



SUMMER 2025

# Herricks Dateline

HERRICKS PUBLIC SCHOOLS



## CELEBRATING *Our Graduates*

On June 26, families and friends gathered in a celebratory spirit as the Class of 2025 took a giant step toward the future at the 66th Herricks High School Commencement.

As members of the high school band performed “Pomp and Circumstance,” the processional of 362 students, led by valedictorian Shannon Hong and salutatorian Sharath Venkatesan, entered the stadium to cheers and applause.

Following a soaring rendition of The Star-Spangled Banner by senior Shuyao Liang, principal Joan Keegan opened the ceremony by inviting representatives of the senior class to welcome guests with a greeting in their native languages. This annual tradition proudly showcases the rich cultural diversity within the Herricks community.

The first speaker of the night, Board of Education president Juleigh Chin, stressed the power of showing up for friends, family and the community. “Show people that you care not just with words, but with your presence and your actions,” Ms. Chin said. “Like a ripple in the water, one small act of showing up can spread farther than you’ll ever know.”

Next, Ms. Keegan introduced Superintendent of Schools Dr. Tony Sinanis, who thanked families, teachers and staff for the support that has been instrumental in preparing students for the next phase of their learning journeys. Dr. Sinanis encouraged the graduates to consider our overreliance on technology and asserted that “some of life’s

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## A Message from *The Board of Education*

Dear Herricks Community,

As one school year ends and another is about to begin, we want to take a moment to thank our students, families, teachers and staff for making this past year full of resilience, growth and community.

Throughout the year, we saw students show up for one another and rise to the moment with courage and heart. Whether working together in classrooms, performing on stage, leading on the field or helping a friend through tough days, our students demonstrated what it means to be collaborative, compassionate and confident.

We saw critical thinking in action, creative innovation in full bloom, and communication that strengthened our community. These are the skills that matter, not just for school but for life. We are proud of the way our students are growing into thoughtful and engaged citizens.

To the Class of 2025, we celebrate all that you have achieved and all that lies ahead. To everyone returning in the fall, we cannot wait to welcome you back with new opportunities, fresh ideas and open hearts.

Until then, we wish you a summer of rest, reflection and joy.

With gratitude and hope,  
Your Board of Education

## At the Top of Their Class

### VALEDICTORIAN SHANNON HONG

Throughout her high school career, Shannon has demonstrated a blend of academic talent, compassionate leadership and an unwavering commitment to causes that matter to her. It is her positivity and resilience that have helped to propel her to the very top of her class, holding a perfect GPA and achieving over 10 perfect 5's on her AP exams.



Beyond academics, Shannon's commitment to social justice and mental health awareness has led efforts to protect educational rights and advocate against the banning of literature. Shannon is also an accomplished writer, winning numerous accolades, including first place in the New York Times essay contest. As president of the Environmental Club, Shannon has served as a wildlife rehabilitator, providing care for injured animals in Nassau County.

Shannon will be majoring in ecology and evolutionary biology at Yale University.

### SALUTATORIAN SHARATH VENKATESAN

Sharath's road to becoming salutatorian has included a balance of academics, family, social life and extracurricular activities, always accompanied by his contagious smile.



Since freshman year, he has proven himself as an exceptional science scholar, participating in research projects, competitions and summer programs.

Outside of the classroom, he holds leadership roles in Robotics Club, Rube Goldberg Club, Science Olympiad and the South Asian Student Association. Sharath also founded a nonprofit organization called A Second Print, which focuses on the use of 3D printers to build prosthetics. Sharath is captain of the volleyball team and an accomplished musician, having been twice recognized with All-State honors as a tuba player.

Sharath will be attending New York University where he will be majoring in neuroscience and biology.

# CELEBRATING *Our Graduates*

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most important lessons cannot be learned online.”

“Life is about leaning into curiosity, critical thinking, and relationships,” Dr. Sinanis said. “It’s about being aware of your surroundings and figuring out what you can contribute to the world. Not everything worth knowing comes with a quick search result.”

Next on the dais, salutatorian Sharath Venkatesan began by highlighting his incredible family support system and how their cultural traditions will continue to define him even as he leaves home to pursue a career in medicine. “As we go out into this world, don’t chase just titles,” Sharath stressed. “Chase meaning, chase peace, chase the kind of life where people are glad they know you not because of what you did, but because of who you are.”

In her thought-provoking speech, valedictorian Shannon Hong challenged her peers to “embrace the unknown not with fear, but with curiosity and courage.” She encouraged her class to see uncertainty as a space for discovery and progress.

“Let’s not run from the future,” she said, “but walk toward it – and let our society evolve. We can be the generation that doesn’t fear the unknown, but learns from it, challenges it and even celebrates it.”

Representing the Class of 2025, Athul Santhosh introduced the

guest speaker, beloved assistant principal Andrew Frisone who is retiring this year after 24 years with the district. “You’re all lucky to be here – but not as lucky as me,” said Mr. Frisone, with his trademark smile. Mr. Frisone talked about all the “Herricks moments” he has experienced and provided words of encouragement.

“You only get what you want if you work hard, you’re honest, and you’re good,” he said. “No matter where life takes you, Herricks will always be a part of your story – and you’ll always be a Highlander.”

Before the diplomas were handed out, Class President Hannah Joseph and Student Government Executive Board President Thomas Tuzzolo joined together to celebrate the strength, diversity of thought and inclusiveness of the Herricks community and the impact that his class will have on the community and the world.

Finally, the moment everyone had been waiting for arrived. Confetti flew and applause and cheers filled the air as diplomas were presented by Board of Education members and the graduates posed for photos.

Before the evening concluded, members of the Class of 2025 took part in the “turning of the tassels,” and tossed their caps high in the air.

Congratulations to our newest class of Herricks graduates. We are so proud of you, and remember, you are all Highlanders for life!



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DISTRICT  
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PAID  
GARDEN CITY, NY  
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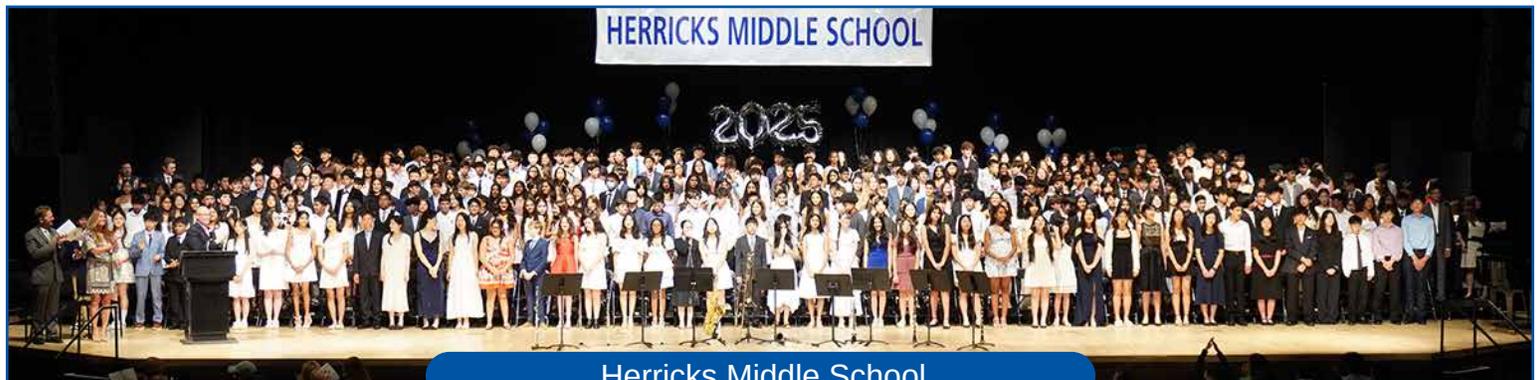
*Superintendent of Schools*

Visit [www.herricks.org](http://www.herricks.org) for more district news and information!

# Moving Upward and Onward!

Congratulations to all students throughout the district who celebrated their moving-up ceremonies in June. Each celebration featured student reflections, words of wisdom from educators and wonderful musical performances.

We wish our new kindergartners, sixth and ninth graders much success as they continue to learn and grow at Herricks!



Herricks Middle School



Center Street Elementary



Denton Avenue Elementary



Searingtown Elementary



Prekindergarten