



HERRICKS HERALD

HERRICKS SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

VOL. 1, NO. 4 DECEMBER / 2023



Herricks Homegrown

SPECIAL ISSUE

We've dedicated this month's issue of the *Herricks Herald* to highlighting a few of the amazing Herricks alumni staff members that help to make our school district great!

Herricks Homegrown

Herricks Homegrown is an exciting new feature where we'll be highlighting Herricks staff members who are also alumni of the district! To kick it all off, we've dedicated this month's Herricks Herald newsletter to spotlighting five different teachers from across the district—and be sure to keep an eye on our social media channels as well, where we'll be sharing video interviews with our Herricks Homegrown staff!

Tom Graef

*Special Education Teacher, Searingtown;
Head Football Coach, Herricks High School*

What made you decide to come back to Herricks as a teacher?

What brought me back? Well, I never really left [laughs]. I graduated in 2012 and from that point on, I had the opportunity to be a volunteer football coach at the high school level. I coached for 4 or 5 seasons as a volunteer and I was lucky enough to get on staff there and be an assistant for a few years before I became the head coach. So, I never really left before the opportunity to come back here and I love the community, love being here, there's nowhere else I'd rather be.



What does being a member of the Herricks School District mean to you?

To be a teacher here and to be a part of this family and community...I grew up here and I always found it to be an incredibly special place filled with so many special people. Having the opportunity to be here and give back to the community that gave me so much has really been a dream come true.



Lyndsey DeSarbo

3rd Grade Teacher, Denton Avenue

Where did you go after graduating from Herricks?

After I graduated from Herricks high school, I actually went to be a physician assistant at the New York Institute of Technology for a semester and quickly changed because I always knew I wanted to be a teacher. I think it was because I had my teachers as role models. I know we've said that, as teachers, we want to instill in our children not only the academics, but also a sense of compassion and confidence. I just knew that I wanted to continue doing that as a teacher.

What made you decide to come back to Herricks as a teacher?

I think what brought me back to Herricks is that I feel like I had a very good childhood and that my teachers and this community had a huge part in that. I was actually asked to coach basketball, which was a big part of my childhood back in high school. So I was asked to coach and then I became a substitute teacher and after that I just never left. I think I've always wanted to just stay at Herricks because it made me who I am. I still have friends who I made in kindergarten, third grade and high school—I still have those friends and I just knew that being a part of this community is where I wanted to be.

Lauren Thomas

*5th Grade Language Immersion Teacher,
Denton Avenue*

Where did you go after graduating from Herricks?

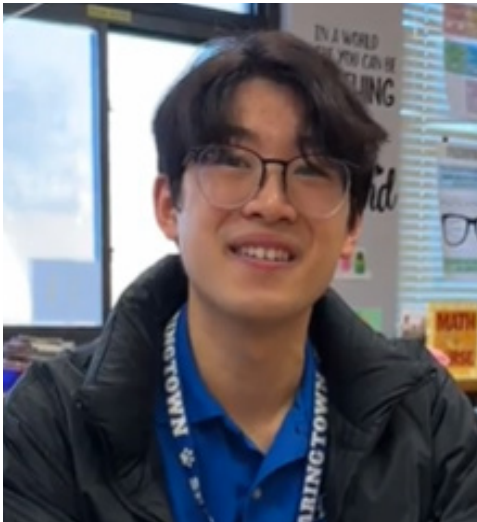
I went to Adelphi University, which is right around here. I pursued teaching because I felt so blessed to have gone to a district where there are so many teachers that really inspire you and motivate you to do your best. I knew that's what I wanted to do with my kids.

What made you decide to come back to Herricks as a teacher?

I always knew that I wanted to come back to Herricks thanks to the teachers that I had when I was a student here. They were just so motivating and they helped me to believe in myself and that I could achieve difficult things. I felt like that's the kind of teacher that I wanted to be. As a student, I sometimes struggled academically, but my teachers always saw me as a child who needed help, not just a student who was getting low grades—so that's something I try to do with my students here. I try to build a relationship with each one of them, so I can help them learn how to truly believe in themselves and feel confident in their learning.

What does being a member of the Herricks School District mean to you?

It's definitely a very rewarding experience because, having gone here, I see myself a lot in my own students—especially teaching 5th grade, I remember all the events that we had, all the friendships I made, the struggles I faced. It makes me want to be that person for them, who inspires and motivates them to feel successful and that they can accomplish hard things. That's why I try to build a relationship with each of them, because if I can help just one student to feel that success and motivation, then that would just mean everything to me.



Darren Yang

5th Grade Teacher, Searingtown

Where did you go after graduating from Herricks?

I went to Hofstra University, one of the local schools around here, and graduated with my Bachelors in Early Childhood Education and Childhood Education. I decided to go into teaching because when I was at the high school, I got into some tutoring for music because I'm a bass player. I really enjoyed it, so I decided to branch out into academics and from there, I just really enjoyed it and decided to pursue education.

What made you decide to come back to Herricks as a teacher?

What can I say...Herricks really feels like home for me. I mean, growing up in this district and going through all the motions, I really feel like I had a place here and I wanted to make an environment like that for other kids, too. So I thought, as a teacher, what better place to go than Herricks?

What does being a member of the Herricks School District mean to you?

To be a teacher here and to be a part of this family and community...I grew up here and I always found it to be an incredibly special place filled with so many special people. Having the opportunity to be here and give back to the community that gave me so much has really been a dream come true.

Andrea Somma

Orchestra Teacher, Searingtown

Where did you go after graduating from Herricks?

After graduating from Herricks High School, I went to Boston University on a scholarship for violin performance. I was also majoring in finance, but after a year I decided that finance was a little boring and started taking some education classes—it was then that I decided that I wanted to pursue music education, in addition to violin performance. I graduated from Boston University with a degree in both violin performance and music education and I went on to do my master's degree in elementary education.



What made you decide to come back to Herricks as a teacher?

When the job at Herricks opened up it was an opportunity to return to my roots, where I had gained so much. To be part of the Herricks music department is really an honor and it was such a special thing to return to Herricks.

What does being a member of the Herricks School District mean to you?

Being a Herricks teacher means that we are held to the highest degree of excellence. We have the expectations of not only our administrators and our colleagues, but also of our students and their parents—and we want to do the best we can for everyone and to bring our students the best education possible.

THE SHOW MUST GO ON: COMMUNITY CENTER AUDITORIUM RECEIVES RENOVATION

Being the dedicated *Herricks Herald* fan that you are, you may remember the numerous capital projects that were highlighted in our September issue earlier this year. Counted amongst those projects was the Community Center Auditorium, which was in the process of receiving a much needed facelift—a facelift which is now quite complete!

Thanks to the hard work of our amazing facilities team, the freshly renovated auditorium boasts all-new seating, flooring, lighting, an updated stage, and more! We'll be holding an official ribbon cutting ceremony in January and the auditorium's inaugural event will be the upcoming Middle School musical.

