

# PM RAIDER CONNECTION

PATCHOGUE-MEDFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT

## SUPERINTENDENT'S GOAL 7:

### Increase Community Engagement and Outreach

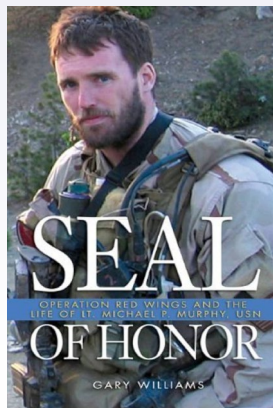
*Superintendent Goal 7 focuses on strengthening relationships between the District and the broader community. By increasing engagement and outreach, the District aims to create stronger, more collaborative connections among parents, local organizations, and other stakeholders. This goal emphasizes the importance of open communication and active involvement in the educational process.*

## INSPIRING LEGACIES

Patchogue-Medford High School recently welcomed back Class of 2014 valedictorian, Dr. Ahmar Alam, who is now a 2nd-year resident at Stony Brook University Hospital. Dr. Alam, alongside a team of medical professionals, engaged with students to discuss careers in medicine, offering invaluable insights into the medical field and education. As a shining example of academic and professional success, Dr. Alam's visit aimed to inspire current students to dream big and pursue careers that make a difference. His journey from the halls of PMHS to a promising medical career serves as a beacon of encouragement for those aspiring to follow in his footsteps.



Equally inspiring is the story of Lieutenant Michael Murphy, PMHS Class of 1994, a true American hero. Lt. Murphy, a Navy SEAL, led a reconnaissance unit into the treacherous Hindu-Kush mountains in Afghanistan in 2005. During an ambush, he demonstrated extraordinary bravery, exposing himself to enemy fire to call for rescue, sacrificing his life to save his team. For his unparalleled heroism, Lt. Murphy was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, along with numerous other distinctions. The legacy of Lt. Murphy endures at PMHS, with the school campus named in his honor in 2014. His courage and commitment remain an indelible part of the District's history.



Both Dr. Alam and Lt. Murphy exemplify the values of dedication, perseverance, and service, embodying the extraordinary potential of PMHS graduates to make a profound impact on the world. These stories inspire the current generation to aim high, act with purpose, and honor the legacies of those who came before them.

## Superintendent Goals for 2024-25

- 1. Develop Success Plans/Improvement Plan for Every School**  
*Promote high levels of growth and proficiency for all students.*
- 2. Continue Actions Toward Closing the Achievement Gap**  
*Focus on English Language Learners, special education students, and other state-reported subgroups.*
- 3. Expand Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Supports**  
*Provide District-wide support to children and their families.*
- 4. Increase Cultural Competencies District-Wide**  
*Ensure the District better reaches the needs of all children.*
- 5. Inspire Confidence and Self-Reflection in Students and Staff**  
*Develop academic and civic readiness in all stakeholders.*
- 6. Refine the Overall Security Efforts Plan**  
*Ensure the safety of students, staff, and visitors in the District.*
- 7. Increase Community Engagement and Outreach**  
*Strengthen relationships between all stakeholders.*

# PATCHOGUE-MEDFORD FAMILY CENTER: A SOURCE OF SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

*Nestled within the heart of the Patchogue-Medford School District, the Family Center is a vital but often underutilized resource hub, brimming with opportunities for support, growth, and connection. Located at Saxton Middle School, this center is much more than a facility—it's a lifeline for students, parents, and families across the District.*



## **A Beacon of Hope in Times of Crisis**

The Family Center stands ready to assist with some of life's most daunting challenges. With connections to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline and other emotional support resources, the center serves as a bridge to safety and healing. Its curated content, including videos and tips for parents and students, equips families to address issues like suicide awareness and emotional regulation with confidence.

## **A Wealth of Services Under One Roof**

The Family Center provides an impressive array of services tailored to meet the diverse needs of the Patchogue-Medford community. Operating Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., the center offers everything from food distribution to crisis intervention, all at no cost.

For those facing immediate challenges, the center's *Crisis Intervention and Short-term Counseling* services are a game changer. Free counseling sessions provide students with a safe space to navigate difficulties and build resilience. The center's multilingual team, which includes skilled social workers such as Rachael Kallman and Roanie Taveras, ensures that every family—whether English- or Spanish-speaking—has access to compassionate care and practical solutions.

The center also excels in preventive and educational initiatives. *Parent Support and Educational Workshops* cover topics such as managing anxiety, talking to children about grief, and even navigating the challenges of cyberbullying. The *Parent University* program offers workshops in both English and Spanish, making these resources accessible to all.





## Untapped Potential in the Community

Despite its breadth of offerings, the Family Center remains a hidden gem, often overlooked by those who could benefit most. Imagine the impact if every family in the Patchogue-Medford District tapped into this treasure trove of resources. Whether it's providing meals, easing the strain of financial hardship, or offering tools to handle emotional challenges, the Family Center has the power to transform lives and strengthen the community as a whole.

The center's commitment to advocacy and education extends beyond crisis response. Programs like the *Community Advocacy, Informational, and Referral Program* connect families with assistance for essentials such as electricity, oil, and food. Additionally, the dedicated staff—featuring psychologists like Robert Christie and Carolyn Walsh—ensures that every service is delivered with expertise and care.

## Your Invitation to Engage

The Patchogue-Medford Family Center is more than a resource—it's a testament to the District's commitment to its families. Whether you're seeking support, guidance, or simply a helping hand, this center is ready to serve. Let's unlock its full potential by spreading the word and encouraging our community to take advantage of the incredible services it offers.

For more information, contact the Family Center at 631-687-6751. Together, we can ensure that no one in our community feels alone or unsupported.

# PATCHOGUE-MEDFORD CELEBRATES PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The Patchogue-Medford School District proudly celebrates National Parental Involvement Day, recognizing the vital role parents and guardians play in the success of our students. Their active partnership, engagement, and dedication help foster an environment where students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. By working hand-in-hand with educators, families contribute to the ongoing achievements of our schools. This day serves as a reminder that the collective efforts of parents, guardians, and school staff are key to creating a supportive and collaborative community for our students. We deeply appreciate our families for their unwavering commitment and ongoing support.



Medford Elementary PTA



River Elementary PTA



South Ocean Middle School PTA

# PRIDE OF PATCHOGUE-MEDFORD: CHRYSE SACCO RECOGNIZED FOR HER REMARKABLE DEDICATION

At Patchogue-Medford, the phrase “Patchogue-Medford Pride” embodies more than just words—it signifies a shared sense of community, commitment, and excellence. Each year, this pride is showcased through the homecoming dedication, where an individual is celebrated for their contributions to the District. This year, the honor goes to Ms. Chryse Sacco, a remarkable educator whose impact extends far beyond the classroom.

Ms. Sacco’s unwavering dedication to the Patchogue-Medford community has left an indelible mark. As a varsity field hockey coach, language lead teacher, and organizer of countless student enrichment programs, she exemplifies the spirit of Patchogue-Medford pride. Her ability to balance numerous roles with grace and compassion inspires students and colleagues alike.

One of her standout contributions is her leadership of the Venture Club, through which she plans immersive educational tours. These trips allow students to explore the world, expand their horizons, and learn more about themselves. From crafting detailed itineraries to coordinating logistics, Ms. Sacco invests countless hours to ensure every tour is a success.

Beyond her role in the Venture Club, Ms. Sacco plays an integral part in the Hall of Fame as a committee member and advisor to its Student Ambassador Organization. She also mentors students pursuing the Seal of Biliteracy, fostering a love for languages and cultural understanding. Her efforts in these areas create inclusive environments where every student feels encouraged and valued.

Her dedication does not stop at the school walls. Ms. Sacco is a familiar face at community events, from sporting matches to theater productions. Her presence shows her students they always have a supporter in their corner. Whether volunteering at soup kitchens, fundraising with her field hockey team, or mentoring new teachers, she embodies a commitment to service that resonates throughout the Patchogue-Medford community.

Ms. Sacco’s contributions have also deeply inspired her family. Her daughter, who describes her as the ultimate role model, shared heartfelt praise, noting her mother’s tireless efforts to uplift students and community members. “She juggles her time from the first bell to late into the evening, ensuring she’s there for her students, her family, and her team,” her daughter shared. “She has shown me that teaching is a profession that goes beyond the classroom.”

Chryse Sacco grew up in the Patchogue-Medford community, a place she continues to champion with pride. Her kindness, generosity, and ability to see the good in everyone have touched countless lives. Her work, often behind the scenes, shines a spotlight on what it truly means to give back.

As we celebrated this year’s homecoming, we also celebrated Ms. Sacco—a teacher, coach, mentor, and community leader who exemplifies the very best of Patchogue-Medford pride. Thank you, Ms. Sacco, for inspiring us all and for making our community stronger every day. Congratulations, Ms. Sacco, on this well-deserved honor!



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# ATHLETICS IN SCHOOL: A KEY TOOL IN FOSTERING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND BUILDING CHARACTER

Athletics plays a vital role in shaping character and fostering the personal growth of student-athletes. By emphasizing teamwork, discipline, and perseverance, sports help students develop essential life skills that extend beyond the field. These experiences build resilience, improve leadership abilities, and promote a strong work ethic. Additionally, school sports programs create opportunities for engagement within the broader community, bringing together families, faculty, and local supporters. As student-athletes represent their schools, they strengthen connections and pride within their districts, creating a sense of unity that enriches the overall educational experience and inspires community involvement.

## Celebrating Section XI Sportsmanship Award Recipients

The Patchogue-Medford School District continues to shine as a hub of athletic excellence, with numerous student-athletes recognized for their sportsmanship, dedication, and teamwork. The prestigious Section XI Sportsmanship Award highlights the District's commitment to fostering character and integrity through sports.

In the 2023-24 academic year, athletes across a variety of teams and age groups demonstrated what it means to play with honor. Pat-Med football was a standout, earning multiple awards in the fall season, reflecting the team's collective spirit and respect for the game. Additionally, individual athletes from the varsity boys' soccer, girls' badminton, and girls' spring track teams contributed to the District's legacy of sportsmanship, showcasing their excellence on and off the field.

The spirit of athletic dedication extended to the middle school level, with commendable achievements from Oregon Middle School boys' spring track, South Ocean Middle School softball, and Saxton/South Ocean teams in both track and tennis. These young athletes embody the District's commitment to nurturing talent from the ground up.

Looking ahead to the fall 2024-25 season, the tradition of sportsmanship continues. Athletes in varsity boys' cross country, boys' golf, and junior varsity boys' soccer will carry the torch of excellence. Middle school teams, including Oregon and Saxton boys' and girls' cross country and soccer, demonstrate the depth of talent across the District.

Congratulations to all award recipients for exemplifying the values of sportsmanship and determination. Your achievements inspire the entire Patchogue-Medford community and serve as a reminder of the power of character-driven athletics.

### Section XI Sportsmanship Award Recipients

Fall 2023-24	Middle School Football "Black Team"
Fall 2023-24	Varsity Boys' Soccer
Spring 2023-24	Varsity Girls' Badminton
Spring 2023-24	Varsity Girls' Spring Track
Spring 2023-24	Oregon Middle School Boys' Spring Track
Spring 2023-24	South Ocean Middle School Softball
Spring 2023-24	Saxton/South Ocean Girls' Spring Track
Spring 2023-24	Saxton/South Ocean Boys' Tennis
Fall 2024-25	Varsity Boys' Cross Country
Fall 2024-25	Patchogue-Medford Varsity Boys' Golf
Fall 2024-25	Junior Varsity Boys' Soccer
Fall 2024-25	Oregon Girls' Cross Country
Fall 2024-25	Oregon Boys' Cross Country
Fall 2024-25	Saxton Boys' Soccer
Fall 2024-25	Saxton Girls' Soccer
Fall 2024-25	Saxton/South Ocean Boys' Cross Country
Fall 2024-25	Middle School Football "Black Team"

### NYSPHSAA School of Distinction

(100% of Varsity Teams Receive Scholar-Athlete Team Award)

2023-2024 School Year – Patchogue-Medford High School Athletics

# SUPERINTENDENT'S GOAL 7 IN ACTION: COMMUNITY OUTREACH AROUND THE DISTRICT

## ***Patchogue-Medford Honors Law Enforcement Appreciation Day***

The collaboration between the Patchogue-Medford School District and local law enforcement, particularly the Suffolk County Police Department, is a critical component of what we do here in the District. The work done among both parties is absolutely essential in keeping our students safe, secure, and comfortable, and we were honored to celebrate the work of local law enforcement during Law Enforcement Appreciation Day.



Throughout the year, law enforcement members actively engage with students, sharing their experiences, providing career guidance, and promoting safety in our schools. Through visits to our schools and collaboration with our high school's Law Enforcement Career and Technical Education (CTE) program, local officers play an integral role in supporting students' aspirations. These efforts not only enrich students' educational experiences but also offer vital opportunities for them to explore careers in law enforcement and public service.

We are grateful for the selflessness of our law enforcement partners and look forward to continuing this important collaboration that enhances the growth and safety of our students.

## ***South Ocean Middle School Celebrates 100th Anniversary***



Last fall, South Ocean Middle School celebrated its 100th anniversary with a heartwarming event that showcased the strong community bonds at the heart of the school. The celebration, sponsored by the PTA, brought together students, families, faculty, and staff for an evening filled with music, food, and games, strengthening the connections within the Patchogue-Medford community.

“We are honored to celebrate a century of achievement at South Ocean Middle School,” said Dr. Donna Jones,

Superintendent of the Patchogue-Medford School District. “This event truly reflects the sense of unity and pride that defines this school and our entire District.”

A newly commissioned mural, unveiled during the festivities, captures the school's rich history and commitment to educational excellence. The mural reflects not only academic achievements but also highlights the importance of the arts, athletics, and extracurricular activities, which are all vital components of the school's inclusive learning environment.

The anniversary event was a true celebration of South Ocean's legacy and its ongoing role in building community and fostering student success.



## Patchogue-Medford Thanks Substitute Teachers

Substitute teachers are one of the many unsung heroes of any school district, and the Patchogue-Medford School District was proud to give them their moment in the sun when we celebrated Substitute Teacher Appreciation Day. These hardworking, dedicated educators ensure the continuity of high-quality education for our students and play a crucial role in maintaining a consistent learning environment, adapting quickly to meet the needs of each classroom they step into.

We are especially grateful for several substitute teachers who go above and beyond to build strong community bonds within our schools. Madelyn Drake, a permanent substitute at Canaan Elementary, works collaboratively with staff and fosters positive relationships with students across grade levels. Matthew Jones at Bay Elementary connects with students by addressing them as “my friends” or “*mi amigos*,” creating an uplifting atmosphere. Ava Neikham at Barton Elementary demonstrates incredible dedication, always arriving early and staying late to support students. At Patchogue-Medford High School, Jake Kolar seamlessly handles any subject, making a positive impact on both students and teachers. These substitute teachers are a truly vital part of our District’s success and community spirit.



*Matthew Jones*



*Ava Neikham*



*Madelyn Drake*

## Eagle Elementary School Reading Prize Patrol Surprises Family Literacy Winners

Eagle Elementary School celebrated National Family Literacy Month by hosting an interactive program that encouraged families to engage in reading and writing activities throughout November. Each participating family pledged to read and write daily, with one family from each grade level randomly selected to receive a surprise visit from the Eagle Reading Prize Patrol.

“Our families were enthusiastic about the program, and we wanted to honor their commitment by surprising them with a visit and prizes,” said Principal Erin Skahill. The Prize Patrol visited homes with banners, balloons, and book baskets to celebrate the winning families’ dedication to literacy.

The first round of visits included kindergartner Bennett LaFond and first grader Amalia Berzosa, followed by fourth grader Thalia Bradley and fifth grader Nyonni Redding. Students were thrilled by the surprise, and the visits have continued to honor other winning families.

This initiative supports the Patchogue-Medford School District’s mission to foster community engagement and enhance student literacy skills.



**Patchogue-Medford Schools**  
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## Tremont Elementary School Celebrates MLK Day, Highlights Message of Unity

Students at Tremont Elementary School in the Patchogue-Medford School District honored Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy through a creative and educational arts and crafts activity. The class explored Dr. King's messages of peace, unity, and equality while expressing their understanding through hands-on projects. The activity encouraged students to reflect on kindness, fairness, and how they can make a positive impact in their own communities. Through art, Tremont Elementary's young learners not only celebrated MLK Day but also deepened their appreciation for the values Dr. King championed.



## Oregon Middle School Staff Prepares Meals for Local Food Bank

Staff members at Oregon Middle School recently came together to prepare meals for a local food bank, demonstrating their commitment to community service. This effort provided nutritious meals to families in need, reinforcing the school's dedication to giving back. This story aligns with our newsletter's special focus on community service and outreach, highlighting the incredible ways our District makes a difference. By volunteering their time and effort, Oregon Middle School staff set an inspiring example of generosity and compassion, showing that small acts of kindness can have a big impact on the community.



## Oregon Middle School Peer Leaders Sworn In

Oregon Middle School in the Patchogue-Medford School District proudly welcomed its newest Peer Leaders during a special swearing-in ceremony. These students, recognized for their leadership, responsibility, and commitment to helping others, took an oath to serve as positive role models within their school community. The Peer Leaders will support their peers, promote kindness, and foster a welcoming environment. Their dedication reflects the school's commitment to encouraging student leadership and personal growth.

