

THE 'SET SPOTLIGHT



June 2025



Letter from the
Superintendent



In the Zone:
Athletics



Celebrating Our
Successes



Community
Corner



Inside the
Classroom



Applauding
Our Educators



Spotlight on the
Arts



Picture Perfect



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LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Manhasset School Community,

Thank you for your participation in the annual budget vote and trustee election. The approved budget supports our district's core priorities while sustaining and enhancing academic programs, student experiences, and learning environments. The Manhasset community's continued support of our district highlights the strong collaboration between families, educators and residents in ensuring that all students have access to exceptional educational opportunities.

This edition of the 'Set Spotlight highlights the continued achievements of our students, as well as spotlights some of the many school activities that have taken place over the past several weeks. Spring is always a busy season for our students, so I commend them for finding balance between their academic pursuits and extracurricular activities.

As we look ahead to the final month of the school year, I want to extend my best wishes to all students, especially members of the Class of 2025. Please take the time to slow down and appreciate these final moments of your high school career and cherish the time spent with your friends and family. We look forward to celebrating your accomplishments in the weeks ahead!

Sincerely,
Dr. Gaurav Passi
Superintendent of Schools



CELEBRATING OUR SUCCESSSES



SIX STUDENTS AWARDED NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIPS

The district is proud to congratulate six members of the Class of 2025 who have been named National Merit Scholarship winners.

Jonathan Liu Chen
Loic Hairabedian
Colin Hairabedian
Jonas Kim
Alena Tsai
Emily Zhao



VE TEAM EARNS BRONZE MEDAL AT INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

On April 8, Manhasset High School students in the Virtual Enterprise class attended the Youth Business Summit at the Jacob Javits Center in Manhattan, where they took home a bronze medal for Best Sales Pitch.

During its inaugural year, the Manhasset Virtual Enterprise class and their Allergy Armour business plan has seen incredible success, winning awards at regional competitions and earning respect from VE leaders, educators and peers for their creativity, enthusiasm and professionalism.

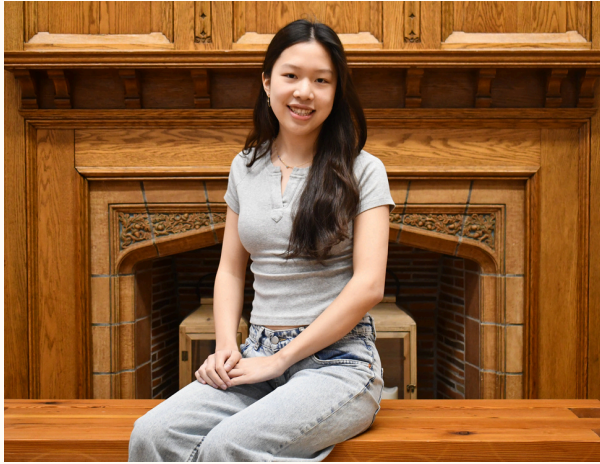


STUDENT AWARDED SCHOLARSHIP FOR SPANISH IMMERSION CAMP

Congratulations to eighth grader Sophia Sharaf on being awarded the Kevin Cessna-Buscemi Global Citizen Scholarship from the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese.

As the recipient of this scholarship, Sophia will attend a one-week, fully immersive language and culture learning camp at the Language Village in Minnesota. This experience will offer Sophia the opportunity to further improve her Spanish skills and focus on her interest in medical anthropology.

CELEBRATING OUR SUCCESSES



CATHERINE CHEN NAMED STOCKHOLM JUNIOR WATER PRIZE COMPETITION FINALIST

Junior Catherine Chen has been named the New York State Finalist in the 2025 Stockholm Junior Water Prize Competition for her project, "Integrated In Vitro and In Silico Approaches for Hydrogel-Based Dye Adsorption: Synthesis, Characterization, and Implementation of a Novel 3D Printed Wastewater Filtration System."

She will be representing New York State at the Stockholm Junior Water Prize National Competition, June 19–22, at Washington University in St. Louis.



MANHASSET MEDALS AT NYS SCIENCE OLYMPIAD TOURNAMENT

The Manhasset High School Division B State Team competed at the NYS Science Olympiad Tournament over the weekend and came home with a total of 11 event medals, including three first-place finishes.

Overall, within a field of 40 teams, Manhasset ranked No. 7 and brought home a team trophy.

This marks the best result in the history of Manhasset's participation in the Science Olympiad.



RASHIDA POONAWALA HONORED WITH AWARD FOR PODCASTING EXCELLENCE

Congratulations to senior Rashida Poonawala on earning the Student Television Network 2025 Broadcast Excellence Award for her podcast, "The Career Spotlight." This is the second consecutive year that Rashida has been recognized with this prestigious award.

[Click here to listen to Rashida's award-winning podcast, "The Career Spotlight."](#)

CELEBRATING OUR SUCCESSSES



SCIENCE RESEARCH STUDENTS SCORE AT INVITATIONAL SCIENCE FAIR

Congratulations to the high school science research scholars who presented at the WAC Lighting Invitational Science Fair on April 27. Students who participated in this competition were judged by professionals in their respective field of science and several were honored with awards.



MANHASSET HACKATHON TEAMS CELEBRATE SUCCESS

Congratulations to the Shelter Rock Storm and Munsey Park Tigers on their hard-fought and well-earned success at the KidOYO Code Conquest "Battle of Bunker Hill" Hackathon on April 4. The Storm conquered 18 other teams to take the top spot and won first place for their banner and Capital Defense Project. The Tigers put up a fight throughout the competition, showcasing their resilience, creativity and teamwork, and earning them a top five finish overall.



SHELTER ROCK SIXTH GRADE MATH TEAM ADDS UP THE WINS

Congratulations to the Shelter Rock Elementary School sixth grade math team on their success at the New York Math League Olympiad.

The math scholars ranked No. 6 in New York State and tied for first place in Nassau County.

In addition, Iris Chen ranked 13th in New York State and second in Nassau County, Brandon Cao ranked 24th in New York State and third in Nassau County, and Jayden Lai ranked 29th in New York State and fourth in Nassau County.

INSIDE THE CLASSROOM



MUNSEY PARK SIXTH GRADERS UNEARTH ANCIENT EGYPT PRESENTATIONS

Sixth grade students at Munsey Park presented their ancient Egypt projects to their families. Teachers facilitated the research as students presented the culminating projects. Students donned costumes and shared individually created newspaper articles and dioramas.

You can see more photos from this creative lesson [here](#).

SHELTER ROCK STUDENTS INVESTIGATE NEWTON'S LAWS OF MOTION

Shelter Rock fourth graders visited the Science Lab for a hands-on study of Newton's Laws of Motion. The students participated in hands-on experiments to observe the Law of Inertia, the Second Law of Motion and the Third Law, for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. To conclude the lab, the students operated fan cars and discussed how Newton's Laws of Motion apply to their operation.



STUDENT VOICES, BRANDED FUTURES: A PODCASTING PROJECT

During Business and Careers class, seventh graders learned about the importance of personal brands. Each student learned how to craft their own unique personal brand to reflect their values, goals and aspirations. The highlight of the project? Hosting their very own podcast!

Students interviewed community members, exploring career journeys and life lessons. These conversations uncovered powerful stories, and students tied in their own career assessment results, making meaningful connections between where they are now and where they hope to go.



SPOTLIGHT ON THE ARTS



MIDDLE SCHOOL DELIGHTS WITH UPLIFTING AND ENERGETIC PRODUCTION OF '13 JR.'

Congratulations to the Middle School cast and crew on their spectacular production of "13 Jr."

The cast brought youthful charm and exuberance to the show, singing and dancing with so much energy, the intimate Black Box Theater could hardly contain it!

This exhilarating production of "13 Jr." was the perfect way to close out a fantastic Manhasset Theater season. The district can't wait to see what's behind the curtain for next school year.

'DANCING WITH THE STARS: SHELTER ROCK EDITION' IS A STAR-STUDED SPECTACLE

The Shelter Rock Dance and Technology Show, "Dancing with the Stars: Shelter Rock Edition," was a spectacular success, showcasing incredible talent, teamwork and community spirit.

From the dancers who lit up the stage with passion and creativity to the tech crew, stagehands and CAPP program participants who worked tirelessly behind the scenes, every student played a vital role in making this unforgettable event a triumph.



SYMPHONIC WIND ENSEMBLE DEBUTS COMPOSITION BORN FROM COLLABORATION

The Manhasset High School Symphonic Wind Ensemble commissioned NYC-based composer Jessica Meyer to write a new piece of music, "From City to Shore," that they performed during their spring concert on April 29.

As part of the collaboration, Ms. Meyer visited the students to provide guidance and feedback as they work together to breathe life into her music.



SPOTLIGHT ON THE ARTS



FOUR STUDENT MUSICIANS SELECTED FOR ALL-EASTERN HONORS ENSEMBLES

Congratulations to our Manhasset High School student musicians who were selected to perform with the All-Eastern Honors Ensembles at the 2025 National Association for Music Education Eastern Division Conference in April.

Students representing Manhasset at the event included Thomas Grygiel in the mixed chorus and trumpeters Bernard Chan and Harrison McKenna and trombonist James Tsekouras in the jazz ensemble. They were among 600 of the top musicians in the 10-state region who were invited to be a part of this prestigious event.

At the conference, which took place in Connecticut, the students spend three days collaborating and rehearsing with renowned conductors and music educators before a final performance.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OUR STUDENT MUSICIANS ON THEIR INCREDIBLE SPRING CONCERT PERFORMANCES!

This year's spring concerts filled our auditoriums with beautiful music and left audiences speechless.

We are so proud to congratulate our choirs, bands and orchestras who spent countless hours practicing and honing their skills before putting their immense talent on display on stage in front of parents, friends and community members.

Special thanks to our passionate and dedicated music educators for guiding and inspiring our students, giving them confidence and encouragement and instilling discipline and motivation that will benefit them not only musically, but in all aspects of their future.

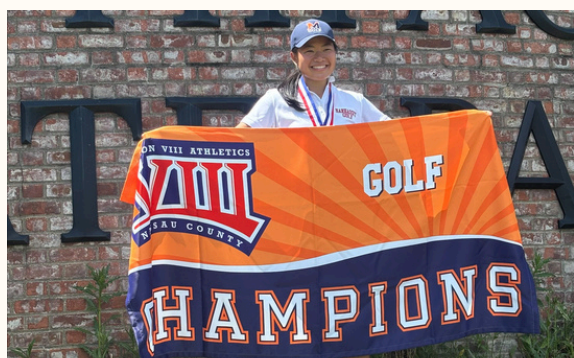


IN THE ZONE: ATHLETICS



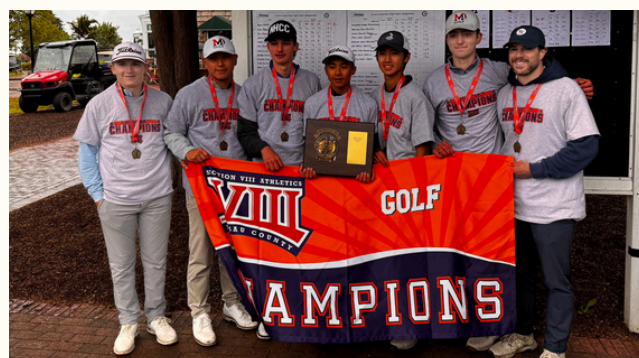
BOYS TRACK AND FIELD WIN COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP

Congratulations to the boys track and field squad on winning the Nassau County Class AA Championship for the second consecutive year and to our individual county champions Nic Katsoulis (1600m), Blake Sealy (3200m) and John Hogan, Matthew Milewski, Cole Miller and Max Tobar (4x800m relay).



GIRLS GOLF COUNTY CHAMPION

Congratulations to Madison Chen on winning first place in the Nassau County championships!



BOYS GOLF TEAM WINS COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP

Congratulations to Manhasset varsity boys golf on earning the title of Nassau County champions!



MANHASSET CREW WINS 2025 BARKER CUP

First place goes to Sean Randall and Owen Lambert of Manhasset High School. This award is given to the boys lightweight double event each year at the Stotesbury Cup Regatta. Congratulations!

IN THE ZONE: ATHLETICS



GIRLS TRACK AND FIELD WIN CONFERENCE WITH UNDEFEATED 14-0 SEASON

Congratulations to our girls track and field team for their incredible season, including a third-place win at counties and plenty of championship trophies, including Anna Paloubis (2000m steeplechase), Kate Voelker (high jump) and Katherine Garvin, Emma Motroni, Anna Paloubis and Gianna Sforza (4x800m).



MANHASSET UNIFIED SPORTS CHAMPIONS

Congratulations to Manhasset Unified Sports on winning first place in their division!



BOYS TENNIS: MAX GOLUBENKO NAMED COUNTY CHAMPION

Congratulations to Max Golubenko on winning first place in the singles division in the Nassau County championships!

COMMUNITY CORNER



SHELTER ROCK STUDENTS HELP FURRY FRIENDS IN NEED

The Shelter Rock Kindness Club and Student Council teamed up to collect donations from the community to benefit rescue animals at North Shore Animal League of America.



UNIFIED SPORTS CLUB 'CHOOSE TO INCLUDE'

Manhasset High School's Unified Sports Club hosted its annual "Choose To Include" campaign in honor of Autism Acceptance Month. Students and staff were asked to fill out cards stating why they "choose to include...". They had a big turnout in the secondary school's main hallway where they displayed the array of cards.



MUNSEY PARK KINDNESS CLUB PREPARES TREATS FOR FAMILIES

Munsey Park Kindness Club students rolled up their sleeves to participate in the Treats from the Heart baking program at the New Hyde Park Ronald McDonald House. The smell of fresh-baked cookies and chocolate cake filled the kitchen. Students not only brought baked treats but also warm smiles, helping to create a comforting environment for families. Their efforts bring families a small taste of home during a challenging time.



APPLAUDING OUR EDUCATORS

**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING STAFF MEMBERS ON THEIR
OUTSTANDING ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**


Elementary

- Amanda Gimondo (Munsey Park Elementary School Counseling) became a certified Anxiety and Stress Management Specialist through the American School Counselor Association.
- Susan Pardes (Munsey Park Elementary School Special Education) renewed her National Board Certification and completed her School Building Leader certification.

English

- Candyce Pelfrey-Kennedy will study English literature this summer at the Cambridge University Teacher Seminar in England.
- Brian Woerner was just named a peer reviewer for the English Journal, the NCTE premiere journal for English scholarship. He has also been accepted as an AP Reader for AP Literature and Composition.
- Eileen Madigan will be an AP Reader for AP Language and Composition. She was also appointed as a member of the NYSED English Regents advisory committee.
- Diana DiPaolo-Caputi was named an AP Reader for AP Language and Composition for the second consecutive year. As a Reader, teachers have the opportunity to witness student work on a national scale and bring this knowledge back to their own classrooms.

Fine and Performing Arts

- Samantha Goldberg (Munsey Park) and Samantha Meyer (Shelter Rock) served as All-County chairpersons, organizing the Division 2 (6th grade) orchestra.
 - Samantha Goldberg prepared and co-presented a workshop on Mentorship to the Nassau County Music Administrators.
 - Antonia Nargentino (Shelter Rock) chaired NMEA All-County Division 2 (6th grade) chorus.
 - Jared Berry (Secondary) serves as the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) National Honor Choir Chairperson. Through this work he organizes thousands of auditions and logistics for honor choir performances all over the country.
 - Patrick Dillon (Munsey Park) serves as the President of the Long Island chapter of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association and presented for SCMEA at the SCMEA "Day of Recorder."
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APPLAUDING OUR EDUCATORS

Mathematics

- Derek Jones, Secondary Mathematics, was honored as an influential high school mentor by Cornell University's Merrill Scholar program. A former Manhasset graduate chose Mr. Jones as "the secondary teacher/mentor who has made the most significant contribution to their education."
- Laura Petras, Secondary Mathematics, has been selected as an AP Statistics examination reader.

Social Studies

- Three social studies teachers have been selected as AP Readers: Kimberly Crawford (AP Human Geography), Annie Law (AP Microeconomics) and Christopher Keen (AP Psychology, second consecutive year). AP Readers must apply for the position with College Board.

World Languages

- Christen Visceglie, Secondary World Language, serves as Vice-President of K-12, National American Association of Teachers of Italian; Advisory Board, American Association of Teachers of Italian, Long Island Chapter; Honoree of the Italian American Heritage Society of Long Island.

Administration

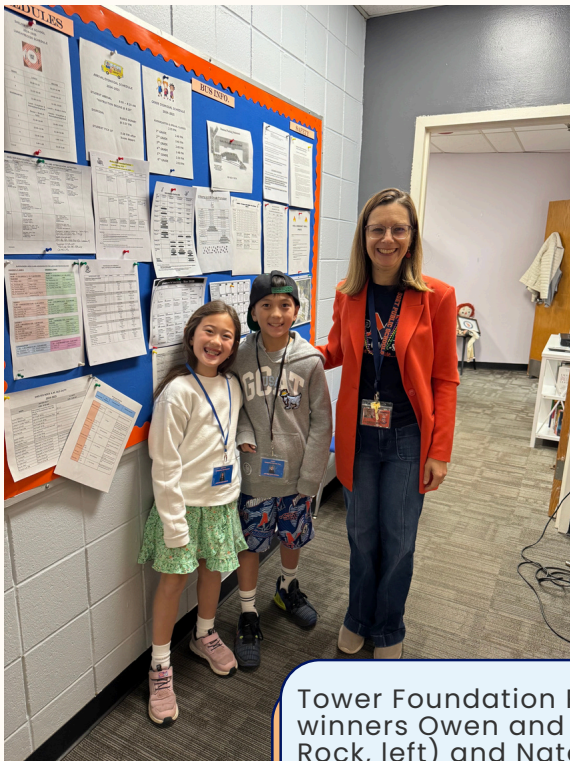
- Dr. Chad Altman, Principal of Munsey Park Elementary School, was named the 2025-2026 Co-President of the Nassau County Elementary School Principals Association (NCESPA).



PICTURE PERFECT



MBC and Film Club attended the 19th Annual Locust Valley Film Festival.



Tower Foundation Principal for a Day winners Owen and Collette (Shelter Rock, left) and Nate (Munsey Park, right).



PICTURE PERFECT



Manhasset High School French, Italian and Spanish national honor societies celebrated their induction ceremony.



Author and illustrator Yangsook Choi visited Munsey Park and Shelter Rock first graders.



Advanced Studio Art and Painting 2 students step outside the classroom for a plein-air painting session.



Shelter Rock fifth graders focused on respect and teamwork at Project Adventure.



Munsey Park fifth graders drafted, created, wrote, then published their own fantasy stories.