



FALL 2010

# The Beacon of Hope

EAST ISLIP UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

## The County's Finest Musicians

The East Islip High School Music Department recently announced the selection of 27 students to the 2010 NYSCAME/SCMEA High School All-County performing groups. This year's outstanding crop of student musicians is reflective of the East Islip music program's continuing success. Congratulations to the following EIHS All-County student musicians:

- Cynthia Converso - Women's Choir
- Amanda DaSilva - Women's Choir
- Jordan Guadagno - Women's Choir
- Jessica Visconte - Women's Choir
- Rebecca Walter - Women's Choir
- Kerri Becvar - Mixed Chorus
- Nicholas Converso - Mixed Chorus
- Thomas Gianni - Mixed Chorus
- Cassandra Holliday - Mixed Chorus
- Michael Janover - Mixed Chorus
- Monica Lobo - Mixed Chorus
- Kaitlyn Malewicz - Mixed Chorus
- Eric McMahon - Mixed Chorus
- Raymond O'Connor - Mixed Chorus
- Angela Pizzuto - Mixed Chorus
- Leah Arden - Orchestra
- Karyn DeFranco - Orchestra
- Joseph Fischer - Orchestra
- Christopher Lau - Orchestra
- Megan Monaghan - Orchestra
- Ethan Schaber - Orchestra
- Annette Tekverk - Orchestra
- Matthew Moore - Band
- Carly Schnitzer - Band
- Marisa Caliguri - Symphony Orchestra
- Kayleigh Cook - Symphony Orchestra
- Frances Flancbaum - Symphony Orchestra

All-County musicians will rehearse with their respective ensembles during the month of November. The 2010 NYSCAME/Suffolk HS All-County performances will take place at Half Hollow Hills High School on November 19.

## 2010-11 Tax Levy Lowered from 2.66% to 1.80%

At their September 16 Board of Education meeting, the East Islip Board approved a resolution to set the overall tax levy for the 2010-11 school year at \$60,460,958.

For a home assessed at \$40,000, the actual tax levy impact is a \$116 per year increase versus the projected budget increase of \$171 per year. The resulting tax rate increase is 1.80% versus the budget projection of 2.66%. This results in a net savings to residents of approximately \$55 per year, from the original budget projection based on a home assessed at \$40,000. The lower tax rate impact is due to higher assessed values on residential properties.



## Star Tennis Player Earns Prestigious Scholarship

Karen Serina, an eighth-grade student-athlete at East Islip Middle School, was recently selected to receive the prestigious John McEnroe Scholarship. Given to only seven tennis players in New York State, Karen was chosen based on tryouts against more than 150 competitors. The \$11,000 partial scholarship is for use toward participation in the John McEnroe Tennis Academy at Randall's Island.

The academy, which seeks to build up both strengths and weaknesses by training these students in a small-group setting, started on September 14 and asks athletes to attend at least two times a week. Karen, who received a partial scholarship for the program, will begin her training once she raises the other half of the money needed for participation. She is hoping to be sponsored by a friend of the family.

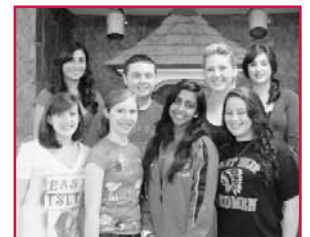
Karen has been playing tennis for eight years. Both her father and brother also play. She can be seen competing with the Varsity Tennis Team under Coach Mike Drozd.

## Students Hit a High Note

East Islip High School recently announced that six students in their music department were chosen to perform in the 2010 New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) All-State performing groups, with another two chosen as alternates. This amazing honor is based upon the superior performance of the musicians at last spring's NYSSMA All-State auditions. Thousands of students statewide compete each year for selection to NYSSMA All-State, but only a select group of the best high school musicians are chosen. Congratulations to the following students:

- Kayleigh Cook (Symphony Orchestra)
- Amanda DaSilva (Women's Chorus)
- Frances Flancbaum (Symphony Orchestra)
- Monica Lobo (Women's Chorus)
- Angela Pizzuto (Mixed Chorus)
- Rebecca Walter (Women's Chorus)

- Alternates**
- Marissa Caliguri
  - Matthew Moore



The festival is held in conjunction with the Annual NYSSMA Winter Conference in Rochester, NY at the renowned Eastman Theatre. Students will rehearse and perform with their respective All-State groups from December 2-5.

## 2 Board of Education Message

Glenn Reed, Vice President



It is a big deal.

I got a one-word text message from my son this past week – “passed.” I told my wife, called Grandma and Grandpa; we were all so happy! The message was about a test he had taken, and it was welcome news to us, something to celebrate. There would be no public announcement, no picture in the paper. This was just an item shared among family members as part of our daily “comings and goings,” but for us it was a big deal.

So I got to thinking about how many events happen in each of our lives almost every day that are a “big deal” to us, but may not be well known by others ...there are a lot! From the earliest news of the first day of school, to making a new friend, to learning something new, to becoming

part of a club or team, I suspect your lists are as long as mine.

That said, I am reminded of the role and importance of family and community in all of this; indeed of the many interactions we all have. In each of our own ways, any time we can “make a big deal” and recognize the accomplishments of our children and of others, we provide much more help and support to them in ultimately achieving these goals and other accomplishments! “You made it through a tough day – good job!” “Homework looks good – nice work!” “How was practice? – well done!” “I saw how you helped that person – thanks.” These interactions that we all have are really important in the positive foundations we build for our youngsters. Keep it up over the years, I believe, and the cumulative effect of this recognition is a powerful force in

the confidence, self respect and character development that we can see in our children and in our entire community. We celebrate each of our children – I believe all of us are a part of that effort.

With the school year now fully underway, the Board of Education continues its focus on our mission this year, “to celebrate our students’ uniqueness and maximize their ability to attain excellence as we guide and prepare them to become responsible citizens of the world.” As always, I invite all members of the community to join us at our monthly meetings (posted on the district website and in the East Islip Library) to come hear the business of the school district and to volunteer your time and efforts to make our towns all we want them to be. It is a big deal!

Thank you for letting me serve as a member of the School Board.

## Superintendent’s Message

Wendell Chu



At a workshop recently, the presenter spoke about what it takes to be a hero and how to build the

courage to be the best. He stated that attitude and action were the keys to being a hero. He asked the audience to think of all the things that they were grateful for. I thought about that question and realized that I am grateful for the chance to work in East Islip, grateful for the wonderful things I have seen teachers doing in classrooms, grateful for the energy and enthusiasm of our students, grateful for the caring and

concern of our administrators, grateful for the support of our parents and community, and grateful for the time and thoughtful planning done by our School Board.

The presenter shared that it is the attitude of thinking of the positive that allows the hero to feel that action can change a situation. He then talked about the need for action. Heroes act while others cannot or will not. The Board of Education has acted to form a strategic planning committee that will develop a three- to five-year plan for our district. This committee will gather insights from our community members to help inform the

direction we want our district to go in. This is important work that will serve to guide our work for the next several years. It will be a living document that will allow us to make course corrections over time, but set the direction firmly. It will also serve as the basis for the goals and objectives that we will develop each year and that will be monitored as we measure how well we are progressing towards our vision.

This is about looking at what we are doing, finding things we are grateful for, building the desire for making things better for all our children, and going into action to get it done. Are you the hero we need to be our best? Join us in working for our children and their futures.



## District Welcomes New Director of Athletics

Stephen Restivo joins the East Islip administration as the district's new Director of Health, Physical Education and Athletics. He comes to us from Three Village Central School District, where he served as Department Chairperson for Physical Education, Health and Athletics. With more than 12 years of education experience, he has also worked in the Middle Country Central School District. Mr. Restivo earned his Bachelor of Science in Physical Education from the University of Rhode Island, and his Master's degree and Certificate in School District Administration from SUNY Stony Brook.

## Familiar Faces in New Positions



### Dr. Lisa Belz, *Principal of Early Childhood Center*

Dr. Lisa Belz returns this year to the Early Childhood Center, where she began as Principal when she joined East Islip in 2004. With more than 20 years of education experience, Dr. Belz worked as a classroom teacher for 14 years in the South Country and Brentwood School Districts, as well as an assistant principal in the William Floyd Elementary School. She earned her Bachelor of Arts at Dowling College, her Master of Arts from SUNY Stony Brook, her Professional Diploma from Dowling College, and her Doctorate in Education from St. John's University. Dr. Belz has also served as a Board of Education trustee in the Bayport-Blue Point School District.



### Deborah Smith, *Principal of Connetquot Elementary School*

Currently in her 14th year with the district, Deborah Y. Smith began the 2010-11 school year in her new role as Principal of Connetquot Elementary School. Since 2005, Ms. Smith has been the district's Director of Humanities K-12, overseeing the curriculum and instruction of ELA and social studies. During her tenure, the district adopted the Balanced Literacy Framework and coordinated the interdisciplinary Environment Green Career Academy program. Ms. Smith has also served as Interim Assistant Principal at both the Middle School and the High School and was a teacher in the district for seven years. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Theater from SUNY Binghamton, her Master of Science in Elementary Education

from Dowling College, and her Professional Diploma in Educational Leadership from Dowling College. She is currently in the Doctoral Program for Foundations, Leadership and Policy Studies at Hofstra University.



### Stephen G. Guarino, *Director of Art & Music*

Stephen G. Guarino joins the administrative staff after a 24-year tenure as a choral director and musical theater teacher with the district. He graduated from the Crane School of Music, Potsdam College in 1986 and began his career in the East Islip School District. He received his Master's Degree from SUNY Stony Brook and his School Building Leader and School District Leader certificates from Dowling College. Mr. Guarino has been a member of the Suffolk County Music Educator's Association and served as their treasurer for three years. In addition to his teaching experience, Mr. Guarino has performed in regional theater productions and most recently designed scenery for "Thoroughly Modern Millie" at the Bayway Arts Center.

He has chaired and co-chaired many All-County Choruses and was the rehearsal accompanist as well as co-conductor for the première season of the LIGMC in 2009.



## East Islip Celebrates

# Homecoming

## with Real Character



A sea of red filled Sal Ciampi Field at Boomer Esiason Stadium for East Islip High School's annual Homecoming game and parade on Saturday, September 25. Hundreds of supporters for the East Islip Redmen Football team came

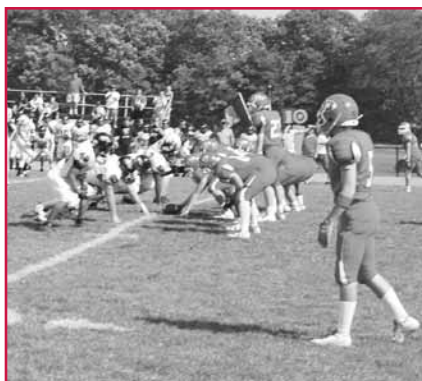
out for a warm, sunny afternoon that kicked off with the traditional parade through Islip Terrace.

The East Islip marching band, kickline team and cheerleaders led the way. Homecoming Queen Victoria Wisdom was escorted in a convertible as she waved to community members. Parade attendees had a chance to preview the cartoon-themed floats that brought famous animated characters to life. Members of each class marched proudly next to their creations: the seniors with Stewie Griffin from "The Family Guy"; the juniors with SpongeBob SquarePants; the sophomores with Snoopy from "Peanuts"; and the freshmen with Bam Bam from "The Flintstones." The parade concluded in front of the high school with a performance by the marching band and the kickline team.

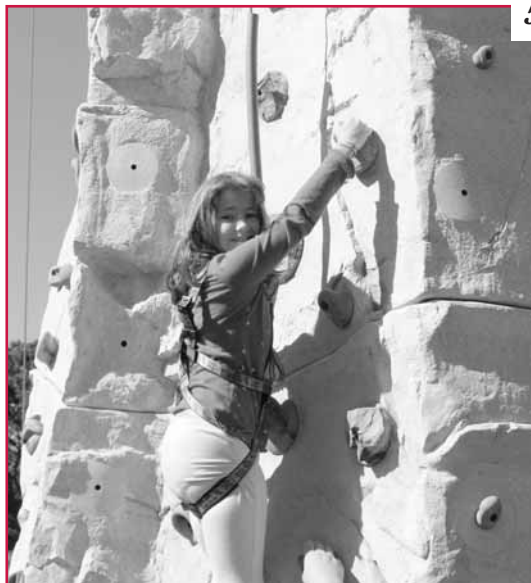
In the audience were members of the East Islip Board of Education, Principal William Brennen, and Superintendent Wendell Chu. Delighted by the outpouring of East Islip pride throughout the Homecoming festivities, Mr. Chu stated, "This is a celebration of everything we are."

Homecoming King Frank Artura, a member of the football team, joined Queen Victoria Wisdom during the halftime show, which included performances by the band and kickline. The cheerleaders kept the crowd energized throughout the game.

Despite a hard-fought, spirited effort, the Redmen were unable to continue their winning streak, losing to conference rival Newfield, 23-7. However, the game result did not put a damper on the spirit of East Islip's Homecoming.







# FTK Foundation Hosts 14th Carnival



The East Islip For The Kids (FTK) foundation recently held its 14th Annual Carnival to raise funds in support of academic, cultural, and recreational programs for East Islip School District students. Despite a rainy start, the carnival kicked off on Friday, October 1 with a nice showing of support. The carnival began with a grand opening ceremony, which included numbers from

several of the district's performing groups. This year's highlight was a performance by the new pep band at the High School and the singing of "God Bless America" by senior Amanda DaSilva.

The Carnival generates almost half of the FTK's annual fundraising and kicks off the start of another fundraising year for the organization. "The true highlight of the carnival is the kids," said LiliAnne Rohan, the FTK Carnival's main organizer. "It is the first event we did back in 1997 and is still the one event that we do each year 'for the kids.'" The FTK's other two major fundraisers are the Golf Outing, held this year on October 14 at the Island Hills Country Club, and the Black Tie Gala, which will be held on March 12 at the Southward Ho Country Club.

FTK would like to show their appreciation to the following local businesses that support the students of East Islip and the FTK Foundation: Yellow Dog Lawn Care, Suffolk Transportation Service Company, Inc., Varsity Home Service Company, Island Air Heating and Cooling, Inc., East Islip Dental Care, EISD Central Office Administrators, East Islip Teachers Association, Michael L. Sherman, DDS, PC, VMA Kemp Ju Jitsu and Bubba's Burrito Bar.



## 6 East Islip To Participate In Rivalry Series

East Islip School District's Varsity Football Team was chosen to be featured in the 2010 Great American Rivalry Series. The series, which highlights top rivalries across the country, is one of the most prestigious football events in the nation. Only 70 rivalries will be featured in the series' seventh annual tour.

As part of East Islip's participation, the Great American Rivalry Series will supply the district with a \$500 student-athlete scholarship for the football letterman with the highest GPA. In addition, the football team will receive helmet decals and the ability to host a free website on iHigh.com. The website can be viewed at [www.ihigh.com/eastislip](http://www.ihigh.com/eastislip).

The rivalry game was played on Saturday, October 30, against West Islip.

## Hitting the Big 1-0-0



Boys' Varsity Soccer coach Raymond Lang secured his 100th career win on September 21st with his team's 3-1 victory against Smithtown East. Currently in his tenth season with the varsity team, Mr. Lang began coaching in 1998 as the middle school soccer coach and has also coached the middle school tennis team. He has been a teacher in East Islip for 15 years and is currently teaching 7th grade science. Mr. Lang was named League 3 Coach of the Year in both 2006 and 2008 and has taken the Varsity Soccer team to win six league titles and two Suffolk County finals.

## High School Hosts 1st Annual College Fair and Workshops

This year, East Islip High School changed their College Fair Night to include student and parent workshops, making it the 1st Annual College Fair and Workshops. Open to all grade levels, workshops included: Financial Aid for College, NCAA Presentation, Financial Literacy, Preparing At-Risk Students for College, College Admissions Process, Saving for College, and a SUNY F.I.T. workshop on "How to Be Accepted to An Art and Design School." In addition, more than 70 college representatives were available in the cafeteria giving out admissions information and answering any student questions.



*Senior Christina Narkon talks with a representative from SUNY Cortland.*



*Senior Kyle Echevarria and his mom, Audrey, at the EI College Fair.*



*Pete Corrao Jr. and his father, Pete Corrao Sr., speak with a representative from the University of Rhode Island.*



## Creating A Smooth Transition

Prior to the start of the school year, each of the elementary schools in the district held a First Grade Orientation for parents and their incoming first graders. The orientation helps students make a smoother transition from the Early Childhood Center by acclimating first graders to their new teacher and new environment before



*Students in Mrs. Thro's class at Ruth C. Kinney Elementary School received a special welcome package that included a sticker, eraser, star and special treat.*

that sometimes-overwhelming first day. During the hour-long program, parents and their children met all of the first-grade teachers and the principal at their respective elementary school building. After introductions, children were taken to see their new classrooms while parents remained behind to review the school's policies and expectations for students.

In the classroom, students had an opportunity to introduce themselves to the class, learn about their new teacher, and ask any questions they may have had. Many classes reviewed their upcoming schedule and devised a seating arrangement; thereby eliminating any 'surprises' a student may encounter on the first day. Following the classroom visits, students reunited with their parents and toured the building.



*At Ruth C. Kinney Elementary School Max and Nicole Montalbano attend the orientation with their first grader, Elisa.*

## Student Selected For Young Leaders Conference



Noelia Vazquez, a sixth-grade student at East Islip Middle School, recently participated in the 2010 Junior National Young Leaders Conference (JrNYLC) in Washington, D.C. This six-day conference gave Noelia the unique opportunity to meet 250 middle school

students from across the United States and be introduced to the rich tradition of leadership throughout American history, while developing her own leadership skills. Scholars chosen for the program participate in educational activities and presentations, visit relevant historical sites, examine notable U.S. leaders and figures, and study the impact of leadership throughout critical periods of American history.

Upon completion of JrNYLC, students gain a greater sense of understanding of the role of individuals in American democracy, as well as the responsibilities of being a great leader. The Congressional Youth Leadership Council is a nonpartisan, educational organization that has inspired young scholars to achieve their full leadership potential. Congratulations to Noelia for being chosen to participate in such a prestigious program.

## Welcome Back! Classes Get Down to Business

Students throughout the East Islip School District were all smiles as the sun and clear skies welcomed them to the new school year on Tuesday, September 7. Greeted by their building principal, students eagerly ventured into the school buildings to rekindle friendships and reignite their love of learning. After formal introductions from new teachers, most classes dove right into the curriculum. Pictured, students from Mrs. Stewart's first-grade class at Connetquot Elementary School take turns reading from a book as a group.





## Enhancing the Curriculum

Elementary teachers throughout East Islip School District spent time in July collaborating on ways to enhance the district's curriculum. As part of these curriculum writing workshops, teachers brainstormed ideas, assessed New York State expectations, planned new and unique lessons, and established plans for the entire school year. These workshops are part of the district's ongoing efforts to enhance teacher development and student curriculum. Pictured is a highlight from the K-3 elementary workshop, at which teachers worked on English Language Arts curriculum writing at John F. Kennedy Elementary School.

## New Alcohol Laws for Minors in Suffolk County

In an ongoing effort to keep our students safe and our parents informed, the East Islip School District would like to inform all parents and residents of a new law that went into effect on August 9, 2010 for Suffolk County. The Suffolk County Legislature has determined that drinking games promote binge drinking and binge drinking can lead to alcohol poisoning; thus it has prohibited the sale of drinking games to minors in Suffolk County. Under the new law, drinking games may not be sold to anyone under the age of 21. The law defines a drinking game as "...any board game, deck of cards, kit or other product that is manufactured and/or marketed as being used for a game in which beer or any other form of alcohol is consumed during the course of play, which includes, but is not limited to, Beer Pong, Beirut, Flip Cup, Quarters, and Kings."

Any questions regarding this new law should be directed to the Suffolk County Department of Health Services at 631-852-5900. This number can also be used to refer any complaints of places in violation of the new law.

## Community Begins *Drug and Alcohol Task Force*

A group of concerned parents and residents have spearheaded a Drug and Alcohol Task Force for the East Islip community. Still in its infancy stages, the group hopes to raise awareness about underage drug and alcohol use and how to combat it as a community. The task force is in the process of looking for partners in the community, as well as identifying local "hotspots" where underage behavior may be taking place. One organization that the group has formed a partnership with is the East Islip School District. Although the task force is currently developing a formal plan, the goal is to utilize the district as a means to reach students and to disseminate information. Currently, the group is working on an anonymous survey for student completion, and the High School is exploring program options to be brought into the health curriculum.

The "task force" has recently agreed on the title The Coalition for Alcohol and Drug Awareness, and plans to meet the first Wednesday of every month at the East Islip Public Library beginning at 7 pm. The group currently consists of approximately 25 concerned community members, including representatives from the local fire department, police department, school district, and government. For more information, please contact Pat Hartley at [Hartley@optonline.net](mailto:Hartley@optonline.net).



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