



# EAST ISLIP

## UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

### SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2023

## MEET OUR 2023 *Valedictorian and Salutatorian*



East Islip High School's Class of 2023 valedictorian and salutatorian are Antonio Cottone and Zachary Zhang, respectively.

An AP Scholar with Distinction and National Merit Scholarship Program Commended Student, Cottone earned the Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America's Certificate of Recognition for Outstanding Accomplishments in Italian Language Studies. He

will attend Stony Brook University, majoring in computer science.

An AP Scholar, Zhang is the vice president of the Math Honor Society and a member of the World Language Honor Society and varsity tennis team. He earned a second-place showing in the 2023 Long Island Physics Olympics. He will attend Brown University, majoring in computer science.



## CONGRATULATIONS *CLASS OF 2023*



## Class of 2023 Presented With *Well-Deserved Scholarship Awards*

East Islip High School presented accomplished members of the Class of 2023 with dozens of well-deserved awards and scholarships at its annual senior local scholarship awards night on June 6. Director of Careers and Student Services Jason Stanton welcomed the students and their families to the ceremony, followed by presentation of the awards by sponsors, administrators and staff.



## The East Islip High School **CLASS OF 2023**

Total Number of Graduates: 283

Number of Local College  
Scholarships: 63

Seal of Civic Readiness: 40

Seal of Biliteracy: 8

AP Capstone Diplomas: 7

AP Scholar: 20

AP Scholar with Distinction: 11

AP Scholar with Honor: 12

Advanced Regents Diplomas: 205

Total Regents Diplomas: 73

Four-Year Colleges: 62.4%

Two-Year Colleges: 19.7%

Technical School: 2.7%

Students Entering Workforce: 8.6%

Students Entering Military: 1.4%

## EIHS Honors Top 10 Seniors

East Islip High School celebrated its 10 highest-ranking academic seniors with a bagel breakfast with school administrators and counselors in the school's Forum. The valedictorian and salutatorian were given their sashes for graduation, and the remaining students their top 10 tassels. Those recognized as the top 10 members of the Class of 2023 are valedictorian Antonio Cottone, who will attend Stony Brook University; salutatorian Zachary Zhang, who will attend Brown University; Isabella Fantauzzi, who will attend Furman University; Nina Gerace, who will attend North Carolina State University; Chase Grimm, who will attend Purdue University; James Kelly, who will attend Georgia Institute of Technology; Abbey Lacy, who will attend St. Joseph's University; Ruelin Man-Martinez, who will attend Georgia Institute of Technology; Nina Walsh, who will attend Binghamton University; and Nicholas Wodicka, who will attend Stony Brook University.



## EAST ISLIP EARNS

# First Best Communities for Music Education Award

The East Islip School District earned its very first Best Community for Music Education designation from the NAMM Foundation, recognizing the district's exemplary musical instruction. East Islip was one of just 830 districts across the nation that were awarded this distinction for 2023.





# EAST ISLIP PHOTOGRAPHERS CHOSEN FOR *NYSATA Exhibition*

East Islip High School photography students Emily Graziano and TessaRose Orgera were selected for exhibition in the 33rd annual New York State Art Teachers Association Legislative Student Art Exhibition, co-sponsored by New York State United Teachers. The virtual show of student artwork is available for viewing through December 2023.



## East Islip High School *Inducts 76 Into Art Honor Society*

Seventy-six of East Islip High School's talented artists were inducted into the school's National Art Honor Society at a memorable ceremony, held on June 5 in the school's gym. The candle ceremony was led by the society's officers, consisting of Co-Presidents Kate Alexander and Bella Pepe, Vice President Sophie Jensen, Secretary Meeghan Mahon and Treasurer Elliott Crane.



## Senior Artist Naomi Mukai Named One of *Long Island's Best*

Graduating senior AP art student Naomi Mukai and her piece "My Repressed Heart" were selected for the 27th annual Long Island's Best: Young Artists at The Heckscher Museum curated art show. This year, 553 Long Island students applied and only 91 of them were curated into the Heckscher show. Mukai will attend SUNY Purchase's Interdisciplinary Arts program this fall.





# Awards, Accolades and Honors **ABOUND**

## Sturek and Vetrano Take Top Honors at BASH Awards

In a day filled with glitz, glamor and celebration, East Islip High School's James Sturek and Jason Vetrano emerged as the champions in the highly competitive Best Sports Package category at the prestigious Broadcast Awards for Senior High. The dynamic duo's exceptional work and undeniable talent in the field of sports journalism secured them the top spot, leaving a lasting impression on both the judges and the audience.



## Dedicated Cosmetology Students Honored

Four East Islip students – rising seniors Gianna Belsito and Amy Marin and recent graduates Brianna Encarnacion and Gianna Urena – from the high school's cosmetology program participated in the school's first-ever Skills USA competition at Suffolk Community College against

cosmetology students from all over Long Island. Belsito and Marin competed in haircut as well as evening style updo and finger wave and roller set, with Belsito finishing in second place among 31 junior competitors. Encarnacion and Urena competed after winning their class competition, which was judged by cosmetology teachers all over the United States. At the competition, they completed evening style updo and the required state board haircut.

## Louis Attard Earns Embry-Riddle Scholarship

Graduating senior Louis Attard was awarded the Embry-Riddle/VEX Robotics Scholarship. He will attend Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's campus in Daytona, Florida, this fall, pursuing a degree in aerospace engineering. Attard was selected to receive the \$6,000 scholarship based on his participation and involvement in VEX Robotics and his school's robotics competition team. He spent the last two years as the lead mechanic on East Islip's robotics team and successfully participated in local and state competitions including the Southern Regional State championships.



## Paige Mathers Wins Rydzeski Scholarship

Eighth grader Paige Mathers, who moves up to the high school this fall, was awarded the prestigious SCMEA Burnhardt J. Rydzeski Scholarship, given to very serious, talented, dedicated and hardworking students. Mathers plans to use the \$500 scholarship for private study. Mathers regularly travels to Manhattan to rehearse singing and musical theater. She has performed in a variety of musical productions at the Broadhollow Theatre Company, CM Performing Arts Center in Oakdale, John W. Engeman Theatre in Northport, Smithtown Performing Arts Center and Studio Theatre of Long Island in Lindenhurst.

## High School Mock Trial Team Earns Second Place at Law Day

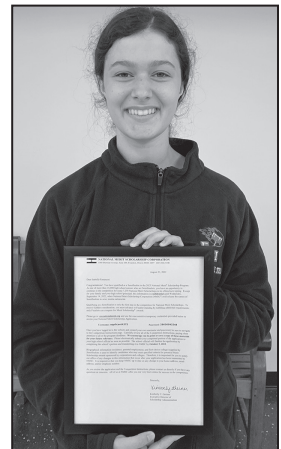
East Islip High School's mock trial team competed in a series of civil law trials against 15 other teams from Suffolk and Nassau counties in the 49th annual Law Day tournament, placing second for the fourth time. The B team of Michael Collina, Hunter Lasiak, Erin McLoughlin and Olivia Stepanenko put on a strong showing in the

preliminary rounds, and the A team of Julia Fink, Jacob Franchi and Hanna Ross went undefeated before losing in the championship round.



## Bella Fantauzzi Named National Merit Finalist

East Islip High School graduating senior Bella Fantauzzi was named a Finalist in the 2023 National Merit Scholarship Program. She was recognized for her exceptional academic performance on the 2021 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test during the prior school year.

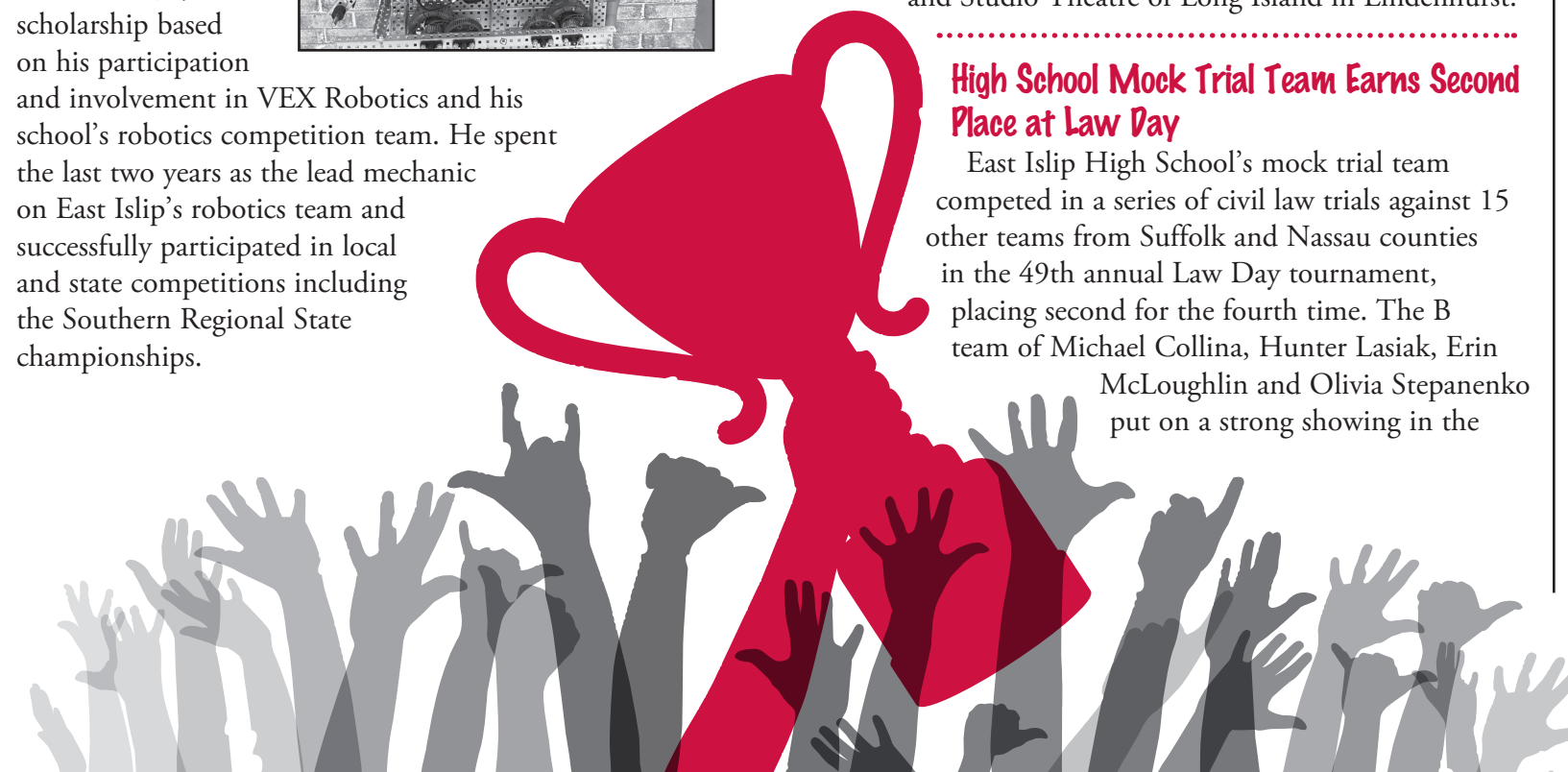


## Nicholas Rizzo and Olivia Simonetti Receive Suffolk Zone Awards

East Islip High School graduating seniors Nicholas Rizzo and Olivia Simonetti were named recipients of this year's Suffolk Zone Awards. The New York State Association for Health, Physical Education,



Recreation and Dance recognized their contributions to the overall positive outcomes of their physical education and health classes as well as their school.





# RCK Fourth Grader Wins First in Brookhaven and State Science Fairs

Dedicated fourth grade scientists at JFK and RCK battled to come up with the most innovative projects in the two schools' annual science and engineering design fairs, while following the scientific method. The JFK winner was Joseph Vertullo for his project, "How Different Materials React in Saltwater," with Brady Ferreby in second and Alexa Duryee in third. Emma Kowalik took first at RCK for her "Loaded Diapers" project, with Kaelyn Dirkschneider in second and James Paradise in third. Kowalik went on to win first place in the 2023 Elementary School Science Fair, hosted by Brookhaven National Laboratory on June 10. She also came in first in the Virtual New York State Science Fair.



## EAST ISLIP HOLDS IMPRESSIVE EXPANDED STEAM DAY

Students from grades 2 and 4 throughout the district visited an impressive array of interactive displays at the annual STEAM Day this past spring, sponsored by the East Islip School Business Partnership. This year, the event expanded to a bigger venue in the East Islip High School gym, and an evening session was added for students, parents and community members to attend. New business partners such as the Town of

Islip, Electrical Training Center and Zebra Technology; the K-5 STEAM program; the high school's video production class, WFTK broadcast studio, Art Honor Society, Math Honor Society and Science Honor Society; and the high school and middle school technology programs helped students to explore the many facets of classes and careers in science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics.

# Connetquot Walks for **AUTISM AWARENESS**

Connetquot Elementary School held an Autism Awareness Walk this past spring, strolling in the sunshine for a worthy cause. “The day’s walk was just a small way of acknowledging students with autism,” Principal Nicholas Bilotti said. “It was also a good way for us to help educate our kids that everyone in this world is special and we all deserve our time.”



## **JFK’s LEGO Girls Finish Impressive Rookie Season at FLL Invitational**



East Islip’s LEGO Girls – a rookie robotics team of fourth grade John F. Kennedy Elementary School students Jayne Elliott, Sonali Kamath and Antonia Rezza – finished their impressive season by competing at the FIRST Lego League Challenge Invitational at the Liberty Science Center in Jersey City, New Jersey. The East Islip trio advanced to the invitationals after finishing in the top five of 100 FLL Long Island Challenge teams this season in the 9-14 age bracket. Their season accomplishments include first-place Robot Performance Award and Core Values Award wins at the Long Island qualifiers; a first-place Engineering Excellence Award, Zebra Award (a special recognition from FLL referees) and invitation to the LSC Invitational Nationals at the Long Island Championships; and a team event trophy at the LSC Invitational.

## **EAST ISLIP PROUDLY BRINGS HOME 18 Medals at Special Olympics**

East Islip’s team of 10 athletes from both East Islip High School and East Islip Middle School once again competed at the Special Olympics New York Spring Games North, earning 18 medals. Each athlete competed in two track and field events, which included the 50-meter dash, 100-meter dash, 400-meter run, 100-meter walk, wheelchair race, softball throw, Turbojav throw and shot put. Anthony Agresta, Dale Ahlers, Donald Ahlers, Madeline

Director, Danny D’Orio, Dan Kenedy, Jake Kozak, Julia Modico, Sara Spruyt and Christopher Urraro collectively won seven gold medals, five silver

medals and six bronze medals, as well as two fourth-place showings. Every athlete on the team won a medal in one or both of his or her events.





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# A Skillful Season *for the High School's Academic Team*

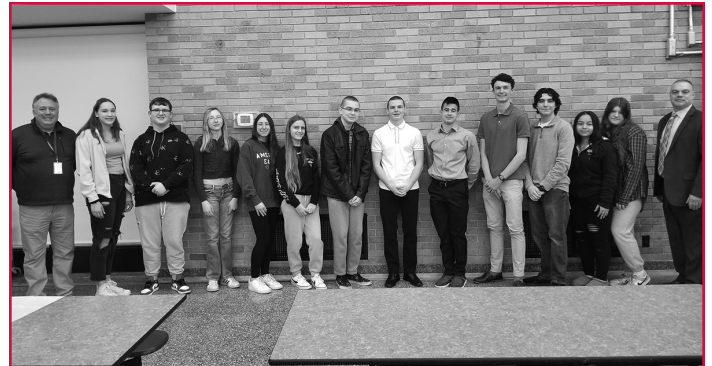
East Islip High School's Academic Team of Liam Eichler, Lance Enriquez, Ryan Flad, Robert Hilbert, Frank Irace, Shazaib Khan, Abbey Lacy, Jesse Najera and Angel Rivas performed with great skill all season, placing second in their division, and earning the prestigious right to compete in the 2023 Long Island Championship Regional Quiz Bowl. East Islip ranked eighth overall on Long Island out of 44 Nassau County and Suffolk County high schools, narrowly losing by only four points to the first-place team in the final round of playoffs.



## SECONDARY SCHOOLS HONOR OUTSTANDING STUDENTS AT BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS EVENTS

East Islip Middle School honored 20 outstanding students at its annual Breakfast of Champions ceremony. Gabriel Acevedo, Kara Albertelli, Caroline Antunes, Anthony Castilletti, Lia Ciampi, Robert DiVisconti, Annelise Eichler, Chase Engel, Casey Flad, Kendel Gravano, Skylar Herrle, Sachin Kamath, Maureen Schweizer, Connor McIntee, Rowan Offner, Ryan Pasfield, Joshua Peckholdt, Makayla Tardi, Brandon Vera and Angelina Zheng were recognized for demonstrating citizenship, dedication, integrity, positive attitude, respect and responsibility.

East Islip High School proudly recognized students Lilly Burton, Daniel Carroll, Lee Daubaras Jr., Aaron Eskenazi, Anna Franchi, Jack Gravano, Kayleigh Gurrera, Alyssa Hartman, Andrew Jacobsen, Abigail Lemke, Joseph Norrby, Andrew Olsen, Alison Romero Jimenez, Jabron Sampson and Ryan Shields as 2023's Breakfast of Champions honorees. These 15 outstanding students were nominated for being excellent student role models and for demonstrating positive, noteworthy character traits.



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