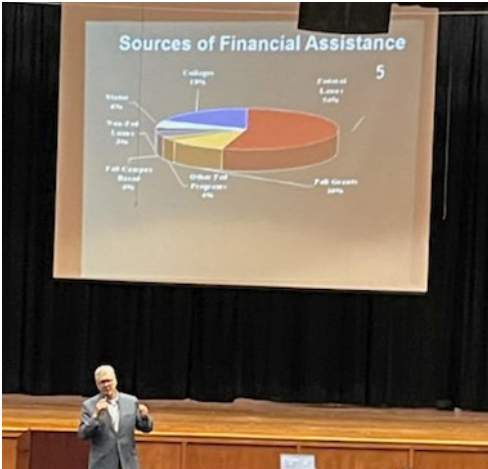
As part of the completion of their Capstone research project, seventh grade students are conducting research on offshore wind energy, investigating the question: What is offshore wind energy and how does it impact communities? Students will present their findings this spring at local research symposiums in their schools. A selected group of students will take their research to Stony Brook University, where they will present to experts in the field. The District's partnership with Stony Brook University supports our students' ambitious research goals and demonstrates the ways in which the educational institution is committed to solving the most pressing problems created by climate change. Sharing their research with experts at Stony Brook helps our students further investigate and understand the wind power industry and its effect on our coastline and our communities.





# Districtwide Partnerships, Expanded

## Molloy University Financial Aid Night



As if the college application process is not stressful enough, students and their families also need to consider their financial aid options. There are many costs associated with attending college or trade school after high school graduation. It can be confusing but it is important to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid form (FAFSA). The FAFSA form helps determine how much financial aid a student is eligible to receive, which could include grants, scholarships, work-study funds, and loans. Gene Rogers, a financial aid advisor from Molloy University, gave informational presentations on FAFSA and other financial aid topics during the Middle Country Central School District Financial Aid Nights. Each year the workshop addresses eligibility requirements and sources of financial assistance, as well as other points of interest that prepare students for their next course of action.

## Business Partnerships

The Middle Country Central School District partners with local businesses and institutions in the community to provide invaluable opportunities to students that include job shadowing and Career in Technical Education Pathways. The Middle Country Business Advisory Board supports the mission of the District and links our schools with the business community surrounding us through exploration, education, and experiences. Emphasis is placed on the skills, knowledge, abilities, and opportunities needed to prepare today's students for the modern-day workforce. Through the Career Exploration Challenge, students are mentored by business leaders while directly immersed in their study or industry of choice. They have the opportunity to earn scholarship funds, too. Our students have participated in job shadowing at Stony Brook University Hospital, Estée Lauder, Cohalan Court Complex, and many other local businesses and institutions. This endeavor bolsters our college and career readiness efforts within the District and promotes student success.



## Health First

The Middle Country Central School District also partners with Health First, a health insurance company that assists New York residents in accessing affordable health insurance. Representatives from Health First visit our schools to host a Districtwide informational presentation for families who may be interested in low-cost health insurance options. An insurance enrollment night is held through our guidance department. Our social workers and nurses are able to refer families to Health First if they know they are struggling with their copays or other fees. It can be difficult to navigate the healthcare system, but our Health First representatives offer assistance to members whenever it may be needed. The District strives to promote good health among our students and families, and our partnership with Health First bolsters this effort. The District also encourages parents and guardians to fill out the Required School Household Income and Benefits Form, which can be found online at [www.mccsd.net/EligibilityForm](http://www.mccsd.net/EligibilityForm). All income forms are critical to support the funding needed to continue the No Cost Meals Program. Please fill one out, per household, each school year.

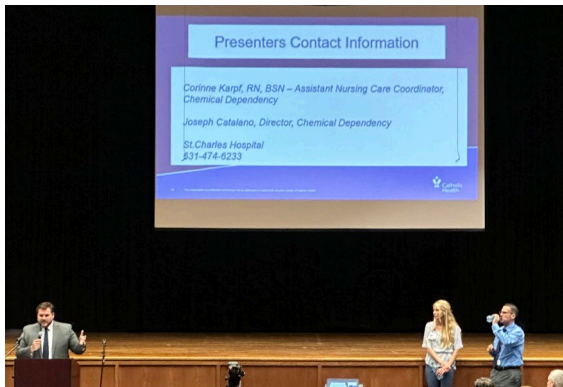
# Districtwide Partnerships, Expanded

## Heart Screen New York

Through a grant that the Middle Country Central School District received from Heart Screen New York and its Saving Lives Through Early Detection Program, our students had the unique opportunity to have cardiovascular tests done to be able to better monitor their health. The program offered a heart health survey, a heart sounds physical, and an ECG and echocardiogram at no cost to our families. The



results were reviewed by cardiologists and physicians experienced in cardiac screening. It is very important to have cardiac screenings done at a young age, as early detection of heart disease can save lives. The District's partnership with Heart Screen New York directly benefits our students and promotes good health. The goal of the screenings is to detect and reduce any cardiovascular conditions that have the potential for sudden death by employing appropriate medical interventions, activity modification, or withdrawal from athletic participation if recommended by a physician. The program raises awareness of heart disease among youths and educates our community about sudden cardiac arrest warning signs and symptoms. Heart disease was identified in seven students, including one student whose grandmother said she was grateful for the screening. "He wasn't showing any signs of having an issue, but at least now, we're on top of it," she said. "I can't thank you enough, along with everyone else who made this possible. Who knows how many lives you all saved by having this screening and alarming parents to this issue."



## Catholic Health Services

Through the District's partnership with Catholic Health Services, our secondary students are informed about the harmful effects of drug and alcohol use. Students at Centereach High School, Newfield High School, Dawnwood Middle School, and Selden Middle School and their families attended presentations hosted by Catholic Health Services on drug and alcohol prevention and how to stay safe. New this year, Catholic Health Services also guided the Middle Country Central School District in hiring two new CASAC, or Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselors, to bolster our supports. Now, drug and alcohol counseling is offered in our schools, and if more intensive services are needed, our students are able to visit a Catholic Health facility

for assistance. A representative from Catholic Health Services sits on the District's Drug and Alcohol Awareness and Prevention Committee (DAAP Committee), helping to provide insight and resources where needed.

## Education Foundation

The mission of the Middle Country Education Foundation is to attract and distribute otherwise unavailable resources to help the students of Middle Country Central School District benefit from academic, technological and career opportunities. Members include parents, Board of Education Trustees, administrators, alumni, and members of the Selden and Centereach communities. The Education Foundation fulfills its mission by concentrating efforts in areas of core interest to the students of the Middle Country Central School District. These include advancing student learning and career opportunities; creating and nurturing collaborative enterprises with local and other corporations, individuals, community-based organizations, service groups, small businesses, and other public or private education institutions; and providing a vehicle for any individual, business or organization to share resources and gifts to promote student success in the Middle Country Central School District.

