



HERRICKS HERALD

HERRICKS SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

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Herricks Homegrown

SPECIAL ISSUE

November is National Gratitude Month, and in this issue of the Herricks Herald, we're celebrating our incredible alumni staff. We're deeply grateful for their dedication and the lasting impact they have on our district!

Herricks Homegrown

Herricks Homegrown is a regular feature where we highlight members of the Herricks staff who are also alumni of the district! This month, we'll be featuring five amazing members of the Herricks community. Additionally, don't forget to keep an eye on our social media channels for the Herricks Homegrown videos, which feature even more of our staff!



Jillian Valletutti

Kindergarten Teacher, Center Street Elementary

Where did you go after graduating from Herricks?

After high school, Ms. Valletutti attended C.W Post University to earn her undergraduate degree in Childhood Education, and also got her Masters Degree there in special education. Although she changed her major a few times, she knew teaching was where her heart was. Ms. Valletutti had experience working for Herricks Summer

Recreation, and was happiest when working with kids, so it was the right decision to pursue a degree in education.

What brought you back to Herricks, specifically?

After her time at Herricks, Ms. Valletutti remained in touch with some of the amazing teachers she had at Center Street Elementary. When a teaching assistant position became available, they reached out and encouraged her to apply. Ms. Valletutti always loved coming back to the neighborhood and visiting past teachers to update them on what she was up to, so applying for the position was a no brainer.

What does being back at Herricks mean to you?

Herricks has always felt like home to Ms. Valletutti. She has always felt comfortable in this school and knew she would fit in well, forming great relationships with her coworkers. She has held this school and town close to her heart. Although her family has since moved out of the district, the best part is that she gets to see her childhood home from the classroom window every day! Each day, Ms. Valletutti is happy to be back at the place where she grew up, surrounded by teachers who helped shape her education. Herricks is home and will always have a special place in her heart!



Giselle Rosario

IG Teacher, Center Street Elementary

Where did you go after graduating from Herricks?

After graduating from Herricks, Ms. Rosario pursued a degree in education at St. John's University. While a student there, she benefited from a collaboration between St. John's and Herricks, which she is extremely grateful for. This collaboration allowed her to complete her observations and student teaching at her home school, Center Street.

What brought you back to Herricks, specifically?

Working at Center Street Elementary is a dream come true for Ms. Rosario. Here, she has the opportunity to be like the many teachers who created opportunities for her, built strong relationships, and celebrated every accomplishment she had. Being back at the place where she grew as a learner and is now continuing to develop professionally in the field of education is truly meaningful to her.

Ms. Rosario has many role models at Center Street and within the district who inspire her creativity and shape how she wants to create a community in her classroom and with her colleagues. Each day, she celebrates victories, whether academic or personal, with her students to help foster a positive learning experience, similar to the one she had as a student.

What does being back at Herricks mean to you?

Coming back to Center Street is like coming home. Ms. Rosario is motivated to build positive relationships with her students and colleagues, where they continue to learn professional, personal, and life skills as educators, and she fosters these values in her students. Herricks is Ms. Rosario's happy place, and she hopes to create a fun learning environment for all of her students, helping to establish a safe space for them to learn and grow.



Katherine Kirschner

*Spanish Language and Language Immersion
Teacher, Herricks Middle School*

Where did you go after graduating from Herricks?

After high school, Ms. Kirschner attended American University in Washington, D.C. There, she majored in Spanish—something she knew she wanted to study, even though she wasn't quite sure what career path it would lead to. As a student, she worked as a teaching assistant for Nassau BOCES during the summer and discovered that she really enjoyed working with students. This experience

inspired her to double major in Spanish and Secondary Education.

What brought you back to Herricks, specifically?

Her experience as a student is what drew Ms. Kirschner back to Herricks. The program is hands-on, culturally rich, features a well-articulated curriculum, and is led by passionate instructors. So, when she sat back and thought, "Where can I be an effective teacher?" the World Language Department at Herricks immediately came to mind.

What does being back at Herricks mean to you?

Now, as a teacher at Herricks Middle School, it reflects Ms. Kirschner's commitment to fostering a community her students are proud to call their own. She is honored by the trust the community places in her to give her best effort for her students and remains dedicated to its growth.

Ms. Kirschner graduated from Herricks High School in 2002 and began working there in 2006. Returning to the Herricks community allowed her to collaborate with colleagues who were once her teachers. While this was initially a strange experience, she quickly adapted and found her place.

Herricks today is quite different from what it was when she was a student—the communities and buildings have changed. Ms. Kirschner feels that, as an adult, stepping back and reflecting on her own educational experiences enables her to create a positive and enriching environment for current Highlanders.



Joanne Savitt

Teaching Assistant, Herricks Middle School

Where did you go after graduating from Herricks?

After high school, Ms. Savitt attended CW Post, where she earned her bachelor's degree. She then completed her master's degree at Queens College. Following that, she taught Spanish part-time at a Catholic school for seven years.

What brought you back to Herricks, specifically?

While working in the Catholic school system, Ms. Savitt also served as a substitute teacher. One of the assignments she took was at Herricks Middle School. As a substitute at Herricks, she fit in well, and the hiring team was impressed with her work. They asked Ms. Savitt to finish out the last two weeks of the school year at Herricks. She worked the days she was available, while simultaneously preparing to give final exams to her 7th and 8th-grade students at the Catholic school.

In the end, Ms. Savitt was offered a teaching assistant position in a Foreign Language classroom. She was thrilled to accept the position in the year 2000. Since then, her role has evolved slightly, and she now works as a teaching assistant in the PACE program, a position she enjoys every day!

What does being back at Herricks mean to you?

Being back at Herricks is a full circle moment. The team at Herricks Middle School is like a family, she knows her coworkers well and looks forward to seeing everyone each day. It is a joy to still be a part of the Highlander family, and happy to be in this role!



Dana Lieberman

School Nurse, Herricks Middle School

Where did you go after graduating from Herricks?

After high school, Nurse Lieberman went to SUNY Bingamton to pursue nursing. Ever since she was young, she knew she wanted to be a nurse when she grew up. Bingamton had a great program, and the price was right, so it was a great place to continue her education!

What brought you back to Herricks, specifically?

When it was time to look for houses and start a family, Herricks was an obvious place to search. Nurse Lieberman had always loved being a part of the Herricks Community, and also still had family living here, so raising her kids in Herricks was something she was drawn to. This decision paid off, as her children were then lucky enough to go to school in the same district that their mom worked in! She did her best not to cramp their style, or embarrass them, so they did like having their mom around!

What does being back at Herricks mean to you?

Being back in the Herricks School District as a nurse feels like coming home. It's a community where she has always found comfort and joy. This full-circle moment offers her a unique perspective on her experiences in Herricks. She recalls her first time working in the elementary schools; she was surprised by how small everything seemed because, as a child, it had all felt so big!